



JONES CENTER

Harold Colbert Jones Memorial Community Center

Providing a Doorway to Opportunity Since 1917

Child Protection Policy

Reviewed
6/10/2020

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INTRODUCTION

Everyone who participates in programs at the Harold Colbert Jones Memorial Community Center (Jones Center) is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Jones Center has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, staff and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Jones Center is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone participating in programs and services accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection while in the care of Jones Center and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Therefore, these policies and procedures are designed to help our center to:

- Safeguard children and youth from abuse.
- Provide assurance to families that their children are safe and secure at Jones Center activities.
- Assure proper reporting when there is reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred.

POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy governs Jones Center and all activities sponsored by or under the control of Jones Center. This policy governs conduct with children as defined in this policy.

The environment of Jones Center is to be free from any form of abuse. Violation of this policy shall be considered grounds for disciplinary action, dismissal, and/or possible legal action. It is required that staff, volunteers, and other leaders of Jones Center activities behave according to these procedures.

DEFINITIONS

Abuse: conduct that harms or has the potential to harm a child physically, sexually, or emotionally with inappropriate aggression, sexual contact, verbal harassment, or negligence.

Accused: the person against whom an accusation of abuse or neglect is made.

Accuser: the person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct, neglect or abuse by a person covered by this policy. The accuser may or may not be the victim of alleged sexual misconduct, neglect, or abuse.

Activity: a program or event sponsored by or under the control of Jones Center.

Child: a person under the age of 18 years.

Child Sexual Abuse: abuse against a child that is sexual in nature. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual contact or interaction between an adult and a child is always considered forced and abusive whether or not consented to by the child.

Mandated Reporter: a person required by law to report to the appropriate state agency all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect that come to their attention. Regardless, all employees of Jones Center and volunteers working with children are responsible for informing the Executive Director or person in charge of the activity of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect and to ensure that the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is informed, as appropriate.

Neglect: the failure of a parent or responsible caretaker to provide adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter, medical care or other basic necessity to a child.

Parent: a parent or legal guardian of a child participating in an activity.

Person in charge of activity: the person designated to lead and take responsibility for the activity. S/he must be a staff member or volunteer as defined by this policy and must have completed all required training and screening.

Response: the action taken by the governing body or entity when a report of sexual misconduct or abuse is received. It may include inquiry into facts and circumstances, or possible disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Sexual Misconduct: conduct that results in or has the potential to result in child sexual abuse.

Staff Member: a person employed by or contracted with Jones Center.

Victim: a child who has allegedly suffered an act of sexual misconduct, abuse or neglect.

Volunteer: a person who provides services for Jones Center and receives no remuneration. Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups.

SCREENING PROCEDURES

It is the policy of the Jones Memorial Community Center that the hiring or utilization of all staff or volunteers age 18 and older will be conditional based on completion of the following:

- Application form with references. Potential staff will complete the usual Jones Center application for employment at the time of hiring. Potential volunteers will complete the volunteer application form.
- Reference checks managed and documented by a Jones Center Supervisor.
- Background checks through the Illinois State Police and DCFS for all staff and volunteers.
- Copy of driver's license or state identification kept on file in Jones Center office.

Each potential staff member or volunteer will sign a statement regarding prior convictions on the employment or volunteer application. All potential candidates are required to complete an Illinois State Police Conviction Information Name Check Request. The Illinois State Police will return forms stating their findings, and all candidates will be given a copy and have seven (7) working days to notify the Illinois Bureau of Identification and Jones Center of any incorrect or inaccurate information on the findings. Additionally, using the website for the State of Illinois (www.isp.state.il.us/sor/frames.htm), Jones Center will perform background checks for all candidates regarding sexual offense history. The search is done by name, and the findings either: (1) state "no record for that name," or (2) lists the individual's name, offense, and other pertinent information. Lastly, all candidates are required to complete a form that is sent to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to identify child abusers.

An applicant may not be employed or utilized by Jones Center if the applicant has been convicted of: (1) committing attempted first degree murder or attempting to commit first degree murder or a Class X felony or committing a felony under Illinois law within seven years of the application for employment, or (2) indecent solicitation of a child, public indecency, prostitution, soliciting for a prostitute, pandering, keeping a place of prostitution, patronizing a prostitute, pimping, juvenile pimping, exploitation of a child, obscenity, child pornography, harmful material, criminal sexual assault, aggravated criminal sexual assault, predatory criminal sexual assault of a child, or criminal sexual abuse, or (3) an offense defined in the Cannabis Control Act except possession offenses involving less than 10 grams and/or manufacture, delivery, or possession with intent to deliver offenses involving less than 2.5 grams, or (4) any offense committed or attempted in any other state or against the laws of the United States that, if committed or attempted in Illinois, would have been punishable as a felony in Illinois or would have been punishable as any of the foregoing offenses.

Jones Center cannot knowingly employ a person who has been found under the Juvenile Court Act to be a perpetrator of sexual or physical abuse of any minor under 18 years of age.

All information gathered in the screening process will be kept in a secure location and will be kept strictly confidential, with access permitted only to those few persons who have a

legitimate need to know. Background checks will be performed at a minimal frequency of every three (3) years.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Training as to how to report suspected abuse or neglect is necessary for all staff and volunteers coming in contact with children. Training will include, at a minimum:

- A copy of the Jones Center Child Protection Policy will be provided to all staff members and volunteers prior to starting work. They will also sign that they have read the document.
- Those working directly with children will be trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of neglect and of physical and sexual abuse prior to working with children.
- Training will be given regarding procedures to follow when an incident of suspected abuse, neglect, or misconduct is to be reported.
- Training will be under the supervision of the Executive Director and Program Director and will be reviewed annually.
- Staff and volunteers working directly with children shall sign the Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status form of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

POLICY REVIEW AND PROCEDURES

Policy Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year. This will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

Good and Poor Practice

The following are regarded as **good practice**, and all Jones Center staff members and volunteers should adhere to these principles and actions:

- always work in an open environment in a room that is visible through an open door or window (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)

- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity, make experience fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- always put the welfare of the young person first
- adhere to and enforce the rule that no adults are allowed to use the same bathroom when youth participants are present
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with youth participants (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- involve parents/guardians wherever possible, e.g. where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms or similar situations, always ensure staff members and volunteers work in pairs.
- request written parental consent if Jones Center officials are required to transport young people in their cars (this is only done as a last resort)
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed groups are taken off site, they should always be accompanied by a male and female staff member or volunteer
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- secure written parental consent for Jones Center to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given

The following are regarded as **poor practice** and should be avoided by all staff members and volunteers:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/guardian and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

Responding to Suspicions of Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed **Appendix A** of this document, or it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify
- **inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **record** all information
- **report** the incident to the person in charge of activity and complete an Incident Report Form (*Appendix B*).

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the person in charge of activity. If you still have concerns, you should refer to the Manual for Mandated Reporters from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services in the Executive Director's office.

Allegations involving a staff member or volunteer:

Jones Center is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people. However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused, particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Jones Center expects its staff and volunteers to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

These procedures should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that s/he is unsuitable to work with children

The allegations may relate to the persons behavior at work, at home or in another setting.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. Any allegation of this nature should be immediately reported to the person in charge of activity and ultimately to the Executive Director.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Person in Charge of Activity
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- Jones Center's Executive Director
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- Jones Center's Executive Director will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Jones Center's Personnel Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the Jones Center's Personnel Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.



Child Welfare Information Gateway

PROTECTING CHILDREN ■ STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

FACTSHEET

June 2007

Disponible en español
www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/sp_signs.cfm

Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect: Signs and Symptoms



The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family, but a closer look at the situation may be warranted when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination.

If you do suspect a child is being harmed, reporting your suspicions may protect the child and get

What's Inside:

- Recognizing child abuse
- Types of abuse
- Signs of physical abuse
- Signs of neglect
- Signs of sexual abuse
- Signs of emotional maltreatment

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
 Administration for Children and Families
 Administration on Children, Youth and Families
 Children's Bureau



Child Welfare Information Gateway
 Children's Bureau/ACYF
 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW
 Eighth Floor
 Washington, DC 20024
 703.385.7565 or 800.394.3366
 Email: info@childwelfare.gov
www.childwelfare.gov

help for the family. Any concerned person can report suspicions of child abuse and neglect. Some people (typically certain types of professionals) are required by law to make a report of child maltreatment under specific circumstances—these are called mandatory reporters. For more information, see the Child Welfare Information Gateway publication, *Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect*: www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/mandacfm

For more information about where and how to file a report, contact your local child protective services agency or police department. An additional resource for information and referral is the Childhelp® National Child Abuse Hotline (800.4.A.CHILD).

Recognizing Child Abuse

The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect.

The Child:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen

- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home

The Parent:

- Shows little concern for the child
- Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home
- Asks teachers or other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs

The Parent and Child:

- Rarely touch or look at each other
- Consider their relationship entirely negative
- State that they do not like each other

Types of Abuse

The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. It is important to note, however, that these

types of abuse are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child, for example, is often emotionally abused as well, and a sexually abused child also may be neglected.

Signs of Physical Abuse

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **child**:

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury
- Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abuse as a child

Signs of Neglect

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **child**:

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Seems apathetic or depressed
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs

Signs of Sexual Abuse

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **child**:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting

- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex
- Is secretive and isolated
- Is jealous or controlling with family members

Signs of Emotional Maltreatment

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **child**:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development

- Has attempted suicide
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child
- Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems
- Overtly rejects the child

RESOURCES ON THE CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION GATEWAY WEBSITE ~

Child Abuse and Neglect

www.childwelfare.gov/can/index.cfm

Defining Child Abuse and Neglect

www.childwelfare.gov/can/defining/

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

www.childwelfare.gov/responding/reporting.cfm

This factsheet was adapted, with permission, from *Recognizing Child Abuse: What Parents Should Know*. Prevent Child Abuse America. © 2003.

INCIDENT REPORT

Introduction

Date of Report: _____ **Person Filing Report:** _____

Where Did the Incident Take Place? (Location i.e. in facility or off site, Specific Area of Building or Room)

When Did the Incident Occur?

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Was this incident verbally communicated to a supervisor, either in person or by telephone?

Yes No

If yes, who verbally communicated incident? _____

To Whom was the incident communicated? _____

How was the incident communicated? _____

Investigative Procedure

Please write a brief statement as to when the investigator was contacted, and when he or she arrived at the scene of the alleged incident. Include a list of the witnesses interviewed, including their titles, job classifications and date(s) of interviews. If applicable, include a list of physical evidence recovered and a list of documentary and demonstrative evidence used.

Summary of Evidence

Write a narrative of what happened and what evidence was used to support those conclusions.

Findings (To be completed by Executive Director or Board Member)

State the investigator's conclusion as to whether the allegations are substantiated, unsubstantiated or unfounded and the basis for the conclusion. If appropriate, the investigator's observations that agency policy was violated or other systematic problems that may have contributed to the abuse or neglect, if substantiated. This should be made in a separate paragraph, and it should be clear that it is not a finding on the allegations.

Incident Reports

The Harold Colbert Jones Memorial Community Center's (Jones Center) program, administrative and volunteer staff has the responsibility to inform the Executive Director and/or the Program Director of any and all incidents, events or information which may, could or will have a significant and/or negative impact on the integrity, liability and/or finances of Jones Center; its program operations, program sites, community and/or client relations, or the ability of Jones Center to deliver services at a level consistent with its philosophy for service provision to the client and the community.

A telephone/verbal report of all emergencies must be provided to the Executive Director and/or program coordinator immediately upon discovery.

A written report, from all involved/witnessing personnel, describing the details with accompanying documentation, must be submitted within 24 hours to the Executive Director; with copies to the appropriate coordinator.

The Executive Director is responsible for communicating with the President of the Board of Directors of Jones Center immediately, or within 48 hours maximum, providing all available details regarding the incident.