



CITYWIDE DISTRICT 75 COUNCIL

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Resolution: Abuse Prevention in Schools Settings

WHEREAS, investigations of abuse done in the course of the past 30 years has established that children with disabilities are three times more likely to experience maltreatment than their non-disabled peers (Hughes et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2012; Stalker & McArthur, 2010); and

WHEREAS, according to the Child Welfare Information Gateway, the presence of a disability considerably increases the incidence, duration, and impact of abuse (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2010a); and

WHEREAS, research shows that at least 25 percent of children with disabilities will experience one or more forms of abuse between birth and 18 years of age (Jones et al., 2012); and

WHEREAS, several risks factors—including interpersonal isolation, social immaturity, insufficient knowledge of what constitutes abuse, emerging sexuality, inadequate communication skills to convey an experience of abuse, over- and under-compliant behavior during interactions with a large and diverse number of adults—are associated with the extremely high rate of abuse of children with disabilities (Durity & Oxman, 2006; Hibbard & Desch, 2007; Kendall-Tacke, Lyon, Tailferro, & Little, 2005; MacDougall, 2000; Shelton, Bridenbaugh, Farrenkopf, & Kroeger, 2008; Sullivan, Vernon & Scanlon, 1987); and

WHEREAS, the lack of a—or limited—common knowledge base for child abuse professionals and special education professionals serves to increases the incidence, duration, and impact of maltreatment of children with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, child abuse professionals may mistakenly attribute maltreatment-related behaviors and/or physical indicators to a child's disability; and

WHEREAS, children with disabilities who rely on caregivers for their daily needs may not know when behavior is inappropriate or may have been taught to obey caregivers' demands (Hibbard & Desch, 2007; National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1994; Steinberg & Hylton, 1998); and

WHEREAS, emotional dependence on caregivers may prevent children from attempting to stop the abuse or neglect because they fear losing the relationship (National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1994; Tobin, 1992); and

WHEREAS, the discovery of abuse in children with severe disabilities is usually dependent upon the emergence of physical signs (death, pregnancy, venereal diseases, physical injury) and/or sudden changes in behavior that re-enact the abuse; and

WHEREAS, current programs offered to children in District 75 to teach them how to be safe do not address their own emerging sexuality; and

WHEREAS, due to the lack of space, students in District 75 occasionally receive related services in isolated and inappropriate areas; and

WHEREAS, this practice may negatively impact their learning experience and be conducive to abuse; and

WHEREAS, recent unfortunate events of abuse of children with special needs within school settings have been reported in the media nationwide; and

WHEREAS, children with disabilities can resist abuse attempts when given information and skills development training; and

WHEREAS, most researchers now concur that teaching children with disabilities about the risks of abuse and neglect, as well as ways to communicate with others can help reduce maltreatment among this population of children; and

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, considering the increased risks faced by children with disabilities, efforts to prevent abuse should be coordinated.

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, in order to prevent the abuse or neglect of children with disabilities in school settings, we strongly recommend that school staff and managers fully implement the procedures set forth in Section V Chancellor's Regulation A-750.

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Citywide District 75 Council strongly advises that, from this moment forward, children in District 75 only be provided related services in non-secluded or isolated areas and that services only be provided either in areas with visual access or in the presence of a witness.

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, we strongly recommend that school officials draft a policy that clearly specifies the term "APPROPRIATE SPACE."

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Citywide District 75 Council urges school officials to vehemently provide training in abuse prevention techniques to students, parents, and staff to help children understand how to identify abuse, respond to it, and tell others.

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, more support programs be implemented at school level to support children with disabilities who have experienced maltreatment.



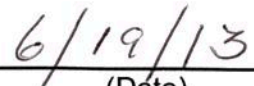
(Council President's Signature)



(Witness Signature)



(Date)



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