



# The Safety & Well-Being of Youth:

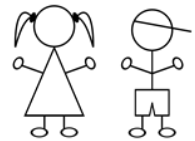
## *A 4-H Volunteer and Staff Partnership*

### Introduction

The Oregon State University Extension 4-H Youth Development Program is dedicated to the safety and well-being of all participants. This resource provides guidelines to do that.

OSU Extension 4-H staff and volunteers are:

- 1) Selected to work in the 4-H Program after consideration of their application, references, criminal background check, interview, and orientation/training.
- 2) Asked to (a) live by behavioral guidelines (volunteers sign “Adult Agreement”); and (b) apply 4-H safety policies and use resources to help ensure that youth and all other participants are safe, while they are part of the 4-H Program.



### Guidelines for Adults Responsible for Youth\*

#### Create an open, trustworthy environment.

- Work in pairs (2-deep leadership).
  - a) Whenever possible, adults should avoid being alone with a single child who is not related.
  - b) In an emergency, general one adult supervises youth, and one adult manages the emergency.
- Work with young people in reasonably open, visible places. Not behind locked doors.
- Invite others (friends, guardians, siblings) to visit 4-H programs at any time.
- Do not use inappropriate language or conversations where youth may overhear.

#### Respect privacy.

- Not share a room with one unrelated minor. If safety requires that an adult chaperone be housed with youth, then several youth should be present.
- Not be in physical contact with youth, unless it’s necessary for the child’s safety or the safety of others.
- Respect the privacy of youth particularly during bathing or changing clothes. (Verbal contact may be used to check a child’s health or safety.)

#### Exercise precautions and establish safety procedures.

- Arrange for youth to use a “buddy” system when they are out of the view of the responsible adult.
- Not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care, such as food, water, or shelter.
- Not allow use of physical/mental hazing, bullying, or “secret” initiations as part of 4-H Programs.

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**Protect those who cannot protect themselves.**

- Be attentive to the physical and emotional state of all children, each time they participate.
- LISTEN if a young person wants to share something personal. Do not promise that you will keep that information confidential. If needed, ask for help from other adults to decide what steps to take next.
- Handle sensitive information confidentially, with only those who “need to know.” Do talk with community agencies and supervisors who are responsible to help.
- Follow guidelines to report suspected child maltreatment to law enforcement or social services.

***\*Adult staff and volunteers are encouraged to follow the guidelines above when socializing with 4-H members under the age of 18, outside of Extension program activities as well.***

**4-H Staff and Volunteers are Mandatory Reporters**

As of January 1, 2013, Oregon state law (ORS 419B.005) rules that all OSU employees (Extension staff) are mandatory reporters (24/7) of suspected child abuse. Due to the nature of their important work, OSU Extension volunteers are required by OSU policy, to report suspected child abuse that comes to their attention during the course of their 4-H volunteer work.

**When to Report?**

Anytime one has ‘reasonable cause’ to believe that a person with whom you have come into contact has suffered abuse, neglect or maltreatment.

**When the report of suspected abuse or neglect is related to a person’s work or volunteer position at OSU, they are also required to notify OSU through the on-line notification system:**

<http://hr.oregonstate.edu/benefits/workers-compensation-resources/incident-reporting>

**What is Child Abuse?**

Oregon (ORS 419B.005) defines child abuse as: any assault caused by other than accidental means; any mental injury caused by cruelty to the child; rape; sexual abuse; sexual exploitation; threatened harm to child’s health and welfare; and negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including, but not limited to, failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care.

**How to Talk with a Child Who may be Disclosing Information about Abuse?**

<b>YOU SHOULD</b>	<b>YOU SHOULD NOT</b>
Find a private place to talk.	Panic or express shock.
Be on the same eye level.	Ask leading or suggestive questions.
Believe the child and be supportive.	Make negative comments about the alleged perpetrator.
Listen. Listen. LISTEN.	Promise confidentiality.
Rephrase important thoughts, using the child’s words.	Disclose information, except to authorities or caretakers, who need to know.
Tell the child you need to report this to someone who can help.	...tell everyone. ...blame others who may be negatively impacted as well.
Ensure that the child is protected from immediate harm (from self or others).	Leave the child unsupervised or confront the suspected abuser.
Seek an appropriate support system for yourself.	Think you need to handle the burden of your emotions alone.

## How to Report Child Maltreatment?

1. If the youth is not in immediate danger, report the situation to an Extension 4-H program supervisor. Together, an official report can be made.
2. Reports are made to either the:
  - a. The local office of the Department of Human Services; or
  - b. Local law enforcement, particularly when the child is in immediate danger. Or dial 911.



### **Another option is: Oregon Statewide Abuse Reporting Line (855) 503-SAFE**

Your report to one agency will be automatically be communicated to the other.

Most reports are made by telephone. The reporter may be asked to provide a follow-up written report. *(When the report of suspected abuse or neglect is related to a staff or volunteer position at OSU, they are also required to notify OSU through the on-line notification system: <http://hr.oregonstate.edu/benefits/workers-compensation-resources/incident-reporting>)*

**It is not the responsibility of, nor is it appropriate for, volunteers or staff to initiate an investigation.**

## What Do I Report?

Before making a report, try to have the following information available:

- Child's gender and age
- Type and extent of suspected abuse
- Name and address of the child's parent/guardian
- Any other information that will help establish the cause of abuse or identity of the abuser

## Will the Report be Confidential? Can I Be Sued?

Oregon law (*ORS 419B.025*) provides that anyone who has reasonable grounds for reporting child maltreatment, and participates in good faith in making a report, shall have immunity from any civil or criminal liability. The reporter's identity will remain confidential to the full extent allowable by law. That person shall have the same immunity if involved in any judicial proceeding resulting from that report. If court action is initiated, the reporting person may be called as a witness, or the court may order that the reporter's name be disclosed. Only people with firsthand knowledge of the child's situation can provide testimony proving that abuse has occurred.

## What if I Don't Report...or Misuse Information?

A mandatory reporter (as defined by state law) who fails to report is subject to prosecution of a Class A criminal violation of the law, which carries a maximum penalty of \$2,000., and termination of employment. Some mandatory reporters have also been sued for damages in civil court for failure to report. *And, if an adult knowingly provides a false report, it is punishable by law.*

**For additional information (video, power point slides, frequently asked questions), go to:**  
<http://hr.oregonstate.edu/policies-procedures/employees/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse>

For questions, contact Viki Dimick Jackson at 541-737-5355

## Potential Signs of Child Maltreatment, Abuse or Neglect



It is important for people who work with children regularly to be able to recognize the symptoms of maltreatment, and to protect those who can't protect themselves.

A single indicator does not prove that abuse is taking place. The repeated presence of an indicator or a combination of indicators should alert educators to that possibility. And, there may be no visible indicators.

The following list is offered as a guide only.

	<b>Physical Indicators</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained bruises, welts, or burns in various stages of healing, e.g., in the shape of article (electric cord, belt buckle, bite mark, cigarette burn)</li> <li>• Unexplained fractures, lacerations, or abrasions, particularly following an absence or vacation</li> <li>• Injuries inconsistent with information from child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wary of physical contact with adults</li> <li>• Behavioral extremes---aggressive, withdrawn</li> <li>• Complains of soreness or discomfort</li> <li>• Wears clothing inappropriate to weather</li> <li>• Reports injury by parents or others</li> <li>• Arrives early at meetings or events or stays late, as if afraid to go home</li> <li>• Chronically runs away (adolescents)</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene</li> <li>• Consistent lack of supervision, especially for long periods</li> <li>• Abandonment</li> <li>• Unattended physical problems or medical needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begs for or steals food</li> <li>• Constant fatigue or listlessness</li> <li>• Falls asleep during meetings</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> <li>• Delinquency, self-destructive</li> <li>• Frequently absent from or tardy to meetings or events</li> <li>• Reports no caretaker at home</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torn, stained, or bloody underclothes</li> <li>• Difficulty walking or sitting</li> <li>• Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia</li> <li>• Pain or itching in genital areas</li> <li>• Venereal disease</li> <li>• Pregnancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawn, chronic depression</li> <li>• Poor self-esteem</li> <li>• Threatened by physical contact or closeness</li> <li>• Inappropriate sexual behavior or premature knowledge of sex</li> <li>• Reports sexual abuse by caretaker</li> <li>• Poor peer relationships</li> <li>• Suicide attempts (adolescents)</li> <li>• Chronically runs away (adolescents)</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional Maltreatment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech disorders</li> <li>• Delayed physical development</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> <li>• Ulcers, asthma, severe allergies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habit disorders (sucking, rocking)</li> <li>• Antisocial, destructive</li> <li>• Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)</li> <li>• Behavior extremes (passive or aggressive)</li> <li>• Developmentally delayed mentally and emotionally</li> <li>• Suicide attempts (adolescents)</li> </ul>

Chart adapted from Broadhurst, Diane D., "The Educator's Role in the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect," the Users' Manual Series. National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, Washington, D.C. 1979, DREW no (Ohds 79-30172). Child Abuse (C1001), Washington State University Cooperative Extension.



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