

Kenny, M. C. (2001). Child abuse reporting: Teachers' perceived deterrents. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 25, 81-92.

(info not yet integrated into the Inspiration lit review info)

*****summary of key information from article:

1. "In all states, teachers are included as mandated reporters."
2. "Public schools, which are the single greatest source of reports nationwide to child protective services, still have more cases unreported than those that are reported to child protective services by all other services combined..." Because..." in the majority of the cases (87%), the teachers reported the abuse to a school official or counselor; very few made direct reports to child protective agencies"
3. "Clearly child abuse is occurring and teachers are observing it, but there appear to be significant barriers to abuse reporting."
4. the teacher barriers to reporting are:
 - "...insufficient knowledge on how to detect and report abuse,
 - fear of legal ramifications for false allegations,
 - consequences of child abuse reporting,
 - fear of disapproval from parents, and parental denial.
 - personal beliefs and biases,
 - lack of knowledge or awareness of signs of abuse or of duty to report, and
 - descriptions of past outcomes of previously reported cases"
5. "Some report that less than 30% of suspected child abuse and neglect cases known to school personnel are formally reported (to Child Protective Services).
6. "Special education teachers made more reports than regular education teachers but did not report having any better pre- or post-service training."
7. "Teachers need to be trained to
 - understand their duty and legal obligation to report and proper reporting protocol.
 - Training needs to allow for experiential exercises and hypothetical situations to help teachers develop the skills necessary to report such abuse and
 - attend to their concerns regarding their fears of making a false report
8. "...school administrators may need to be open to providing continued training in this area and support for teachers when they must report child abuse.

*****in depth information from article:

CA/N Legislation:

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“Congress recognized the serious nature of childhood abuse and passed the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Public Law 93–247, in 1974 (Wilson, Thomas, & Schuette, 1983). States followed this action by establishing mandatory reporting laws for some professions. In all 51 US jurisdictions, school teachers and administrators are mandated to report child abuse and neglect to child protective services (Bavolek, 1983; Crenshaw, Crenshaw, & Lichtenberg, 1995).”

“All states have legislation requiring that certain professionals report child abuse. In all states, teachers are included as mandated reporters.”

“Public schools, which are the single greatest source of reports nationwide to child protective services, still have more cases unreported than those that are reported to child protective services by all other services combined (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1999).”

“...ironically, schools make the most reports and at the same time, fail to report the most child abuse cases (Crenshaw et al., 1995).”

“In a national sample of teachers, Abrahams, Casey, and Daro (1992) found that 74% of the sample stated they had suspected a child of being abused or neglected at one time. Of these teachers, 90% indicated that they reported the case. However, in the majority of the cases (87%), the teachers reported the abuse to a school official or counselor; very few made direct reports to child protective agencies (Abrahams et al., 1992).”

“Teachers play an important role in the detection and reporting of child abuse. By virtue of their work, they have ongoing contact with children, thus placing them in a unique position to detect signs of child abuse (Abrahams et al., 1992). In addition, teachers are well placed to make observations of children on a daily basis and compare current behavior with peer norms and/or past behavior (Crenshaw et al., 1995).”

“Clearly child abuse is occurring and teachers are observing it, but there appear to be significant barriers to abuse reporting.”

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“Abrahams and colleagues (1992) found that the biggest deterrents to child abuse reporting among their sample of teachers included insufficient knowledge on how to detect and report abuse, fear of legal ramifications for false allegations, consequences of child abuse reporting, fear of disapproval from parents, and parental denial. Bavolek (1983) also identified several reasons for failure to report on the part of school personnel. These include personal beliefs and biases, lack of knowledge or awareness of signs of abuse or of duty to report, and descriptions of past outcomes of previously reported cases (Bavolek, 1983).”

“Some report that less than 30% of suspected child abuse and neglect cases known to school personnel are formally reported (Abrahams et al., 1992; Bavolek, 1983; Reinger, Robinson, & McHugh, 1995). Abrahams and colleagues found that many teachers often make their reports to other school personnel, such as counselors, principals, or nurses, rather than making a direct report themselves. In turn, many of these cases may go unreported.”

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Discussion:

“This preliminary survey of teachers found that many are unaware of standard child abuse reporting procedures and feel unprepared to report such cases.”

“...it seems that the longer teachers work the more likely they are to report.”

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“The present findings were consistent with other research (James & DeVaney, 1994) that found that school professionals are reluctant to report child abuse violations, especially by members of their staff (i.e., other teachers). The most commonly cited reason for failure to report this abuse was fear of making an inaccurate report, followed by feeling as though child protective services does not offer help to maltreated children. It seems that the fear of making a false report outweighs the desire to follow legal standards in protecting children.”

“The significant difference found between special education teachers and regular education teachers is worth discussing. Special education teachers made more reports than regular education teachers but did not report having any better pre- or post-service training.”

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“...the teachers in this sample did not feel adequately trained to make child abuse reports. They reported that both their pre-service (college education) and post-service (on the job training) did not prepare them to make child abuse reports. Additionally, the fact that most teachers felt they should not be mandated reporters and that their school administration would not support them in making reports may also deter them from reporting.”

“This study clearly outlines the need for enhanced training in child abuse reporting laws and procedures for school teachers. There is a definite need for more thorough training for teachers on child abuse reporting. Teachers need to be trained to understand their duty and legal obligation to report and proper reporting protocol. Training needs to allow for experiential exercises and hypothetical situations to help teachers develop the skills necessary to report such abuse and attend to their concerns regarding their fears of making a false report (James & DeVaney, 1994). Additionally, it appears that school administrators may need to be open to providing continued training in this area and support for teachers when they must report child abuse. Although most teachers are aware of their legal obligation to report abuse, many do not know the correct procedure or when to report such cases.”

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