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Elementary Teachers' Knowledge of Minnesota's Mandatory Reporting law of Child Maltreatment

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ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF
MINNESOTA'S MANDATORY REPORTING LAW OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the degree of
Master of Social Work

AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

2001

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

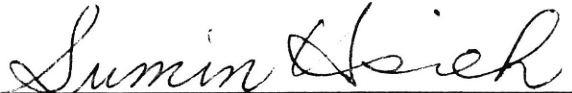
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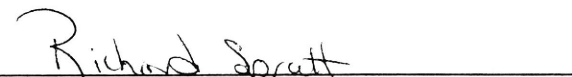
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ABSTRACT**ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF
MINNESOTA'S MANDATORY REPORTING LAW OF CHILD MALTREATMENT****AN EXPLORATORY STUDY****KARA JEAN ROGERS**

JUNE 21, 2001

Although teachers in all 50 states are designated as mandated reporters of child maltreatment, concerns have been expressed regarding their overall knowledge for reporting child abuse and neglect. The purpose of the study is to explore elementary teachers' knowledge regarding Minnesota's mandatory reporting law, the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors, Minnesota Statute 626.556. All full-time and part-time public school elementary teachers from a school district in Central Minnesota were surveyed (N=383). Of those surveyed, 225 (59%) agreed to participate in the study. The data was analyzed by univariate and bivariate analysis. The results indicate that almost all participants who perceived themselves to be knowledgeable regarding their responsibilities for reporting child maltreatment, actually were not. The study is important because it provides the school district with information regarding the types of training teachers need to understand and fulfill their responsibilities as mandated reporters.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Problem

Evidence of child maltreatment can be traced to the beginning of time. In ancient Greece and Rome, children were offered to guests as sexual concubines, sacrificed to the gods, or exposed in extreme conditions to prove their worthiness to live (Breiner, 1990). Scriptures in the Bible support the idea of corporal punishment as a religious guide for child-rearing. "He that spareth the rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24). Even nursery rhymes from the colonial period depict children being "whipped" (Grotberg, 1976, p. 405) into silence. Little, if any, protection was given to children because they were viewed as property rather than people.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of child abuse and neglect continues to be a problem that plagues many societies still today. It is estimated that 3.1 to 4 million children have been maltreated by a parent sometime in their life (Roth, 1998). According to Bescharov & Laumann (1996), child maltreatment includes: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. To combat the issue of child maltreatment in America, legislation has been passed to address the safety of children and the responsibilities of designated professionals to report child abuse and neglect. As a general rule, all professionals who work with children are required by law to report concerns of child maltreatment (Stein, 1998). Therefore, mandated reporters include but are not limited to: dentists, doctors, nurses, social workers, foster parents, group home and residential treatment staff, guardian-ad-litem, therapists, child care workers, clergy, law enforcement personnel, school administrators, and teachers.

Of all mandated reporters, teachers usually have the most ongoing contact with children. They can observe and talk with children 7 hours a day, 5 days a week, 9 months out of the year. For children who have been or are at-risk for being abused or neglected-school can be a safe, structured, supportive environment. However, according to the National Research Council (1993), a national survey found that only 57% of teachers knew their school had written procedures for identifying and reporting child maltreatment. Of the teachers who knew about the written policies, most were not clear about "the nature of existing school policies" (p.184). Approximately two-thirds of teachers in another national survey stated their training on child abuse identification and reporting was inadequate (Abrahams, Casey & Daro, 1992). Public schools are said to make more maltreatment reports than any other facility, however, it is estimated that they fail to report 80% of reportable cases (O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole & Lucal, 1999). Child welfare groups have voiced concern over the low percentage of suspected child maltreatment cases that are actually reported to child protection authorities (National Research Council, 1993).

Significant Purpose of this Study

In recent years, literature has addressed the possible reasons of underreporting by mandated reporters. The actual research on this topic, however, has been minimal. Research on teachers as mandated reporters is even more minuscule. Since children are with teachers more often than any other group of mandated reporters, research is needed to address this issue. A specific area that needs to be studied is teachers' knowledge of their responsibilities for reporting known and suspected child maltreatment. After all, teachers are less likely to report concerns of abuse or neglect if they do not know their responsibilities for reporting.

Research Question

The intent of this exploratory study is to research elementary teachers' knowledge and understanding of Minnesota's mandatory reporting law, the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors, MN Statute 626.556. The research question to be addressed in this study is: What do elementary teachers know about their responsibilities for reporting child maltreatment?

Summary

This chapter provided a background of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, and the research question being addressed. The following chapter will review literature on child maltreatment and mandatory reporting laws. Gaps in the literature that led to the development of this study will also be addressed. Chapter 3 will provide the theoretical frameworks used to understand the basis of the study. Chapter 4 will outline the research design, address measurement issues, and discuss the protection of human subjects. Chapter 5 will present the results of the study. Finally, chapter 6 will discuss the research findings in greater detail, outline the strengths and limitations of the study, discuss implications for the field of social work, and make recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Evidence of child maltreatment can be traced back to ancient history. It continues to be a problem that plagues many societies still today. It is estimated that 3.1 to 4 million children have been physically abused by a parent sometime in their life (Roth, 1998). To combat the issue of child maltreatment in America, legislation has been passed to address the safety of children and the responsibilities of designated professionals to report known and suspected child maltreatment. This literature review will look at child maltreatment and mandatory reporting legislation in a historical context. It will identify the roles and responsibilities of teachers as mandated reporters, summarize related literature, and address gaps in existing research.

Definitions of Child Maltreatment

According to the Minnesota State Legislature (2000), MN Statute 626.556 defines child maltreatment as follows:

“Physical abuse” means any physical injury, mental injury, or threatened injury, inflicted by a person responsible for the child’s care on a child other than by accidental means, or any physical or mental injury that cannot reasonably be explained by the child’s history of injuries, or any aversive and deprivation procedures that have not been authorized under section 245.825 [governs the use of such procedures in facilities serving persons with mental retardation and related conditions]. Abuse does not include reasonable and moderate physical discipline of a child administered by a parent or legal guardian which does not result in injury. Actions which are not reasonable and moderate include, but are not

limited to, any of the following that are done in anger or without regard to the safety of the child:

- (1) throwing, kicking, burning, biting, or cutting a child;
- (2) striking a child with a closed fist;
- (3) shaking a child under age three;
- (4) striking or other actions which result in any nonaccidental injury to a child under 18 months of age;
- (5) unreasonable interference with a child's breathing;
- (6) threatening a child with a weapon;
- (7) striking a child under age one on the face or head;
- (8) purposefully giving a child poison, alcohol, or dangerous, harmful, or controlled substances which were not prescribed for the child by a practitioner, in order to control or punish the child; or other substances that substantially affect the child's behavior, motor coordination, or judgment or that results in sickness or internal injury, or subjects the child to medical procedures that would be unnecessary if the child were not exposed to the substances; or
- (9) unreasonable physical confinement or restraint ... including but not limited to tying, caging, or chaining. [Physical abuse was included in Minnesota's original mandatory reporting law in 1963.]

“Sexual abuse” means the subjection of a child by a person responsible for the child's care, by a person who has a significant relationship to the child, as defined in section 609.341, or by a person in a position of authority, as defined in section 609.341, subdivision 10, to any act which constitutes a violation of section 609.342 (criminal sexual conduct in the first degree), 609.343 (criminal sexual conduct in the second degree), 609.344 (criminal sexual conduct in the fourth degree), or 609.345 (criminal sexual conduct in the fifth degree). [The degree of

Criminal Sexual Contact is related to intimate parts, position of authority, sexual contact, and sexual penetration.] Sexual abuse also includes any act which involves a minor which constitutes a violation of prostitution offenses. Sexual abuse includes threatened sexual abuse. [Sexual abuse was included in Minnesota's original mandatory reporting law of 1963.]

“Neglect” means failure by a person responsible for the child's care to supply a child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, health, medical, or other care required for the child's physical or mental health when reasonably able to do so; failure to protect a child from conditions or actions which imminently and seriously endanger the child's physical and mental health when reasonably able to do so; failure to provide for necessary supervision or child care arrangements appropriate for a child after considering factors as the child's age, mental ability, physical condition, length of absence, or environment, when the child is unable to care for the child's own basic needs or safety, or the basic needs or safety of another child in their care; failure to ensure that the child is educated; or prenatal exposure to a controlled substance, as defined in section 253B.02, subdivision 2, used by the mother for a nonmedical purpose, as evidenced by withdrawal symptoms in the child at birth, results of a toxicology test performed on the mother at delivery or the child's birth, or medical effects or developmental delays during the child's first year of life that medically indicate prenatal exposure to a controlled substance. [Neglect was added to Minnesota's mandatory reporting law in 1978.]

“Mental injury” [also known as Emotional Abuse] means an injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of a child as evidenced by an observable or substantial impairment in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior with due regard to the child's culture. [Examples of mental injury include but are no limited to: a caretaker who displays

a pattern of withholding affection; a child who exhibits low self-esteem or destructive behaviors due to a pattern of belittling, criticizing or blaming by the child's caretaker; or a child who exhibits emotionally disturbed behavior due to a pattern of behavior by the child's caretaker (MN-DHS, 1993).] [Mental injury was added to Minnesota's mandatory reporting law in 1989.]

"Threatened injury" means a statement, overt act, condition, or status that represents a substantial risk of physical or sexual abuse or mental injury.

[Examples of threatened injury include but are limited to: a caretaker who threatens to abandon a child; a caretaker who threatens to physically or sexually abuse a child; or a caretaker who uses a weapon to threaten a child (MN-DHS, 1993).] [Threatened injury was added to Minnesota's mandatory reporting law in 1989.]

History of Child Maltreatment

Evidence of child maltreatment, infanticide, and child scarifies can be traced back to ancient Greece. "Human life was considered so short and cheap that there was little concern about killing" (Breiner, 1990, p. 49). Ancient Greece was a patriarchal society. Male heads of households were allowed to do with their children as they saw fit. Children were offered to guests as sexual concubines, sacrificed to the gods, or exposed in extreme conditions to prove their worthiness to live (Breiner, 1990). The first child of each sex was allowed to live if healthy, but subsequent children were often killed so the family did not have to divide their scared land to other heirs (Breiner, 1990; Lacey, 1968). In fact, infanticide was so common and accepted that many of the comedies and jokes of that era were written about killing children (Breiner, 1990).

Sexual abuse, violence toward child, and infanticide were also commonplace in ancient Rome. Children were viewed as inferior. Young girls were raped and forced to have sex with animals for entertainment, and young boys were scarified to the gods in

secret magical rituals (Breiner, 1990). It was recorded by Horace and other Romans that men would eat the leg marrow and brains of infants to improve their virility, and other body parts were used for love potions (Breiner, 1990). In 374 A. D., legislation was drafted by Valentine, the Christian Emperor, making infanticide a capital offense (Smith, 1978). At that time, however, the Church was more concerned about “the parents’ souls than the destruction of a child’s life” (Breiner, 1990, p. 118).

According to Greven (1991), the most influential source of physical punishment against children has come from people’s interpretation of the Bible. Scriptures in the Old Testament and passages from the New Testament have been used for centuries to sustain the defense for using *the rod* and other forms of physical violence against children (Greven, 1991). Mrs. Morrow Graham, mother of the Reverend Billy Graham, said the following:

Billy was always full of pranks; sometimes he carried things a bit too far, and off came his father’s belt. Mr. Graham never punished in anger or desperation, but when he did see the necessity for correction, I winced. At such times I had to remind myself of another Proverb: “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die” (Proverb 23:13). More than once I wiped tears from my eyes and turned my head so the children wouldn’t see, but I always stood behind my husband when he administered discipline. I knew he was doing what was biblically correct. And the children didn’t die! (Greven, 1991, p.3)

The use of physical punishment is said to correspond with people’s conceptions of God and their interpretations and attitudes toward biblical passages (Greven, 1991). The Book of Proverbs has been used by many people as a religious guide to child-rearing. Some of the passages used to condone physical punishment include: a) “A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool’s back” (26:3); b) “He that spareth his

rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (13:24); c) “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (29:15); d) “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (22:15); e) “The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly” (20:30); and f) “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shall beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell” (23:13-14) (Greven, 1991, pp. 48-49).

In early colonial time, children were only considered important because of their role as laborers in the community (Grotberg, 1978). Children are not mentioned anywhere in the Constitution. They were not afforded any rights because they were viewed as property. Children were perceived as miniature adults who were full of sin, and needed to be “disciplined rigorously” (Grotberg, 1978, p. 406). Even nursery rhymes supported the idea that “children must be seen, not heard” (Grotberg, 1978, p. 406):

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe
 She had so many children she didn't know what to do;
 She gave them some broth without any bread
 She *whipped them all soundly* and put them to bed. (Grotberg, 1978,
 p. 405)

Greven (1991) reports that physical discipline of school children dates back to the colonial period. In 1977, the first case regarding corporal punishment in school was heard before the Supreme Court. The case of *Ingraham v. Wright* involved a 14-year-old boy named James Ingraham, from Drew Junior High (Florida), who was paddled by the school principal at least 20 times. As a result of the paddling, Ingraham suffered severe pain and bruising. The final ruling was that physical punishment at school did not violate either the 8th or 14th Amendments of the Constitution (Greven, 1991). Therefore, schools are limited in restricting speech, but are allowed to use corporal punishment (which can be considered child abuse if used by parents) as a means to discipline children

(Stein, 1998). As of September of 1999, 12 states still condone the use of physical punishment in public schools (Smith, Morrow, & Gray, 1999). According to the Children's Defense Fund (1999), every day 2,658 students suffer corporal punishment in public schools; which equates to about 1 student every 9 seconds.

The U. S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect reports that child maltreatment has reached epidemic proportions- about 3 million reports each year, most of which turn out to be accurate (Brodkin & Coleman, 1995). In Minnesota in 1992, there were 27,462 reports of child maltreatment- because some of the children were involved in more than one type of maltreatment, the sum of allegations totaled 30,536 (Wattenberg, 1994). Of those cases: 15,258 (55.6 %) involved neglect; 11,508 (41.9 %) involved physical abuse; 3,225 (11.7 %) involved sexual abuse, and 545 (2 %) involved emotional abuse (Wattenberg, 1994). Of the 15,258 neglect reports, 6,464 (42 %) were substantiated and most involved children under the age of two (Wattenberg, 1994). In 1990, 32 % of the physical abuse reports were substantiated, 41 % of sexual abuse reports were substantiated, and 55 % of the emotional abuse reports were substantiated (Wattenberg & Cassidy, 1992).

Child Abuse Legislation & Mandatory Reporting Laws

In 1866, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) was formed. The ASPCA was called upon to assist in the *rescue* of Mary Ellen Wilson, a child who was severely abused by her guardians. As a result of the Mary Ellen case, the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (New York SPCC) was established in 1874. In 1880, New Jersey passed the first anti-child abuse legislation. The Legislation made child abuse a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of 10 - 50 dollars and up to 6 months of imprisonment (Nelson, 1984). Other states soon followed suit with their own child maltreatment legislation.

The first White House Conference on Children, the Conference on the Care of Dependent Children, was held in 1909. From this conference, the groundwork was laid for changes in children's lives (Costin, Karger, & Stoesz, 1996). By 1912, the Federal Children's Bureau was created through legislation to address issues regarding the welfare of children. The federal government's involvement in child welfare increased during the New Deal through the Social Security Act of 1935 (Costin et al., 1996; Pelton, 1985). In the 1940s through the 1950s, more services for children were established through the emerging fields of child psychiatry and social work (Tzeng, Jackson, & Karlson, 1991).

In 1962, the Journal of the American Medical Association published the famous article of "The Battered-Child Syndrome," which addressed the seriousness of child abuse. Later that same year, amendments to the Social Security Act were made requiring each state "to develop a plan to extend child welfare services, including protective services, to every political subdivision" (Tzeng et al., 1991). Between 1963 to 1967, every state passed some form of child abuse reporting law. According to DeFrancis (1979), 11 states successfully passed mandatory reporting laws in 1963. By 1965, a total of 47 states had reporting laws; and the final 3 states followed suit with mandatory reporting laws by 1967 (DeFrancis, 1970).

In 1974, Congress passed the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). This was the first time federal legislation had been made in America to combat the issue of child maltreatment. CAPTA was enacted to standardize the definition of child abuse and neglect as well as the procedure for states to respond to maltreatment reports (Costin et al., 1996). It also required that a guardian-ad-litem (court-appointed adult who assures the child's best interest and legal rights are met) is assigned to all child maltreatment cases that are addressed in Court (Pelton, 1985). Through CAPTA, the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) was established within the Department of Health and Human Services. The NCCAN provided a model for state child protection programs. Eventually, all 50 states enacted

this model statute for child protection programs, which included the following: 1) standard definition of child maltreatment; 2) methods for reporting and investigation maltreatment; 3) immunity for those reporting suspected maltreatment of children; and 4) development of prevention services and public education to reduce the incidence of child maltreatment (Costin et al., 1996).

Initially, only physicians were required to report suspected child maltreatment. Since then, the persons designated as mandated reporters have expanded. Under Minnesota law, mandated reporters now include:

A professional or the professional's delegate who is engaged in the practice of the healing arts, social services, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, child care, education, law enforcement, or a member of the clergy.

(MN-DHS, 1993, p. 2)

All states have different wording regarding their designated mandated reporters. Most states include the professionals in the above-stated list. Eighteen states include "any person" in the list of persons mandated to report suspected or known child maltreatment (Hutchinson, 1993). In general, all professionals who come into contact with children are required by law to report suspected or known child maltreatment (Stein, 1998).

Therefore, mandated reporters include but are not limited to: dentists, doctors, nurses, social workers, foster parents, group home and residential treatment staff, guardian-ad-litem, therapists, teachers, school administrators, child care workers, clergy, and law enforcement personnel.

Minnesota's Mandatory Reporting Law

Minnesota Statute 626.556, the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors (2000) states Minnesota's public policy regarding child maltreatment is as follows:

The legislature hereby declares that the public policy of this state is to protect children whose health or welfare may be jeopardized through physical abuse,

neglect or sexual abuse. In furtherance of this public policy, it is the intent of the legislature under this section to strengthen the family and make the home, school, and community safe for children by promoting responsible child care in all settings; and to provide, when necessary, a safe temporary or permanent home environment for physically or sexually abused or neglected children.

In addition, it is the policy of this state to require the reporting of neglect, physical or sexual abuse of children in the home, school, and community settings; to provide for the voluntary reporting of abuse or neglect of children; to require the assessment and investigation of the reports; and to provide protective and counseling services in appropriate cases.

There are four basic assumptions underlying mandatory reporting laws: 1) children need people outside their home to protect them; 2) parents who maltreat their children will not voluntarily seek services; 3) a large number of maltreated children will not be seen by public agencies without mandatory reporting; and 4) mandated reporting by designated professionals will help to ensure accurate and complete reports of child maltreatment (Hutchinson, 1993).

According to the Minnesota Department of Human Services (1993), the law requires that mandated professionals report all known and suspected child maltreatment that has occurred within the preceding 3 years. The reporter is only responsible to report maltreatment, they are not responsible to investigate or prove maltreatment has occurred. Mandated reporters can contact their local social service agency and talk with child protection staff to determine if a particular situation is reportable (MN-DHS, 1993).

Mandated reporters must contact either the local social service agency or law enforcement to make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect. According to Lowenthal (1996) "A report is a request for an investigation into a suspected cause of abuse" (p. 22). In instances of imminent danger [such as abandonment or current severe

abuse], reporters are advised to contact their local police or sheriff's department [as law enforcement can immediately remove a child from a dangerous environment by placing him or her in protective custody.] (MN-DHS, 1993). An oral report of suspected child maltreatment must be given as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours. The oral report can be given by telephone or in person. A written report must follow up the oral report within 72 hours, excluding holidays and weekends, of learning the information. The written report should include: 1) child's name, age, address; 2) the person believed to be responsible for the maltreatment; 3) nature or extent of the maltreatment; and 4) name and phone number of the reporter (MN-DHS, 1993). Social services or law enforcement will determine if the report meets legal criteria for assessment, and investigate if necessary.

The law provides certain protections for reporters: 1) the reporter's name is kept confidential (unless ordered by the Court); 2) the reporter is immune from civil and criminal liability (if the report is given in good faith); and 3) retaliation by their employer is prohibited (MN-DHS, 1993). It is a misdemeanor if a person mandated by law does not report suspected or known child maltreatment (DeFrancis, 1970). In Minnesota, a mandated reporter who fails to report child maltreatment may be sued for monetary damages. The court will typically consider four elements: 1) whether the person had a legal duty to report; 2) whether the person failed his or her duty to report; 3) whether the child was actually maltreated; and 4) whether the failure to report was the proximate cause of the child's maltreatment (Gullatt, 1999; Yell, 1996). Any person who falsely reports child maltreatment is liable under civil suit and may have to pay actual or punitive damages set by the court or a jury (MN-DHS, 1993).

Mandated Reporters

Professional literature and research identifies several reasons why mandated reporters are not reporting. According to the literature (Besharov & Laumann, 1996;

Brodkin & Coleman, 1995; Gullatt, 1999; Hutchinson, 1993; Lowenthal, 1996; Nunnelley & Fields, 1998; Nunnelley & Fields, 1999; Tite, 1993), the main factors that affected a mandated reporters decision to report includes: 1) lack of knowledge about the reporting process; 2) frustration with the child protection system; 3) conflicting values; and 4) case characteristics.

Lack of knowledge about the reporting process is one reason some mandated reporters may ignore their duties to report. There is a misconception among mandated reporters that they must *prove* maltreatment has occurred (Nunnelley & Fields, 1999). In actuality, a reporter only needs "reasonable suspicions" (Yell, 1996) that abuse or neglect has happened or is likely to happen. The legal standard for reasonable suspicion is that a reasonable person would have had similar concerns about the situation (Alexander & Alexander, 1992). Furthermore, child protection investigators and law enforcement do not want reporters to investigate suspected maltreatment. If the case goes to trial, allegations may be brought up that the child was coerced or tricked into falsely reporting. Therefore, it is best if the child only gives his or her full statement to trained investigators. A second misconception is that the alleged perpetrator will be told who made the report, and therefore, may retaliate (Nunnelley & Fields, 1998). By law, reporters' names are confidential. The only times a reporter's identity would be disclosed is if a false report was believed to have been given intentionally, or if it was deemed necessary by the Court (MN-DHS, 1993).

Frustration with child protective services (CPS) is another identified reason that mandated reporters fail to report. Zellman & Antler (1990) conducted a national survey of 2,000 mandated reporters in 15 states. Respondents were asked their professional background, reporting history, and the factors that affect their decisions whether or not to report. Following the survey results, 6 states were selected for field visits based on four variables: 1) percentage of respondents who had made maltreatment reports in the last year; 2) percentage of respondents who stated they always received feedback from CPS;

3) respondents perception of the amount of children who benefit from mandatory reporting laws; and 4) percentage of respondents who had or expected to encounter difficulty making a report [due to busy telephone lines] to the proper authorities- CPS or law enforcement (Zellman & Antler). The study found that most mandated reporters were frustrated with CPS and their responsibility to report maltreatment. Many respondents stated their decision not to report all instances of maltreatment was due to frustrations with busy phone lines, anger over previously screened-out or unsubstantiated reports, and concern regarding the effectiveness of social service interventions (Zellman & Antler).

The selection of the research respondents creates a question as to the study's reliability. According to the report, the surveyed professionals were "clustered" (Zellman & Antler, 1990, p. 30) in 15 states. Of the 15 states, only 2,000 mandated reporters were surveyed. Of those surveyed, only 55% responded and 6 states were selected for site visits. Therefore, a total of 103 mandated reporters were interviewed for the study (Zellman & Antler). It is unlikely that the results from this small sample would be consistent with the views of the overall population of mandated reporters. Therefore, the findings of this survey may not be representative of mandated reporters at large.

Teachers as Mandated Reporters

In all 50 states, teachers are designated as mandated reporters, and thus are legally obligated to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect. The U. S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect has stated that the nation's educational system has the ability to be "the linchpin of efforts to protect children from abuse and neglect" (Yell, 1996). Teachers are usually with children more frequently and for longer duration of time, than all other mandated reporters. They have the most opportunity to observe and talk with children on an almost daily basis. However, according to the National Research Council (1993), a national survey found that only 57% of teachers knew their school had written

procedures for identifying and reporting child maltreatment. Of the teachers who knew about the written policies, most were not clear about “the nature of existing school policies” (p.184). Approximately two-thirds of teachers in another national survey believed their training on child abuse identification and reporting was inadequate (Abrahams, et al., 1992).

Child maltreatment reports have exceeded 3 million a year, and will likely continue to grow (Helfer, Kempe & Krugman, 1997). According to Besharov & Laumann (1996), a large amount of the maltreatment reports received by child protection agencies would not have been made without the passage of mandatory reporting laws. Over half of all maltreatment reports are initiated by mandated reporters (Doueck & Levine, 1997). Public schools are said to make more maltreatment reports than any other institution, however, it is estimated that they fail to report an estimated 80% of all reportable cases (O’Toole, et al., 1999). The low percentage of suspected child maltreatment cases that are actually reported to child protection authorities has been of special concern for child welfare groups (National Research Council, 1993).

Conflicting values is identified as another possible reason mandated reporters may chose not to report suspected child maltreatment (Nunnelley & Fields, 1999; Tite, 1993). It is suggested that teachers are particularly reluctant to interfere with a parent’s right to discipline their child (Tite, 1993). What one teacher personally considers abusive behavior may be viewed by another teacher as an appropriate means of discipline. Teachers may also feel that having to identify and report child abuse and neglect takes away valuable time from their job as educators (Nunnelley & Fields, 1999). Nowadays, graduation standards is the new focus of schools. Teachers’ schedules are very busy and they have limited, if any, down time. Finally, teachers may also be concerned about repercussions to the child [i.e.. further abuse or removal from the home] if a report is made (Nunnelley & Fields, 1998).

Reporter and organization characteristics were also identified as determining factor in the reporting of maltreatment. O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole & Lucal (1999) conducted a factorial survey of 480 teachers regarding their recognition and reporting of child abuse. They studied personal characteristics of the reporter and characteristics of the organization (school). Variables describing the teachers were categorized by "socialization regarding abuse, specific attitudes and beliefs regarding reporting, and past reporting behavior" (p. 1089). Variables for the organizations characteristics were divided into "school size (number of students and teachers); number of students seen per day; location of school; source of school support (public, Catholic, non-Catholic, private non-religious); and school procedures for handling suspected cases of child abuse" (p.1089).

The study concluded that the variables describing teachers did little to explain the variance for the recognition and reporting of maltreatment. Teachers' evaluations of Child Protection Services (CPS) was the only significant variable for measuring their attitudes and beliefs. Teachers who gave a high evaluation of CPS recognized and reported more abuse (O'Toole, et al., 1999). A significant difference was noted in the different types of schools. Catholic school teachers had the highest recognition and reporting of abuse, while public school teachers had the lowest (O'Toole, et al., 1999). Not surprising, more reports were filed in schools where there were more teachers.

Gaps in the Literature

Research has revealed alarming statistics regarding the amount of documented maltreatment to children in America; however, research on child abuse is a relatively new development (Gullatt, 1999). In recent years, literature has addressed the possible reasons of underreporting by mandated reporters (Besharov & Laumann, 1996; Brokin & Coleman, 1995; Gullatt, 1999; Hutchinson, 1993; Lowenthal, 1996; Nunnelley & Fields, 1998; Nunnelley & Fields, 1999; O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole & Lucal, 1999; Tite, 1993;

Yell, 1996; Zellman & Antler, 1990). The actual research in this topic; however, has been minimal (O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole & Lucal, 1999; Zellman & Antler, 1990). Research specific to teachers as mandated reporters is even more minuscule (O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole & Lucal, 1999).

Since children are with teachers more than any other group of mandated reporters, research is needed to address this issue. A specific area that needs to be studied is teachers' knowledge of their responsibilities for reporting suspected and known child maltreatment. After all, teachers are less likely to report concerns of abuse and neglect if they do not know or understand their responsibilities for reporting. The goal of this research project is to fill that gap by surveying teachers in a local school district regarding their knowledge of reporting child maltreatment, pursuant to Minnesota Statute 626.566, the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors. The results of the survey can be used to determine what, if any, training is needed or desired for teachers to understand and fulfill their duties as mandated reporters.

Summary

This chapter provided literature on child maltreatment and mandatory reporting laws. It identified the roles and responsibilities of teachers as mandated reporters, summarized related literature, and addressed gaps in the existing research. The next chapter will address the theoretical frameworks of the systems theory and advocacy theory to help understand the relevance of the study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks

Introduction

In this chapter, systems theory and the theory of advocacy will be used to examine and address the issues involved with teachers as mandated reporters of child maltreatment. Since teachers are with children more often than any other group of mandated reporters, their involvement in the protection of children is crucial.

Systems Theory

The general systems theory was derived from biology by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in the 1930s (Nicholas & Schwartz, 1998). Bertalanffy introduced this as a new approach to understanding organisms in nature as systems with holistic properties which cannot be found separately in individual parts (Andreae, 1996). From this, there was a gradual shift from focusing on the individual to understand the important of the “person-environment interrelatedness and person-situation transactions” (Andreae, 1996, p. 605). One of the primary assumptions of the systems theory includes wholeness. The wholeness of a system can be described like a ripple-effect, change in any one part of the system will cause changes in all parts throughout the system (Kilpatrick & Holland, 1999). Because systems are constantly changing and interacting with its environment, a balance must exist among the parts of the system in order to function effectively (Nichols & Schwartz, 1998).

Systems theory is critical when looking at the effectiveness of mandated reporting of child maltreatment. There are several key players involved in the system of protecting children. These key players include the children themselves, their families, mandated reporters, the community, and the judicial system. Parents are primarily responsible for the care and welfare of their children, but history has proven that parents do not always

fulfill that responsibility. In fact, sometimes parents are responsible for committing crimes against their children. Because of this concern, legislation has been developed to address the safety of children. To help ensure that the legislation will be followed, certain professionals have been designated as mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are obligated by law to report all cases of known, suspected, and threatened child maltreatment. In all 50 states teachers are designated as mandated reporters. This is important because they have more day-to-day contact with children than any other group of mandated reporters.

If a teacher suspects or knows that a child is being or has been maltreated in the past 3 years, they are obligated to report it to their local social service agency or law enforcement department. When mandated reporters comply with their legal obligations, community agencies (such as social services or law enforcement) get involved to determine the level of risk and what, if any, intervention or services are needed. The court can be brought in, if needed, to help monitor the child's welfare and the family's compliance with services. However, failure in any one part of the above system, will result in failure in the entire system of protecting children.

If teachers are not aware of or do not understand their legal responsibilities as a mandated reporter, then they may not report or wait too long to report alleged maltreatment. Their failure to report may lead to ongoing maltreatment to a child and potentially, the child's death. It is important that teachers understand all of their responsibilities as a mandated reporter. By following the guidelines and procedures of Minnesota's mandatory reporting law, they are actively participating and contributing to the system of protecting children.

When focusing on teachers roles as mandated reporters, other systems come to play. For example, teachers themselves are mandated reporters, however, teachers often rely on the support and training of their districts regarding the reporting of child maltreatment. Because child maltreatment laws can be amended yearly, districts rely on

the local social service agencies to keep them abreast of the latest changes and requirements. If the social service agency fails to notify the school district of these changes, teachers will most likely go unaware of those changes, and children will suffer the consequences. Furthermore, if districts do not provide the training to keep teachers informed of their responsibilities, many teachers may not complete life-saving reports. Therefore, as a system working together to protect children, it is vital that all key players understand and fulfill their responsibilities for the system to be successful.

Theory of Advocacy

According to Payne (1997), the theory of advocacy originated in the legal field. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has expanded the term advocacy to promote social justice and social change for all, especially those who are not able to speak or act on their own behalf (Reamer, 1998). The primary objective of advocacy is that people with resources and knowledge are responsible to help ensure that others, who are less fortunate, are afforded the same basic human rights. One of the most important basic human rights is that of safety.

The 1974 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was the first federal legislation in America to combat the issue of child maltreatment. It helped to establish the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN), which designated certain persons who are mandated by law to report suspected and known child maltreatment. The goal behind mandated reporting is to provide a formal process for protecting children. Among other professionals, teachers are designated as mandated reporters in all 50 states.

Teachers who understand the important role they play in the system of protecting children are more likely to comply with their responsibilities as a mandated reporter, despite conflicting values, fear of repercussions, or frustration with Child Protective Services. Teachers need to be told they are a valued and necessary component in the

child welfare system. Due to the nature of their jobs, teachers have time to build a rapport with children so they may disclose if they are being abused or neglected. When children disclose such information, or show signs that maltreatment may be occurring, it is a teacher's duty to advocate for the child's protection. If a teacher chooses to disregard the information or discredit the child, he or she may never tell again. The primary way for teachers to accomplish this advocacy for children is to fulfill their responsibilities as mandated reporters. It is not a teacher's responsibility to decide what is or is not worth investigating. They must report all concerns of child maltreatment.

Children need advocates because they are often unable to speak for or defend themselves. They are counting on teachers to help them lead safe, fulfilling lives. When teachers have a better understanding of their roles as advocates for children, they may actively seek out information regarding the ever-changing reporting laws, resulting in safer lives for children.

Summary

This chapter examined the systems theory and theory of advocacy as tools for understanding the importance of teachers advocating for children through mandated reporting. The next chapter will outline the methods used to conduct the study, including the protection of human participants.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will explain the methods used to conduct the study. The discussion will include the research question, research design, definitions of concepts, participant demographics, sample selection, measurement issues, data collection, data analysis, and procedures for the protection of human subjects.

Research Question

The intent of this exploratory study was to research elementary teachers' knowledge and understanding of Minnesota's mandatory reporting law, the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors, MN Statute 626.556. The research question to be addressed in this study was: What do elementary teachers know about their responsibilities for reporting child maltreatment?

Research Design

The research design was an exploratory, quantitative survey. The questionnaire included sixteen closed-ended questions regarding teacher demographics, teachers' knowledge of reporting procedures and guidelines, previous training regarding mandated reporting, and teachers' opinions regarding their overall knowledge and needs about reporting child maltreatment. The survey answer-options were mutually exclusive and exhaustive, using "other- please explain" when appropriate.

According to Rubin & Babbie (1997), there are many strengths of survey research. First, survey research is useful for studying large groups of people. Therefore, this survey provided a more accurate depiction of the participants' overall knowledge, opinions, or beliefs regarding mandated reporting of child maltreatment. Second, surveys allow

researchers to analyze several variables at the same time. Therefore, the relationship between numerous variables in this study were assessed simultaneously

Rubin & Babbie (1997) also note several limitations of survey research. First, the use of standardized questions in survey research does not always capture people's experiences, opinions, or attitudes. This is especially true in quantitative surveys, because the participant must chose one of the response options, instead of answering in their own words. Second, because the survey was relatively short in length, it may not have asked enough questions to reflect the participants' true knowledge and opinions. Finally, surveys only reflect what people *say* they would do, but cannot show what they *actually* would do. Therefore, a participant may believe they would respond in a certain way to a situation, but in actuality they may respond very differently when they encounter that situation. Overall, due to the large sample size that was studied, a self-administered questionnaire was appropriate for this research project.

Definition of Concepts

The units of analysis were public school elementary teachers in a particular school district. The dependent variable in this research study was the teachers' "knowledge" regarding mandated reporting responsibilities and procedures. The variables it was compared to were "type(s) of teaching licenses", "years of experience", and "employment status". For the purpose of this study, the concepts were defined as follows:

Elementary school: a school with grades ranging from kindergarten to 6th grade

Teacher: a person who is licensed to teach by the Department of Children, Families, and Learning.

Knowledge: information someone has in their memory regarding a specific topic

Responsibilities: actions someone is suppose to perform

Previous training: inservice (in school), workshop (out of school), college course, staff meeting, and written information that occurred prior to completing the survey

Type of teaching license: classroom teacher (general teaching license- Kindergarten through 6th grade), specialist (teaching license in Music, Art, Physical Education, Media, English as a Second Language, and Reading), special education (teaching license for Emotional/Behavior Disorders, Learning Disabilities, Developmentally Disabled, Speech Therapist)

Years of experience: number of years paid as a teacher

Employment status: full-time (7:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. for every scheduled school day- contracted for the full school year), part-time (less than 7:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. or not every scheduled school day- contracted for the full school year), substitute (contracted on a hourly, daily or monthly basis)

Mandated reporter: “A professional or the professional’s delegate who is engaged in the practice of the healing arts, social services, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, child care, education, law enforcement, or a member of the clergy” (MN-DHS, 1993, p. 2).

Child maltreatment: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse/mental injury, neglect, and threatened injury (Refer to Definitions of Child Maltreatment in Chapter 2, pg. 4-7).

Participant Demographics

The participants for this study were all elementary public school teachers from a school district in Central Minnesota. Although the identities of those who participated are not known, based on the teachers in the school district, one can assume the ages, gender, and races of the participants were varied. However, the majority of teachers in the district are believed to be middle-aged Caucasian women. All of the teachers have a

minimum of a four-year college degree with an elementary teaching license from the Department of Children, Families, and Learning.

Sample

All full-time and part-time public school elementary teachers in a school district in Central Minnesota were surveyed for the study (N=383). The list of the teachers and their assigned buildings was obtained from the 2000-2001 Staff Directory.

Measurement Issues

According to Rubin & Babbie (1997), "it is virtually impossible to avoid all possible sources of measurement error" (p. 170). In this study, there is a likelihood that social desirability bias could have occurred. Due to the research topic, participants may have stated what they believed to be socially desirable rather than how they truly felt. They may also have looked up the correct answers to the reporting questions in the survey so it looked as though they were knowledgeable of their reporting responsibilities. Systematic error may have occurred if the participants misinterpreted a question, and then answered the question based on that misinterpretation.

Random error is of low concern for this study for three reasons. First, completion of the survey was voluntary. Therefore, participants would have likely chosen not to complete the survey rather than randomly select answers. Second, the participants were educated professionals. They tend to take work-related responsibilities (mandated reporting) seriously. Third, the intent of the study was to determine what, if any, training teachers need regarding mandated reporting. It is doubtful that a teacher would intentionally randomly select answers knowing that it may result in lengthy, unnecessary training.

Reliability and validity were also measurement issues in the study. Because the study is based on knowledge, and learning in an ongoing process, it is unlikely that the

same results would be reached in a later study. Furthermore, if participants were alerted to their lack of knowledge regarding mandated reporting (which they are legally responsible to abide), they may seek out the necessary information to increase their knowledge in that area.

There were several benefits to using a quantitative survey for this research design. First, closed-ended survey responses were easily coded for charting. Therefore, the results of the questionnaire were analyzed to identify patterns and themes. Second, the survey format should have been easy for participants to complete. It required little time and energy on the participant's behalf. Third, pre-testing was conducted to ensure clarity and content of the questions. Fourth, it was easy for the researcher to administer the survey to a large group of participants. After writing the questions, the researcher only had to distribute the surveys to the appropriate buildings. Finally, the closed-ended quantitative survey was able to assess the teachers' knowledge without the teachers' identities being revealed to anyone, including the researcher. Therefore, the participants were more likely to answer the survey questions honestly and openly.

There were also some limitations to conducting this research design. First, the researcher was not available to probe the participants for more information or to give clarification regarding the intent of a question. Second, the spontaneity of a response could not be captured. Since participants were given two weeks to complete the survey, they had time to think about or look up their answers rather than stating what first came to mind.

Data Collection

The questionnaire included sixteen closed-ended questions regarding teacher demographics, reporting procedures and guidelines, and training history and needs (see Appendix D). The demographic questions included types of teaching licenses, years of experience as a licensed teacher, and current employment status. The procedural

questions included guidelines and timelines for reporting maltreatment, consequences for failing to report, and protection for the reporter. The training questions included knowledge regarding their schools' policies for reporting, types of training teachers have received, their opinions regarding their overall knowledge of reporting responsibilities, training topics they want or need, and preferences for training format. The survey answer-options were mutually exclusive and exhaustive, using "other- please explain" when appropriate.

The questionnaire was pre-tested twice before conducting the official study. The first pre-test included fellow MSW students at Augsburg. The second pre-test included non-teaching school personnel (principal, school social worker, school counselor, and school psychologist). The questionnaire was amended for clarity and content based on the feedback from the two pre-test groups.

The official questionnaires were hand delivered to each elementary school in the district, and either the researcher or secretarial staff distributed the surveys in the appropriate mail boxes. Included with the questionnaire was a cover letter, instructions, a sucker (as an incentive), and a pre-addressed return envelope. Instructions were clearly stated on the top of the first page of the questionnaire. Participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary, and their consent to participate in the study was assumed if they returned a completed questionnaire. Teachers were asked to complete the survey based on their immediate knowledge (not looking up the answers or asking others for assistance). They were instructed to return the completed questionnaire in the provided pre-addressed envelope within 2 weeks (a specific return date of March 13, 2001, was given).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was completed in two steps. First, univariate analysis was conducted to determine the frequency and percentage of responses. Second, bivariate

analysis was conducted through chi-square testing to assess the relationship between variables. The variables: “types of teaching license” (question 1 in survey), “years of experience” (question 2), and “employment status” (question 3) were assessed to determine the relationship between the teachers knowledge of the variables: “reportable offenses” (question 4), “timelines for reporting” (questions 5 , 6, & 7), “failure to report” (question 8), “protection of reporters” (question 9), “school policies” (questions 10 & 11), “previous training” (questions 12 & 13), “opinion regarding their overall knowledge mandated reporting responsibilities” (question 14), “training topics needed or wanted” (question 15), and “preference for training format” (question 16). To ensure accuracy of the charted results, the data was hand checked prior to finalizing the results.

Human Subjects

Careful attention was made to ensure the protection of participants. The researcher obtained written approval from the school district and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Augsburg College prior to administering the questionnaire. (IRB approval #2001-14-1.) The study was anonymous. No identifying questions were asked. Participants were instructed not to write any identifying information on the questionnaire or return envelope. Therefore, even the researcher does not know the identities of those who choose to participate.

The participants were informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntary; it would not affect their employment with the school district and their relationship with Augsburg College. Returning a completed questionnaire was viewed as the participant’s informed consent to participate in the study. The raw data will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home, and will be destroyed by August of 2001. A copy of the final study will be given to the participating school district. All participants and other school employees can request to view the district’s copy of the final report.

Summary

This chapter addressed the methods used to conduct the study. An exploratory, quantitative questionnaire was sent to all elementary public school teachers in a Central Minnesota school district (N=383). A response rate of 59% was received for the study. Pre-testing of the instrument occurred prior to distributing the official questionnaire. The data was analyzed by univariate and bivariate analysis. In the next chapter, the results of the study will be presented.

Chapter 5: Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study. Information will be given regarding participant demographics, knowledge regarding reporting procedures and timelines, previous training, opinions regarding overall knowledge of reporting responsibilities, training topics needed or desired, and preferences for training format.

The intent of this exploratory study was to research elementary teacher's knowledge and understanding of Minnesota's mandatory reporting law, Minnesota Statute 626.556, the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors. The research question to be answered is: What do elementary teachers know about their responsibilities for reporting child maltreatment? The research question will be answered by analyzing the responses to questions 4-9 in the questionnaire (See Appendix D). Finally, the responses to questions 4-9, 15, and 16 will help to determine what, if any, training is needed or desired, and if so, how it should be presented.

Demographics of Participants

Of the 383 distributed questionnaires, 225 (59%) chose to participate in the study. Of the participants, 56.9% identified themselves as elementary classroom teachers, 21.8% were special education teachers, 9.3% were specialists, and 12% stated they had more than one of the above-stated licenses. (See Table 5.1). The teachers who participated in the study had various levels of experience, as shown in Table 5.2. The majority of the participants (67.1%) had 10 or more years of teaching experience, which was twice as much as the other four categories combined. Most of the participants (92.9%) were employed full-time, 6.7% were part-time, and .4% did not identify their employment status. (See Table 5.3).

Table 5.1: Types of Teaching Licenses

Teaching Licenses	Frequency	Percent
classroom	128	56.9
special education	49	21.8
specialist	21	9.3
classroom & special education	15	6.7
classroom & specialist	7	3.1
classroom & other	2	.9
specialist & special education	2	.9
classroom, special ed. & specialist	1	.4
TOTAL	225	100.0

Table 5.2: Years of Teaching Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent
less than 2 years	11	4.9
2-4 years	21	9.3
5-7 years	16	7.1
8-10 years	26	11.6
more than 10 years	151	67.1
TOTAL	225	100.0

Table 5.3: Employment Status

Employment	Frequency	Percent
full-time	209	92.9
part-time	15	6.7
TOTAL*	224	99.6

*Does not equal 100% due to missing data

Knowledge of Reporting Procedures

Questions 4-9 in the questionnaire determined the participant's knowledge regarding what is reportable as child maltreatment, the timelines for reporting, consequences for failure to report, and the protection of reporters (See Appendix D). Of the 225 participants, only 7 (3%) correctly answered all five of the reporting questions. However, none (0%) of the participants incorrectly answered all of the questions.

Reportable Offenses

A majority of the participants (70.6%) knew they were obligated to report all types of child abuse and neglect (known, suspected, and threatened). However, 20% did not identify threats of child abuse and threats of neglect as reportable offenses, 1.8% stated you only have to report known abuse and neglect, and another 1.8% stated you do not have to report any type of neglect. (See Table 5.4). There was no significant relationship between the identified reportable offenses and types of teaching licenses, years of experience, or employment status.

Table 5.4: What Mandated Reporters are Obligated to Report

Obligated to Report	Frequency	Percent
all known, suspected, and threatened abuse & neglect	159	70.6
known & suspected abuse & neglect	45	20.0
suspected abuse & neglect	6	2.7
known abuse & neglect	4	1.8
known, suspected & threats of abuse	4	1.8
known, suspected, & threats of abuse, and known & suspected neglect	4	1.8
known & suspected abuse	2	.9
known, suspected & threats of abuse and known neglect.	1	.4
TOTAL	225	100.0

Timelines for Reporting

Oral Report. When examining the timelines for making an oral report of maltreatment, 52.4% answered correctly by stating an oral report must be made “immediately, but no longer than 24 hours of learning about the maltreatment”. Another 25.3% stated the oral report should be made 12 hours earlier, and 18.8% were not sure. (See Table 5.5). The years of teaching experience and the identified timelines for making an oral report of child maltreatment were statistically significant, $X^2=31.312$, $df=16$, $p<.05$ (see Appendix E). More participants (63%) with 5-7 years of teaching experience knew the correct answer compared to any other group.

Table 5.5: Timeline for Making an Oral Report of Child Maltreatment

Oral Report	Frequency	Percent
immediately, but no longer than 12 hours of learning about the maltreatment	57	25.3
immediately, but no longer than 24 hours of learning about the maltreatment	118	52.4
within 48 hours of learning about the maltreatment, excluding holidays and weekends	7	3.1
within 72 hours of learning about the maltreatment, excluding holidays and weekends	1	.4
not sure	42	18.8
TOTAL	225	100.0

Written Report. Most participants (80.4%) *did not* know the correct timeline for sending a written maltreatment report. Only 19.6% correctly identified that a written report must be sent “within 72 hours of the oral report, excluding holidays and weekends”. A total of 51.5% stated a written report should be made within 48 hours or as soon as possible, and 25.8 % were not sure of the timeline. (See Table 5.6). The difference between the identified timelines for a written report and types of teaching licenses, years of experience, or employment status was not statistically significant.

Table 5.6: Timeline for Making a Written Report of Child Maltreatment

Written Report	Frequency	Percent
as soon as possible	36	16.0
within 48 hours of the oral report, excluding holidays and weekends	80	35.5
within 72 hours of the oral report, excluding holidays and weekends	44	19.6
with 5 business days, excluding holidays and weekends	5	2.2
within 7 calendar days	2	.9
not sure	58	25.8
TOTAL	225	100.0

Past Maltreatment. Only 11.1% knew that a mandated reporter is legally responsible to report all types of child maltreatment that has happened “within the last 3 years”. A majority of the participants (41.3%) stated they were “not sure”, 32.9% said there was “no time limit” for reporting past maltreatment, and 4.9% stated you only had to report maltreatment that occurred within the “past week”. (See Table 5.7). There was no significant relationships between the identified timelines for reporting past maltreatment and the types of teaching licenses, years of experience, or employment status.

Table 5.7: Timeline for Reporting Past Child Maltreatment

Reporting Past Maltreatment	Frequency*	Percent*
within the past week	11	4.9
within the last month	3	1.3
within the last 6 months	4	1.8
within the last year	8	3.6
within the last 2 years	4	1.8
within the last 3 years	25	11.1
within the last 4 years	0	0.0
within the last 5 years	0	0.0
no time limit	74	32.9
not sure	93	41.3
TOTAL	222	98.7

* Does not equal 100% due to missing data

Consequence for Failure to Report and Protection of Reporters

Over half (62.7%) of the participants knew it is a “misdemeanor” if a mandated reporter fails to report known, suspected, or threatened child maltreatment. (See Table 5.8). The difference between the identified consequences for failing to report maltreatment and types of teaching licenses, years of experience, or employment status was not statistically significant. Almost all of the participants (89.8%) knew the reporter’s identify is NOT usually disclosed to the alleged perpetrator. (See Table 5.9). However, there was a significant relationship when comparing years of experience to their knowledge regarding the reporter’s protection against disclosure, $X^2=12.784$, $df=4$, $p < .05$ (see Appendix F). Typically, the more years of teaching experience, the higher percentage of participants knew the correct answer. Seventy-three percent of participants with less than 2 years of experience answered it correctly, compared to 95% of participants with more than 10 years of teaching experience. The exception to this was that 94% of participants with 5-7 years of experience knew the correct answer, compared to 88% of participants with 8-10 years of experience.

Table 5.8: Consequence for Not Reporting

Consequence	Frequency*	Percent*
felony	60	26.7
misdemeanor	141	62.7
no crime	10	4.4
Total	211	93.8

*Does not equal 100% due to missing data

Table 5.9: Disclosure of Reporter’s Identity

Disclose?	Frequency*	Percent*
true	20	8.9
false	202	89.8
Total	222	98.7

*Does not equal 100% due to missing data

Training

Of the 225 participants, 84% stated their school has a written policy for reporting child abuse or neglect, and 74.2% stated they know their school's reporting policy. However, 40% stated they had not received any written information this school year regarding reporting procedures. (See Table 5.10). There were no significant differences between those who identified receiving written information in the past year and the types of teaching licenses, years of experience, or employment status.

Table 5.10: Received Written Information this School Year

Written Information this Year	Frequency	Percent
yes	127	56.4
no	90	40.0
TOTAL*	217	96.4

* Does not equal 100% due to missing data

Training Over the Past Two Years

When determining what, if any, training teachers have received over the past two years, 58.2% stated they had mandated reporting training during a staff meeting, 45.3% indicated they were given written information, 23.1% stated they had been trained during a school inservice, and 16.4% stated they have not had any training regarding mandated reporting. (See Table 5.11). In the “other” category, eight participants identified getting training regarding mandated reporting as follows:

- school social worker, psychologist, or principal (4)
- MEA Newspaper (1)
- SPRAD training (2)
- student teaching experience (1)

It should be noted, some participants indicated they had received more than one training within the past two years by selecting more than one category. (Participants were asked to “check all that apply”.) A significant relationship was noted between which participants reported not having mandated reporter training, those who reported having training in staff meetings, and those who received written information and their years of teaching experience, and employment status.

Table 5.11: Training in the Past Two Years

Training	Frequency*	Percent*
no training	37	16.4
school inservice	52	23.1
workshop (outside of school)	8	3.6
college course	3	1.3
staff meeting	131	58.2
written information	102	45.3
other	8	3.6

*Does not total 225 or 100% because participants were asked to check all that apply

There was a statistically significant relationship between the employment status and those who reported having mandated reporter training in a staff meeting in the past 2 years. Sixty percent of all full-time employees reported having mandated reporter training during a staff meeting, compared to only 27% of part-time employees, $X^2=6.496$, $df=1$, $p<.05$ (see Appendix G).

There were also significant relationships between the years of teaching experience and those who reported not having mandated reporter training, were trained during a staff meetings, and those who received written information. Thirty-six percent of all teachers with less than 2 years of teaching experience reported not having any training regarding mandated reporting in the past two years. Six percent of teachers with 5-7 years experiences stated the same, $X^2=12.713$, $df=4$, $p<.05$ (see Appendix H). Eighteen percent of participants with less than 2 years of experience reported having mandated reporter training in a staff meeting within the last 2 years, and 65% of participants with more than 10 years of experience stated the same, $X^2=20.613$, $df=4$, $p<.01$ (see Appendix I). Finally, only 9% of participants with less than 2 years of teaching experience reported getting written information on mandated reporting, compared to over 50% of all teachers with 5 or more years of teaching experience, $X^2=16.674$, $df=4$, $p<.01$ (see Appendix J).

Opinion of Overall Knowledge

Over half of all participants (58.7%) stated they felt “knowledgeable” regarding their “responsibilities as a mandated reporter”. (See Table 5.12). However, only 7 (3%) of the 225 participants correctly answered all five reporting questions. When looking at just questions 5-7 regarding reporting timelines, only 15 (7%) correctly answered all three questions. Of the 225 participants, 65 (29%) incorrectly answered all three of the timeline questions or had a combination of incorrect answers and stated they were “not sure,” and 31 (14%) reported they were “not sure” for all three questions. Of the 65 participants who incorrectly answered the timeline questions, 41 (63%) identified themselves as “knowledgeable” of their responsibilities as a mandated reporter. Furthermore, 5 (16%) of the 31 participants who answered “not sure” for all of the timeline questions also identified themselves as “knowledgeable” of their responsibilities as a mandated reporter.

There were statistically significant relationships between the participants’ opinion regarding their overall knowledge of mandated reporting responsibilities and the timelines for making an oral report, $X^2=32.722$, $df=8$, $p<.01$ (see Appendix K); timelines for making a written report, $X^2=38.936$, $df=10$, $p<.01$ (see Appendix L); and the timelines for reporting past maltreatment, $X^2=26.122$, $df=14$, $p<.05$ (see Appendix M).

Table 5.12: Opinion Regarding Overall Knowledge of Responsibilities

Knowledgeable?	Frequency*	Percent*
yes	132	58.7
no	82	36.4
TOTAL	214	95.1

*Does not equal 100% due to missing data

Training Topics Needed or Wanted

When determining what type(s) of training teachers want or need, over half of all participants (50.7%) stated they want to know “when to report (timelines)” child maltreatment, 48% stated they want information on the “behaviors or characteristics of children who may be abused or neglected”, and 13.3% stated they did not need or desire any type of training regarding mandated reporting. (See Table 5.13). In the “other” category, ten participants identified wanting or needing training on the following topics:

- review of district policy (1)
- social services responsibilities (1)
- training for paraprofessionals (1)
- how to document for later reference (1)
- chain of command for reporting (1)
- effective reporting (1)
- review of all mandated reporting responsibilities (4)

Table 5.13: Training Topics Needed or Desired

Training Needed or Desired	Frequency*	Percent*
none (knowledgeable in all areas)	30	13.3
when to report (timelines)	114	50.7
behaviors or characteristics of children who may be abused or neglected	108	48.0
legal definitions of abuse or neglect	100	44.4
who or where to file official maltreatment reports	67	29.8
what information is needed when making a maltreatment report	84	37.3
protection for mandated reporters	75	33.3
penalties for not reporting	62	27.6
other	10	4.4

* Does not total 225 or 100% because participants were asked to check all that apply

There was a statistically significant relationship between the participants' years of experience as a teacher and the types of mandated reporter training they need or desire. Forty-four percent of the participants with 10 or more years of teaching experience stated they want training regarding "when to report (timelines)" child maltreatment, compared to 81.5% of teachers with 4 or less years of experience, $X^2=15.009$, $df=4$, $p<.01$ (see Appendix N). Fifty-seven percent of teachers with 2-4 years experience identified "who or where" to make a maltreatment report as a needed training, compared 25% of teachers with 10 or more years of experience, $X^2=9.558$, $df=4$, $p<.05$ (see Appendix O). Finally, a majority of participants (73%) with less than 2 years of experience also reported "what information" is needed to make a maltreatment report as a valuable training topic, compared to 31% of teachers with 10 or more years of experience, $X^2=10.473$, $df=4$, $p<.05$ (see Appendix P).

Training Format

Over half (56.4%) of the 195 participants who stated that they need or want mandated reporter training prefer that the training be offered as a school inservice, and only 1.8% stated they want the training offered as a community workshop. (See Table 5.14). In the “other” category, one participant stated that mandated reporter training should be presented during a staff meeting.

Table 5.14: Preferences for Training Format

Training Preferences	Frequency*	Percent*
community education class	5	2.2
school inservice	127	56.4
child protection presenter	77	34.2
community workshop	4	1.8
written materials	100	44.4
district training	67	29.8
other	1	.4

* Does not total 225 or 100% because participants were asked to check all that apply

A significant relationship was noted between the years of experience and how the participants want the information presented, $X^2=19.179$, $df=8$, $p<.05$ (see Appendix Q). No participants with less than 2 years of experience, 5-7 years of experience, or more than 10 years of teaching experience identified a community workshop as a preferred way for mandated reporter information to be presented, compared to 10% of participants with 2-4 years of experience and 9% of participants with 8-10 years of experience.

Summary

Over half (58.7%) of the 225 participants stated they felt “knowledgeable” regarding their responsibilities as a mandated reporter. However, the results of this study indicate that only 7 participants (3%) correctly answered all of the mandated reporting questions. A majority of the participants (86.7%) stated they need or want training in this area. Over half (56.4%) stated they prefer the training be presented during a school inservice. The following chapter will discuss these findings in greater detail, outline the strengths and limitations of the study, address its implications to the field of social work, and make recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine elementary teachers' knowledge and needs regarding Minnesota's mandated reporting law, Minnesota Statute 626.556, the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors. This chapter will discuss the results of the study, possible reasons for the results, and ways to improve teachers' knowledge of their responsibilities for reporting child maltreatment. The strengths and limitations of the study, implications for social work policy and practice, and recommendations for future research will also be discussed.

Significant Findings

Demographics

Of the 383 teachers who were invited to take part in the study, 225 (59%) agreed to participate. The majority of the participants had more than 10 years of teaching experience, which was more than twice as much as the other four categories combined. Teachers with less than 2 years of experience made up the lowest percentage of participants. The "years of teaching experience" yielded the most statistically significant results in the study (9 out of 13 chi-square tests).

Timelines for Reporting

Oral report. Over half of all participants correctly stated that an *oral* report of child maltreatment must be made "immediately, but no longer than 24 hours of learning about the maltreatment." The answer with the next highest response was "immediately, but no longer than 12 hours of learning about the maltreatment." The third highest response was "not sure". Therefore, although just under half of all the participants did

not know the correct answer, over half of them believed they were responsible to make an oral report of child maltreatment 12 hours earlier than the required timeline. Therefore, one can assume that a majority of these participants would make an oral report within the required 24 hour period.

Written report. When examining the responses for making a written report of child maltreatment, only one-fifth of the participants answered it correctly by selecting “within 72 hours of the oral report, excluding holidays and weekends.” The highest response was “within 48 hours of the oral report, excluding holidays and weekends.” The next two common responses were “not sure” and “as soon as possible.” Based on these responses, it is unclear when they would actually make a written maltreatment report. Over all, it appears that over half of the participants would send a written report of child maltreatment within the 72 hour required timeline.

Past maltreatment. Very few participants correctly identified the time frame for reporting past maltreatment as anything “within the last 3 years.” The two highest responses were “not sure” and “no time limit.” Approximately one-sixth of the participants stated the time frame for reporting past maltreatment was at least a year short of the required time frame. Of those participants, just under half stated you only report maltreatment from the “past week”. Based on this response, they may have been underreporting or not reporting maltreatment that happened in the remaining 1,088 days of the required reporting time frame. This may be due to the incorrect notion that there must be a visible injury as a means to *prove* maltreatment has occurred (Nunnelley & Fields, 1999).

According to Minnesota Statute 626.556, a mandated reporter must make a report of child maltreatment if he or she “knows or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused...or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years” (MN State Legislator, 2000, p. 4). Based on the participants who correctly identified 3 years as the time frame for reporting

past maltreatment, and those who stated there is no time limit for reporting, it is logical to state that just under half of the participants likely report maltreatment from the preceding 3 years.

Protection of Reporters

There was a statistically significant relationship between the participants' years of experience and their knowledge regarding the reporter's protection against disclosure. Typically the more years of experience, the higher percentage of participants knew that a reporter's identity is NOT usually disclosed to the alleged perpetrator. Seventy-three percent of participants with less than 2 years of experience answered it correctly, compared to 95% of teachers with more than 10 years of experience. The exception to this was that participants with 5-7 years of experience correctly answered the question more often than participants with 8-10 years of experience.

Training Over Past Two Years

When determining what, if any, mandated reporter training teachers have received over the past two years, a majority of teachers stated they had received training during a staff meeting. Approximately one-fifth reported not having any training over the past two years. Of the participants with less than 2 years of teaching experience, approximately one-third stated that had not had any training in the past two years. Also, only a few of participants with less than 2 years of experience reported getting written information on mandated reporting over the past two years, compared to half of all teachers with 5 or more years of teaching experience. These results are significant because new teachers likely have the least amount of reporting experience, yet they are getting the least amount of training. According to Lowenthal (1996), teachers' lack of knowledge regarding the procedure for mandated reporting may detour them from reporting abuse.

Opinion of Overall Knowledge

Over half of the 225 participants stated they were “knowledgeable” regarding their responsibilities as a mandated reporter, however, only 7 participants answered all of the reporting questions correctly. That means that almost all of the participants who perceived themselves to be knowledgeable, actually were not. Again, these results reiterate that most teachers do not know or understand their responsibilities as mandated reporters. Special attention should be focused on the areas where most teachers were lacking, such as the reporting timelines (oral, written, and past maltreatment).

Training Topics

When determining what type of training teachers want or need, over half of all participants stated they want information on “when to report (timelines),” which is consistent with their identified needs as mentioned in the above paragraph. This topic was rated highest for teachers with 4 or less years of experience. Overall, more than half of all teachers with less than 2 years of experience rated all of the topics, except “who or where you file official maltreatment reports,” as a needed or desired. “When to report (timelines)” was the highest rated topic for teachers with more than 10 years of experience, and “penalties for not reporting” and “who or where...” had the lowest rating.

Training Format

A majority of participants stated they want mandated reporter training offered as a school inservice, whereas almost no teachers selected a community workshop as their preferred training method. All participants with less than 2 years of experience want mandated reporter training offered as a school inservice. A majority of part-time teachers stated that written information would be useful, compared to one-third of all full-time teachers. This is important because part-time employees are not in the building all of the time to participate in formal training.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Strengths

There are several strengths of this study. First, all part-time and full-time public elementary school teachers employed in the school district were surveyed for this research project (N=383). Of those teachers, 225 (59%) gave their informed consent to participate in the study by returning a completed questionnaire. Therefore, by giving all elementary teachers a chance to participate in the study, and the high response rate, the results of this study are considered representative of the entire population of elementary public school teachers within the district and surrounding communities. Second, the study helped to determine the teachers' knowledge regarding their responsibilities for reporting child maltreatment. This is important because Minnesota Statute 626.556 states that educators are legally obligated to report known, suspected, and threats of child maltreatment within certain timelines. If teachers do not know or understand their responsibilities, they may not be fulfilling their responsibilities as mandated reporters. Third, the survey provided teachers with a confidential arena to state what specific topics regarding mandated reporting they need or desire. Therefore, the district will be able to focus the training according to what topics teachers have deemed important or necessary. Finally, teachers were able to identify how they would want the training to be presented. This is important because teachers are more likely to voluntarily participate in a training if they are comfortable with the way in which it is presented.

Limitations

As in any research project, there are limitations to this study. First, based on some of the teachers' responses that they are "knowledgeable regarding their responsibilities as mandated reporters", and answering "not sure" to one or more of the mandated reporting questions, this may indicate that they misinterpreted the researcher's meaning of the word "knowledgeable." Therefore, the question was not written to ensure an accurate

interpretation of the intended meaning. Second, since most of the participants had more than 10 years of teaching experience, they have likely been in this particular district for many years, and therefore, the results may not be representative of other districts in the state. Third, only public school elementary teachers were studied. As in the study by O'Toole et al. (1999), the results of the study may have been different if parochial school teachers were included. Last, surveys only reflect what people *say* and not what they actually *do*. Therefore, teachers may know their legal obligation to report child maltreatment, but that does not mean that they comply with the law. Past research (O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole & Lucal, 1999; Zellman & Antler, 1990) has shown that some mandated reporters purposefully do not report child maltreatment even though they are legally obligated to do so.

Implications for Social Work Practice and Policy

According to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 1996):

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society.

Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living. (p. 1)

Therefore, it is our responsibility to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves. Children are arguably our most valuable and vulnerable resource in society. Children are said to be "our future." But, what is to come of our future if we do not stand up for our children now?

According to Lowenthal (1996) social workers and nurses are the most informed and prepared groups to deal with child maltreatment; educators are the least. Therefore, as social workers it is our responsibility to aid and support teachers in their reporting of child maltreatment. School social workers should keep up-to-date with the ever changing reporting laws and provide consultation and formal training to all school personnel as needed. School social workers should collaborate with their local social service agencies to develop training curriculum, which should be mandated as part of new teacher orientation, and reviewed yearly with returning teachers. By doing this, we are reinforcing the importance of a teacher's role as a mandated reporter to help protect children, and showing the community that we value our children and our future.

Recommendations for Future Research

In general, literature and research regarding mandated reporting is a fairly new phenomenon (Gullatt, 1999). In recent years, literature has addressed the possible reasons for underreporting by mandated reporters (Besharov & Laumann, 1996; Brodtkin & Coleman, 1995; Gullatt, 1999; Hutchinson, 1993; Lowenthal, 1996; Nunnelley & Fields, 1998; Nunnelley & Fields, 1999; Tite, 1993; Yell, 1996; Zellman & Antler, 1990), but research specific to teachers as mandated reporters is minuscule (O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole & Lucal, 1999). The goal of this research project was to determine teachers' knowledge of their responsibilities for reporting child maltreatment and what, if any, training is needed for them to fulfill those responsibilities.

The study presented conflicting results regarding elementary teachers' perceived knowledge and actual knowledge of mandated reporting. Based on these findings, the school district will now be able to provide specific training to address the teachers' identified needs. Should the district choose to require a formal mandated reporter training for all new teachers, and a yearly review session for returning teachers, another survey could be conducted in the future to determine if the training has had a significant

impact on the teachers' knowledge. The study could also be expanded to include teachers at parochial schools and the secondary level, as well as non-licensed school personnel; such as paraprofessionals, assistants, office staff, etc.. Furthermore, this study could be duplicated to assess other mandated reporters' (medical professionals, day care workers, foster parents, members of the clergy) knowledge and needs regarding the reporting of child maltreatment.

Summary

The results of the study showed that almost all elementary teachers who perceived themselves to be knowledgeable regarding mandated reporting, actually were not. A substantial amount of new teachers reported not having any training of mandated reporting in the past two years. A large majority of participants indicated a need or desire for additional training, especially in the area of reporting timelines. This study is important because it will provide the school district information on training topics teachers deemed necessary to understand their responsibilities for reporting child maltreatment. Strengths and limitations of the study were discussed, as well as the implications for the field of social work, and recommendations for future research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: District Request Letter

January 17, 2001

Dr. Hugh Skaja

██████████ School District ██████████

██████████

██████████ MN ██████████

Dr. Hugh Skaja:

I am employed by ██████████ as a Special Education School Social Worker (.6) at Lincoln and Jefferson Schools. I am also in the process of completing my graduate degree in Social Work at Augsburg College. As part of my graduation requirement, I am interning at Lincoln and Jefferson Schools as the Homeless Liaison (.4). I also must write a thesis regarding an area of interest. I have chosen to research elementary teachers' knowledge of Minnesota's mandatory reporting law of child maltreatment.

The purpose of this research project is to determine elementary teachers' knowledge and area(s) of need regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect. This study is important because teachers, who are with children more often than any other group of mandated reporters, cannot effectively protect children if they are not knowledgeable about Minnesota's mandatory reporting law.

To complete this research project, I am requesting **written permission** to survey all elementary teachers employed by ██████████. Participation in this study will be completely voluntary. The study will be anonymous. No identifying questions will be asked. A copy of the measurement tool is attached for you to review.

The results of this study will be shared with the District Administration Office. The results may be beneficial in determining what, if any, additional training is needed for teachers to fulfill their duties as mandated reporters and help protect "our future".

I hope you will support me in completing this very important study. Please contact me if you have any questions or wish to discuss this further. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kara Rogers, LSW
Augsburg MSW Student

Lincoln- Monday, Wednesday & Friday (p.m.).....(320) ██████████ ext. ██████████

Jefferson- Tuesday, Thursday & Friday (a.m.).....(320) ██████████ ext. ██████████

Appendix B: District Permission Letter

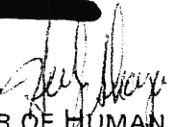
[REDACTED] SCHOOLS DISTRICT [REDACTED]
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

628 ROOSEVELT ROAD
[REDACTED], MN [REDACTED]

PH: (320) [REDACTED]

FAX: (320) [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

HUGH SKAJA, Ed.D. 
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES



February 14, 2001

To: Whom it may concern

Re: Elementary School Teacher Survey

It would be our pleasure to help Kara Rogers with the Elementary School Teacher Survey. She presented the survey to our Elementary Principals, for approval, in a very professional manner. The Principals gave full approval for the survey.

Thank you.

Appendix C: Survey Cover Letter

February 26, 2001

Dear Elementary School Teacher:

I am in the process of completing my graduate degree in Social Work at Augsburg College. As part of Augsburg's graduation requirement, I must write a thesis on a topic of choice. I have chosen to research elementary teachers' knowledge of child maltreatment reporting procedures.

The purpose of this research project is to determine elementary teachers' knowledge and area(s) of need for reporting child abuse and neglect. The survey results will help to determine what, if any, training is needed or desired. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your employment and your relationship with Augsburg College. No identifying questions will be asked, therefore, your identity will remain anonymous. In further attempt to secure your anonymity, please do not write your name or any other identifying information on the questionnaire. Your consent to participate in this study is assumed when you complete the survey. Only the researcher, the researcher's thesis advisor, and the thesis reader will have access to the completed surveys. The raw data will be kept in a locked desk at the researcher's home. The raw data will be destroyed no later than August 1, 2001. A copy of the final results will be available at the District Administration Office (DAO) for all employees to review.

If you have any questions, you can contact me at (320) [REDACTED] ext. [REDACTED]. My thesis advisor, Dr. Sumin Hsieh, is also available to answer any questions you may have. She can be reached at (612) 330-1376.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will agree to participate in this very important study. **Please enclose your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided and return to me by March 13, 2001.**

Your support is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Kara Jean Rogers

Augsburg IRB Approval # 2001-14-1
District [REDACTED] approval given 2/14/01

Appendix D: Survey

Instructions:

Please answer these questions to the best of your ability without seeking outside help or other assistance. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable or causes undue stress.

Your decision whether or not to participate, and your responses for this questionnaire, will not affect your employment with District [REDACTED] and your relationship with Augsburg College. Your identity will not be known by anyone, including the researcher. Should you chose to participate in this study, **please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope (through district mail) by March 13, 2001.** Returning a completed questionnaire will be considered as your informed consent to participate in this study. Thank you for your time.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Please make a check (✓) in the space(s) that correspond with your answer(s).

QUESTIONNAIRE

Background Information:

- 1) Type of teaching license: (check one)
 - classroom (K- 6th grade)
 - special education (EBD, LD, DD, MMI, Speech)
 - specialists (Music, Art, Physical Education, Media, ESL, Reading)
 - other- please specify: _____

- 2) Years of experience teaching: (check one)
 - less than 2 years 2 - 4 years 5 - 7 years 8 -10 years
 - more than 10 years

- 3) Current employment status: (check one)
 - full-time part-time

Reporting Procedures and Guidelines:

- 4) Teachers are legally obligated to report: (check all that apply)
 - known** child abuse **suspected** child abuse **threats** of child abuse
 - known** child neglect **suspected** child neglect **threats** of neglect

5) What is the timeline for mandated reporters to make an **oral** child maltreatment report?
(check one)

- immediately, but no longer than 12 hours of learning about the maltreatment
- immediately, but no longer than 24 hours of learning about the maltreatment
- within 48 hours of learning about the maltreatment, excluding holidays and weekends
- within 72 hours of learning about the maltreatment, excluding holidays and weekends
- not sure

6) What is the timeline for mandated reporters to make a **written** child maltreatment report?
(check one)

- as soon as possible
- within 48 hours of the oral report, excluding holidays and weekends
- within 72 hours of the oral report, excluding holidays and weekends
- within 5 business days, excluding holidays and weekends
- within 7 calendar days
- not sure

7) Mandated reporters must report all known or suspected child maltreatment that has occurred:
(check one)

- within the past week
- within the last month
- within the last 6 months
- within the last year
- within the last 2 years
- within the last 3 years
- within the last 4 years
- within the last 5 years
- no time limit
- not sure

8) Failure to report known or suspected child maltreatment is: (check one)

- a felony a misdemeanor not a crime

9) A reporter's identity is usually disclosed to the suspected perpetrator? (check one)

- True False

Training:

10) Does your school have a written policy for reporting child abuse or neglect? (check one)

- Yes No Not sure

11) Do you know your school's policy for reporting child abuse or neglect? (check one)

- Yes No Not applicable

12) Have you received any written information **this school year** stating the guidelines for reporting child abuse and neglect? (check one)

Yes No

13) In the **past two years**, in what ways have you received training regarding your responsibilities as a mandated reporter? (check all that apply)

no training inservice workshop (outside of school)
 college course staff meeting written information
 other- please specify: _____

14) Do you feel knowledgeable about your responsibilities as a mandated reporter? (check one)

Yes No

15) What, if any, areas related to mandated reporting training do you need or want?
 (check all that apply)

None (You feel knowledgeable in all areas)
 When to report (timelines)
 Behaviors or characteristics of children who may be abused or neglected
 Legal definitions of abuse and neglect
 Who or where you file official maltreatment reports
 What information you need when making a maltreatment report
 Protection for mandated reporters
 Penalties for not reporting
 Other- please specify: _____

16) If in the above question you indicated a need or desire for mandated reporter training, how do you want the information presented? (check all that apply)

Community education class
 School inservice
 Child Protection presenter
 Community workshop
 Written materials
 District training
 Other- please

specify: _____

Thank you for your time and participation in this very important study.

Augsburg IRB Approval # 2001-14-1

**Appendix E: Years of Experience & Oral Report Timelines
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	immed., to 12 hours	immed., to 24 hours	within 48 hours	within 72 hours	not sure	TOTAL
<2 years	0	5	3	0	3	11
2-4 years	6	8	0	0	7	21
5-7 years	3	10	0	0	3	16
8-10 years	7	15	0	0	4	26
>10 years	41	80	4	1	25	151
TOTAL	57	118	7	1	42	225

$X^2=31.312, df=16, p<.05$

**Appendix F: Years of Experience & Knowledge of Disclosure
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	usually disclose	usually do not disclose	TOTAL
<2 years	3	8	11
2-4 years	5	16	21
5-7 years	1	15	16
8-10 years	3	23	26
>10 years	8	140	148
TOTAL	20	202	222

$X^2=12.784$, $df=4$, $p<.05$

**Appendix G: Employment Status & Trained During Staff Meeting in Past Two Years
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	yes	no	TOTAL
full-time	126	83	209
part-time	4	11	15
TOTAL	130	94	224

$X^2=6.496$, $df=1$, $p<.05$

**Appendix H: Years of Experience & No Training in Past Two Years
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	no training	had training	TOTAL
<2 years	4	7	11
2-4 years	8	13	21
5-7 years	1	15	16
8-10 years	3	23	26
>10 years	21	130	151
TOTAL	37	188	225

$X^2=12.714$, $df=4$, $p<.05$

**Appendix I: Years of Experience & Trained During Staff Meeting in Past Two Years
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	Yes	No	TOTAL
<2 years	2	9	11
2-4 years	9	12	21
5-7 years	4	12	16
8-10 years	18	8	26
>10 years	98	53	151
TOTAL	131	94	225

$X^2=20.613$, $df=4$, $p<.01$

**Appendix J: Years of Experience & Received Written Information
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	yes	no	TOTAL
<2 years	1	10	11
2-4 years	3	18	21
5-7 years	9	7	16
8-10 years	14	12	26
>10 years	75	76	151
TOTAL	102	123	225

$X^2=16.674$, $df=4$, $p<.01$

**Appendix K: Opinion of Knowledge & Oral Report Timelines
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	immed., to 12 hours	immed., to 24 hours	within 48 hours	within 72 hours	not sure	TOTAL*
feel knowledgeable	39	77	5	1	10	132
do not feel knowledgeable	14	35	2	0	31	82
no response (blank)	4	6	0	0	1	11
TOTAL*	57	118	7	1	42	225

$X^2=32.722, df=8, p<.01$

**Appendix L: Opinion of Knowledge & Written Report Timelines
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	ASAP	within 48 hours	within 72 hours	5 business days	7 calendar days	not sure	TOTAL
feel know- ledgeable	28	53	32	3	1	15	132
do not feel knowledge- able	7	24	9	2	1	39	82
no response (blank)	1	3	3	0	0	4	11
TOTAL	36	80	44	5	2	58	225

$X^2=38.936, df=10, p<.01$

**Appendix M: Opinion of Knowledge & Timeline for Reporting Past Maltreatment
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	past week	past month	past 6 months	past year	past 2 years	past 3 years	not sure	no timeline	TOTAL
feel know- ledgeable	8	2	2	4	3	19	40	52	130
do not feel knowledge- able	3	1	2	4	1	3	49	19	82
no response (blank)	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	3	10
TOTAL*	11	3	4	8	4	25	93	74	222

*Does not equal 225 due to missing data
 $X^2=26.122$, $df= 14$, $p<.05$

Appendix N: Years of Experience & Want Training on “When To Report (Timelines)”
(Pearson Chi-Square)

	yes	no	TOTAL
<2 years	9	2	11
2-4 years	17	4	21
5-7 years	8	8	16
8-10 years	14	12	26
>10 years	66	85	151
TOTAL	114	111	225

$X^2=15.009$, $df=4$, $p<.01$

**Appendix O: Years of Experience & Want Training on “Who or Where to File...”
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	yes	no	TOTAL
<2 years	3	8	11
2-4 years	12	9	21
5-7 years	6	10	16
8-10 years	8	18	26
>10 years	38	113	151
TOTAL	67	158	225

$X^2=9.558, df=4, p<.05$

Appendix P: Years of Experience & Want Training on “What Information is Needed...”
(Pearson Chi-Square)

	yes	no	TOTAL
<2 years	8	3	11
2-4 years	10	11	21
5-7 years	7	9	16
8-10 years	12	14	26
>10 years	47	104	151
TOTAL	84	141	225

$X^2=10.473$, $df=4$, $p<.05$

**Appendix Q: Years of Experience & Workshop Format
(Pearson Chi-Square)**

	want workshop presentation	workshop presentation	N/A- do not want any training	TOTAL
<2 years	0	11	0	11
2-4 years	2	18	1	21
5-7 years	0	14	2	16
8-10 years	2	21	3	26
>10 years	0	127	24	151
TOTAL	4	191	30	225

$X^2=19.179$, $df=8$, $p<.05$

Augsburg College
Lindell Library
Minneapolis, MN 55454