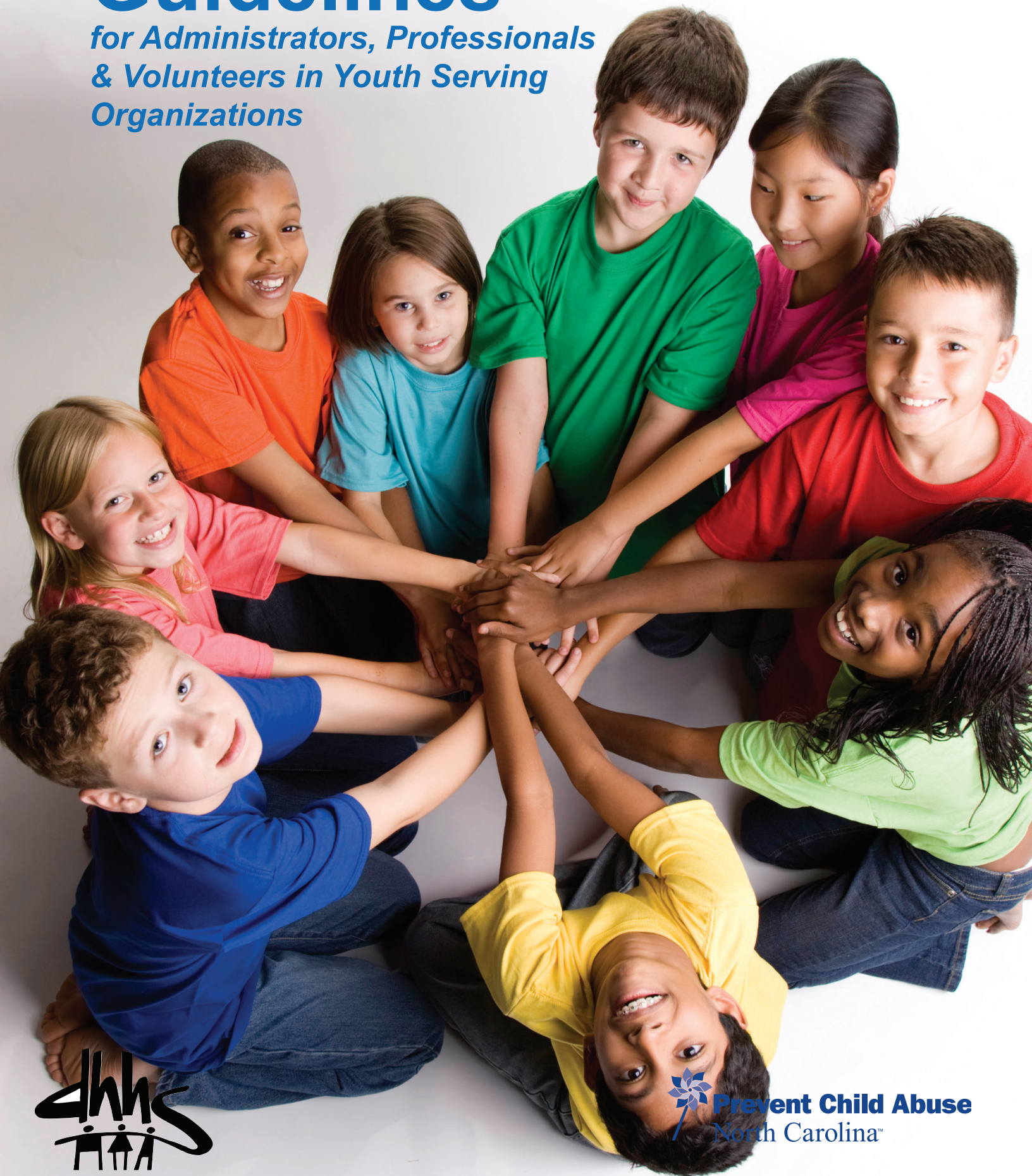


Guidelines

*for Administrators, Professionals
& Volunteers in Youth Serving
Organizations*



Prevent Child Abuse
North Carolina™

Impact of Abuse and Neglect on Children in Youth Organizations

Our children are our state's next generation of parents, workers, and leaders. If they are going to be successful in those roles, they must have safe, stable, nurturing environments that encourage their healthy growth and development. Children's environments are built on the experiences they have with adults in their lives. These experiences literally shape the architecture of their developing brains.

We wouldn't build a house on a weak foundation, or put the walls up before we put the wiring in. Just like a house, children's brains develop in a predictable series of steps. Positive, nurturing experiences build strong foundations and wiring. Chronic stressful situations, such as abuse and neglect, release toxins that damage developing brains.

Trying to change behavior or build new skills on a foundation that wasn't built correctly requires more work, is more expensive, and is less effective. By working together to ensure children have safe, stable, nurturing relationships in all areas of their lives, we ensure the next generation pays us back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship.

The Impact of Child Maltreatment in a Group Setting

Because child maltreatment literally rewires the way that a child's brain is developed, when children are maltreated they:

- are often unable to concentrate on tasks
- are often unable to follow instructions
- are often unable to self-regulate
- may suffer from low self-esteem
- may have difficulty making friends
- may be targets for bullies or bully others
- may act out abusive interactions they have experienced
- may contribute to staff burnout and high turnover

Guidelines for Directors and Administrators

- **Set the tone for employees' willingness to make referrals.**
- **Put policies and procedures in place BEFORE a referral needs to be made.**
- **Ensure the report is made and the child and family are supported.**
- **Eliminate barriers preventing staff from making referrals.**
- **Protect the child's and family's right to privacy.**
- **Make sure all parents are aware of your policies regarding referrals for suspicions of maltreatment upon entering your facility.**
- **Make staff and volunteer training part of your standard orientation.**
- **If your organization decides to have a "designated referral source (reporter)", remember their role is not to "screen" cases.**
- **Utilize the expertise of community agencies for resources and training.**
- **Provide information on mandatory reporting laws and other resources and programs available to families.**
- **Support staff who may not be comfortable with the referral process.**
- **Provide support to other children and families if you have an extremely distressing or public case of child maltreatment in your organization.**

Everyone has a role to play in building strong families.



Guidelines for Professionals and Employees



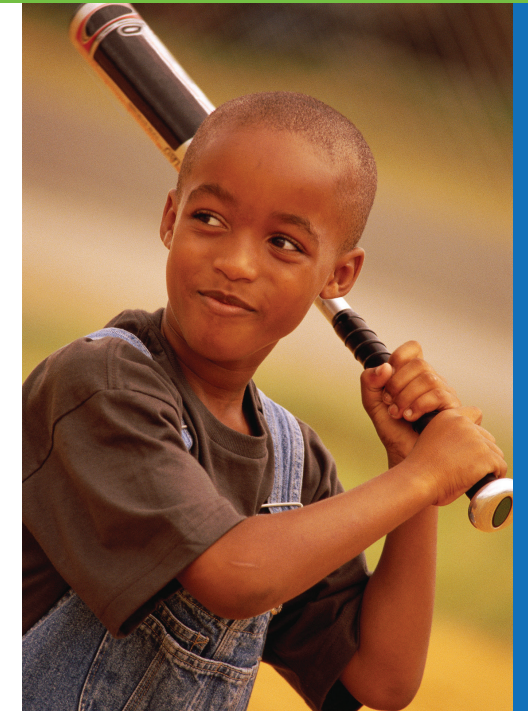
Professionals are in a unique position to see a change in behavior or performance. Your organization may be a safe place. As a result, children may disclose or you may overhear an accidental disclosure.

- Be aware of your responsibility as a mandated reporter.
- Educate yourself by taking 'Recognizing & Responding to Child Maltreatment' training.
- Make sure you understand organizational policies and procedures.
- Know what resources exist in your community and where you can find further information and assistance.
- Understand what you should do if a child discloses maltreatment.
- Be aware of indicators and how to respond to them.

Guidelines for Volunteers

As a volunteer, you interact with children and families and may establish a close and trusting relationship with them.

- Be aware of indicators and how to respond to them.
- Be prepared for a possible disclosure know how to respond.
- Request 'Recognizing & Responding to Child Maltreatment' training with employees.
- Know your responsibility as a mandated reporter.
- Understand organizational policies and procedures regarding suspicions or disclosures of abuse and neglect.
- Know what resources exist in your community and where you can find further information and assistance.



Increasing Protective Factors in Our Communities

- **Model healthy relationships.**
- **Highlight positive aspects of the parents and children you interact with.**
- **Listen, be aware and be an ally to families.**
- **Know what resources exist in your community.**
- **Look for ways to partner with community agencies.**
- **Remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. Look for support when you feel overwhelmed with the challenges of parenting.**
- **Work to eliminate corporal punishment in schools and to model effective discipline techniques.**
- **Offer words of encouragement to parents struggling in public.**
- **Participate in Child Abuse Prevention Month activities during April.**
- **Volunteer to help agencies that serve families.**
- **Respond to suspicions of child maltreatment.**
- **Advocate for children and families by supporting public policies and programs that promote the well-being of children and families.**
- **Donate to agencies that work to strengthen families.**



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