

Turtlenecks on a Hot Day

BREAKING THE SILENCE
CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING

The Scenario:

Cary, a 2nd grader, arrives at school wearing a long sleeve turtleneck shirt on a 90° day. What do you do?

Discussion Begins

What do you do?

Is this child abuse?

Do you report? If so, to whom? If so, when? If you don't, what might happen to Cary? To you? To your school? To LAUSD?

If you report and the Local Law Enforcement Agency or the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) tells you...

...to **handle it administratively**, what do you do next?

...**they will investigate**, what do you do next?



Legal Response

You can seek to clarify why Cary is wearing such clothing on a hot day. The child's response may give rise to a reasonable suspicion of abuse, or provide no basis for reasonable suspicion. If there is a reasonable suspicion that child abuse occurred, a Suspected Child Abuse Report must be filed with either the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or the Local Law Enforcement Agency.

Other Considerations

If told to **handle administratively**, you should file a report anyway and notify an administrator. The administrator should interview the child, see if there are any prior complaints by the child, and speak with the nurse to see if there are prior indicators of problems. If the administrator discovers that there are indicators of abuse, then s/he should file a Suspected Child Abuse Report with the Local Law Enforcement Agency.

Additionally, s/he should notify the Local District Operations Coordinator.

Keep a copy of the Suspected Child Abuse Report you filed along with the agent's name and ID.

Listen

Although you may be perplexed as to the student's attire, you may inquire in a gentle and caring way as to why the student is wearing this clothing.

Protect

The situation must be addressed by following the legal response. Doing so is the best way to protect students and promote a safe learning environment.

Connect

Convey concern for the student's well-being. Every school site has protocols, systems, and resources to support and address student safety and well-being. This is an opportunity to become familiar with and use the procedures, policies, and resources at your work site.

Model

Maintain a professional and calm level of emotions and reactions. Do not express shock or anger. By asking clarifying questions, you are demonstrating concern for the student's well-being.

Teach

Encourage the student to speak to a trusted adult. Students may have different reactions to the same event. Teach the student to identify and use positive coping strategies and problem solving skills.

Emotional Support