

ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC. (RMDC)
HEAD START
ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

All children at Rocky Mountain Development Council, Inc. Head Start have a right to be safe and protected from abuse.

To ensure this safety and protection:

- All regular and intermittent staff, consultants, School District staff, Carroll College work study students, foster-grandparents and regular volunteers, will sign a release form annually so that the required background checks can be completed.
- All regular and intermittent staff, consultants, School District staff, Carroll College work study students, foster-grandparents and regular volunteers will receive yearly training on abuse - its indicators, reporting procedures, etc.
- Parents/Guardians will receive information regarding abuse and neglect reporting through an overview of our program by staff during Initial Family Visits.
- Classroom staff will annually provide personal safety training to children on how to protect and take care of themselves. Staff will utilize a curriculum approved by the program. Staff will provide information to parent/guardian about this curriculum prior to its presentation.
- In buildings with elevators, children will not be allowed to ride in the elevator with the exception of physically challenged children being transported by specialists or staff, and those children who are with their parent/guardian or transporting party.
- In order to protect children and adults from potentially abusive situations, Head Start will have two adults present with children. One of these adults must be an RMDC Head Start staff. The other will preferably be RMDC Head Start staff, but if this is not possible, the second adult may be a foster grandparent, Carroll College work study student, School District staff, regular program consultant or regular volunteer. In the event that children are on a walking or driving field trip, two RMDC Head Start staff must be present. If this is not possible the field trip will be rescheduled.
- An adult and child who are 1:1 will always be visible either by way of leaving doors open or by having doors with windows which allow visibility.
- Staff must ensure children's safety in the bathroom by adhering to any/all of the following:
 1. In each and every instance, ensure public bathroom is safe prior to sending child to the bathroom and maintain visual contact with the bathroom doorway until child returns to classroom.
 2. Send children to bathroom when another staff is visible and is supervising the bathroom.
 3. Accompany child to the bathroom.
- No RMDC vehicle or individual staff member vehicle used for business purposes will run with child(ren) unless two adults are present and proper child safety restraints are used.
- Children must be accompanied into their classrooms.
- Children will not be left alone in private vehicles in parking areas.

Staff who witness an unaccompanied child will talk with the parent/guardian if possible and notify the family advocate to follow-up with parent/guardian to ensure this does not continue. If it should continue, the Department of Public Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Program, will be contacted for assistance.

I have read and understand this Abuse Prevention Policy and do hereby agree to abide by it. I understand this signed copy will be made a part of my personnel file. I understand violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

RECOGNIZING INDICATORS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

Taken from “Montana School Guidelines for the Identification and Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect 2015-2016”

Child maltreatment is a complex, insidious problem that cuts across all sectors of society. The presence of a single indicator does not prove that maltreatment exists. However, the repeated presence of an indicator, the presence of several indicators in combination, or the appearance of serious injury should alert the educator to the possibility that child abuse or neglect may be present. There are four types of child maltreatment. They are described below with some of the indicators and signs. For a complete list of indicators and signs access the above booklet at:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/cfsd/documents/CANpubs/UNPAM-119%20School%20Guidelines%20August%202015%202016.pdf>

PHYSICAL NEGLECT

In Montana, physical neglect is the most common type of child maltreatment. It is the failure to provide basic necessities such as nutrition, shelter, appropriate clothing for the weather, or to provide cleanliness and general supervision. It can also be exposing or allowing the child to be exposed to an unreasonable physical or psychological risk.

Physical Indicators	Signs
Constant hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing	Extreme behavior to get attention or to withdraw from attention
Consistent lack of supervision	Uncared-for appearance
Constant fatigue or listlessness	Inadequate or no shelter
Unattended physical problems or medical needs	Undernourished and tired appearance
Abandonment	Delayed growth, maturation, speech
	Begs, steals, hoards food

PSYCHOLOGICAL MALTREATMENT

Psychological abuse/neglect is the second most common type of child maltreatment in Montana. This type of abuse is the repeated action on the part of parents or others that belittles the child, makes the child fearful and stops the healthy developmental and or socio-emotional growth of a child.

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Speech disorders	Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, eating)
Lags in physical development	Conduct disorders (withdrawal, anti-social, destructive, cruelty, stealing)
Failure-to-thrive syndrome (progressive wasting away)	Sleep disorders and inhibition of play
	Behavior extremes (overly compliant or aggressive, running away)

PHYSICAL ABUSE

The third most common type of child maltreatment in Montana is physical abuse. Physical abuse can be an intentional act, an intentional omission, or gross negligence resulting in substantial skin bruising, internal bleeding, substantial injury to skin, burns, bone fractures, extreme pain, permanent or temporary disfigurement, impairment of any bodily organ or function, or death.

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Bruises or welts on face, mouth, torso, buttocks-in various stages of healing, choke marks, human hand prints	Wary of physical contact with adults - sometimes even shrinking at the touch or approach of an adult
Burns, broken bones and fractures, lacerations and abrasions	Becomes apprehensive when other children cry
Injuries at different stages of healing; unexplained abdominal injuries	Extremes in behavior (aggressiveness or withdrawal) – behavior that lies outside the range expected for the child’s age
Wary-flinching or ducking when adults make sudden movements	Seems frightened of the parents
Anxious and apprehensive-nightmares and flashbacks	Reports injury by a parent

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse of children is the fourth most common type of child maltreatment in Montana. Definitions of sexual abuse by law says, “Sexual abuse” means the commission of sexual assault, sexual intercourse without consent, indecent exposure, deviate sexual conduct, sexual abuse, ritual abuse or incest. “Sexual exploitation” means allowing, permitting or encouraging a child to engage in a prostitution offense, or allowing, permitting or encouraging sexual abuse of children.

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Difficulty in walking or sitting	Withdrawn - engage in fantasy or infantile behavior
Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing	Poor peer relationships (fighting, no friends)
Complaints of pain or itching in genital area	Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
Bruises or bleeding in external vaginal or anal area	Seductive, provocative behavior; severe behavior changes
	Excessive masturbation