

Criterion 1.B.09: Resource for Programs

Purpose: This resource helps program administrators improve their program’s ability to meet required criterion 1.B.09 and other NAEYC Accreditation criteria related to child abuse prevention within the early childhood program setting. Criterion 1.B.09 states: “Teaching staff never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion.”

Instructions for Program Administrators:

1. Read information for each topic related to child abuse prevention in the program setting.
2. Consider the series of questions and consider completing optional activities related to each topic. Note the references to NAEYC Early Learning Program Standards and Criteria related to child abuse prevention.
3. Make a list of your program’s strengths and weaknesses related to child abuse prevention.
4. Develop and implement program improvement plans to address any weaknesses in your program. Be sure to include a plan for monitoring your program’s progress over time.

While a program administrator may complete this activity alone, NAEYC encourages collaboration among a program’s administrative staff, teaching staff, and other stakeholders as this activity is completed.

TOPIC #1: Written Policies and Procedures

It is important to have written policies and procedures that document your program’s position on child abuse. Policies and procedures on child abuse prevention must send a clear message to program staff that physical and psychological abuse is prohibited at your program and must provide specific procedures for individuals to follow if abuse is suspected or observed.

Consider the following reflective questions and complete the related activities to support your program’s development of policies and procedures that support child abuse prevention. Note that the phrase “policies and procedures” refers only to policies and procedures related to child abuse prevention.

Reflective Questions	Optional Related Activities
What are your program’s written policies and procedures [related to child abuse prevention]?	Gather all written policies and procedures [related to child abuse prevention] and note their locations (for example, in the staff/family handbooks, program website, orientation materials).
Are the policies and procedures clearly written and easy to understand?	Ask staff members and/or family member volunteers to review your program’s written policies and procedures. Request feedback on how easy it is to understand the information.
Do staff members receive a copy of written policies and procedures before working with children?	Gather written information [related to child abuse prevention] that is provided to staff members after they are hired and during their initial orientation. Make any necessary improvements to ensure staff have access to all applicable policies and procedures.
How frequently are the policies and procedures reviewed?	Create a schedule to remind you to review policies and procedures on an ongoing basis. Note the date of the last review and plan for an upcoming review. You may choose to develop a committee of program staff and/or family members to participate in the review process.

Reflective Questions		Optional Related Activities
Criterion 10.D.03 and 10.D.04	Do the written policies and procedures comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws?	Review your program's policies against applicable federal, state, and local laws (for example, state licensing regulations). Be sure your program's policies and procedures either reference applicable laws or address them completely.
	Do the written policies and procedures include requirements for staff to report all suspected and observed incidents of child abuse to appropriate local agencies?	Highlight the parts of your program's written policy that address requirements for staff to report child abuse that has been observed or is suspected. Add additional language to the policies and procedures if necessary.
Criterion 10.D.03 and 10.D.04	<p>What are the written procedures that must be followed when a staff member is accused of child abuse?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the staff member who reports suspicions of child abuse protected from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action, unless it is proven that the report is malicious? Are the rights of the accused staff person protected? 	<p>Review existing procedures to be followed when a staff member is accused of abuse or neglect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the perspective of the staff member who reports the suspected or observed incident. Make any necessary improvements to the procedures to ensure the rights of staff members who report child abuse are protected. Consider the perspective of the accused staff person and think about issues like confidentiality and due process. Make any necessary improvements to the procedures to protect the accused staff member's rights.
	What written procedures are designed to address staff members who violate child abuse prevention policies and procedures at your program?	Consider a scenario in which a staff member violates your program's written policies and procedures related to child abuse prevention. Make any necessary improvements to clearly indicate how the situation would be addressed. Be sure to include notifying NAEYC through a 72-Hour Report and reporting to other agencies, like the state licensing body.

TOPIC #2: Hiring Practices

Programs that carefully screen employees before they are hired are more likely to select staff members who will follow policies and procedures related to child abuse prevention. Screening potential employees prevents known child abusers from being employed at your program and helps you to select competent staff members who are likely to follow established policies and procedures related to child abuse prevention.

Consider the following reflective questions and complete the related activities to ensure that your program's hiring practices prevent child abuse from occurring within your program.

	Reflective Questions	Optional Related Activities
Criterion 10.E.02	<p>Do your program's hiring procedures ensure that all employees who come into contact with children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. have passed a criminal record check; and b. are free from any history of substantiated child abuse or neglect? 	<p>Review your state licensing guidelines related to criminal record checks. Note the amount of time it takes to complete a criminal record check and review a sample criminal record check so that you are familiar with the document that is provided.</p>
	<p>Do your program's hiring procedures include a thorough review of a candidate's background, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. personal interviews, b. verification of professional references, c. verification of educational qualifications, d. a careful review of the employment record, and e. a signed written application? 	<p>Prepare questions that address child abuse prevention to use while interviewing potential staff members and checking their professional references. You might ask a potential employee to define child abuse in their own words or describe how they would react if they observed an instance of child abuse within the program.</p>
Criterion 10.E.05	<p>Does your program require a mandatory probationary period during which the staff member does not have any unsupervised access to children?</p> <p>What is the method for evaluating performance of new staff members during the probationary period?</p>	<p>Make a list of performance measures related to child abuse prevention that must be observed during a staff member's probationary period. Consider what should <i>not</i> be observed (physical or psychological abuse) as well as what <i>should</i> be observed (positive child guidance and appropriate implementation of your program's discipline policy).</p>

TOPIC #3: Initial Orientation, Ongoing Training, and Monitoring

It is important for all adults who have contact with children to receive an initial orientation and ongoing training on child abuse prevention. Additionally, staff should be regularly monitored to ensure child abuse prevention policies are followed and related procedures are implemented. These activities ensure that all staff are aware of, understand, and follow applicable policies and procedures related to child abuse prevention.

Consider the following reflective questions and complete the related activities to support your program's development of an orientation, ongoing training, and monitoring to prevent child abuse from happening in your program.

Reflective Questions		Optional Related Activities
Criterion 6.A.01	Do all teaching staff members receive training in NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct, which states, "Above all, we shall not harm children"?	Access the Code of Ethical Conduct on the NAEYC website and review all related resources, including the supplement for program administrators and Code of Ethical Conduct videos. Visit www.naeyc.org and mouse over <i>Early Childhood Professionals</i> , then <i>Resources and Links</i> , then select <i>Code of Ethical Conduct Videos</i> . Incorporate relevant information into staff training or consider how to improve existing staff training on the Code of Ethical Conduct.
	Are new staff members evaluated on their understanding of child abuse prevention policies and procedures before working with children?	Create an evaluation* to assess a new staff member's knowledge of child abuse prevention policies and procedures. The evaluation can take any form you want—oral, written, computer-based, etc. Use the evaluation with your existing staff and use the results to influence the topics your program will address in refresher trainings on child abuse prevention. *If your program already evaluates new and existing staff on child abuse prevention, conduct a review of the existing evaluation and make any necessary improvements.
	Are existing staff members evaluated on their understanding of child abuse prevention policies and procedures and their ability to implement them?	
Criterion 6.A.03 and 6.A.04	Do all adults who work with children receive an initial orientation and regular refresher training that includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. understanding what constitutes child abuse; b. the program's discipline policy and appropriate guidance of children; c. means of preventing potential abuse situations in group settings; d. identification of signs of potential abuse; and e. individual obligations and procedures for reporting suspected cases of abuse? 	Review your program's initial orientation for both hired staff members and volunteers. Highlight the topics that address child abuse prevention and promote appropriate guidance of children. Make any necessary improvements to the orientation. Create and implement a schedule for ongoing refresher trainings on child abuse prevention and appropriate guidance of children.

Reflective Questions		Optional Related Activities
Are staff members observed and evaluated on their performance in: a. positive guidance techniques, and b. managing challenging behaviors exhibited by children?		Conduct observations of your staff as they work with children. Be sure to include observations of staff who are working with children who exhibit challenging behavior. Highlight instances in which positive guidance techniques are successfully implemented and identify areas in which staff can improve. The NAEYC Accreditation Criteria within topic areas 1.E., 1.F, and 3.B may be helpful to you as you complete this activity.
If one adult is allowed to work alone with children, how does your program ensure that the staff member is appropriately monitored?		Identify periods of time in which one staff member is alone with children. Adjust the schedule of your program's day to limit, as much as possible, the amount of time one staff member is alone with children. Develop and implement a plan for supervising staff to conduct periodic, drop-in visits of classrooms while a staff member is alone with children.
Criterion 7.A.11	Does your program allow families to visit any area of the facility at any time during the program's regular hours of operation?	Encourage families to observe your program at any time. You may include an open invitation in your parent handbook and/or incorporate frequent invitations to visit the program into communication with families. The presence of families in your program naturally contributes to supervising staff's efforts to monitor staff members' compliance with policies and procedures related to child abuse prevention.

TOPIC # 4: Supporting Staff

Providing support to help staff members manage any stress or frustration they encounter when working with children can help prevent child abuse from occurring within your program. Consider the following reflective questions and complete the related activities to ensure that the support your program provides to its staff members helps to prevent child abuse from occurring within your program.

Reflective Questions		Optional Related Activities
Criterion 10.E.07	What are your program's policies regarding providing staff members with space and time away from children?	Discuss the importance of taking breaks with your staff members. Encourage staff to request temporary relief when needed. Request suggestions on how to improve the physical space in which staff members take breaks to make the space more inviting.
	How do you offer temporary relief for staff members who may be unable to perform their duties?	
	How do you encourage staff members to take breaks?	
Criterion 10.D.01	Does your program provide referrals for staff to resources that support them in wellness, prevention and treatment of depression, and stress management?	Research local resources that can promote staff wellness. Consider inviting guest speakers who promote wellness to a staff meeting or offering an employee assistance program to your staff as a benefit of their employment.

Related Resources

The following related resources can further assist you in your efforts to prevent child abuse from occurring within your program.

1. Bloom, P.J., and T.N. Talan. 2004. *Program Administration Scale*. NY: Teachers College Press.
2. NAEYC. 1996. *Prevention of Child Abuse in Early Childhood Programs and the Responsibilities of Early Childhood Professionals to Prevent Child Abuse*. Washington, DC: Author.
3. Ritchie, S., and B. Willer, eds. 2008. *Self-Study Kit for Program Quality Improvement through NAEYC Early Childhood Program Accreditation*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.