

## CREATE A PROACTIVE CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PLAN

### #1: Premises Review

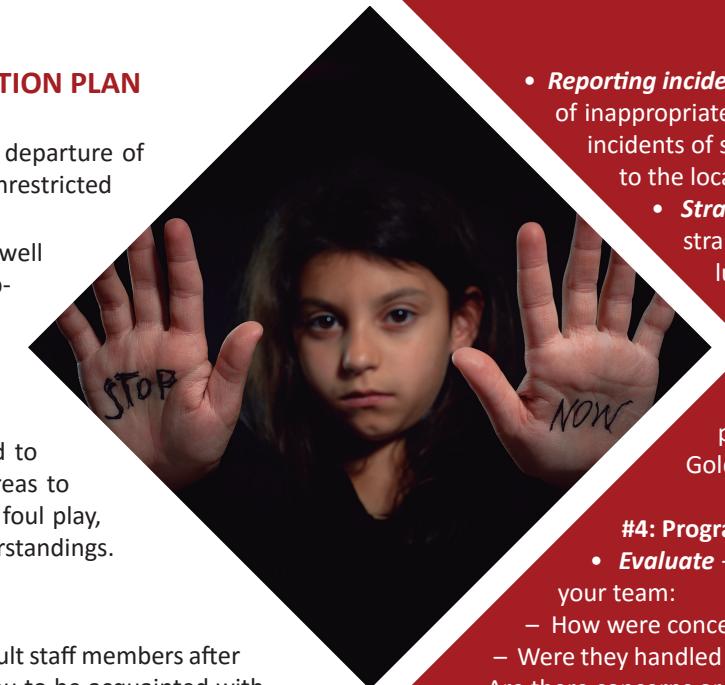
- **Access to Premises** – carefully monitor arrival and departure of children at your facilities. Do not allow children unrestricted access throughout the building or property.
- **Interior & Exterior Lighting** – Ensure facilities are well lit, both indoors and outdoors to help facilitate appropriate security and supervision.
- **Visual Panels** – be sure all areas have windows or vision panels in doors to allow easy monitoring of activities taking place in the rooms.
- **Restrooms** – Limit the number of children allowed to use restrooms at the same time. Monitor these areas to minimize one-on-one situations, which can lead to foul play, inappropriate behavior or accusations and misunderstandings.

### #2: Personnel Administration

- **Staff Selection** – carefully interview and select all adult staff members after a six-month waiting period. The wait time allows you to be acquainted with the individual's talents and personality. Conduct background checks in accordance with denominational policies.
- **Staff Training** – all staff members who work with children and teens should be appropriately trained in child abuse awareness, prevention and the reporting laws of the local jurisdiction. Training should also include the expected code of conduct used in keeping with the Christ-centered mission of the ministry.
- **Supervision** – appropriate adult supervision is required at all times. Use the two-adult rule, keeping in mind that an adult should never be alone with one child.
- **Dismissal of Staff** – any adult who fails to abide by these rules could be subject to dismissal from further participation in the ministry. The policy is to protect children and teenagers from harm and protect staff from accusations and misunderstandings.

### #3: Protecting Children

- **Discipline and Touching** – carefully monitor staff member interaction with children and teenagers for appropriate behavior in keeping with the ministry's code of conduct.
- **Out-of-Program Contact** – carefully monitor any staff member who has frequent out-of-program contact with a child or teenager, especially on a one-to-one basis or without the knowledge of the child's parent or guardian.
- **Sign In/Sign Out Controls** – be sure you maintain a good record of all children and teenagers who participate in your activity, and that they are picked up and released only to their parent or other authorized adult as designated in the parental permission slip.



- **Reporting incidents** – Be observant of any signs of child abuse or incidents of inappropriate conduct by adults or other children. Promptly report all incidents of suspected child abuse to law enforcement authorities and to the local denominational administration.

- **Stranger awareness** – Always be alert and observant of any strangers or unknown individuals who may be watching or lurking around the premises during children and youth ministry activities.

- **Bullying awareness** – Be observant for signs of bullying or incidents of inappropriate hazing activity among children or teenagers. Adopt a zero tolerance policy and teach them to respect each other by living the Golden Rule and developing strong Christian friendships.

### #4: Program Review

- **Evaluate** – Assess your Child Protection Program twice a year. Ask your team:
  - How were concerns and issues handled?
  - Were they handled effectively? Are there further steps that need to be taken?
  - Are there concerns or issues that the program does not cover?
  - How should the program be modified to meet these new concerns?
- **Implement** – Modify your program to accommodate the improvements from your program evaluation. Present the changes to the church board for approval. Send out a notice to all staff members and parents about the changes made to your Child Protection Program. Continue to work together to keep all children safe.

(Adventist Risk Management Guidelines)

### BE PREPARED

P	Become Proactive
R	Respect Relationship
E	Educate Adults & Children
P	Protect your Flock
A	Acting Responsibly
R	Report Suspected Abuse
E	Effect Change in Attitudes
D	Duty to Protect from Harm



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## THE VALUE OF CHILDREN

"Anyone who welcomes one child like this for my sake is welcoming me. But if anyone leads astray one of these little children who believe in me he would be better off thrown into the depths of the sea with a mill-stone hung round his neck!" Matthew 18:5-6 (Phillips Translation)

## WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse, sometimes referred to as child maltreatment and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity. Within this broad definition, five subtypes can be distinguished—physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and negligent treatment; emotional abuse; and exploitation.

## ABUSE IS WRONG BECAUSE:

### It destroys the body

*"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are,"* 1 Corinthians 3: 16, 17.

### It robs children of their innocence

*"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea,"* Matthew 18:6.

### It lowers self-esteem

*"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen,"* Ephesians 4:29.

### It warps the perception about God

*"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"* 1 John 3:1.

### It is not God's plan for families

*"... The Lord desires His people to give in their homes a representation of the order and harmony that pervade the heavenly courts,"* Counsels On Health, p. 101.

### It is not God's plan for our lives

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future,"* Jeremiah 29:11.

## CHILD ABUSE FACTS . . .

- Every 10 seconds a child abuse incident is reported in North America.
- More than 3 million child abuse allegations are made to law enforcement in North America.
- 1 in 5 churches reported allegations of abuse.
- When child abuse occurs in a Church setting, most likely it is by a respected member.
- Sexual abuse occurs by all genders, all races, socioeconomic status and religious faiths.
- The average age of victims is between 8-11 years.
- More than 90% of victims know the perpetrator in some way.
- Less than 5% are False Accusations.
- Child sexual abuse is rarely a one-time act.

## TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

**PHYSICAL:** Actions that cause any non-accidental physical injury to a child, such as striking, kicking, burning, hair pulling, choking, whipping, throwing, and others.

**SEXUAL:** An adult uses force on a child for sexual purposes or involves a child in sexual acts, such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

**EMOTIONAL:** Actions, often referred to as psychological maltreatment that seriously interferes with a child's cognitive, emotional or social development, such as ignoring rejecting, isolating, verbally assaulting, exploiting, bullying and criticizing.

**NEGIGENCE:** Failure to provide the basic needs of a child by his parents or caregiver, such as a lack of food, shelter, medical attention, adequate supervision, affection, presence, as well as selling, distributing, or giving illegal drugs or alcohol to a child.

## GUIDELINES FOR SAFEGUARDING OUR CHILDREN

- Two-Adult Rule or Never being alone with a child
- Open Door Policy to avoid one on one situations
- Adult Screening – Background Checks
- Six-Month Waiting Period for new volunteers
- Training in Child Protection

*SDA Church Manual (2010), pp. 168 & 169*



## FALSE THEORIES ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

- Parents will be able to tell if their child has been sexually abused.
- Children need to be physically disciplined to learn to respect their elders.
- Boys cannot be sexually abused.
- Playing with a child's genitalia is harmless.
- Children are not affected when one parent abuses the other.
- Only strangers molest children.
- Children will quickly outgrow effects of abuse.
- Denying a child food or other basic needs is not considered abuse.
- If a child's body reacts to fondling, it is because he/she enjoys it.
- Children lie about being abused in order to get adults in trouble.

## HAS YOUR CHILD BEEN ABUSED?

- Stay calm. Respect the child's privacy; find a quiet and comfortable place and carefully listen to what he/she is saying.
- Believe the child and take him/her seriously. Let the child know that the abuse was not his/her fault.
- Report the abuse to the authorities.
- Do not confront the abuser yourself.
- Take the child to the doctor for immediate medical attention.
- Find a licensed therapist who specializes in child abuse.
- Pray with the child and reassure them that Jesus loves them; create a safety net around the child so that he/she will feel protected.

## SAFETY MEASURES FOR PARENTS

- Network with your children's friends and their parents.
- Explain to children that people who want them to keep secrets from their parents are not safe.
- Encourage children to tell you if anything frightens or disturbs them.
- Instruct children to always check with you before going anywhere—even if it is with someone they know.
- Instruct them never to open the door when home alone.
- Teach children how to say "no" to anyone who tries to touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Show them how to phone emergency personnel.
- Screen baby-sitters very carefully.
- Question the motives of adults and older children who constantly want to spend time alone with your child.

