

# building CIRCLES • breaking CYCLES

## Discussion Guide

Here are a few suggestions for how program administrators, faculty, trainers, and others might make the best use of this brochure. We certainly hope that you will distribute the brochure, but in order for the brochure's messages to have their greatest impact, you must take further action. By discussing these sensitive issues with staff, administrators, and other personnel who work with children you will empower early childhood educators to use their knowledge and skills to support families in many effective ways.

### Program administrators

Provide the brochure to your staff before a regular staff meeting and use it as a basis for discussion. You may be able to incorporate it into an in-service training, or as part of the annual Week of the Young Child or Child Abuse Prevention Month activities (both are in April). Here are a few questions that you might use to get a discussion started. These questions will help your staff explore important ideas in the brochure, connect what they learn to their own values and experiences, and think about their own professional development.

1. Before you read the brochure, what did "child abuse prevention" mean to you? What did you see as your role in preventing abuse and neglect?
2. How has the information in the brochure expanded your view? Now that you've read the brochure, what else might you do to help prevent abuse and neglect?
3. National research by NAEYC revealed that early childhood educators

- are willing to take an even more active part in preventing child abuse and neglect;

- feel a strong professional and personal responsibility to help prevent child abuse and neglect;
- see promoting healthy social and emotional development as important to preventing child abuse and neglect; and
- feel unprepared and uncomfortable about discussing difficult topics with families, and want more hands-on training and resources.

Do these findings ring true with your experience as an early childhood educator, working with children and families every day?

4. The brochure talks about the things you do every day that help to prevent child abuse and neglect and promote healthy social and emotional development. Discuss each item in the brochure as a group, thinking about the following points:

- To what extent do your program and staff work in intentional ways to do these everyday things? Focus on your strengths and accomplishments, as well as your areas of need.
- Brainstorm ways in which you might do more in these areas.
- In what areas do you need more training/resources?
- How can you support each other?

5. As a staff, what are we committed to do to improve our program and our own skills and knowledge in supporting families to help prevent child abuse and neglect? Make a list of concrete things you can do individually or together as a staff to take a more active part in preventing child abuse.

**Keep in mind** that your discussion group may include individuals who have had troubling personal experiences with abuse or neglect. While respecting their privacy, try to tune in to the needs of those individuals and be prepared to connect them with other resources.

## Higher education faculty or trainers of early childhood education practitioners

Many of the ideas and questions in the preceding section will be valuable for you as well. Provide this brochure to your students or trainees and use it as a basis for a class discussion or workshop. Consider incorporating this brochure into your curricula for child development, health and safety, professional ethics, or family systems classes and workshops. Here are a few questions that you might use to get a discussion started. These questions will help students or workshop participants explore important ideas in the brochure, connect what they learn to their own values and experiences, and think about their own professional preparation.

**1.** Before you read the brochure, what did “child abuse prevention” mean to you? What did you see as the role of early childhood educators in preventing abuse and neglect?

**2.** How has the information in the brochure expanded your view?

**3.** Were there any statements in the brochure that surprised you? Why?

**4.** How do you feel about having these important responsibilities be a part of your everyday job?

**5.** What did you learn that you would like to incorporate into your work as an early childhood educator?

**6.** What are you committed to do to improve your skills and knowledge in supporting families to prevent child abuse and neglect? Think about concrete steps you can take in your own professional development that will help prepare you for these responsibilities.

