



# ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

It is the responsibility of all Arizonans for Children volunteers to understand their role as a mandated reporter. Arizonans for Children staff will screen, train, and supervise all volunteers. The following guidelines will explain in detail how each of those procedures should be conducted and what is expected of volunteers.

## Screening

- Complete written application
- Check driving record and gain copy of current insurance coverage
- Check criminal history: state criminal history, child abuse registry, sexual offender registry.
- Provide three personal references
- Complete personal interview

The decision to accept an applicant into the program will be based upon a final assessment done by program staff at the completion of the mentor or mentee screening procedure. The program coordinator has final approval for an applicant's acceptance into the program. No reason will be provided to mentor applicants rejected from participation in the program.

All mentors are expected to meet the eligibility criteria. However, extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the program coordinator and acceptance may then be allowed with written approval of the executive director and representative of the board of directors when all eligibility requirements are not clearly met. These instances are expected to be rare.

Documentation of the screening process must be maintained for each applicant and placed in confidential files.

## Training

Mentors must attend a minimum one-hour initial training session prior to being matched. The agendas must cover basic program guidelines and communication/relationship building skills, as well as safety concerns and mandatory reporting procedures (see more below).

### **Support & Supervision**

Coordinators will make monthly phone or personal contact with the mentor. Mentors should share any concerns, questions, or other needs. In the case of match difficulties, discord, or concerns, mentors should participate in appropriate discussion and intervention to improve or rectify problem areas.

Mentors should maintain contact with the caregiver and case manager and alert the coordinator if communication issues arise.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

All staff, mentors, and other representatives of the program must report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect of agency clients or program participants immediately. All such suspected reports must be made to appropriate state and/or local authorities. Program staff must follow the mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect procedure.

Any staff, volunteers, or mentors accused of child abuse or neglect will be investigated by the agency. Contact with program youth will be restricted or constrained and/or the person in question suspended from employment or program participation per the decision of the executive director and board of directors until such investigation is concluded.

### **The following details are sourced from the Arizona Department of Child Safety website:**

A report of suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment is a responsible attempt to protect a child. Arizona law requires certain persons who suspect that a child has received non-accidental injury or has been neglected to report their concerns to DCS or local law enforcement (ARS §13-3620.A). If a child tells you of such experiences, act to protect that child by calling the toll free Arizona Child Abuse Hotline at 1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445).

Any person who reasonably believes that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the minor by other than accidental means or that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental in nature, or who reasonably believes that there has been a denial or deprivation of necessary medical treatment or surgical care or nourishment with the intent to cause or allow the death of an infant who is protected under A.R.S. § 36-2281, shall immediately report or cause reports to be made of this information to a peace officer or to Department of Child Safety, except if the report concerns a person who does not have care, custody or control of the minor, the report shall be made to a peace officer only.

## Identifying Abuse

**What is abuse/neglect:** When a parent, guardian or custodian inflicts or allows the infliction of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment. There are several types of abuse and neglect:

1. Physical abuse includes non-accidental physical injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns, cuts or other injuries.
2. Sexual abuse occurs when sex acts are performed with children. Using children in pornography, prostitution or other types of sexual activity is also sexual abuse.
3. Neglect occurs when children are not given necessary care for illness or injury. Neglect also includes leaving young children unsupervised or alone, locked in or out of the house, or without adequate clothing, food, or shelter. Allowing children to live in a very dirty house which could be a health hazard may also be considered neglect.
4. Emotional abuse of a child is evidenced by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or improper aggressive behavior as diagnosed by a medical doctor or psychologist, and caused by the acts or omissions of the parent or caretaker.
5. Exploitation means use of a child by a parent, guardian or custodian for material gain.
6. Abandonment means the failure of the parent to provide reasonable support and to maintain regular contact with the child, including providing normal supervision, when such failure is intentional and continues for an indefinite period.

**All staff and mentors should read and save the following page: [AZ DCS Report Child Abuse or Neglect](#)**