**ZERO TOLERANCE CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT POLICY**

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy affirms OUR commitment to the safety and welfare of children by providing guidance to employees and families regarding Michigan laws governing the reporting of suspected child abuse and child neglect.

DEFINITIONS

**Mandated Reporters:** Mandated reporters are people who are always required to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the Department of Human Services (DHS). Mandated Reporters include but are not limited to: nurse, person licensed to provide emergency medical care, audiologist, psychologist, licensed professional counselor, social worker, licensed master’s social worker, licensed bachelor’s social worker, school administrator, school counselor or teacher, law enforcement officer, member of the clergy, regulated child care provider.

**Abuse:** The physical or mental injury of a child by a person who has permanent or temporary care or custody of the child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances indicating that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed; or sexual abuse if a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not, defined as any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for the supervision of a child, or by any household or family member.

**Physical Abuse:** Harm or threatened harm to a child through non-accidental injury. Examples of physical abuse include beating, kicking, punching, and burning.

**Sexual Abuse And Sexual Exploitation:** Engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration with a child (as defined in the criminal code) constitutes sexual abuse. Sexual exploitation is defined as allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution or to be depicted in a sexual act (as defined in the penal code).

**Neglect:** the failure to give proper care and attention to a child, including leaving the child unattended, by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child under circumstances indicating:

* That the child’s health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm; or
* Mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury
* Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, or medical care
* The failure to protect a child from a known or potential risk of harm is also considered neglect.

**Mental Injury:** The observable, identifiable, and substantial impairment of a child’s mental or psychological ability to function.

**Maltreatment:** Treatment that involves cruelty or suffering that a reasonable person would recognize as excessive. Examples include forcing a child to eat dog food as punishment, locking a child in a closet, or teaching a child to assist in criminal activities.

**Child:** Any individual under the age of 18 years.

**PROCEDURES**

As mandated reporters, Michigan law requires that our centers/center staff must file a report when there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect. Reporters are not required to determine whether abuse or neglect has actually occurred. The Department of Human Services is responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect. Our policy is to make a report whenever we suspect that abuse or neglect may have occurred.

The Child Care and Parent Institute shall cooperate fully and appropriately with any investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect by a local department or social services or law enforcement agency. If the individual suspected of child abuse or neglect is an employee, student, or contractor of the Center, the Center shall coordinate its own investigation or other activities in response to a report with the appropriate local agency.

I have read, fully understand and agree to Zero Tolerance Child Abuse and Neglect Policy.

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| PARENT, LEGAL GUARDIAN OR RESPONSIBLE ADULT |
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Signature Printed Name Date