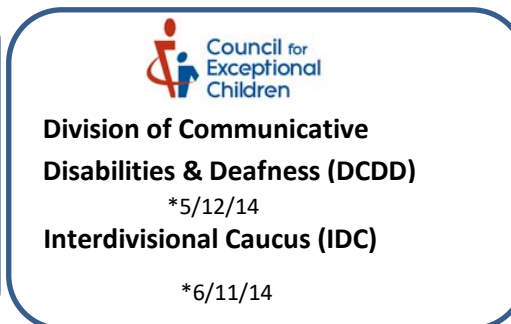
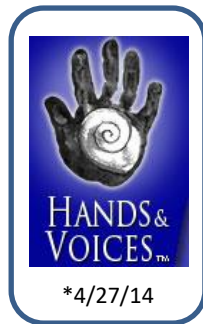


## The Following Organizations Support the Inclusion...



**“...of IFSP safety statements and IEP safety objectives in the educational planning documents of children with exceptionalities.”** \*Date the organization adopted motion.

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**\*Needed Levels of Knowledge & Action: September 5, 2017**

**By Harold A. Johnson, Ed.D./Emeritus Professor/Kent State University**

**Level 1 = Awareness & Understanding:** *You must be aware of a problem before you can address it...*

**Knowledge:** Children with exceptionalities are among the most vulnerable members of society (UNICEFF, 2013). It is currently estimated that 25+% of children with exceptionalities will experience maltreatment (i.e., neglect & abuse) between birth and 18 years of age (Jones et al, 2012). Children between the ages of birth and five years are the most likely to experience maltreatment (Child Maltreatment, 2015). Maltreatment perpetrators are most often individuals with the greatest access to a child, i.e., members of the child’s family, relatives, neighbors, friends and trusted community individuals (e.g., church officials, coaches, teachers, etc.). The maltreatment experience often results in significant health, social, learning, behavioral and achievement problems (Crowley, 2016; Fisher, 2016) that can persist through an individual’s life (CDC, 2016).

**Action:** a) Share this document with a friend/colleague; b) Consistently “check in” with your children/students (i.e., what they are doing and how they are feeling); c) Trust your gut, when you think a child/student may be experiencing maltreatment – **ACT!** See below “Level 2” for guidance on what to do when taking action.

**Suggested Resource:**

- Child Welfare Information Gateway “The Risk and Prevention of Maltreatment of Children with Disabilities” ([www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/focus.pdf](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/focus.pdf));
- Protecting the Most Vulnerable from Abuse (<http://leader.pubs.asha.org/article.aspx?articleid=2280650>); &
- Videos: “7 Kidpower Strategies for Keeping Your Child Safe” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMy-jgZAYAO>).

**Level 2 = Recognition & Reporting:** *You must act for the safety and wellbeing of the child above all other concerns...*

**Knowledge:** Educators know they are mandatory reporters of suspected instances of child maltreatment. Unfortunately many do not know the physical or behavioral indicators of maltreatment, school vs. state mandated reporting protocols, or that children with exceptionalities experience significantly higher rates of maltreatment than their nondisabled peers (Crowley, 2016). Additionally, when educators do report their maltreatment suspicions, they often face substantial reporting barriers (e.g., fear of being wrong, a concern of how parents might respond to a report, lack of administrative support for the report, etc.) (Kenny, 2001).

**Action:** a) Review and discuss suggested resources with at least one friend/colleague; b) Call the 24/7 free and confidential [National Child Abuse Hotline](http://www.ncha.org) (1-800-4-A-CHILD) to discuss any maltreatment concerns with a counselor who will help you to understand what you are seeing and then decide if and how to call the child protective services or the police; and c) Communicate with the possible maltreated child/student to let him/her know that you care for them, that he/she is safe with you and you will do all you can to help him/her.

### Suggested Resources:

- Child Welfare Information Gateway “What is Child Abuse and Neglect? Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms” ([www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan/));
- “Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse & Neglect” ([www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/mandat/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/mandat/)); &
- “Toll-Free Crisis Hotline Numbers” ([www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/reslist/tollfree/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/reslist/tollfree/))

**Level 3 = Prevention & Responding:** *You can prevent, or at least diminish, harm by planning for safety and success...*

**Knowledge:** Simply recognizing and reporting child maltreatment is not enough; parents and educators must collaborate to prevent child maltreatment from occurring. Hungry, tired, ill clothed, hurt and/or traumatized children cannot thrive and achieve at a level consistent with their potential. While the root causes of child maltreatment are beyond the control of educators (i.e., spousal abuse, drug abuse, criminality, mental illness, homelessness, etc.), student safety and success can be enhanced by providing parents and their children critical knowledge and skills. IFSP and IEP document development, implementation and monitoring protocols provide parents and professionals the opportunity to plan for the safety and success of children with exceptionalities (Chiak et al, 2017).

**Action:** a) Share and discuss this document at IFSP and IEP meetings; b) Use information in the “IFSP & IEP Safety Checklist” (see below) to build safety and success into educational programming and c) Identify and nominate an individual as a “Bright Spot” (<http://www.deafed.net/PageText.asp?hdnPageId=240>) for the “O.U.R. Children Project.”

### Suggested Resources:

- Child Welfare Information Gateway: “The Role of Educators in Preventing and Respond to Child Abuse & Neglect” ([www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/educator/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/educator/))
- Child Welfare Information Gateway: “Protective Factors to Promote Well-Being” ([www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/protectfactors/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/protectfactors/)); &
- CEC/IDC “IFSP & IEP Safety Checklist” ([www.deafed.net/Forms/03\\_22\\_16\\_Safety\\_Checklist\\_Document.pdf](http://www.deafed.net/Forms/03_22_16_Safety_Checklist_Document.pdf));

**\*Note:** Please help distribute this document ([http://www.deafed.net/Forms/Safety\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.deafed.net/Forms/Safety_Letter.pdf)). Contact Dr. Harold Johnson/Project Director ([3hjohnson@gmail.edu](mailto:3hjohnson@gmail.edu)) to learn more about this effort.

### Web Sites of Supporting Organizations

- Hands & Voices ([www.handsandvoices.org](http://www.handsandvoices.org) effort entitled the “O.U.R. Children Project”)
- Division of Communicative Disabilities & Deafness ([community.cec.sped.org/dccd/home](http://community.cec.sped.org/dccd/home))
- Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower International ([www.kidpower.org/](http://www.kidpower.org/))
- Association of College Educators Deaf & Hard of Hearing ([www.acedhh.org/](http://www.acedhh.org/))

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