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Title: MATC CHILDREN'S CENTERS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING	Code: GG0302-1
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Policy Reference: G0302, Child Safety and Welfare on Campus

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### **Legal Requirement to Report Child Abuse or Neglect**

Wisconsin state law requires child care workers in a daycare center to report to authorities if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child in their care has been **abused** or **neglected**, or have reason to believe that a child has been threatened with **abuse** or **neglect** and that **abuse** or **neglect** of the child will occur. Any person participating in good faith in the making of a report and cooperating in an investigation of abuse or neglect has immunity from any civil or criminal liability for doing so.

“**Abuse**” means any of the following:

- Physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. Physical injury includes, but is not limited to, lacerations (wounds), broken bones, burns, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising, or great bodily harm.
- Sexual abuse including sexual intercourse or sexual contact with a child under the age of 16, sexual exploitation, and forced viewing of sexual activity.
- Emotional damage for which the child’s parent or caretaker has neglected, refused or been unable for reasons other than poverty to obtain the necessary treatment or to take steps to improve the symptoms. Emotional damage means harm to a child’s psychological or intellectual functioning which is exhibited by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or aggression.

“**Neglect**” means failure, refusal or inability on the part of a parent or other caretaker of a child, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.

In addition to reporting suspected abuse or neglect as required by this policy, any Center staff member noting any injury to a child shall continue the practice of recording the injury in the medications and injury log book. The entry in the log book shall not refer to the report made to Child Protective Services.

#### **I. Procedure When a Person Other than Another MATC Staff Member Is Suspected of Abuse or Neglect of a Child Enrolled in the MATC Child Care Program**

The following procedures will be implemented when a Center staff member has reasonable cause to suspect that a person other than another MATC staff member has



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physically, emotionally, or sexually abused or neglected a child enrolled in the MATC Child Care Program, or has reason to believe that abuse or neglect of such a child will occur.

1. Any Center staff member who notices signs of possible physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect of an enrolled child or has reason to believe abuse and/or neglect will occur, must report this to the Center Coordinator or designated Supervisor in Charge. In addition, the employee may request that the Coordinator/Supervisor assist in evaluating the signs of abuse or neglect and reporting as required under this policy.
2. A staff member who has reasonable cause to suspect that abuse or neglect has occurred, or has reason to believe that abuse or neglect will occur, shall immediately call Child Protective Services ("CPS"). If the staff member has reason to suspect that the health or safety of a child is in immediate danger, he/she may request an immediate investigation by the local law enforcement agency. If CPS is unavailable, the staff member shall call the local law enforcement agency. The following information should be reported:
  - The name, address, telephone number, birth date, and schedule of the child
  - The names, address(es), and telephone number(s) of the child's parents and/or caretakers
  - The names and ages of any other children in the child's home, if known
  - The facts and circumstances contributing to the suspicion of abuse or neglect, or to the belief that abuse or neglect will occur
  - The name of the staff member reporting
  - The center name, address, and telephone number
  - Any other available information which the CPS worker or law enforcement officer requests
3. The staff member making the report to CPS shall immediately document in writing the information listed below and place it in a separate file relating to the child abuse/neglect report. Such file shall be maintained in the Coordinator/Supervisor's office.
  - The facts and circumstances contributing to the suspicion of abuse or neglect, or to the belief that abuse or neglect will occur, including a physical description of the child's injuries and/or changes in the child's behavior
  - Any explanation given by the child's parent or caretaker regarding the child's appearance or behavior
  - The date and time of the call to CPS or the local law enforcement agency



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- The name and telephone number of the CPS worker or law enforcement officer taking the call
  - The signature of the staff member making the report
4. The Coordinator/Supervisor shall call his/her direct supervisor and the MATC Public Safety Department to inform them that a call has been placed to Child Protective Services or to the local law enforcement agency.
  5. The MATC Public Safety Officer shall fill out an Incident/MATC Missing Property report, send the original to the Director of the MATC Public Safety Department, and provide a copy to the Center, which shall be kept in the child abuse/neglect report file.
  6. By law all oral and written reports made by Center staff to CPS or to the local law enforcement agency, and records maintained by MATC and other persons documenting suspected abuse or neglect, are confidential. A Center staff member making a report to CPS may tell the child's parent that he or she has made a report, but there is no legal obligation to do so, and a staff member shall not disclose the identity of any other staff member who has made a report. The Coordinator/Supervisor may notify other Center staff members caring for the child that a report has been made without identifying the reporter.

Any parent or any other person who requests information relating to a CPS report shall be referred to the Coordinator/Supervisor. If the parent or other individual requests information from the Coordinator/Supervisor relating to a CPS report, the Coordinator/Supervisor will ask for the request in writing. The Coordinator/Supervisor shall consult the General Counsel before releasing any information, including any written report or record. However, in no case may the Coordinator/Supervisor or any staff member disclose any information that would identify any person who reported the suspected abuse or neglect to CPS or the local law enforcement agency.

**II. Investigation of Child Abuse/Neglect by CPS/Law Enforcement Agency**

If a Child Protective Services investigator or law enforcement officer arrives to investigate a report of abuse or neglect, whether or not that report was made by MATC staff, the following procedures will be in effect:

1. The Coordinator/Supervisor will inform classroom staff.
2. The Coordinator/Supervisor will call the MATC Public Safety Department to request that an officer be present when a CPS investigator, law enforcement officer, and/or parent are at the center during an investigation. In the absence of a Public Safety



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Officer, or for outlying campuses, the Coordinator/Supervisor will contact the Campus Operations Manager or Campus Team Leader(s).

3. The CPS investigator or local law enforcement officer will be given access to the child, Center staff, and all pertinent written information. Center staff members will cooperate with the investigation, and if requested, will provide a subsequent report in writing. A copy of such report, if any, shall be placed in the file relating to the child abuse/neglect report.
4. An attempt should be made to move all parties involved to an alternate location.
5. If the CPS investigator or law enforcement officer asks to speak to the child's parent or caretaker and that person is on campus, the Public Safety Officer will be sent to his/her class or work site to request that he or she speak to the investigator.
6. Upon completion of the investigation, the Coordinator/Supervisor will inform Center staff and carry out the directions of the CPS investigator or law enforcement officer regarding arrangements for the child's custody and changes to the current list of persons authorized for pick-up of the child, if any.
7. The Coordinator/Supervisor will document the information listed below in writing and place it in the file relating to the child abuse/neglect report.
  - The name of the CPS investigator or law enforcement officer who investigated a report of abuse or neglect
  - The date of the investigator's visit and the information provided to the investigator
  - The steps taken to assist the investigator
  - The investigator's directions for the child's custody and changes to the list of persons authorized to pick up the child, if any.

**III. Procedures When an MATC Staff Member is Accused of Abuse or Neglect of a Child Enrolled in the MATC Child Care Program**

The following procedures will be implemented when an MATC staff member is accused of abuse or neglect of a child in the MATC Child Care Program.

1. If the Children's Center Coordinator becomes aware that an MATC employee is alleged to have abused or neglected a child enrolled in the MATC Child Care Program, the Center Coordinator shall immediately report the allegation to his/her direct supervisor, the General Counsel, the Director of the MATC Public Safety Department, and the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources.



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2. If the Center Coordinator is alleged to have abused or neglected a child in the MATC Child Care Program, any MATC employee becoming aware of the allegation shall report it to the General Counsel, and the General Counsel shall report the allegation to the Director of the MATC Public Safety Department and the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources.
3. Upon receiving a report under No. 1 or 2 above, the General Counsel shall direct an immediate investigation into the allegations of abuse or neglect.
4. Pending the outcome of such investigation, the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources will determine whether the accused MATC employee should be reassigned to duties which do not involve contact with children or should be placed on paid administrative leave.
5. If after investigation the General Counsel has reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred, the General Counsel shall (1) report to CPS or the local law enforcement agency and document the report in the manner required in Section I of this policy, and maintain the child abuse/neglect report file in his/her office; (2) notify the MATC Public Safety Department that a call has been placed to CPS or to local law enforcement; and (3) forward the findings of the investigation to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources/Labor Relations to take appropriate employment action against the accused employee.
6. If after investigation the General Counsel believes there is no reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect occurred, he or she shall forward the findings of the investigation to the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources and the employee's immediate supervisor.
7. All requests for information relating to allegations of child abuse or neglect by an MATC staff member shall be referred to the General Counsel.