
Policy Title: No Hit Zone Policy in Children's Advocacy Centers

Purpose:

1. To create and reinforce an environment of comfort and safety for children, families and staff.
2. To provide clear procedures for addressing situations in which adults are using physical discipline with children, or to de-escalate a situation in which caregivers/staff begin to raise their voices, or show other signs of stress and inappropriate behaviors that occur prior to physical discipline.

Policy:

1. The CAC shall implement a "No Hit Zone" which is an environment in which no adult shall hit a child, no adult shall hit another adult, no child shall hit an adult, and no child shall hit another child.
 - a. The policy will be implemented on all CAC property including all owned and leased properties, buildings, grounds, and parking lots.
2. When hitting is observed, it is all staff, interns and volunteers' responsibility to interrupt the behavior as well as communicate system policy to those present.
3. Staff will not be expected to place themselves in a dangerous situation by confronting violent behavior; security or police should be notified through established procedures whenever staff has concern for their physical safety or the safety of children, visitors or other staff.
 - a. If necessary, the executive director or appropriate supervisor should be notified through established procedures.

Procedure: TRAINING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

Training and Prevention:

1. All staff, children, and adults will be made aware of agency policy that is in place to ensure and reinforce an environment of comfort and safety.
2. All adult agency staff and volunteers will complete training upon implementation and ongoing training during orientation for new staff. Every new employee must be trained during new staff orientation.
3. Each staff member will have access to a No Hit Zone toolkit. The toolkit will include materials and brochures to teach parents.

Reporting and Response Procedure:

1. Staff will identify and respond to situations that compromise the safe environment utilizing the education they are provided with during the training.
2. If the witness is a non-staff member, such as a volunteer or intern, he or she should report the account to a staff member and allow him or her to address the situation.
3. The following steps will be taken when hitting or other disruptive behavior is witnessed:
 - a. Respond in a nonjudgmental way.

- b. Empathize with the frustrations and stress the involved individuals may be experiencing. Remind them that the agency is a “No Hit Zone”--no physical violence is tolerated.
- c. Try to have conversations with the involved individuals out of earshot of others so that the individual is not embarrassed, and, if possible, include the child.,
- d. Avoid making threats.
- e. Thank the individual(s) for respecting our policies and offer written educational material as appropriate.
- f. Any intervention/action should be documented.
- g. If indicated by the situation, notify Child Protective Services or Law Enforcement in accordance with state law.
- h. If indicated by the situation, notify supervisor or police for assistance.

References:

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- Gershoff, E. T., Font, S. A., Taylor, C. A., Garza, A. B., Olson-Dorff, D., & Foster, R. H. (2018). A short-term evaluation of a hospital No Hit Zone policy to increase bystander intervention in cases of parent-to-child violence. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 94, 155–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.child.youth.2018.09.040>.
- Vaughan-Eden, V., Holden, G. W., & LeBlanc, S. S., (2018). Commentary: Changing the social norm about corporal punishment. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 32 (1). DOI 10.1007/s10560-018-0592-y
- LeBlanc, S., Alexander, R., Mastrangelo, M. & Gilbert, H. (2019). No hit zones: A simple solution to address the most prevalent risk factor in child abuse. *APSAC Advisor*, 31 (1), 37-51.

Supervisor

Date

Director

Date