CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO



YOUR GUIDE TO WORKING WITH MINORS What you need to know



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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION1	
WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUTH	
Keep kids out of danger1	
Avoid being alone with a minor1	
Stay vigilant2	
Steer clear of transportation complications2	
Avoid abuse2	
Keep kids away from drugs, alcohol, and sexual materials2	
Sexual topics are off limits2	
Do's and Don'ts	
DEFINITION AND SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT4	
Physical Abuse4	
Physical Neglect	
Sexual Abuse5	
Emotional Maltreatment5	
REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT	
Make a Report:6	



INTRODUCTION

California State University, Sacramento serves thousands of minors annually. University students, faculty, and staff interact with youth in many ways. You may be a coach, counselor, mentor, researcher, teacher, or volunteer. Perhaps you are with an outside group, such as a school or camp that brings kids to the campus.

Whatever your role, this guide will help you work effectively with youth. It offers



good practices, describes the signs of child abuse and neglect, and explains your legal duty to make a report. Following this guide will help you protect youth and also protect yourself.

WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUTH

Keep kids out of danger.

The #1 priority is to keep children and youth out of dangerous situations. Some dangers are obvious, such as crossing a busy street. Others are more subtle, such as a heat injury. Kids do not always have good judgment, and some activities suitable for adults are unsuitable for younger people. Climbing ladders is risky for youth, as is operating machinery. Younger children might not know to take shelter in an approaching thunderstorm. Part of your role in working with minors is to anticipate and avoid dangers.

If youth are engaged in laboratories or research activities, seek advice on appropriate training and protocols. Do not assume that minors are fully informed and competent.

Avoid being alone with a minor.

One-on-one situations create the risk of child abuse. If you are teaching a child to read or to play a sport, stay in an open area with other people around. Do not be alone in an office or classroom with a single child. Remaining visible to other people protects the child and also protects you.

If you need to check on a minor in a private area such as a sleeping room, locker room, or bathroom, bring another adult along.

If you have an important reason to be alone with a child, such as for music lessons or individual counseling, discuss safeguards in advance with your director or supervisor and obtain written permission from the child's parent or guardian.



Stay vigilant.

If you are supervising kids, keep your attention on them. Avoid distractions including personal electronics and conversations with other adults. The moment your attention wanders is the moment a problem will occur or a participant will slip away.

Steer clear of transportation complications.

Watch for problems when parents pick up children. Know who is authorized, and not authorized, to pick up each child. Don't release a child to someone else. Unless you have written permission from a parent or guardian, do not transport a minor yourself. You can, of course, transport your own kids.

Avoid abuse.

Don't engage any abusive conduct toward a youth or in the presence of youth. Take special care not to touch minors inappropriately. Never under any circumstances use corporal punishment or any discipline designed to humiliate a minor. Discuss questions and concerns with your director or supervisor.

Keep kids away from drugs, alcohol, and sexual materials.

Sacramento State does not tolerate the use or possession of illicit drugs. Do not provide illicit drugs to minors or use drugs in the presence of minors. Everyone knows that drinking before age 21 is illegal. Youth should not possess or consume alcohol. Adults should not drink when they have responsibility for the wellbeing of youth. Do not use any form of tobacco in the presence of minors under your care. Do not allow them to use any form of tobacco during the time they are on campus or in the campus-affiliated program.

Are the youth under my care permitted to receive or use prescription drugs or over-thecounter medications? Consult your program director or supervisor about obtaining written parental permission.

Sexual topics are off limits.

Avoid risqué jokes, even if youth are telling them. Do not share sexual material with any minor. If sexual content may be relevant to an academic course, counseling session, or other professional setting, follow professional norms. As always, discuss any issues with your director or supervisor.

Enjoy working with youth, within boundaries. Enjoy the opportunity to serve as a role model, teacher, and guide to minors. At the same time, maintain boundaries and take your responsibilities seriously. Treat youth with respect at all times. Avoid singling one child out from a group to become your special friend.



DEFINITION AND SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- Abuse is the physical, sexual or emotional harm or risk of harm to a child under the age of 18 caused by any person who acts as a caregiver for the child.
- Neglect occurs when a parent or caregiver fails to provide proper supervision for a child or adequate food, clothing, shelter, education or medical care although financially able or assisted to do so.

The following are common signs of abuse and neglect.

Physical Abuse		
Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators	
Unexplained bruises and welts:	Wary of contact with	
• On face, lips, mouth, torso, back, buttocks, thighs in various stages of healing	an adult	
Clusters, forming regular patterns		
Reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle)		
On several different surface areas		
Regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation		
Unexplained burns:	Apprehensive when	
• Cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks	other children cry	
• Immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like, doughnut-shaped on		
buttocks or genitalia)		
Patterned like electric burner, iron, etc.		
Rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso		
Unexplained fractures:	Behavioral extremes:	
• To skull, nose, facial structure in various stages of healing	Aggressiveness	
Multiple or spiral fractures	Withdrawal	
Unexplained laceration or abrasions:	Frightened of parents	
To mouth, lips, gums, eyes	or any specific adult	
To external genitalia		
	Afraid to go home	
	Reports injury by	
	parent or any specific adult	



Physical Neglect		
Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators	
Consistent hunger, poor hygiene,	Begging, stealing food	
inappropriate dress		
Consistent lack of supervision, especially in	Extended stays at school (early arrival and/or	
dangerous activities or long periods	late departure)	
Constant fatigue or listlessness	Constantly falling asleep in class	
Unattended physical problems or medical	Alcohol or drug abuse	
needs		
Abandonment	Delinquency (e.g., thefts)	
	States there is no caregiver	

Sexual Abuse		
Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators	
Difficulty in walking or sitting	Unwilling to change for gym or participate in PE	
Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing	Withdrawn fantasy or infantile behavior	
Pain or itching in genital area	Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge	
Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas	Poor peer relationships	
Venereal disease, especially in pre-teens	Delinquent or run-away	
Pregnancy	Reports sexual assault by any adult	

Emotional Maltreatment		
Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators	
Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.)	Behavior extremes:	
	Compliant, passive	
	Aggressive, demanding	
Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive,	Overly adaptive behavior:	
etc.)	Inappropriately adult	
	Inappropriately infant	
Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, speech		
disorders, inhibition of play)		



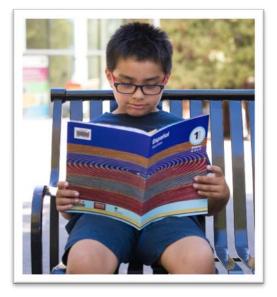
REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Countless minors suffer abuse or neglect each year. The consequences can be deadly. Every year children and youth die from abuse and neglect. Under California law, everyone has a legal duty to report child abuse and neglect. Together we can reduce the emotional and physical pain that minors needlessly experience.

What should you do? If you consider the situation an emergency, dial 9-1-1 immediately.

You must also take these two steps if you suspect or know that a child is suffering abuse or neglect.

• Step 1. Call the toll-free California 24-hour hotline for reporting child abuse and neglect.



1-800-422-4453. If no answer, call the Sacramento County (916) 875-5437 hotline.
Step 2 Call the Sacramento State Police Department at 916-278-6000 or 278-6900

Make a Report:

- If you know that a minor is suffering abuse or neglect
- If you suspect that a minor is suffering abuse or neglect
- Regardless of who the suspected culprit may be a family member, teacher, religious leader, student, or coach, well-respected or not
- Regardless of where the abuse or neglect may be occurring, for example in the home, at the University, or elsewhere.

Before making a report, you do not need to conduct your own investigation or be certain that mistreatment has occurred.

You do not need to call the Sacramento State Police Department for abuse or neglect that you encounter in a private capacity, outside the scope of your university role.

Anyone who makes a report in good faith receives legal protection from retaliation.

If you have any questions about your role and responsibilities, get advice. Talk to your program director or supervisor, Risk Management, Human Resources, or the University Counsel.

