

Childcare Program Staff

Dana Damm, Program
Manager and Licensing
Specialist
ddamm@garfield-
county.com
945-9191 ext 3066

Childcare Consultants

Ericka Anderson
eanderson@garfield-
county.com
945-9191 ext. 3067

Donna Ward
dward@garfield-county.com
945-9191 ext 3065

Amelia Dress
amdress@garfield-
county.com
945-9191 ext. 3067

Physical address:
108 8th St.
Suite 300
Glenwood Springs

Mailing address:
195 W. 14th St.
Rifle, CO 81650

Fax: 970-928-0465
www.garfield-county.com

Garfield County DHS Childcare Quality and Licensing

Friday Tip
November 20, 2009

Reporting Child Abuse

Last week at the Directors' Breakfast in Glenwood, Susan Ackerman and Megan Hurley from the Childhelp River Bridge Center talked about the responsibilities of mandated reporters in Colorado. Teachers, directors, home childcare providers and specialists are all mandated reporters and are required to report *any reasonable suspicion* of child abuse to DHS. A couple key points:

- If you're concerned that a child is being physically, sexually, emotionally abused or neglected, call the reporting line. Teachers shouldn't try to investigate themselves. It is less traumatic for the child, and better for the investigation process, when children do not have to repeat their story multiple times.
- When you call the reporting line, they will ask for:
 - basic information about the child, parents/caregivers and siblings, including contact information.
 - Name and relationship of alleged perpetrator, if known
 - Your observations, i.e., why you suspect abuse
 - Anything the child said *in their own words*. Write down what the child said so that you can convey it accurately.
 - It's ok if you don't have all of this information immediately. Provide as much information as you can without interviewing the child or family.
- When you suspect abuse, it's best to call immediately. If needed, investigators can come to your setting to interview the child. Waiting until the end of the day can delay the process and make it harder to investigate.
- The reporting numbers in our area are:
 - Garfield County 945-9191
 - Pitkin County 429-4020
 - Eagle County 704-2760
- Investigators are concerned with what's best for the child. An investigation will be sensitive to the needs and the child, family and other caregivers. Not all reports will be investigated immediately but each phone call is important for investigators to determine when an investigation is called for.

Although the reporting process can be intimidating, it's an important way that we advocate for children. Please don't hesitate to call if you suspect child abuse or neglect. If you have general questions about making a report or developing a policy about reporting, any of the child care consultants would be happy to help.

Looking for more?

If you would like more information or would like to schedule a presentation for you staff, please contact Susan Ackerman, Director of Childhelp River Bridge Center at 945-5195 or sackerman@childhelp.org.