The School's Role in the Prevention of Child Abuse

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Introduction

The following stories appearing in U.S. newspapers over the past five years have alerted the nation to the problem of child abuse:

A mother was fined $50 and given a six-month suspended sentence on child neglect charges for leaving her two children, ages six and two, waiting in 22-degree weather in a car outside a disco.

Three children, ages one, two, and five, were found apparently scalded to death by steam from a radiator in their Bronx apartment, where authorities said their parents had locked them while they went to a party. A fourth child survived.

A 22-month-old baby was admitted to a hospital with a body temperature of only 75 degrees, a broken leg, two broken ribs, multiple bruises, her upper lip torn from the gum, and a large scorch mark on her buttocks. The child had apparently been placed on a stove and put in a freezer. The mother and her boyfriend were both products of violent homes and had been subjected to child abuse while growing up.

A mother was given a 10-year prison sentence for abusing her daughter. The child had been hospitalized 19 times for severe infections that doctors were unable to trace until they decided the source was the child’s mother.

These cases illustrate the horrors of child abuse. Society cannot ignore such cruel actions, not only for the sake of the victims but also
for the perpetrator and the other family members. These are extreme cases, to be sure; but there are many other cases where the child has survived unscathed, but irreparable harm has been done nevertheless.

The actual incidence of child abuse in the U.S. is not known, but it is generally recognized to be far greater than is reported. Some estimate that only one out of five cases is reported. Accurate statistics are difficult to obtain because: 1) each state has its own definitions and reporting requirements; 2) the general public is not trained to recognize abuse; 3) people do not want to get involved and therefore are unwilling to report suspected cases; and 4) protective service agencies have difficulty obtaining conclusive evidence that maltreatment has occurred. Even so, the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect estimates that one million children are abused annually and that over 5,000 die as a result. Over the past 10 years, estimates have been continually revised upward, indicating that child abuse is a serious social problem in the U.S.

Because recent data reveal that at least 50% of child abuse cases involve school-age children, school personnel are in a position to play a key role in the identification, reporting, and treatment of abused children. If educators suspect that a child is being abused and do nothing, then they are not only endangering the health and possibly the life of the child, but are also contributing to the recurrence of the problem.

Whether educators should intervene in child abuse cases is both a legal and an ethical issue. Child abuse is an unpleasant subject—one many educators would rather avoid. Some would argue that teachers have no training or preparation in child abuse intervention; and schools have no policy for dealing with such cases. Others express fear that reporting suspected child abuse will result in parents retaliating by suing or threatening physical harm to the reporter, or by abusing the child even more for telling things that the parents feel are nobody’s business but their own. Still others might argue that it does little good to report child abuse cases because there is inadequate follow-up by social service agencies and little likelihood that the child will be removed from the abusive environment.

It is the authors’ position that educators have a legal obligation to report suspected cases of child abuse and an ethical and professional
responsibility to assist the abused and neglected child. Laws in all 50 states require the reporting of suspected child abuse; and 42 states specifically mandate that school personnel report suspected cases of child abuse. The legal mandate is quite clear. This fastback will deal primarily with educators' ethical and professional responsibilities, because recent data reveal that at least 50% of the incidence of child abuse involves school-age children. In the pages that follow, we shall define the problem of child abuse and suggest how educators can, within established policy, recognize and report child abuse and assist the abused child in the school.
What is Child Abuse?

Most parents never abuse their children, no matter what the circumstances; others seem to do so on the slightest provocation. What is considered discipline by some parents would be considered abuse by others. So before condemning parents for the way they treat their children, it is important to clarify what behaviors go beyond discipline and constitute abuse. Abuse refers to acts of commission inflicted upon a child that result in such injuries as bruises, burns, and broken bones. Neglect refers to acts of omission, such as the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter; or failure to provide for a child’s educational, health, and emotional needs; or failure to provide supervision; or abandonment. In this fastback we shall use the term child abuse to mean physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation, and emotional abuse of a child by a person (caretaker) responsible for the child’s welfare.

The consequences of various types of abuse are outlined below:

Physical. Physical abuse may include damage to a child’s vital organs such as the brain, ears, and eyes; or injury to the mouth area, hands, arms, feet, legs, and genitals. Such injuries may result in mental retardation, deafness, blindness, speech problems, fine and gross motor problems, or even the loss of a limb. Extreme maltreatment may result in the child’s death.

Emotional. Injuries from physical abuse usually heal and leave no visible signs, but emotional abuse is often more damaging. Emotionally abused children may display impaired self-concept, employ ex-
treme defense mechanisms, and be deficient in overall thought processes. They also display more aggressive and self-destructive behavior, exhibit lower impulse control, and are subject to greater anxiety. Given these types of behavior, abused children are often identified as antisocial as they grow older. There is considerable evidence to show that abused children are more likely to become juvenile delinquents and, eventually, abusive parents.

*Cognitive.* Maltreatment may impair the child’s cognitive development, which becomes apparent once the child is in school. Research indicates that maltreated children often have significant learning problems, perform below grade level, and their language development is less than would be expected for their age.

**Characteristics of Child Abusers**

We do not know all the reasons that cause an adult to abuse a child, but we do know that certain factors are positively correlated with child abuse. Research shows that when a certain kind of parent (or caretaker) is under enough stress, and given certain behaviors of the child, abuse may result. The following characteristics are commonly found in potential child abusers:

- The caretaker has a history of being abused and/or neglected as a child.
- The caretaker uses physical punishment as the primary method of disciplining a child.
- The caretaker has unrealistic expectations that are inconsistent with the developmental age of the child.
- The caretaker has had no models of successful family relationships and, therefore, has little notion of parenting skills.
- The caretaker usually does not have friends or family to help with the heavy demands of caring for small children.
- The caretaker typically reports that there was not much love or emotional support from adults during his/her childhood.
- The caretaker usually has poor impulse control.
- The caretaker has an undue fear of “spoiling” the child by “giving in” to the child or allowing the child to “get away with” anything.
High-Risk Children

Abused children are generally no different from other children, although their parents may perceive them as different. Nevertheless, children who are difficult to manage for behavioral or physical reasons are more likely to be abused. Such physical or behavioral characteristics might include the following:

- premature birth or health problems at birth that prevent early parent-infant bonding;
- irritability and constant crying;
- delayed toilet-training;
- extremely aggressive or severely withdrawn behavior;
- mental retardation.

Events Precipitating Abuse

Abusive parents often do not have the coping abilities to deal with stressful situations; therefore, a stressful event can precipitate an incident of child abuse. Such stressful events might include:

- death in the family
- physical or mental illness of one or both parents
- a major developmental change in a family member (rebellion in adolescence or a midlife crisis in a parent)
- divorce or separation of the parents
- marital problems
- financial problems
- rejection of any kind
- another pregnancy or birth
- jealousy because of attention given to the child by the spouse
- loss of a job or income
- a move to a new community
- chronic poverty
- inadequate housing
- problems at school
- breaking down of a crucial household appliance or automobile

This brief discussion of the factors associated with child abuse by no means gives an adequate explanation of why some parents are abusive.
and others in the same or similar circumstances are not. It would take considerable psychological probing to uncover all the factors, and they would vary in each case. Such are the vagaries of human nature. Nevertheless, familiarity with some of these factors associated with child abuse will help educators to be alert to personality traits and circumstances that are potentially contributing factors in child abuse cases.
Reporting Child Abuse

One of the major reasons for the passage of child abuse reporting laws is that social services cannot be provided unless the situation is reported to the appropriate agency. Early identification and reporting can lead to intervention before the child suffers irreparable harm. In order to encourage reporting, school districts need to develop written policies regarding suspected child maltreatment. Written policies inform school personnel when and how to act when child abuse is suspected, and indicate to school personnel and to the general public that the school encourages the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse to the proper authorities. Also, having a written policy provides the school administration with clear authorization when dealing with irate parents. The following is a model school policy statement on reporting suspected child abuse incidents that can be adapted by other school districts to fit local needs.

Model Policy Statement for Child Abuse and Neglect

Because of their sustained contact with children, school employees are in a position to identify abused children and refer them to the appropriate agencies for treatment of present injuries and for protection from further abuse. Therefore, in order to comply with (supply the title of state child abuse/neglect reporting law), it is the policy of the (supply name of school district) that any school employee who knows or reasonably suspects that the injury or injuries have been inflicted upon the child as a result of abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation (supply state's definition), shall report
or cause reports to be made in accordance with the district's procedures. School employees are immune from any civil and/or criminal liability when reporting suspected child maltreatment in good faith. Failure on the part of any school employee to report may result in (include state's penalty for failure to report). School district disciplinary action may be brought against the school employee who fails to report suspected child maltreatment.

**Reporting**

It is not the responsibility of the school employee to: 1) prove that the child has been abused, or 2) determine whether the child is in need of protection. In gathering information, any interview or physical examination of the child should be conducted in the highest professional manner. School employees shall not make contact with the child's family or other persons for the purpose of determining the cause of the injury and/or apparent neglect.

**Records**

The school district shall maintain records pertaining to child abuse cases in a central but separate file to ensure confidentiality. Only authorized personnel shall have access to the child abuse and neglect reports that have been prepared by individuals in the educational system. One person shall be designated to supervise the central file to ensure its confidentiality. This person shall be responsible for investigating the credentials of anyone requesting information from the file and is authorized to permit or deny access to the information contained in the file. If a child changes school districts, the records shall be forwarded to the new school district. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act has no jurisdiction over reporting a suspected child abuse and neglect case by school personnel. However, such a report must be made available, upon request, to the parent.

**Policy Implementation**

The school district shall provide inservice training to all school employees on the subject of identifying and reporting children sus-
pected as being abused. The superintendent or his/her designee shall distribute annually to all school employees copies of the district's policy, reporting procedure, and reporting form regarding suspected cases of child abuse.

**Mandate Against Maltreatment**

School employees shall not physically strike a student, verbally abuse a student, leave students unsupervised, sexually abuse a student, allow one student to maltreat another student, or use "time-out" rooms for long periods of time. If the situation warrants, a school employee may physically restrain a student by using a district-approved method.

If a school employee is reported for maltreating a student(s), the building principal shall make a report to (supply name of appropriate agency). In addition, the school board shall hold an administrative hearing regarding the district's action towards the school employee.

**Reporting Procedure**

Once a school policy on reporting suspected child abuse is written and officially adopted, it should be disseminated among school personnel and made available to the community so that there is no question about the commitment of the school in reporting such incidents. Even when a written policy statement exists, many cases of child abuse are not reported because reporting procedures are not clear. Following is a suggested reporting procedure and a sample report form, which may be adapted for use in school systems.

1. If a school employee knows or suspects that injuries have been inflicted upon the child as a result of abuse or that a child is a victim of neglect or sexual molestation, he/she shall immediately make an oral report to the building principal or his/her designee.

2. The principal or his/her designee shall immediately report the case by telephone to the (supply name of mandated social agency) and inform, in writing, the school employee initiating the report of this action.

3. The school employee initiating the report shall complete the dis-
district's child abuse reporting form within 48 hours after making the oral report and give it to the principal or his/her designee.

4. Upon receiving the district's child abuse reporting form, the principal or his/her designee shall mail, within 24 hours, one copy of the form to the agency receiving the oral report and keep two copies in a separate file.

5. Upon obtaining a report from the agency investigating the report as to its disposition, the principal or his/her designee shall enter the disposition on the district's child abuse form, and send a copy to the district's pupil personnel office, and keep a copy in a separate file for reported cases of child abuse.

6. The principal or his/her designee shall then inform, in writing, the school employee initiating the report as to its disposition.
Sample Child Abuse Reporting Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child's Name</th>
<th>Last Name (legal)</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Middle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Birthdate</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Child's Domicile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mother
Father
Guardian

Address
Address
Address

Tel:
Tel:
Tel:

Record observations leading to the suspicion that the child is a victim of abuse or neglect. Supply time and date of observations.

Provide additional information from interview with child.

Signature
Signature

Interviewer
Observer of the Interview

Written report submitted to principal or designee.

Signature
Date
Initiator of Report

Time

Oral Report made to Principal/Designee

Date
Time

Oral Report made to (supply name of social agency)

Date
Time

Written report sent to (supply name of social agency)

Date
Time

Disposition of the case

Signature
Date

Principal

Copy #1—Mail to agency receiving the oral report.
Copy #2—Mail to district Pupil Personnel Office.
Copy #3—Place in principal’s Child Abuse/Neglect File.

(NOT TO BE PLACED IN THE CHILD’S PERSONAL FILE.)
Identifying Suspected Child Abuse

School personnel need assistance in determining if a situation they have observed is a case of child abuse that should be reported. The following list of indicators will be useful in helping educators to recognize child abuse.

**Physical Abuse—Physical Indicators**

Child shows evidence of unexplained or repeated injury or injuries in the form of:

a. lacerations, punctures, or missing teeth
b. fractures, sprains, or dislocations
c. rope burns, immersion burns, or cigarette or cigar burns (especially on soles of feet, palms, back, or buttocks—these are seldom self-inflicted)
d. bruises or welts reflecting shape of object used to inflict the injury or injuries on several different surface areas
e. new injuries before old injuries have healed

**Physical Abuse—Behavioral Indicators**

The child is or may be:

a. wary of adult contacts
b. consistently on the alert for danger
c. subject to frequent and severe mood changes
d. frightened of parents and avoids home (consistently arrives at school early or leaves late)
e. apprehensive when other children cry
f. demonstrating behavioral extremes (aggressive, disruptive, or destructive; or unusually shy, withdrawn, passive, or overly compliant)

**Neglect—Physical Indicators**
Child shows evidence of:
- a. constant fatigue or listlessness
- b. unattended physical problems or medical needs
- c. consistent hunger (begs for food, undernourished)
- d. poor hygiene, unbathed, filthy clothing, or inappropriate dress for the weather
- e. abandonment

**Neglect—Behavioral Indicators**
Child is or may be:
- a. constantly hungry, begs for food
- b. rejected by other children because of offensive body odor
- c. constantly falling asleep in class
- d. constantly arriving at school early and leaving late
- e. left alone for substantial periods of time

**Sexual Abuse—Physical Indicators**
Child shows evidence of:
- a. difficulty in walking or sitting
- b. torn, stained, or bloody underclothes
- c. pain or itching in genital area
- d. semen around the genitals or on clothing
- e. lacerations, bruises, or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal, or anal area
- f. venereal disease (especially in young children)
- g. pregnancy

**Sexual Abuse—Behavioral Indicators**
Child shows evidence of:
- a. bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge
- b. regression (Some sexually abused children, especially younger ones, will retreat into a fantasy world, or exhibit infantile behaviors, which may be interpreted as retardation.)
c. delinquency or aggression (The anger and hostility these children, particularly teenagers, feel toward the perpetrator may cause them to adopt aggressive behavior toward others.)

d. poor peer relationships (Because of guilt feelings the child cannot form relationships with peers.)

e. running away to escape from the home situation (Running away may be an indirect manner of asking for help in a situation in which they feel powerless.)

f. unwillingness to participate in physical activities (Young children who have been highly stimulated sexually or have had forced sexual intercourse may find it painful to sit during school or to play active games.)

g. drug use/abuse (The use of alcohol and other drugs may be the child’s method of handling his/her guilt and anxieties.)

h. indirect allusion (Sometimes sexually abused children confide in someone they feel may be helpful by using vague or indirect allusions to the home situation; e.g., “I’m afraid to go home tonight,” “I’d like to come and live with you,” or “I want to live in a foster home.”)

i. seductive behavior (If a child views sexual contact as a positive source of attention, he/she may adapt seductive behaviors with peers or adults.)

**Emotional Maltreatment—Physical Indicators**

Child shows evidence of:

a. habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking)

b. conduct disorders (hyper- or hypo-activity, antisocial, destructive)

c. neurotic traits (sleep disorders, speech, enuresis, inhibition of play)

d. psychoneurotic reactions (hysteria, obsessions, depression, compulsion, phobias, hypochondria)

e. physical manifestations of nervous disorders (overweight, skin rashes)

**Emotional Maltreatment—Behavioral Indicators**

Child shows evidence of:

a. low self-esteem
b. behavior extremes (compliant and passive or aggressive, demanding, disruptive)
c. overly compliant behavior
d. developmental lags (physical, mental, emotional)
e. seeking affection
f. attempting suicide
g. excessive temper tantrums

Conducting the Interview
When a teacher or other school employee has sufficient reason to believe that a child has been abused, an interview should be conducted without delay. If, while conducting the interview, it is determined that the child is in need of immediate medical attention, the school employee should follow the school's normal procedure for dealing with injuries or illness. Contact with the parents shall be solely to secure permission to refer the child to the family physician or available medical personnel. The following interview procedure is suggested.

1. The school employee conducting the interview should make the child as relaxed as possible by explaining to the child that he/she is not in any trouble or subject to any punishment. Conduct the interview in a place that assures privacy and make the child feel at ease. The interviewer should sit near the child, not behind a desk or table.

2. If the interviewer is the school nurse, she may want to involve the teacher who has the best rapport with the child.

3. Bring the child along slowly. Do not press for an answer.

4. Avoid accusing anyone as being the perpetrator of the abuse or neglect. Reassure the child that he/she is not at fault.

5. When the child has injuries, he or she may submit to showing the injured area. In such cases, ask the child to show you the abused area, but do not force the child to remove clothing if he/she is unwilling; avoid touching the child unnecessarily.

6. Suggested questions to use in the interview are:
   How did you get your injuries?
   What caused your injuries?
   Who caused your injuries?
   Why did you get your injuries?
When did you get your injuries?
Have you ever been hurt before?
Where are your injuries?
Why do you come to school so early?
Why do you stay after school so late?
Why are you so frequently absent/late?
When did you eat last?
Why are you so tired?
Are these the only clothes you have?
Why do you wear such (light/heavy) clothes?

8. Tell the child that the conversation is confidential. Other teachers and classmates will not be told what has happened. Make it clear from the beginning that it might be necessary to inform the appropriate authorities of the situation, but do not contact parents, relatives, friends, or neighbors for the purpose of determining the cause of the injury and/or apparent neglect.

9. If, as a result of the interview, further action will be taken, the child should be told what will happen and when.

10. Under no circumstances should the child be asked to conceal from the parents that the conversation has taken place or that further action is contemplated.
Prevention and Assistance

In addition to identifying and reporting suspected cases of child abuse, there is much educators can do in schools and the community to directly or indirectly help prevent child abuse, to reduce its recurrence, and to assist children who are victims of abuse or neglect. Although some writers such as D. G. Gil feel that true prevention is next to impossible without fundamental changes in our social structure, the authors of this fastback suggest the following as preventive actions appropriate for educators:

1. Being consistently positive and supportive in their interactions with students, for example, by modeling appropriate adult-child interactions;

2. Reinforcing or otherwise calling attention to positive interactions among students;

3. Providing parenting skills as an integral part of the curriculum;

4. Participating in and supporting the prevention activities of community-based family therapy teams and the media;

5. Extending school hours to care for “at-risk” children after school;

6. Keeping confidential anecdotal records relative to suspected cases;

7. Reporting suspected cases and following up with social agencies that investigate child abuse cases;

8. Requesting follow-up information from social agencies regarding the disposition of reported cases.

Assisting the Abused Child in School

Whether the abused child remains with the parents or is placed in a
temporary foster home, he or she is likely to continue attending school. Positive, supportive school experiences can help to counteract the negative consequences of abuse or neglect. The following suggestions are offered as ways to support the abused or neglected child in the school.

*Treat the maltreated child with respect and dignity.* Abused children soon learn that using physical force is an effective means of gaining control over others. Therefore, school personnel must provide appropriate models to help these children learn that adult-child interactions need not be hostile. School personnel must refrain from physically and verbally abusing students. Demeaning phrases are destructive and only reinforce the negative self-perceptions many of these children already have.

*Be sensitive to the student’s needs, feelings, and concerns.* On some days it will be more difficult for these students to learn than on other days. Try to spend some personal time with these students so that they are aware that you understand their needs and feelings.

*Be supportive of the abused child.* In conversation with others about these students, address their strengths and try to make others aware of the difficult struggles the abused child has to face each day. There may be times when an abused child will be disruptive. A fight with another student or a run-in with the teacher might have been precipitated by a conflict at home. Do not shield the child, but help him/her understand the consequences of these behaviors and support him/her in learning more appropriate ways to handle problems. Remember, you are demonstrating your disapproval of the behavior, not the child.

*Tailor experiences for student success.* Nothing remedies a low self-concept as much as success. When students perceive themselves as positive individuals, they will probably do better in school. Plan and provide experiences that allow every student to succeed.

*Avoid caustic remarks about the child’s parents.* Despite what you may think or feel about abusive parents, children still have an emotional investment in their parents and will resent sarcastic remarks being made about their parents.

*Help students understand parental abuse of children.* With older
students, it is possible to discuss frankly the problem of parental abuse of children. By doing so you may help them to obtain a realistic perspective regarding their relationships with their parents. Reassure students that they need not become abusive parents just because they have been abused as a child.

Be in touch with your own feelings. There are days when you feel irritable for any number of reasons. As hard as you try to mask these feelings, they do carry over to the classroom. Students who harbor very negative thoughts about themselves depend on you to be understanding of their needs and are extremely sensitive to your interactions with them. Rather than trying to hide your feelings, share them with the student. By doing this you demonstrate and reinforce open communication with the student; and, as an adult, you serve as a positive model for handling daily crises in your life. Whatever your anxieties may be, being open and honest about them will allow you to interact more effectively with your students.

Continue to watch for repeated incidents of maltreatment. Although both abused children and their parents may be in therapy, sometimes abuse will continue to occur. Do not hesitate to report your suspicions again.

With written policies and procedures to follow, there is much school personnel can do to prevent child abuse, to assist the victims of child abuse in the school, and to complement treatment provided to the victims and their parents by other agencies. Schools cannot be concerned with only the intellectual development of children; they must accept the expanded responsibility of safeguarding their general health and welfare as well.
Inservice Training for School Personnel

The Education Commission of the States (1977) has found that few colleges of education provide preservice training on the school's role in the prevention of child abuse. If schools are to be effective in this role, they must plan and carry out their own inservice programs. The authors recommend that at least a full day of inservice training be offered to all school personnel. Staff from social agencies that deal with child abuse should be invited to assist in the training.

Following are eight broad areas that should be addressed in an inservice program to prepare school personnel relative to identification, reporting, and treatment of child abuse:

1. General information:
   a. Definitions of the various types of child abuse
   b. Incidence of child abuse (local, state, and national)
   c. Effects of abuse or neglect on children
   d. Legal and ethical issues in reporting child abuse

2. Etiology of child abuse
   a. Parent characteristics associated with child abuse
   b. Child characteristics associated with abuse
   c. Types of stress associated with child abuse
   d. Theories concerning the causes of child abuse

3. Indicators of various types of child abuse:
   a. Physical indicators
   b. Behavioral indicators
   c. Emotional indicators

4. State reporting statutes:
a. Legal responsibilities
b. Confidentiality and child/family privacy rights
c. Legal immunities

5. School policy relative to reporting cases of suspected child abuse:
   a. Rationale for establishing a policy
   b. Elements of a comprehensive policy
   c. Procedures and forms for reporting
   d. Interview techniques to use with children
   e. Corporal punishment

6. Role of individuals and social agencies (other than schools) involved with cases of suspected child abuse:
   a. Police
   b. Social services
   c. Attorney
   d. Court
   e. Court appointed guardian

7. Approaches to prevention:
   a. Community awareness
   b. Parenting skills in the curriculum
   c. Outreach to families
   d. Resources in the community
   e. Development of a school child-abuse team

8. Assisting the abused child in school:
   a. Assessing the school's capabilities to help children
   b. Classroom techniques
Conclusion

Few, if any, educators realize when they enter the profession that they will have to deal with the ugly reality of child abuse. Neither their experience nor training has prepared them for coping with the tragic consequences of abused and neglected children. Yet statistics on the incidence of child abuse confirm that it is much more prevalent than we would like to believe. We cannot wish it away; it could face us in the classroom tomorrow. While some would argue that the schools can't solve all of society's problems, who else can serve as the child's advocate when the parents fail?

The authors of this fastback argue that educators have both a legal and ethical responsibility to identify and report cases of suspected child abuse. This does not make them judges or prosecutors, but it does extend their professional role into an area fraught with tension, sordidness, and even some personal risk.

The policies and procedures outlined in this fastback for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse are a beginning step in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Our nation's children deserve at least this much from those who call themselves educators.
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