Organizations and Divisions Supporting Educational Planning for the Safety & Wellbeing of Children with Exceptionalities

The following organizations and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Special Interest Divisions adopted the "Safety Motion" on the dates designated, i.e., "...support the inclusion of IFSP safety statements and IEP safety objectives in the educational planning documents of children with exceptionalities."

- 04/27/14 - Hands & Voices "O.U.R. Children Project"
- 05/12/14 –CEC/Division of Communicative Disabilities & Deafness (DCDD)
- 05/23/14 – Kidpower "Take Charge of Your Safety"
- 06/12/14 – CEC/Interdivisional Caucus (IDC)
- 02/12/15 – Association of College Educators – Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ACE DHH)
- 09/11/17 – CEC/Division of Early Childhood (DEC)
- 09/15/17 – CEC/Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL
- 09/25/17 – CEC/Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD)
- 10/13/17 – CEC/Technology and Media Division (TAM)
- 10/18/17 – CEC/Pioneers Division (CEC-PD)
- 10/19/17 – CEC/Division of International Special Education Services (DIES)
- 10/28/17 – CEC/Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT)
- 11/01/17 – CEC/Division on Visual Impairments and Deafblindness (DVIDB)
- 04/25/18 – CEC/Division for Physical, Health and Multiple Disabilities (DPHMD)
- 05/15/18 – CEC/Association for the Gifted (TAG)

11/11/17 - CEC/Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE)

"The CASE division supports this IDC work [re. prevention of maltreatment] with some updates and adjustments to the document as written due to concerns with the alignment with IDEA, 504, and ESSA regulations. In addition, CASE recommends a CASE member be part of the IDC workgroup or any work group that might be established in the future."

11/13/17 - CEC/Board of Directors "CEC Works to Mitigate Maltreatment"

"The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) recognizes the increased risk for maltreatment experienced by individuals with exceptionalities and the significant life-long negative impact that that the maltreatment experience can have upon an individual's health, learning, and performance. In Jan. 2014, the CEC Interdivisional Caucus established a Maltreatment Workgroup to conduct research, gather resources, provide professional development, and foster collaboration in order to address maltreatment. Since the establishment of the workgroup, they have requested the CEC Board of Directors take action to lessen the occurrence of maltreatment of individuals with exceptionalities. In response, the CEC Board of Directors appointed a CEC workgroup to develop a policy on maltreatment."

02/11/18 - CEC/Teacher Education Division (TED)

TED recognizes our role in the preparation and support of education personnel (teachers, support staff, administrators)

·   to be aware of and address the safety needs of individuals with exceptionalities;

·   to be cognizant of the ethical and legal responsibilities to protect these individuals from maltreatment; and

·   to understand, learn, and implement evidence-based strategies that promote safety and well-being.

Key Resources for the Safety and Well Being of Children w/ Exceptionalities

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Level 1: Knowledge = "Awareness & Understanding"

Background Information: 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: **1)** Share this document with a friend/colleague; **2)** Consistently "check in" with your children/students (i.e., what they are doing and how they are feeling); & **3)** 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.

Resource: **1)** Child Welfare Information Gateway "The Risk and Prevention of Maltreatment of Children with Disabilities" (www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/focus.pdf); **2)** Protecting the Most Vulnerable from Abuse (http://leader.pubs.asha.org/article.aspx?articleid=2280650); & **3)** Videos: "7 Kidpower Strategies for Keeping Your Child Safe (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMy-jgZAYA0).

Level 2: Skills = "Recognition & Reporting"

Background Information: 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: **1)** Review and discuss suggested resources with at least one friend/colleague; **2)** Call the 24/7 free and confidential National Child Abuse Hotline (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; & **3)** 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.

Resources: **1)** Child Welfare Information Gateway "What is Child Abuse and Neglect? Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms" (www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan/); **2)** "Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse & Neglect" (https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/manda/); & **3)** "Toll-Free Crisis Hotline Numbers" (www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/reslist/tollfree/)

Level 3: Strategies = "Prevention & Responding"

Background Information: 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: **1)** Share and discuss this document at IFSP and IEP meetings; **2)** Use information in the "IFSP & IEP Safety Checklist" (see below) to build safety and success into educational programming and **3)** Identify and nominate an individual as a "Bright Spot" (http://www.deafed.net/PageText.asp?hdnPageId=240) for the "O.U.R. Children Project."

Resources: **1)** Child Welfare Information Gateway: "The Role of Educators in Preventing and Respond to Child Abuse & Neglect" (www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/educator/); **2)** Child Welfare Information Gateway: "Protective Factors to Promote Well-Being" (www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/protectfactors/); & **3)** CEC/IDC "IFSP & IEP Safety Checklist" (www.deafed.net/Forms/03_22_16_Safety_Checklist_Document.pdf);

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