

Glastonbury Little League Child Abuse Awareness and Reporting Policy

Legislative Mandates

The State of Connecticut and the Federal government both have legislated mandates pertaining to the reporting of instances of Child Abuse by all individuals in positions of interacting with children. The safety and well-being of all participants in the GLL program is paramount. As adults, we want to ensure that the young people playing in our program are able to grow up happy, healthy and, above all, safe. Whether they are our children, or the children of others, each of us has a responsibility to protect them. Unfortunately, there are those who would seek to do harm to these children, to rob them of their right to feel safe and grow up in a free and healthy environment. As a result of the Federal legislation and combined with Connecticut law, those interacting with children must act as mandatory reporters and therefore, they are required to report or cause a report to be made when, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm. (Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101a) or where child abuse occurs where a child has had physical injury inflicted upon him or her other than by accidental means, has injuries at variance with history given of them, or is in a condition resulting in maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment. (Connecticut General Statutes §46b-120) or where child neglect occurs where a child has been abandoned, is being denied proper care and attention physically, emotionally, or morally, or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being. (Connecticut General Statutes §46b-120). With this in mind, we need to better understand what child abuse is.

What is Child Abuse?

Defining child abuse is the first step in battling it. Child abuse can take several different forms:

Physical abuse of a child is when a parent or caregiver causes any non-accidental physical injury to a child.

There are many signs of physical abuse. If you see any of the following signs, please get help right away. Signs of physical abuse in a child:

Physical:

- Any injury to a child who is not crawling yet
- Visible and severe injuries
- Injuries at different stages of healing
- On different surfaces of the body
- Unexplained or explained in a way that doesn't make sense
- Distinctive shape
- Frequency, timing and history of injuries (frequent, after weekends, vacations, school absences)

Behavioral:

- Aggression toward peers, pets, other animals
- Seems afraid of parents or other adults
- Fear, withdrawal, depression, anxiety
- Wears long sleeves out of season
- Violent themes in fantasy, art, etc.
- Nightmares, insomnia
- Reports injury, severe discipline
- Immaturity, acting out, emotional and behavior extremes
- Self-destructive behavior or attitudes

28.3% of adults report being physically abused as a child.¹

¹ Statistic provided by Childhelp.org

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult uses a child for sexual purposes or involves a child in sexual acts. It also includes when a child who is older or more powerful uses another child for sexual gratification or excitement.

Signs of sexual abuse of a child:

Physical:

- Difficulty sitting, walking, bowel problems
- Torn, stained, bloody undergarments
- Bleeding, bruises, pain, swelling, itching of genital area
- Frequent urinary tract infections or yeast infections
- Any sexually transmitted disease or related symptoms

Behavioral:

- Doesn't want to change clothes (e.g., for P.E.)
- Withdrawn, depressed, anxious
- Eating disorders, preoccupation with body
- Aggression, delinquency, poor peer relationships
- Poor self-image, poor self-care, lack of confidence
- Sudden absenteeism, decline in school performance
- Substance abuse, running away, recklessness, suicide attempts
- Sleep disturbance, fear of bedtime, nightmares, bed wetting (at advanced age)
- Sexual acting out, excessive masturbation
- Unusual or repetitive soothing behaviors (hand-washing, pacing, rocking, etc.)
- Sexual behavior or knowledge that is advanced or unusual
- Reports sexual abuse

20.7% of adults report being sexually abused as a child.²

Definition of Child Sexual Abuse. Child Sexual Abuse can be defined as the exploitation of a child by an older child, teen, or adult for the personal gratification of the abusive individual. This form of abuse could involve a range of sexual activities, from touching to non-touching offenses, and may also include acts that are considered non-sexual but are done for the gratification of the abuser. This might include talking to a child in a sexually explicit way, voyeurism, or exposure of private parts to a victim and/or victim's exposure of his or her private parts

When a parent or caregiver harms a child's mental and social development, or causes severe emotional harm, it is considered emotional abuse. While a single incident may be abuse, most often emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior that causes damage over time.

Signs of emotional abuse in a child:

Physical:

- Delays in development
- Wetting bed, pants
- Speech disorders
- Health problems like ulcers, skin disorders
- Obesity and weight fluctuation

Behavioral:

- Habits like sucking, biting, rocking
- Learning disabilities and developmental delays
- Overly compliant or defensive
- Extreme emotions, aggression, withdrawal
- Anxieties, phobias, sleep disorders
- Destructive or anti-social behaviors (violence, cruelty, vandalism, stealing, cheating, lying)

² Statistic provided by Childhelp.org

- Behavior that is inappropriate for age (too adult, too infantile)
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviors

10.6% of adults report being emotionally abused as a child.³

Child neglect is when a parent or caregiver does not give the care, supervision, affection and support needed for a child's health, safety and well-being. Child neglect includes:

- Physical neglect and inadequate supervision. Examples of physical neglect:
 - Deserting a child or refusing to take custody of a child who is under your care
 - Repeatedly leaving a child in another's custody for days or weeks at a time
 - Failing to provide enough healthy food and drink
 - Failing to provide clothes that are appropriate to the weather
 - Failing to ensure adequate personal hygiene
 - Not supervising a child appropriately
 - Leaving the child with an inappropriate caregiver
 - Exposing a child to unsafe/unsanitary environments or situations
- Emotional neglect. Examples of emotional neglect:
 - Ignoring a child's need for attention, affection and emotional support
 - Exposing a child to extreme or frequent violence, especially domestic violence
 - Permitting a child to use drugs, use alcohol, or engage in crime
 - Keeping a child isolated from friends and loved ones
- Medical neglect. Examples of medical neglect:
 - Not taking child to hospital or appropriate medical professional for serious illness or injury
 - Keeping a child from getting needed treatment
 - Not providing preventative medical and dental care
 - Failing to follow medical recommendations for a child

While a single indicator may not be cause for alarm, children who are neglected often show that they need help:

- Clothing that is the wrong size, in disrepair, dirty, or not right for the weather
- Often hungry, stockpiles food, seeks food, may even show signs of malnutrition (like distended belly, protruding bones)
- Very low body weight, height for age
- Often tired, sleepy, listless
- Hygiene problems, body odor
- Talks about caring for younger siblings, not having a caregiver at home
- Untreated medical and dental problems, incomplete immunizations
- Truancy, frequently incomplete homework, frequent changes of school

A crucial step in stopping child abuse before it happens is knowing who might be a child abuser, and where child abuse might happen. For better or worse, the answer to each question is simple. Where can it happen? Anywhere. Who could be a child abuser? Anyone.

Who are the reporters?

The legislatively adopted Federal "Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Act of 2017" mandates that all amateur sports organizations, which participate in an interstate or international amateur athletic competition and whose membership includes any adult who is in regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor must report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to law enforcement. In the case of Glastonbury Little League, this would be ADULT(over 18 years old) Administrators, Coaches,

³ Statistic provided by Childhelp.org

Managers, Umpires, Concession Staff. An individual who is required, but fails, to report suspected child sexual abuse is subject to criminal penalties. If an individual suspects a case of abuse within GLL, they should report it within 12 hours of the alleged incident to the appropriate child services organization and/or local law enforcement as well as, GLL President and CT. District 7 Administrator. There is a “safe harbor” for good faith reporting,

Immunity from liability.

Concern is often expressed over the potential for criminal or civil liability if a report of abuse is subsequently found to be unsubstantiated. However, we want adults and Little Leaguers to understand that they shouldn't be afraid to come forward in these cases, even if it isn't required and even if there is a possibility of being wrong. All states provide immunity from liability to those who report suspected child abuse in “good faith.” At the same time, there are also rules in place to protect adults who prove to have been inappropriately accused. Little League policies prohibit retaliation of any kind when a good faith report of child abuse is made. Reports of Child abuse will be handled in a confidential manner by the recipients of those reports.

Resources for Reporting Child Abuse

GLL President, Don Longtin; little.league01@cox.net; 860-643-9165

CT 7 District Administrator: Bill Howard; 860-289-1422; Billd7ct@comcast.net

Glastonbury Police Dept: 860-633-8301

State of CT: DCF; (DCF 136 form) within 48 hours after that, both to the DCF Careline, **1-800-842-2288**. The written report form is available on the DCF website at http://www.ct.gov/dcf/lib/dcf/policy/forms/DCF-136_Rev_05_2015.pdf or one can be requested when an oral report is made to the DCF Careline.

Additional information on Child Abuse Education/Prevention/Reporting

National Little League; www.Littleleague.org/childprotection

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline; www.childhelp.org/pages/hotline-home; 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)

Stop It Now!' www.stopitnow.org/help#contact; 1-888-PREVENT (1-888-773-8368)