Presentation Notes: Who’s Protecting Our Children

Slide 1

Who’s Protecting Our Children?

Human Growth and Development
Who’s Protecting Our Children?

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Terms

- **Abuse:** Includes physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse

- **Child Protective Services (CPS):** A government agency that investigates reports of abuse and neglect of children

- **Emotional and verbal abuse:** Rejecting children, blaming them, or constantly scolding them, particularly for problems beyond their control

- **Mandated reporter:** A person who is required by law to report maltreatment
Terms

- **Neglect**: Failing to provide for a child's basic needs, including food, water, a place to live, love and attention

- **Physical abuse**: Intentionally causing an injury to a child

- **Sexual abuse**: Includes any inappropriate sexual behavior with a child, including touching or taking photographs
Types of Child Abuse

- Physical
- Neglect
- Sexual
- Emotional

Script: There are many types of abuse. The general definition of abuse includes physical abuse, neglect, sexual and emotional. There are many signs and symptoms of abuse that we will discuss in later slides.
Physical Abuse

- Physical signs
  - Unexplained
    - Bruises or welts
    - Burns
    - Fractures or dislocations
    - Bald patches on scalp

Script: Approximately 325,000 children out of 1.25 million children a year are victims of physical abuse. Physical abuse includes hitting with an open hand, closed fist, or objects; punching; shaking; throwing; kicking; burning; stabbing; drowning; electrocuting; tying up; or choking.
Script: As a teacher, it is important to recognize these behavioral indicators because for some students, the teacher may be their only contact person who can recognize their cry for help. It is the teacher’s responsibility to watch for these signs and to report them every time.
Neglect

- Physical signs
  - Not meeting basic needs (food, shelter, clothing)
  - Failure to thrive (underweight, small for age)
  - Persistent hunger
  - Poor hygiene
  - Inappropriate dress for season or weather
  - Consistent lack of supervision and emotional care
  - Unattended physical problems or medical needs
  - Abandonment

Script: Neglect includes both physical and emotional neglect. This means failure to provide for the child’s basic needs and attention.
Neglect

- Behavioral signs
  - Begging or stealing food
  - Early arrival or late departure from school
  - Frequent visits to the school nurse
  - Difficulty with vision or hearing
  - Poor coordination
  - Often tired or falling asleep in class
  - Takes on adult roles and responsibilities
  - Substance abuse
  - Acting out behavior
  - Educational failure
  - Verbalizing lack of caretaking

Script: Approximately 61 percent of abused children are suffering from neglect. It is imperative for the teacher to recognize these signs in the student because the teacher may be the only person to make a difference in the child’s life and stand up for them.
Sexual Abuse

- Physical signs
  - Difficulty walking or sitting
  - Torn, stained, or bloody undergarments
  - Pain, swelling, or itching in genital area
  - Pain when urinating
  - Vaginal or penile discharge
  - Bruises, bleeding, or tears around the genital area
  - Sexually transmitted diseases

Script: This type of abuse is very common, although it is one of the least acknowledged forms of abuse. Over 30 percent of children never tell anyone about the sexual abuse. Of those who do speak about their abuse, 80 percent deny it in the beginning. It includes any inappropriate sexual behaviors with a child, including touching or taking photographs.
Sexual Abuse

- Behavioral signs
  - Unwilling to change for gym or participate in PE activities
  - Sexual behavior or knowledge inappropriate to child's age
  - Sexual acting out on younger children
  - Poor peer relations
  - Delinquent or runaway behavior
  - Report of sexual assault
  - Drastic change in school performance

Script: Approximately 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused. Recognize the sexual abuse signs in children because you will not only be helping the child that exhibits these signs, but you will also be helping others by taking a stand against child abuse.
Script: It is a misleading myth that children are often abused by strangers. The fact is, children are often abused by someone close to them such as a family member or a close friend of the family. It is important for educators to know that a student exhibiting “one sign” of abuse does not necessarily mean they are being abused. Teachers should observe the child’s behavior and appearance over a period of time before making conclusions. If the teacher does suspect child abuse, it should be reported immediately.
Emotional Abuse

- Physical signs
  - Speech disorders
    - Stuttering
    - Baby talk
    - Unresponsive
  - Failure to thrive (underweight, small for age)
  - Hyperactivity

Script: Emotional abuse is just as unbearable as physical abuse, neglect and sexual abuse. Emotional abuse happens when someone removes a child’s self-esteem by criticizing, belittling, screaming, nagging, verbally berating, creating fear and limiting opportunities.
Emotional Abuse

- Behavioral signs
  - Learning disabilities
  - Habits of sucking, biting, rocking
  - Sleep disorders
  - Poor social skills
  - Extreme reactions to common events
  - Unusually fearful
  - Overly compliant behaviors (unable to set limits)
  - Suicidal thoughts or actions
  - Self-abuse
  - Difficulty following rules or directions
  - Child expects to fail so does not try

Script: Emotional abuse is extremely hard to define and prove. Therefore, it is often not prosecuted. Teachers can provide support to students whom they feel are going through emotional abuse, and as always, report suspected abuse.
Reporting Child Abuse
Mandated Reporters

- Teachers
- Doctors
- Nurses
- Social workers
- Counselors
- Psychologists

Script: As a future teacher, you will be a mandated reporter. Although it can be intimidating to report suspected cases of child abuse, remember it is your responsibility to help protect the student. By reporting suspected cases of abuse, you are taking a stand against child abuse.
Script: In Texas there are two ways to report child abuse. You can call or fill out a report online. Your information is kept confidential.
Reporting Child Abuse in Texas

- Information to have on hand before reporting child abuse (if known):
  - Name, age, address of the child
  - Your name and contact information
  - A brief description of the situation and child
  - Current injuries, medical problems or behavioral problems
  - Parents’ names and names of siblings in the home
  - Names of relatives, in or outside the home
  - Explain how you know about the situation

Script: It is important to document all information you may have about the situation. Always print a copy of the report for your records. It is always a good idea to inform your principal of the situation. You should know your school district’s policy for reporting child abuse and follow their protocol as well.
Responding to a child who is abused or neglected
Responding to Abused Children

- Remain calm
- Believe the student
- Listen without passing judgment
- Tell the student you are glad he/she told someone
- Assure the student that abuse is not his/her fault
- Do what you can to make sure the student is safe from further abuse
- Do not investigate the case yourself

Script: If a student reports abuse to you as a teacher, it can be an overwhelming burden. Remember to follow these guidelines when responding to children you suspect are being abused and report the suspected abuse as soon as possible.
Treatment for Abused Children
Script: Students who are abused will often undergo counseling treatment. Counseling is a wonderful tool for abused children to make sense of their feelings and to improve their peer and family interactions.
Preventing Child Abuse
Prevention

- Education and knowledge can prevent child abuse.

Script: Child abuse is 100 percent preventable through educational tools such as child abuse awareness.
Resources for Abused Children
Script: There are numerous resources students, teachers and parents can utilize to learn more about child abuse, what it is and how to prevent it. Here are some of the resources available to those who wish to know more.

- Childhelp
  National Child Abuse Statistics
  This website gives informative information on child abuse statistics in America.
  http://www.childhelp.org/pages/statistics#stats-sources

- HealthyChildren.org
  Safety and prevention: What to know about child abuse
  The American Academy of Pediatrics gives valuable information and the signs and symptoms of child abuse.

Resources and References
Resources and References

- Child Welfare Information Gateway
  National Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month
  Information on child abuse prevention awareness month and activities to do for each day of the month.
  http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/preventionmonth/

- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
  Texas Child Protective Services (CPS)
  This website gives an overview of CPS and specific information its responsibilities.
  http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_protection/

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Resources and References

Textbooks:

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