

If a Child Discloses Abuse to You...

DO:

- ✓ Stay calm and show no signs of shock;
- ✓ Listen and respond with empathy in a non-judgmental and open way;
- ✓ Consider the disclosure seriously;
- ✓ Remain calm, supportive, and reassuring;
- ✓ Validate the child's feelings;
- ✓ Mirror the child's language when appropriate (use and clarify the vocabulary that the child uses);
- ✓ Explain what you need to do (report to the director/counselor) and why;
- ✓ Allow the child control when feasible;
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions to gather information and detail;
- ✓ Consider the child's language needs and whether support in another language is necessary;
- ✓ Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in coming forward and that they are currently safe; and
- ✓ As soon as possible following the disclosure, make a written report and write notes from the conversation.

DON'T

- ✗ View images of children (rather ask for a brief description and secure a device as possible evidence for law enforcement);
- ✗ Take photos (if the child shares an injury, seek medical attention);
- ✗ Interview the child, ask leading or unnecessary questions, or provide language for the child;
- ✗ Take notes during the disclosure;
- ✗ Make promises that may not be able to be honored (such as promising you won't tell anyone or that this will never happen again);
- ✗ Suggest that the child may be to blame in any way for what happened; or
- ✗ Ask the child to wait until another person can be present to witness the disclosure.