
	DHS Early Head Start Program Policy		
PDM 9			
SUBJECT	Critical Incident Reporting		
REFERENCE	Program Design and Management		
EFFECTIVE	8/1/2016		
Policy Council Approval: 7/26/16	Policy Council Revision: 5/23/23	Governing Body Approval: 9/19/16	Governing Body Revision: 6/15/23
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Policy:

The Head Start Program, including Early Head Start (EHS) must develop and implement a system for Critical Incident Reporting (CIR). All staff must be trained on incident reporting.

A critical incident includes, but is not limited to:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect which may or may not have occurred during service hours.
- Allegations of child abuse/neglect or maltreatment against any EHS staff member, volunteer, consultant and contractor, including, but not limited to grabbing, shoving, shaking, swatting, or dragging a child; spanking or any other type of corporal or physical punishment; binding tying, or taping a child; terrorizing a child with threats or menacing acts; or any form of sexual contact.
- Incidents which may have placed a child, family member or staff in danger.
- Any incident where a child is left unsupervised while in the care or under the supervision of program staff, which includes leaving a child alone anywhere on the grounds of an EHS center (e.g., in a classroom, bathroom, on a playground), as well as outside the facility in a parking lot, or on a nearby street.
- Any incident that involves a classroom that is out of ratio. Any situation that involves a classroom out of ratio must be reported.
- Inappropriate discipline, which is any type of conduct used to instill fear or humiliate rather than to educate a child, such as poking or pinching a child; making fun of or laughing about a child; using/withholding food or an activity as a punishment or reward; or isolating a child.

- Health incidents and illnesses, which include, but are not limited to:
 - Injuries that require urgent medical attention by a health-care professional, such as a broken bone; a severe sprain; chipped or cracked teeth; head trauma; deep cuts; contusions or lacerations; or animal bites.
 - Child or staff member leaving by emergency medical transport
- Any reportable disease/illness, as indicated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, State of Texas, State of Texas Child Care Regulations, or the City of San Antonio Metro Health Department
 - Child receiving outside medical attention at any point in time for an injury sustained during EHS program hours
- Unauthorized release where a child is released from an EHS center to a person without the permission or authorization of a parent or legal guardian and whose identity had not been verified by photo identification.
- Any incident which has the potential to generate negative media coverage
- Any media inquiry/coverage of the program
- Unplanned interruption in EHS Program services
- Closure of any facility or part of a facility, including outdoor play areas
- Accidents involving vehicles that transport children and families

When applicable, parents/guardians must be notified of critical incidents within 24 hours of occurrence. Providers must also provide notification to the EHS Senior Special Projects Manager or designee within 24 hours.

Performance Standard(s):

1302.47(c); 1302.102(d)(1)(ii); 1304.12; 1303.79(b)(3)

Information Memorandum:

ACF-IM-HS-22-07

