

ISLAMIC SCHOOLS ADDRESSING

CHILD ABUSE

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Why should Islamic schools address the issue of child abuse ?

1) Moral and ethical obligation to stop abuse

You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind you enjoin Al-Maruf and forbid Al-Munkar 3: 110

Truly Allah loves the doers of good .2 : 195 , 3 ; 134 ,5 : 93

In a famous hadith Prophet Muhammad pbuh told us the three levels of correcting a wrong : by the hands , tongue and in the heart .

2) Educate parents of our schools about the thorny issue of child abuse. Many parents are knowingly or unknowingly abusive.

3) Help our teachers by ;

- a) enabling them to recognize child abuse
- b) enabling them to avoid child abuse in the class room
- c) enabling them to understand the impact of abuse on learning

4) Protect our schools from possible liabilities arising from unreported cases of child abuse.

5) Help children of our school to grow in a very healthy Islamic environment both at home and in school .

## CHILD ABUSE – DEFINITION

The federal Child Abuse Prevention And Treatment Act ( CAPTA ) . ( 42 U.S.C.A. 5106g),as amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, defines child abuse and neglect as,

“ at a minimum, any recent act or failure to act on the part of parent or caretaker which results in death , serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation,or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm .”

For CAPTA , the term child is one who has not reached 18 years old ( except in the case of sexual abuse ). Each state is responsible for its own definition of child abuse and neglect.

## WHO SHUOLD REPORT ?

- 1) Teacher
- 2) An instructional Aide
- 3) Teacher’s aide / assistant
- 4) A classified employee of any public school
- 5) Admin or employee of public or private children org /youth camp/day camp
- 6) Doctors ,nurses ,dentists ,
- 7) Photo processors and printers
- 8) Basically anybody that come to interact with children

## TYPES OF ABUSE :

### Physical Abuse

It is defined as any nonaccidental physical injury to the child and can include striking , kicking, burning ,or biting the child , or any action that results in a physical impairment of the child.

### Neglect

It is defined in terms of deprivation of adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care. Several states will distinguish failure to provide due to financial ability to do so and failure to provide for no apparent financial reason. The latter constitutes neglect.

### Sexual Abuse / Exploitation

Definitions vary from state to state .Some states refer to general terms in sexual abuse others are specific about various acts as sexual abuse .Sexual exploitation is an element common to all definitions of sexual abuse . Prostitution and child pornography are included in sexual exploitation .

### Emotional Abuse

Most states include this type of abuse under neglect.It is an injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of the child as evidenced by observable or substantial changes in the behavior , emotional response , or cognitive response .

### Abandonment

In general it is considered abandonment of the child when the parent's identity and whereabouts are unknown. The child has been left by the parents in circumstances where the child suffers serious harm, or the

parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or to provide reasonable support for a specified period of time

### Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is an element of definition of child abuse or neglect in some states . Some of the examples will be

Exposure of a child to drug paraphernalia ,sale or distribution of drug or any drug related activity

Allowing a child to be present where the chemicals or equipment of controlled substances are used or stored

Selling , distributing or giving drugs or alcohol to a child

### FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EFFECTS OF ABUSE ON CHILDREN

- Age of the child when the abuse happened. The younger the more harmful it is
- Who committed the abuse . Generally worse when committed by parents or someone held in trust e.g. priests , teachers , coaches
- Whether or not violence was involved , if so how severe
- How long the abuse went on
- Was anybody told about it and what was the response generated e.g. doubting , blaming , shaming. Responses can even be more harmful than the abuse itself

### LESS DETERMINING FACTORS

- How normal such abuse was in a culture or extended family
- Whether the child had loving families

- Whether negative feelings were entertained by family for positive reconstruction.

## IMPACT OF ABUSE ON CHILDREN AND LEARNING

### EMOTIONAL IMPACT

- Depression, sadness, worrying, nightmares, panic attacks
- Guilt ,shame ,numbing of emotions, low self esteem
- Feel anxious ,hypersensitive to danger cues, anger outburst
- Distrusts of adults, withdrawn behavior,
- Ambivalent feeling of attachment and doubt of parents

### COGNITIVE IMPACT

- Concentration and memory deficits, poor grades , drop outs
- Intrusive thoughts and images of violence
- Fantasies of rescuing victim or family, day dreaming
- Attempts to understand or justify violence

### BEHAVIORAL IMPACT

- More aggressive and antisocial behaviors ( most often boys )
- Fearful and inhibited behavior ( most often girls )
- Lack of social competence, excessive dependency, inability to communicate
- Eating disorders, lying , stealing
- Poor judgement , gang activity , substance abuse

It is impossible to list and enumerate a complete list of effects of abuse on children but the above partial list can help us understand what a serious evil child abuse is .

## GETTING THE SCHOOL READY TO HANDLE CHILD ABUSE

The goal of this paper is to prepare the whole school staff , board of directors, Imams and masjid officials to protect themselves , the children and the very institutions in which they are involved against the harm and repercussions of child abuse. We need to recognize that the muslim community is not exempted from domestic violence , child abuse or pedophils and any attempt to cover or deny it could jeopardize the very existence of our institution. We need to learn from the failure of the catholic diocese to handle child abuse and how costly it is to them today.

Below is a list of steps that full time school , Sunday school and Islamic centers should adopt to implement a policy as regards to child abuse.

- 1) Have a board resolution to officially announce that child abuse will not be tolerated and will be reported to respective authorities.
- 2) At the beginning of each school year have a mandatory workshop on child abuse offered to whole staff. The workshop should include all aspects of child abuse , a simple quiz taken by all in attendance and a signed statement by one and all that they have understood everything that has been presented in this workshop. The signed statement will be kept in each employee 's file.
- 3) All those who will interact with children will have to take a mandatory finger printing with recognized authorities before accepting employment or position paid or volunteer.
- 4) Have regular khutbas or PTA meeting on domestic violence and child abuse to promote awareness.

### TIPS TO TEACHERS :

- Do a lot of Zikr to help you deal with the stress of class management. Engage in breathing exercise , meditation regularly with your class during the day.
- Identify your buttons and know when they are being pushed.
- Keep your hands always to yourself.
- Avoid physical contact even an innocent hug or kiss.

- Avoid being ALONE with a child by all means. Avoid the your word against my word scenario.
- Document any suspicion of child abuse from your students. After you document your case give it to your supervisor and have him /her sign the report.
- Have good communication with the children and their parents as well
- Be loving ,friendly and know the boundaries in your daily interactions with the kids.
- Be fair and kind to all your students.
- Know that if you ever have recourse to child abuse YOU WILL BE ON YOUR OWN .No colleague , principal or board member will be able to defend you.
- Know that a mere allegation, forget conviction , can be very detrimental to your career and reputation in the community

## SAMPLE QUIZ AND RELEASE FORM

- 1) What does CAPTA stand for ?
- 2) Which of the following is not a form of child abuse
  - a) physical
  - b) physiological
  - c) psychological
  - d) all of the above
  - e) none of the above
- 3) According to CAPTA the term child is
  - a) below 3 yrs old
  - b) below 15 yrs old
  - c) below 18 yrs old
  - d) below 21 yrs old
- 4) You suspect one of your student is being abused at home , what should you do ?
  - a) call 911
  - b) ignore it ,it's none of your business
  - c) confront the parents right away
  - d) all of the above
  - e) none of the above
- 5) Who of the following is expected to report child abuse ?
  - a) a doctor
  - b) a nurse
  - c) a photographer
  - d) a teacher's aide
  - e) all of the above
- 6) The harm of child abuse is lesser when it is done by a member of the family rather than by a stranger. T / F

- 7) The laws of child abuse does not apply to a private organization .T/ F
- 8) While child abuse definitely produces emotional and cognitive effects it does not produce behavioral problems . T / F
- 9) Finger printing of teachers is a highly recommended procedure before employment. T / F
- 10) A teacher staying alone with a child for the sloe purpose of helping with remedial math takes unnecessary risks .T / F

#### RELEASE STATEMENT

I , the undersigned acknowledge attending a workshop on child abuse given by ----- as part of my job training at the facility.I fully understand my responsibility and obligation in regards to the whole issue of child abuse.

Name :

Position :

Date :

Signature :