



A Newsletter from your
Technical Assistance Center,
Prevent Child Abuse-NJ

Supporting Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Somerset Counties



Spring into Action: Keeping Children Safe



Spring is here and it's a great time to renew your commitment to promoting healthy and safe environments. In light of Child Abuse Prevention month, this newsletter will focus on tips to reduce caregiver stress and practical ways to help keep children safe and healthy while in your care.

Caring for the Caregiver

Being an early childhood education provider can be one of the most important and rewarding professions. But let's get real, it can also be very stressful and tiring! Before we can take care of the children and families in our care we need to first take care of ourselves. It's important to recognize signs of stress and occupational 'burn out' in ourselves and our colleagues. This can take the form of extreme exhaustion, physical pain and overall feeling of being stressed out. This kind of stress is common in child care where the physical and emotional demands leave staff feeling isolated and unsatisfied. Signs of stress may be different for each person and can impact you physically and emotionally.

Signs of burn-out:

- Not feeling satisfied with your work
- Feeling unprepared to effectively do your job
- Overwhelmed by the demands of the work
- Irritability and frequent changes in mood
- Behavior that is not aligned with your self-image of an effective child care worker
- Questioning professional identity
- Physical aches or pain

Tips to reduce job related stress:

- Participate in reflective supervision – dedicate time with your supervisor or a colleague to reflect on how your work impacts your physical and emotional well-being
- Incorporate physical activity or breathing exercises during breaks or personal time
- Seek out support from colleagues, family, and friends
- Take inventory of what you are doing to care for yourself and set goals on how to improve self-care
- Promote the Strengthening Families Protective Factors for yourself <http://www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies/systems/body/Self-Care-for-ECE-Providers.pdf>

A focus on self-care will strengthen your ability to cultivate and nurture social and emotional competence in your program, model healthy behaviors and cultivate a healthy and safe environment.

Whitehead, S. (April 1984). The child care worker and occupational stress. *The Child Care Worker*, 2(1), 5-8. Retrieved March 16, 2017, from <http://www.cyc-net.org/profession/pro-whitehead.html>

GNJK Standards:
3.2.1, 4.5.1, 5.5.3



Supporting Healthy Sexual Development of Young Children

Have you ever felt uncomfortable when talking to a young child about their sexual play? Or wondered if you need to speak with a parent about their child's sexual behavior? This is a topic that is difficult to address, but is necessary when thinking about child abuse prevention. As children develop curiosity about themselves and their peers it's important to be aware of normal sexual behavior, warning signs of potential problems, and ways to address concerns in a healthy manner.

Normal sexual behaviors that you may see in preschool aged children include:

- Touching or showing their genitals or wanting to touch or see other people's bodies
- Fascination with bodily functions and language related to bodily functions
- Playing "doctor" or "making babies" games

Possible signs or indicators of problem sexual behavior may include:

- A wide discrepancy in the age of the children involved
- An indication that a child was forced, threatened, or intimidated into becoming involved in the sexual behavior
- An escalating pattern of sexual behaviors

To support healthy sexual development for young children, consider establishing rules for acceptable classroom behavior; respond calmly when addressing sexual behaviors in the classroom; and work to incorporate conversations about body parts and privacy during routine interactions. As you address this issue in the classroom, it is equally important to share information with parents, so they can support learning at home. This approach can help children to be more comfortable with their body, understand behavior that is appropriate, build self-esteem, and support healthy development.

The following steps are suggested when addressing a situation where children are involved in sexual play.

1. Stay calm (an intense emotional reaction may scare the child from providing further information)
2. Redirect the children from the behavior
3. Talk quietly with each child involved to gather more information
4. Determine whether the behavior is typical sexual play or if it is overly "sexualized" behavior (discuss with your supervisor or mental health professional for guidance)
5. Talk with the parents involved; encourage this as an opportunity to teach children about privacy, respect for their body, and respecting others
6. Provide appropriate resources to parents, if necessary
7. Contact 1-877-NJ-ABUSE if there is suspicion of child abuse



Understanding sexual behaviors of children: A guide for parents and professionals working with children. (n.d.). Retrieved March 16, 2017, from <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childreneyouth/sexualbehaviorchildren.htm#warning>

Related Videos

Teaching Children about Body Safety & Privacy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNwRQHNIUIg>

How to Teach Small Kids about Private Parts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6DuoJ84S-c>



GNJK Standards: 2.4.4, 3.2.1,
3.2.2, 3.3.3

Responsive Relationships



Most caregivers have experienced a **challenging situation** with a child who loses control and is unable to manage their emotions in a healthy way. **To prevent these situations**, we need to teach children skills to manage their emotions and participate in healthy relationships. We also need to reflect on the cause of the challenging behavior and a trauma informed approach in that every behavior serves a purpose. Help children to identify their feelings, control anger and problem solve by creating an environment to support their individual needs.

When introducing new skills, provide concrete examples and opportunities to practice the skill; continuously promote the use of new skills and acknowledge when children are demonstrating the skill.

For more information visit:

- <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html>
- http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/do/resources/teaching_tools/ttyc.htm
- http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/do/resources/documents/vc_article_11_2006.pdf

Tips to Help Children to Calm Down

S.T.A.R.

Smile
Take a deep
breath
And
Relax



Smell the flowers
& blow out the candles

GNJK Standards:
2.3.1, 2.3.4, 2.4.4, 2.5.1,
3.2.1, 4.4.3

Center Spotlight



Millhill Child & Family Development is a NAEYC accredited preschool district provider in Trenton, NJ. Serving the community for over 45 years, the school seeks to 'empower children and families through individualized and culturally-sensitive educational and behavioral health services.' With a mission to serve the whole family, Millhill provides numerous services to help support members of their community.

Trauma informed care is at the heart of the services provided to children and their families. A Trauma-Informed Coordinator works with children, families, and staff to assist in the development of social and emotional competency of the children. In order to promote nurturing and responsive relationships, the staff at Millhill uses the principles of trauma-informed care, which includes program-wide partnership.

Every member of the Millhill staff and the families they serve work in collaboration to address challenging situations and create an environment that supports individual needs. Millhill has also formed numerous partnerships in the community to help provide services to their children and families:

- The National Council for Behavioral Health provides trauma training to Millhill staff
- Millhill hosts workshops to educate and engage families
- The Strengthening Families program is used to support protective factors
- Developmental and behavioral assessments are administered by licensed staff and medical professionals
- Home visits are conducted by Family Workers

As a Grow NJ Kids participant, the program is working towards rating readiness and is looking forward to rating later this year. For more information visit: <http://millhillcenter.org>

Save the Date for these Upcoming Opportunities!



Webinars, *Open to all GNJK programs*

Date	Time	Topic	Presenter	Description
5/18	12-1 pm	Finding the Why in Quality- Our Journey to Rating Readiness and Beyond	Guest panelists: Dr. Holly Seplocha & Lauren Busco NJ Center for Quality Ratings	Participants will better understand the GNJK standards, Continuous Quality Improvement and how to better utilize GNJK resources to prepare for rating readiness.



GNJK Peer Learning Communities (PLCs), *County Specific*

Date	Time	Location	County
4/3/17	1-3 pm	Child Care Connection, Trenton	Mercer
4/6/17	1-3pm	Child Care Resources, Neptune	Monmouth/Ocean
5/17/17	1:30-3:30pm	South Branch Reformed Church Preschool, Hillsborough	Middlesex/Somerset
5/26/17	12-2pm	Learning Resource Center, East Orange	Essex
TBD	12-2pm	North Bergen Public Library, Kennedy Branch	Hudson

CONGRATULATIONS!

The following programs have received
3 STAR RATINGS...



Essex County

Sandy Lane Nursery School

Middlesex County

Edgar Early Learning Center, Noah's Ark Preschool & YES Early Learning Center

Somerset County

South Branch Reformed Church Preschool

Networking Meetings, *Region Specific*

Region	Date & Time	Location	Open To
Central Register	5/31/17 9am-1pm	RWJ Conference Center: 3100 Quakerbridge Rd, Mercerville	Mercer Middlesex Monmouth Ocean Somerset
North East Register	6/1/17 10am-1pm	The Waterfront 2 Grafton Ave, Newark	Essex Hudson



Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey™



PCA-NJ operates a broad range of preventative services designed to support the improvement and quality of professional workforces and programming, resulting in significant positive impacts on family functioning and health in all 21 counties. *PCA-NJ programs include:*

- ◆ Grow NJ Kids TAC
- ◆ Healthy Families
- ◆ Parents as Teachers
- ◆ Parent Linking Program
- ◆ Enough Abuse
- ◆ Middlesex County Council for Young Children
- ◆ Human Trafficking Prevention
- ◆ Essex Pregnancy & Parenting Connection
- ◆ Parent Education & Technical Assistance
- ◆ The Period of Purple Crying

Central Region TA Center 103 Church Street, Suite 210 New Brunswick, NJ 08901 732.246.8060

Northeast Region TA Center 550 Broad Street, Suite 1105 Newark, NJ 07102 973.371.5301

<https://www.preventchildabusenj.org/growtac>