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## RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE IN THE CLASSROOM

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# RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE IN THE CLASSROOM

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Social Work

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by  
Carolina Cervantes  
Nancy Garcia  
May 2021

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify educators' perceptions of Mandated Reporting Training. This study used a quantitative design with 88 participants from Southern California. Child abuse can impact a child's life severely and may even cause death in extreme situations. Child Protection Services receives millions of child abuse allegations every year. Abuse continues to be underreported despite state regulations that require teachers to complete the Mandated Reporter Training. Professionals in the educational field believe this training is insufficient as it is only taken once a year and does not provide enough information to report and identify abuse. This research study evaluated teacher's perspectives about the effectiveness of the Mandated Reporter Training to assess if it was sufficient in helping teachers identify and report abuse. The research question was "Is there is a relationship between mandated reporter training, experience and preparedness to report child abuse in teachers?" The research was conducted through an online questionnaire that was created using Qualtrics. Participants were recruited using social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. The study found that most educators received training and were able to identify signs of abuse. Future research should focus on using qualitative interviews with open-ended questions to obtain more knowledge. The study also recommends a collaboration on trainings between educators and social workers in child welfare.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of individuals who have been important sources of inspiration, knowledge, and support throughout my graduate education. First, I would like to thank my family for supporting me all through my MSW journey.

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-Carolina Cervantes

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who contributed to my academic accomplishments. Thank you to family and friends for the support and motivation. A huge thanks to my colleague Carolina Cervantes for not only being an extraordinary research partner but for being a supportive, empathetic friend. Graduate school would not have been the same without you. To my classmates, I am so thankful to have been a part of such an insightful, supportive cohort.

-Nancy Garcia

## DEDICATION

A mis padres,

Que sin ellos no hubiera logrado una meta más en mi vida. Muchos de mis logros se los debo a ustedes entre los que se incluye este. Me han dado todo lo que soy como persona, mis valores, mis principios, y mi perseverancia. Con mucho amor y cariño, les dedico todo mi esfuerzo. Gracias por todos los sacrificios para que yo pudiera estudiar, se merecen esto y mucho más. Gracias por su apoyo incondicional y por haberme hecho una mujer independiente, luchadora, y valiente. Todo lo que hago es por ustedes y para ustedes. Quiero que siempre se sientan muy orgullosos. Son mi inspiración para seguir adelante en la vida. Los quiero mucho.

To my little brother,

For your unconditional support and love. I want you to follow your dreams, and to know that you will forever have me as your biggest supporter.

To my love,

Thank you for believing in me and encouraging me in my weakest moments. I am truly thankful for having you in my life. I love you.

To all first-generation children of immigrant parents,

For thriving and conquering systems that were never created for us. Yet, somehow, we are all out here thriving and making moves for the first time in our family. All because our parents dared to dream big. This is for all of you.

-Carolina Cervantes

## DEDICATION

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Gracias por los 59 años de lecciones, inspiración, amor, y motivación. Aunque no estés físicamente conmigo, se que estarías muy orgulloso de mi. Gracias por enseñarme a luchar por mis sueños y a nunca rendir me. Siempre voy a admirar tu fortaleza. Eres mi mejor ejemplo y espero seguir tus huellas.

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-Nancy Garcia

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## CHAPTER ONE

### PROBLEM FORMULATION

The maltreatment and neglect of children is a substantial public health concern and social problem. It is associated with negative consequences that can harm a child's mental health, education, and relationships. Child abuse damages children's biological development and can lead to possible psychological impairments (Cicchetti & Handley, 2019). The effects of abuse can impact a child's life severely and can possibly even end a child's life. Research suggests several million children continue to be referred to Child Protective Services every year (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017). In 1974, The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was established to address the prevention, assessment, and investigation of child abuse and neglect cases. In 2010, CAPTA was reauthorized to help protect children from all types of abuse which includes emotional, sexual, physical and psychological abuse (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). Despite all the prevention efforts to prevent maltreatment and neglect cases, child abuse continues to be underreported. In 2018, approximately 4.3 million child abuse allegations were made to Child Protection Services involving an estimated 7.8 million children (U.S Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). From these allegations, education personnel were reported to be among the top reporters (U.S Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). Although educators are among the top reporters, they also fail to report suspected cases of abuse (Arbolino et al.,

2008). Educators play a key role in identifying signs of abuse; however, lack of adequate training prevents them from reporting higher suspicions of abuse.

California Assembly Bill 1432 requires that all educational agencies provide a mandatory training to staff every year (Child Abuse Identification & Reporting Guidelines, 2019). The training includes information on identifying and reporting abuse and neglect. This could range from teachers to classified aides. Employees need to complete the online training module titled California Child Abuse Mandated Reported Training (Child Abuse Identification & Reporting Guidelines, 2019). This training is meant to inform educators about the signs of abuse and neglect, but also to inform educators about the steps necessary to report the abuse (Child Abuse Identification & Reporting Guidelines, 2019). It is important to expand the duration of child abuse training as professionals in the educational field believe they have not had an adequate amount of training to fulfill their role (Smith, 2010). Studies have found that educators are unaware of how to report the abuse at times (Smith, 2010). This study analyzed if educators were aware of the requirements of reporting abuse and assessed whether they could identify signs of abuse.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze if there was a relationship between mandated reporter training, experience, and preparedness to report child abuse by teachers. The study provided an overview of the experiences, knowledge, and attitudes of educators towards reporting child abuse. This study

focused on researching whether teachers felt they had the adequate training and skills necessary to report abuse. This study also evaluated teacher's experiences as mandated reporters, amount of training received, and confidence about reporting procedures. Increasing the knowledge professionals have about abuse and reporting procedures could ultimately decrease the risks and harm of children.

Educators are one of the most frequent and influential figures in a child's life. They are in a position to detect early signs of abuse in children. Compared to other professionals, they have the ability to observe children for signs of abuse, have daily contact, and analyze their behavior in the classroom (Crosson-Tower, 2001). Given the amount of contact teachers have with children they are powerful in the detection and prevention of child abuse. Without proper training educators can miss the opportunity to save children from possible abuse. Failure to report puts children at risk of further harm and prevents social workers from intervening.

#### Significance to Social Work Practice

This study is significant to the social work profession because it has created awareness about improving child abuse trainings for teachers. Early identification of abuse will allow the discovery, treatment, and prevention of child maltreatment and neglect cases. Although teachers are in an ideal position to report child abuse, limited cases of reporting affect children daily. This study helped assess teacher's knowledge about reporting child abuse and attitudes

regarding the child abuse reporting system. Social workers can be involved in educating teachers about way to recognize signs of abuse, reporting procedures, and prevention methods. Social workers can also help increase communication and trust between the education system and the child welfare system. Lastly, social workers are available for teachers who need extra support in the event of a disclosure. The research question of this study was: "Is there is a relationship between mandated reporter training, experience and preparedness to report child abuse in teachers?"

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

It is fundamental to bridge the gap of teacher education and child abuse. Improving child abuse training would enhance an educator's ability to identify and report abuse. This chapter focused on examining the literature of mandated reporter training in the education system. The subsections focused on mandated reporter laws and training, lack of training, role of educators, reporting procedures, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

#### Mandated Reporter Training

Abuse continues to be underreported despite state regulations that mandate individuals to report abuse and neglect. In California, the Mandated Reporter training must be completed by individuals who work in daycare agencies and school districts once a year (California Department of Education, 2018). This includes school administrators, law enforcement officials, teachers, and social service employees who are legally bound to report. Failure to report abuse could result in a misdemeanor punishable for up to six months in jail or a \$1,000 fine (California Department of Education, 2018).

The training mandated reporters receive is designed to help staff identify signs of abuse and neglect. Staff and educators are required to learn the steps to report and identify signs of abuse (California Department of Education,

2018). The general training is four hours long and is the only training required for volunteers who interact with children. Professionals take the general training which is a one-time prerequisite before taking the specific training for their profession (Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training, 2020). School personnel, social workers, and childcare professionals take the general mandated reporter training which is a one-time prerequisite and then take a 3-hour training course for their specific profession (Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training, 2020). Despite the fact that educators are mandated reporters, many educators lack the knowledge required to carry out their roles as mandated reporters.

### Lack of Training

Teachers spend a large amount of time with children and are required to complete the Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training annually (Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training, 2020). Educators report difficulty identifying signs of abuse and struggle remembering the process of reporting abuse due to lack of adequate training (Arbolino et al., 2008). Previous studies have shown that mandated reporters only report half of all suspected cases of abuse and neglect (Arbolino et al., 2008). There are a few factors that contribute to the underreporting of abuse. School staff may be uninformed about the laws that require them to report (Arbolino et al., 2008). Training is only required once a year which impairs an educator's ability to remember the steps required to report the abuse (California Department of Education, 2018). The lack of reporting could be attributed to the limited training offered to educators (Arbolino et al.,

2008). Additionally, different schools have different guidelines and policies that need to be followed by educators (Arbolino et al., 2008). Educators report that there is a lack of training, classes, and workshops available to help educate about the signs of abuse and the steps needed to report it (Arbolino et al., 2008). Implementing more trainings would give educators the necessary tools to become better advocates for their students.

### The Role of Educators

School staff, specifically educators, play an important role in identifying possible child abuse cases. The relationship they have with their students allows them to detect any signs of abuse. According to the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, professionals reported the highest percentage of child abuse and neglect cases with a percentage of 67.3% (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). Professionals who report the most suspicions of abuse include school staff, police officers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, and social service staff (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). The estimation does not provide the number of cases that were not reported (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). While educators are in a position to report child abuse, literature indicates a gap between child abuse reporting and educator's training. Education personnel often lack the knowledge to report cases even under their obligation as mandated reporters (Goldman, 2010). Previous studies have found that minimal mandated reporter trainings are available for teachers (Goldman, 2010). The lack of training affects the way

educators carry out their role as mandated reporters. Additionally, educators who receive poor trainings are less likely to report suspected cases of child abuse (Mathews, 2011). The low quality of training leaves educators at a disadvantage.

### Reporting Procedures

Research indicates educators are given limited training regarding child abuse reporting and procedures. In a study conducted, 74% of teachers surveyed found their child abuse training to be minimal and inadequate (Kenny, 2001). Although educators are given the training required by law, challenges exist regarding the effectiveness of child abuse reporting trainings. Despite the responsibility they have, educators face barriers that prevent them from carrying out their role effectively (Crosson-Tower, 2003). Barriers include lack of knowledge, poor training, and fear of false allegations. Greytak (2009), found that educators often did not feel confident in their ability to identify signs of child abuse and neglect. Although educators had exposure in training, they were often unaware of what signs to look for.

Much of the research has indicated that there are difficulties regarding reporting procedures. Kenny (2001) found that educators were unfamiliar with the guidelines on reporting child abuse. Additionally, schools tend to differ in the way they handle maltreatment cases. Some teachers have made reports to the administration staff first rather than to child protective services (Kenny, 2001). This may indicate a lack of knowledge or unwillingness to make a report. Teachers who failed to report abuse credited their failure to fear of inaccuracy,

fear of looking foolish and not seeing any physical signs of abuse (Kenny, 2001). Additionally, Hawkins & McCallum, (2001) found that 63% of teachers feared the consequences of making a false report. The fear of reporting demonstrates a lack of knowledge surrounding mandated reporting procedures for educators.

The literature suggests improving the effectiveness of training procedures for educators. When evaluating training programs, Alvarez and colleagues (2004) suggest that including the consequences of failure to report would help increase reports of abuse. Additionally, trainings for educators should be accessible throughout the school year. Kenny (2001) further agrees on providing extra support for training procedures and incorporating different training techniques. Goldman and Grimbeek (2011) found that 37% of interactive lectures were effective in providing child abuse procedures while online lectures and tutorials ranged from 10-25%. These studies indicate the importance of having effective trainings to assist educators in identifying and reporting child abuse.

### Theories Guiding Conceptualization

In social work practice, applying an ecological approach can be best understood by looking at people, families, cultures, communities, and policies. This approach can help identify and intervene upon strengths and weaknesses in the transactional processes between these systems. Using an ecological perspective allows researchers to take into consideration the individual and their environment (Teater, 2014). This theory supports the idea that the environment can affect a teacher's perception and understanding of child abuse reporting. A

teacher's environment consists of a school setting which influences their ability to report cases of child abuse and neglect. If they do not receive the training necessary, they may fail to take immediate action. These factors demonstrate how the environment can impact the behavior and actions of an individual.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory demonstrates how multiple factors can affect a person's behavior (Hepworth et al., 2017). The microsystem is composed of individuals who are constantly interacting with children such as teachers, family members, peers, and other individuals (Hepworth et al., 2017). A teacher who does not have an adequate amount of knowledge about signs of abuse or neglect will be unable to identify children at risk.

Bronfenbrenner's next level, the mesosystem, involves interrelations between 2 or more settings (De Anza College, 2020). Teachers who do not receive mandated reporting training might be unfamiliar with reporting procedures and might lose the ability to detect any unusual signs of abuse in the classroom. The exosystem is the third level that consists of external networks (De Anza College, 2020) The ecosystem can be viewed as the immediate setting for teachers which is the education system. If education programs do not provide the necessary child abuse trainings, it can affect the way teachers conduct mandated reporting procedures.

The macrosystem is the fourth level of Bronfenbrenner's ecology system theory that includes an individual's practices, views, and even policies (Hepworth et al., 2017). At this level, the state of California implements a training that is

mandated for teachers to take once a year (Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training, 2020). The chronosystem is the final level which includes all the adjustments a person experiences in their life span (Hepworth et al., 2017). A teacher who is forced to make a mandated child abuse report because of a situation might seek more resources and training to feel more confident identifying signs of abuse and filling out a child abuse report.

### Conclusion

Individuals working with children are required to complete the Mandated Reporter Training once a year. In summary, studies have demonstrated that teachers lack knowledge and do not have the training necessary to identify and report abuse in the classroom. The education of teachers regarding child abuse is a concern because it can lead to failure of reporting abuse. This study assessed teacher's knowledge about child abuse laws and teacher's opinions about the current system for reporting abuse.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Introduction

The focus of this study was to analyze if there was a relationship between mandated reporter training, experience, and preparedness to report child abuse among teachers. This chapter describes the specifics on how the study was conducted. The sections listed are the study design, sampling methods, data collection and instruments, procedures, protection of human subjects, and data analysis.

#### Study Design

The purpose of this study was to assess if there was a relationship between mandated reporter training and teacher's experiences due to lack of training (Arbolino et al., 2008). This study focused on identifying educators' responses and preparedness to report child abuse among educators in Southern California. This study is considered a descriptive study as it describes a situation that has been studied and provided a new perspective (Walker, 2016). This design was ideal because there is a limited amount of research related to child abuse trainings that required further analysis (Walker, 2016). This research study provided insight about ideas that would improve training and enhance teacher's ability to identify and report abuse. This study used a quantitative survey design that analyzed educator's experiences as mandated reporters (See Appendix C).

The aim of the study was to determine the scope of the research problem and to learn about areas that needed improvement. A descriptive study was necessary in understanding the current issues teachers face identifying signs of abuse and neglect among children.

### Quantitative Study

This study used a quantitative study in order to effectively and precisely identify shortcomings of the mandated reporter training given to educators. This method allowed educators to complete a survey that analyzed their attitudes, beliefs and assessed their level of preparedness in reporting abuse. The method used to conduct the quantitative research study was administering internet-based surveys as a result of COVID-19 prohibiting close contact with people. This method is a standardized instrument as it is used to evaluate a certain skill, characteristic, or target a certain area (Walker, 2016). Surveys provided flexibility and increased participants' involvement as it allowed them to complete the survey on their own time. This method also made it easier to target certain populations and to obtain more precise results. In this case, the survey was administered to educators since they are required to complete the Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training.

The use of a quantitative study provided data and insight about the adjustments that should be made to the Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training. This research study could potentially help restructure child abuse trainings for educators. One strength of using this design was that there was a

larger number of respondents. This survey allowed clients to remain anonymous as they were not required to put their names. Distributing the surveys was easy because they were completed through online networks.

Limitations of using surveys consisted of receiving broad responses from participants. Due to the methods being strictly quantitative, this study should not be seen to fully represent all educators from Southern California. Another limitation of this design was that fewer data and information was obtained in comparison to qualitative data. Another limitation is that participants might have provided dishonest answers if they wanted to finish the survey quickly. There is no guarantee that the responses received were from people in the study population.

### Sampling

This study obtained participants by using snowball sampling of general education teachers from grades K-12 from schools in Southern California. Snowball sampling was conducted due to participants having an increased likelihood to recruit school faculty to take the survey. Participants were also recruited via networking sites such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook. A total of one hundred surveys were sent out to potential participants. Agency approval was not be required due to the surveys being conducted through personal networks. Participants were able to access the survey at their own convenience using their computers from home.

## Data Collection and Instruments

This study used a quantitative data collection design and analysis. The study is considered a descriptive study that consisted of independent and dependent variables. The independent variables were training, experience and preparedness, while the dependent variable was teacher's willingness to report abuse. Additionally, the survey used a five-point Likert scale for the level of measurement (Likert, 1932). Participants were provided a survey design questionnaire that included the information and goals of the study.

The survey was provided to potential participants via a link or email. The data for the study was collected using an anonymous web-based survey created through Qualtrics. The questionnaire was made up of several questions pertaining to educators' experiences as mandated reporters (see Appendix C). Participants were asked to record their responses on a Likert Scale ranging from Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Undecided Strongly Agree, or Agree.

The Teacher Rating Scale of School Adjustment (TRSSA) was used and modified as a survey instrument for this research (Matthews et al., 2009). The survey consisted of six sections of responses. The first section gathered demographic information and was collected prior to the start of the study. The survey gathered the age, gender, ethnicity, educational level, and number of years teaching. The second section asked participants to answer questions assessing child abuse trainings they received from their school district. The third section asked participants about their knowledge of child abuse reporting laws.

The fourth section asked participants about their experiences reporting child abuse cases. The fifth section measured participants attitudes and beliefs regarding child abuse reports. To determine whether teachers report child abuse differently depending on the type of abuse, two vignettes were included for section six. After each vignette, participants were asked to rate their degree of certainty that child abuse occurred.

Using a descriptive study allowed the researchers to gather percentages of educators who do not report child abuse. This type of data was important in understanding if educators with more experience had a higher likelihood of reporting abuse. It also allowed educators the opportunity to share their perspective on how prepared they felt about identifying and reporting abuse.

### Procedure

The first step in beginning the research study was to obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once the IRB approved the research study participants were recruited through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Snowball sampling helped gather more participants. Participants were asked to fill out the informed consent form prior to starting the survey. The consent form discussed maintaining the confidentiality of all participants. The form also explained the purpose and goals of the study as well as the importance of teacher's participation. It explained that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw from the study if they chose to.

Participants read the form and marked a checkmark in the box to indicate they understood and agreed to participate.

Once the consent form was completed participants were able to proceed through Qualtrics and complete the survey. Participants had access and were able to self-administer the survey at their chosen location. Participants were asked to fill out the survey questionnaire and submit it. Researchers were notified when participants complete the survey by logging into Qualtrics. It was estimated that the survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Once the survey was completed, participants were thanked for their participation. Participants were given the option to enter a raffle to win a Starbucks gift card once the survey was finished.

#### Protection of Human Subjects

Confidentiality was maintained for all the participants in the study. The identity of the participants was kept strictly confidential. Each participant read and checked a box in the informed consent form prior to starting the survey (see Appendix C). The informed consent statement stated the nature of the study, the goals of the study, and the approximate time it would take to complete the survey. Responses to the questionnaires were only be viewed by the researchers and the research advisor. The participants were not required to write their names on the survey they received. Upon completion of the study, all the information was deleted to protect any sensitive information from being released.

## Data Analysis

In order to effectively carry out this research study, it was important to use a quantitative analysis. The independent variables in this study were training, experience, and preparedness. The dependent variable was teacher's willingness to report abuse. Other variables that were used in the study were age, gender, ethnicity, educational level and the number of years teaching. This was a descriptive study that described the situation and provided a new perspective. The statistical test for this study was multiple logistic regression. The dependent variable was categorical and dichotomous. All data collected from this study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS).

## Conclusion

In this chapter, the study outlined and gathered information from educators via a survey to examine whether teachers had the adequate training and skills to report child abuse. The study used a quantitative statistical method that was used to carry out the research. This chapter described the research design, procedure, data collection, and data analysis used to conduct the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

This chapter will focus on discussing the findings of the study. There were 88 participants gathered throughout the month of January 2021 from Southern California. This section will discuss the number of participants, number of years teaching, demographics, and participants opinions about mandated reporter training. The data will be reviewed and analyzed in order to see if there is a relationship between mandated reporter training, experience, and preparedness to report child abuse among teachers.

#### Demographics

Although 103 participants started the questionnaire, only 88 completed it. Analysis was completed on the 88 participants. Table 1 shows the Demographic Characteristics of all the Participants in this study. From the 88 participants, 75.0% were females and 23.9% were males. From the sample, 14.8% of the participants were in the age group of 24 or under, 39.8% were in the 25-35 age group, 20.5% were in the 36-45 age group, 13.6% were in the 46-55 age group, 9.1% were in the 56-65 years age group and 1.1% in the 66 or more-age group. When asked about ethnicity, 42.0% of the participants reported to be Caucasian, 38.6% were Hispanic, 5.7% were Asian, 5.7% were African American, 3.4% were Native American, 3.4% were two or more races.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	66	75.0
Male	21	23.9
Missing	1	1.1
<b>Age</b>		
24 or under	13	14.8
25 to 35 years	35	39.8
36 to 45 years	18	20.5
46 to 55 years	12	13.6
56 to 65 years	8	9.1
66 or above	1	1.1
Missing	1	1.1
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
African American	5	5.7
White/Caucasian	37	42.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	5.7
Latino/Hispanic	34	38.6
Native American	3	3.4
Two or more races	3	3.4
Missing	1	1.1

Participants were also asked their level of education. Please note that in this section participants were able to make more than one choice, leading to higher totals than the sample size. Table 2 shows Subjects Taught, Grade Levels Taught, and Number of Years Teaching. 17.0% had a bachelor's degree, 18.2% had a credential, 68.2% had their master's degree and 1.1% had a doctoral

degree. When asked about the type of credential they had, 34.1% had a multiple subject credential, 58.0% had a single subject credential, and 14.8% had a special education credential. The participants were also asked which grades they have taught, 31.8% reported Elementary School, 20.5% reported middle school, and 50.0% reported high school. When asked what subject they taught, 36.4% said Other, 23.9% taught English, 25.0% taught Math, 18.2% taught Science, 15.9% taught Social Science, 13.6% taught History, 6.8% taught Physical Education, and 4.5% taught Foreign Language. When asked about what grades they have taught, 54.5% taught 9-12, 40.9% taught K-5, and 39.8% taught 6-8. The participants were also asked the number of years teaching, 37.5% had 2-5 years, 27.3% had 16 years or more, 14.8% 1 year, 12.5% 6-10 years, and 6.8% 11-15 years.

Table 2. Subject Taught, Grades Taught, and Number of Years Teaching

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Level of Education		
Bachelor's Degree	15	17.0
Credential	16	18.2
Master's Degree	60	68.2
Doctoral Degree	1	1.1
More than one selected	4	4.5

Type of Credential		
Multiple Subject	30	34.1
Single Subject	51	58.0
Special Education	13	14.8
More than one selected	6	6.9
<hr/>		
Grade Level Taught		
Elementary School	28	31.8
Middle School	18	20.5
High School	44	50.0
More than one selected	2	2.3
<hr/>		
Subject Taught		
English	21	23.9
Math	22	25.0
Social Science	14	15.9
Physical Education	6	6.8
History	12	13.6
Science	16	18.2
Foreign Language	4	4.5
Other	32	36.4
More than one selected	39	44.3
<hr/>		
Grades Taught		
K-5	36	40.9
6-8	35	39.8
9-12	48	54.5
More than one selected	31	35.2
<hr/>		
Number of Years Teaching		
1 year or less	13	14.8
2 to 5 years	33	37.5
6 to 10 years	11	12.5
11 to 15 years	6	6.8
16 years or more	24	27.3
Missing	1	1.1
<hr/>		

## Opinions about Mandated Reporter Training

The participants on this sample were asked questions about mandated reporter training experience and questions testing their knowledge when reporting abuse. Table 3 demonstrates the findings of the questions and statements asked regarding Mandated Reporter Training Experience. Out of 88 participants, 80.7% agree that they have received mandated reporter training whereas 3.4% neither agreed nor disagreed. More than half of the participants 82.9% somewhat agree they are prepared to identify indicators of child abuse, 6.8% disagree with this statement. Participants were asked if they believed school districts should provide more child abuse training and 60.2% of participants agreed that more trainings should be offered. The majority of participants 71.6% agreed that the mandated reporter training modules were sufficient enough in teaching them to report abuse. Participants were asked to report the number of hours of mandated reporter training they received in the 2019-2020 school year. A large number of participants 71.6% reported that they had received less than 3 hours of training whereas 18.2% reported 3 to 7 hours of training.

Table 3. Mandated Reporter Training Experience

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
I have received mandated reporter training in my school district	Strongly Agree- 71	80.7
	Somewhat agree-10	11.4
	Neither agree nor disagree-3	3.4
	Missing	4
My school district should provide more training	Strongly Agree- 27	30.7
	Somewhat agree-26	29.5
	Neither agree nor disagree-15	17.0
	Somewhat disagree-11	12.5
	Strongly disagree-5	5.7
Missing	4	4.6
The trainings have prepared me to identify child abuse	Strongly Agree- 31	35.2
	Somewhat agree-42	47.7
	Neither agree nor disagree-5	5.7
	Somewhat disagree-4	4.5
	Strongly disagree-2	2.3
Missing	4	4.6

The mandated reporter training modules are enough to report abuse	Strongly Agree- 20	22.7
	Somewhat agree-43	48.9
	Neither agree nor disagree-9	10.2
	Somewhat disagree-9	10.2
	Strongly disagree- 2	2.3
Missing	5	5.7
Hours of training received in 2019-2020	Less than 3 hours- 63	71.6
	3 to 7 hours- 16	18.2
	More than 7 hours- 2	2.3
	No training- 2	2.3
Missing	5	5.6

### Knowledge about Reporting Child Abuse

The participants were also asked about the procedures for reporting child abuse. Table 4 shows the Knowledge Teachers have about Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect. Participants were asked if they needed proof to report abuse, the correct answer is no because no evidence is necessary when making a child abuse report. The majority of participants 67.0% stated that they did not need proof while 19.3% stated that proof was necessary. A majority of participants 76.1% disagreed with the statement that they must first notify the principal before making a child abuse report. More than half 77.3% of the participants agreed they are aware of the required timeframe when making a suspected child abuse report. Participants were also asked if they are responsible for reporting abuse even if they are aware that someone else has

already reported it, 77.2% agreed they must report even if someone else has reported the abuse. More than half of the participants 84.0% agree they could be prosecuted if they have suspicion of child abuse and fail to report it.

Table 4. Knowledge about Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
I must have proof of abuse before making a report	Strongly Agree- 5	5.7
	Somewhat agree-12	13.6
	Neither agree nor disagree-5	5.7
	Somewhat disagree-20	22.7
	Strongly disagree- 39	44.3
(Answer= No)		
Missing	7	8
To report child abuse, I must notify the principal	Strongly Agree- 3	3.4
	Somewhat agree-7	8.0
	Neither agree nor disagree-4	4.5
	Somewhat disagree-19	21.6
	Strongly disagree- 48	54.5
(Answer= No)		
Missing	7	8
I am aware of the required timeframe for making a suspected child abuse report	Strongly Agree- 44	50.0
	Somewhat agree-24	27.3
	Neither agree nor disagree-8	9.1
	Somewhat disagree-3	3.4
	Strongly disagree- 2	2.3
Missing	7	7.9

I must report abuse even if someone else has reported it	Strongly Agree- 48 Somewhat agree-20 Neither agree nor disagree-5 Somewhat disagree-4 Strongly disagree- 3	54.5 22.7 5.7 4.5 3.4
(Answer=yes)		
Missing	8	9.2
If an investigation reveals you had suspicion and did not report, you could be prosecuted	Strongly Agree- 59 Somewhat agree-15 Neither agree nor disagree-4 Somewhat disagree-1 Strongly disagree- 1	67.0 17.0 4.5 1.1 1.1
(Answer= yes)		
Missing	8	9.3
I have reported child abuse	Strongly Agree- 44 Somewhat agree-8 Neither agree nor disagree-4 Somewhat disagree-4 Strongly disagree- 20	50.0 9.1 4.5 4.5 22.7
Missing	8	9.2
I have suspected child abuse but decided not to report it	Somewhat agree-2 Neither agree nor disagree-4 Somewhat disagree-11 Strongly disagree- 63	2.3 4.5 12.5 71.6
Missing	8	9.1

I do not know how to report	Somewhat agree-5	5.7
	Neither agree nor disagree-9	10.2
	Somewhat disagree-11	12.5
	Strongly disagree- 55	62.5
Missing	8	9.1
I am confident about identifying indicators of abuse	Strongly Agree- 25	28.4
	Somewhat agree-32	36.4
	Neither agree nor disagree-12	13.6
	Somewhat disagree-9	10.2
	Strongly disagree- 2	2.3
Missing	8	9.1

### Experience Reporting Abuse

Only about half of the participants 59.1% agreed that they have reported child abuse. The majority of participants 84.1% disagree with the statement that they have suspected child abuse but decided not to report it. Most participants disagreed 75.0% with the statement “I do not know how to report”, implying they do know how to report suspected child abuse. Table 5 demonstrates Teacher’s Experiences when Reporting Abuse. About 33.0% of participants felt that the current system for reporting child abuse was effective compared to the 34.1% that disagreed. A majority of participants 77.3% shared that they would report abuse even if their school administrator disagreed with them. Only 30.7% of

participants shared that they would consult with a supervisor before making a child abuse report. Most of the participants 63.6% were not afraid to make a report for fear of retaliation. Participants were asked to share their feelings when reporting abuse, 22.7% shared they were nervous, 4.5% shared they were afraid, 27.3% shared they were stressed, and 28.4% shared they were anxious. The last statement in this section asked participants if they felt emotionally overwhelmed when reporting child abuse cases, almost half of the participants 34.1% stated that they felt overwhelmed when reporting abuse.

Table 5. Teacher’s Experiences when Reporting Abuse

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
I believe the current system for reporting abuse is effective	Strongly Agree- 7	8.0
	Somewhat agree-22	25.0
	Neither agree nor disagree-21	23.9
	Somewhat disagree-24	27.3
	Strongly disagree- 6	6.8
Missing	8	9
I would report abuse even if my school administration disagreed with me	Strongly Agree- 47	53.4
	Somewhat agree-21	23.9
	Neither agree nor disagree-7	8.0
	Somewhat disagree-3	3.4
	Strongly disagree- 2	2.3
Missing	8	9

I will consult with administration before I make a report	Strongly Agree- 6	6.8
	Somewhat agree-21	23.9
	Neither agree nor disagree-20	22.7
	Somewhat disagree-17	19.3
	Strongly disagree- 16	17.2
Missing	24	10.1
I would be apprehensive to report child abuse for fear of retaliation	Strongly Agree- 2	2.3
	Somewhat agree-9	10.2
	Neither agree nor disagree-13	14.8
	Somewhat disagree-19	21.6
	Strongly disagree- 37	42.0
Missing	8	9.1
When I reported abuse, I felt	Nervous-20	22.7
	Afraid-4	4.5
	Stressed 24	27.3
	Anxious-25	28.4
Missing	15	17.1
I feel emotionally overwhelmed reporting child abuse cases	Strongly Agree- 9	10.2
	Somewhat agree-30	34.1
	Neither agree nor disagree-10	11.4
	Somewhat disagree-10	11.4
	Strongly disagree- 20	22.7
Missing	9	10.2

## Vignettes

After each vignette, participants were asked to rate their degree of certainty that child maltreatment was occurring and whether they would report it. Table 6 Vignettes shows 46.6% strongly agreed to report, 34.1% somewhat agreed, 5.7% neither agreed or disagreed, and 5.7% somewhat disagreed. For the second vignette, 34.1% strongly agreed, 31.8% somewhat agreed, 11.4% neither agreed or disagreed, 11.4% somewhat disagreed and 3.4% strongly disagreed.

Table 6. Vignettes

Vignette 1	Strongly Agree- 41	46.6
You observe a student who has been quiet. He looks unbathed most of the time and his clothes are worn out. The child is wearing long sleeve shirts and shorts that are too small for him. He has bruises on his legs. Would you report?	Somewhat agree-30	34.1
	Neither agree nor disagree-5	5.7
	Somewhat disagree-5	5.7
	Missing	7
(Answer=There is an answer, generally yes you would report unless you have information to the contrary)		

Vignette 2	Strongly Agree- 30	34.1
A girl becomes socially withdrawn and is unwilling to participate in class. Quality of schoolwork has deteriorated. She becomes distressed when the bell rings at the end of the day. She tells a classmate she does not like living at home. She is constantly falling asleep in class. Would you report?	Somewhat agree-28	31.8
	Neither agree nor disagree-10	11.4
	Somewhat disagree-10	11.4
	Strongly disagree- 3	3.4
	Missing	7
(Answer=There is an answer, generally yes you would report unless you have information to the contrary)		

---

### Presentation of the Findings

The results of the study show that there is no significance between number of years teaching and knowledge of child abuse reporting laws. The findings also suggest that there is no significance between number of hours of mandated reporting training and knowledge of child abuse laws. Findings show that reporting abuse or not reporting abuse does not reflect their knowledge. The findings also show that the training received, years teaching, and the knowledge

teachers have did not impact their reporting. The results also showed gender is not significant in reporting abuse. Findings report that there is no relationship between attitudes about reporting abuse and hours of training received. There is no relationship between grade levels taught and knowledge about reporting abuse. There is no significance in the attitude of participants and their gender when reporting abuse. The results of vignettes in the study were not significant. The data from the surveys show that participants have negative feelings towards the mandated reporter training with many reporting they feel anxious, afraid, and overwhelmed when making a child abuse report.

### Conclusion

The chapter provided the results of the data collected through a survey design questionnaire. The data analyzed the responses of the 88 participants. The data found that a majority of participants were female 75% compared to the 23.9% participants that were male. The findings show that most participants were aware of the rules required when reporting child abuse and neglect. The data found that only about 60% of participants have reported abuse. The findings show that a majority of participants feel confident identifying signs of abuse but would like to increase the length of training given on mandated reporter training. There are no significant findings from bivariate analysis looking at potential factors impacting attitudes towards child abuse reporting.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

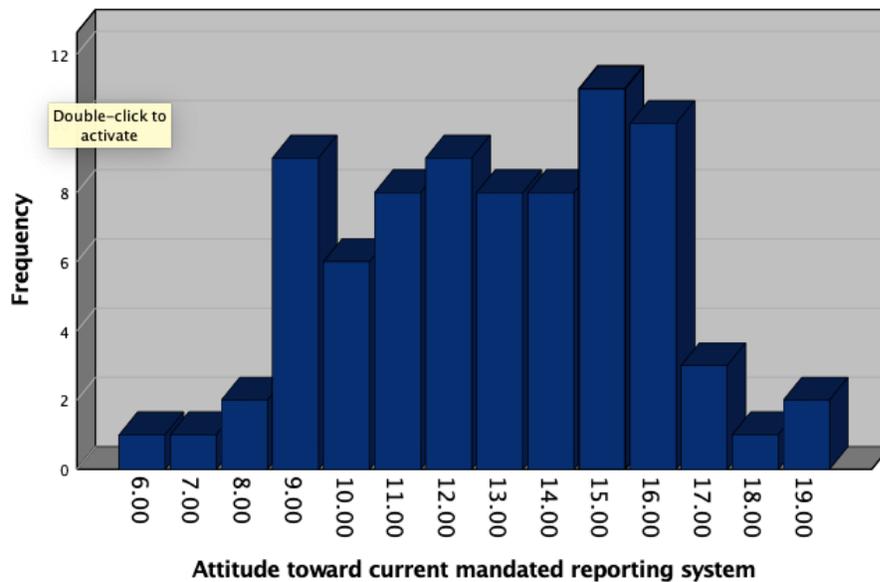
This chapter presents a discussion based on the findings. Included in this chapter are a summary of the study, limitations of the project, implications for social work practice and policy, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion. This section will also discuss the findings of the literature review and compare them to the findings of the study.

#### Interesting Findings

The findings of the study showed some interesting findings. The data collected from the study suggests that teachers have negative feelings towards the system of mandated reporting. It was interesting to see that 60.2% of teachers believed the school district should provide more training, yet 82.9% felt they were trained enough to identify signs of abuse and neglect. In addition, it was interesting to see that some of the teachers answered the questions about knowledge of reporting child abuse and neglect incorrectly. This could be why only 33% of participants felt that the current system for reporting abuse is effective. This further reaffirms the idea that child abuse trainings should be longer and more detailed. The results of the study further suggest that the system of reporting abuse caused negative feelings. Teachers reported feeling nervous, afraid, stressed, anxious, and overwhelmed. It was interesting to see

that 63.6% of teachers were not afraid of retaliation if they reported child abuse. One interesting thing about this study is that it took teacher's feelings about reporting child abuse into consideration. Figure 1 Attitudes toward Current Mandated Reporting System demonstrates the attitudes teachers have towards reporting abuse. It is important to note that the lower the score on the graph means the teacher feels more support. The higher the score on the graph means the teacher has more negative feelings toward the reporting system.

Figure 1. Attitudes toward Current Mandated Reporting System



## Discussion

The findings from the study were inconsistent with the literature that suggested teachers had difficulty identifying signs of abuse and neglect (Arbolino et al., 2008). The study showed that 82.9% of participants felt they were prepared to identify signs of abuse and neglect. The literature suggested that educators took a seven-hour training course about mandated reporting (Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training, 2020). The study found that 71.6% of participants reported that they received less than 3 hours of training while 18.2% reported that they received 3 to 7 hours of training. In order to meet the requirements for the California Mandated Reporting training, educators must take the general training which is a one-time prerequisite. They must also take a profession-specific training every year that takes three hours to complete. The study found that 71.6% of educators reported that they received less than 3 hours of training which is less than the mandated reporter training should be. The previous studies showed that educators failed to report abuse because they were not aware of the laws required to report (Arbolino et al., 2008). This study found that the majority of educators were informed of the laws and required timeframe for reporting abuse. This study also showed that 67% of participants believed they did not need evidence to report abuse. In addition, 77.3% of participants stated that they knew the timeframe needed to make a child abuse report. The participants were also aware that they needed to report abuse even if someone

else had already reported and that they could be prosecuted if they did not report child abuse.

Previous studies showed that only 50% of all child abuse and neglect cases were reported (Arbolino et al., 2008). This study found that 59.1% of the participants have reported abuse which means a large number 40.9% of participants have not reported suspicions of abuse, similar to the findings of the literature review. The literature revealed that 74% of teachers believed child abuse training was ineffective and minimal (Kenny, 2001). The data collected in this survey also suggest that teachers believe the mandated reporter abuse training is not effective. The majority of participants 77% believed the current system for reporting abuse is not effective. Participants believe changes need to be made to improve mandated reporter training. The literature further suggests that teachers who failed to report abuse were afraid of being inaccurate, of looking foolish, or of not observing any physical signs of abuse (Kenny, 2001). According to the data collected in this survey, 4.5% of participants were also afraid to report, 22.7% were nervous, 27.3% were stressed, and 28.4% were anxious. These findings show that reporting abuse causes educators to feel overwhelmed and distressed. Providing more extensive training could reduce feelings of fear and anxiousness and may increase the number of child abuse cases reported.

The literature review showed that participants did not know how to identify signs of abuse, however in this study, participants overall reported being

confident in identifying signs of abuse. One key finding that was not discussed in the literature was the participants feelings towards reporting abuse. The data collected showed that participants felt anxious and overwhelmed when reporting abuse. The study was conducted to see if there was a relationship between mandated reporter training, experience, and preparedness to report child abuse among educators. The hypothesis of the study was not supported.

## Strengths and Limitations

### Strengths

The study had a variety of strengths such as the use of an online questionnaire. Through the use of email, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram a wide variety of participants were able to participate without assistance from the researchers. Online questionnaires are beneficial because they do not cost a lot of money to create (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018). Additionally, having the survey be anonymous may have reduced any feelings of discomfort due to the sensitive topic of child abuse. Participants are able to remain anonymous through online surveys (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018). Another strength is that this survey could be used in future research to obtain more data.

### Limitations

One of the limitations of the study is that it was limited to only educators from Southern California. By soliciting respondents from all over the U.S., a wide variety of responses could have been captured. The study was also limited by its

relatively small sample size of 88 participants. A small number of participants means it is not generalizable to the study population (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018). As a result, the study may not be representative of all educators. If the sample size was larger than perhaps there would have been more significant findings to report.

Another limitation of the study was its limited use of an online survey. The use of the online survey makes it difficult to ensure that all the participants who participated in the study were teachers from Southern California. There were also no controls on the survey to make sure participants would answer all questions, therefore there was a different number of respondents in some questions. Furthermore, some of the quantitative questions made it difficult to gain a more nuanced understanding from the participants. The survey could have been better explored by adding open ended questions (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018). By incorporating qualitative questions, the research would have revealed teachers' perspectives on mandated reporter training (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018).

#### Implications for Social Work Practice and Policy

Educators are in a unique position to provide valuable support to children. The results from this study indicate that participants would like to receive more trainings. According to the study, 60.2% of the participants indicated their school district should provide more training. In addition, 71.6% reported receiving less than 3 hours of training. It appears educators are reporting less hours than they are required. The results from the study demonstrate school districts would

benefit from utilizing child welfare agencies or social workers in the school districts on mandated reporting training. Educators should receive refresher trainings in which they have the opportunity to consult with social workers and feel supported during the process of identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. With adequate knowledge and experience, educators can fulfill their role by taking the correct precautions, legal steps, and education to protect children from abuse.

#### Future Research

Future research could be comprised of a collaboration between teachers and social workers on child abuse trainings. School districts would benefit from using child welfare agencies as a resource for mandated reporter training. The social work profession has an extensive knowledge and experience on training that may assist teachers. By having a training collaboration, teachers would be provided with the tools and training to report child abuse or neglect. Professional training and workshops attended by teachers should be led by social workers who work with abused and neglected children regularly.

Learning to recognize the signs of child abuse is a central focus on their education, however educators should also learn ways they can assist and support their students. This includes what happens after a report of child abuse and the adverse effects their students may experience in the classroom. The collaboration of both professions can provide the best assistance for children

possible. Qualitative research is recommended for future studies to capture more in-depth responses.

Social Work programs put a high emphasis on preparing students to identify and report signs of abuse and neglect. It would be helpful for professors to go over cases thoroughly in order to help students further identify signs of abuse. This would allow social work students to be better prepared and learn how to become consultants. In addition, professors should go through the step-by-step process of reporting abuse with students so that in the future social workers are able to guide educators more efficiently. The social work program should make a child welfare class mandatory in order for all students to learn more about the process of reporting abuse from the beginning of the case to the end of the case. Social Work programs could invite educators to lecture students about how abuse and neglect looks in the school setting. The social work program could create a training event that allows social work students to give in-person training to educators in Southern California.

California State University San Bernardino should provide additional training/tools in the detection and report of child abuse for social work students, particularly for students entering educational fields, and invite other professions to partner on these trainings. This may include educational videos, handbooks, and yearly seminars. By hosting these trainings, outside professionals such as police officers, doctors, nurses and teachers would have the opportunity to

attend. The ultimate goal would be to reduce fears regarding reporting issues as well as to better educate students and professionals on the topic of child abuse.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify if there is a relationship between mandated reporter training, experience, and preparedness to report child abuse among teachers. One big distinction of this study is that it also evaluated teachers' feelings towards the system of reporting abuse whereas other literature studies have focused on the knowledge about reporting abuse. The hypothesis of the study was not supported, however educators agreed that the mandated reporter training should be more extensive in order to facilitate the process and reduce the stress associated with reporting abuse. Through this research, school districts and child welfare agencies can implement a collaboration on trainings to help report child abuse.

APPENDIX A  
RESEARCH STUDY RECRUITMENT FLYERS

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO

# TEACHERS YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE!

--Do you ever suspect abuse but don't know if to report?

--Do you feel that it is challenging to report abuse because of lack of knowledge?

\*This survey will be confidential. No personal information will be released.



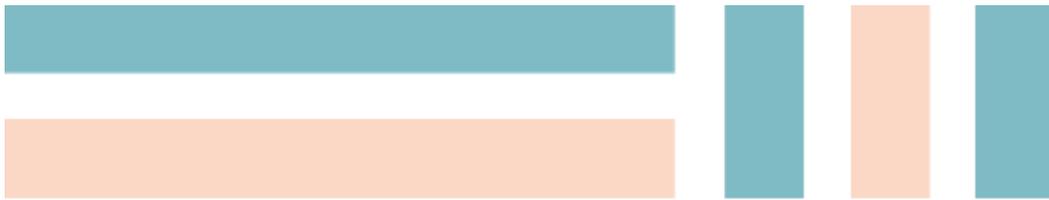
## **Who do we need?**

- Educators
- Teachers

(Preschool, Elementary/Middle/High School, Childcare Teachers)

## **Purpose of Study:**

To research if teachers believe the Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training is enough training to identify signs of abuse and neglect and report it.



**About us:**

Our names are Nancy Garcia and Carolina Cervantes. We are conducting a research project as a part of our Master's in Social Work Program at California State University of San Bernardino (CSUSB) under the supervision of Carolyn McAllistor, LCSW.

Our research study aims to examine if educators believe they receive enough training to identify signs of abuse and neglect in order to be able to report it.

We are recruiting about 100 participants in hopes of understanding if the mandated reporter training is sufficient.

This study is voluntary. If you are interested in participating, please click the following link below to be directed to the online survey or email us to receive a copy of the survey. Our contact information is listed below.

Nancy Garcia- 007071942@coyote.csusb.edu  
Carolina Cervantes- 007070629@coyote.csusb.edu

For any inquiries, you may contact us at  
(626) 862-6433.

Thank you for your participation!



APPENDIX B  
INFORMED CONSENT

**INFORMED CONSENT**

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to examine if there is a relationship between reporting child abuse and the level of training, experience, and preparedness teachers have in schools in Southern California. The study is being conducted by graduate students Carolina Cervantes and Nancy Garcia under the supervision of Dr. McAllister, the director of the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at CSUSB.

**PURPOSE:** The focus of this study is to analyze if there is a relationship between mandated reporter training, experience, and preparedness to report child abuse in teachers

**DESCRIPTION:** Participants will be asked a few questions assessing child abuse trainings they have received, knowledge of child abuse reporting laws, experiences reporting child abuse, two vignettes asking participants to rate the degree of certainty that abuse occurred, attitudes and beliefs about child abuse reports, and demographics.

**PARTICIPATION:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** All responses will remain confidential. Your name will not be asked in the questionnaire.

**DURATION:** It will take about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

**RISKS:** There are some risks associated with the study. Some of the questions might cause discomfort or may be triggering.

**BENEFIT:** There will not be any direct benefit to the participants.

**CONTACT:** If you have any questions about this study, please email [Dr. McAllister](mailto:Dr.McAllister) at: [cmcallis@csusb.edu](mailto:cmcallis@csusb.edu)

**RESULTS:** Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library [ScholarWorks](http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/) database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after May 2021.

.....  
I agree to participate in the survey \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO.

I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Place an X mark here**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date**

APPENDIX C  
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

**Part 1**

**Demographics**

(Please place an X next to your response)

What is your gender?	Female Male Other
What is your current age?	24 or Under 25-35 years 36-45 years. 46-55 years. 56-65 years 66 or above
What is your ethnicity?	African American White/ Caucasian Asian/ Pacific Islander Latino/ Hispanic Native American Other
What is your level of education?	Less than high school High school graduate Some college College graduate Graduate or professional school Doctoral
Number of years teaching?	1 year or less 2-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16 years or more

**Mandated Reporting (Likert Scale)**

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Undecided
- 4 = Agree
- 5=Strongly Agree

**Teacher Reporting Attitude Scale for Child Sexual Abuse-Revised (TRAS-CSA-R)**

**Part 2**

The second section will ask participants to answer questions assessing child abuse trainings they have received from their school district.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I have received mandated reporting training in my school district.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Do you believe your training prepared you to identify indicators of child abuse?	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Do you think your school district should provide more training related to	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

child abuse?					
Are the mandated reporter training modules sufficient enough to report abuse?	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

How many hours of mandated reporter training did you receive in 2019-2020 school year?

Less than 3 hours  3-7 hours  More than 7 hours  no training

**Part 3**

This section will ask participants about their knowledge of child abuse reporting laws.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I must have proof of abuse before I make a report to child protective services.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
In order to report child abuse, I must first notify the school principal.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
I am aware of the required timeframe	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

for making a suspected child abuse report.					
It is my responsibility to report abuse even though I am aware someone else already reported it.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
If an investigation reveals that you had reasonable suspicion and failed to file a report, you could be prosecuted.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

**Part 4**

This section will ask participants about their experiences reporting child abuse cases.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I have reported child abuse.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
I have suspected child abuse but decided not to report it.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

I do not know how to report.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
I am confident being able to identify indicators of child abuse	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

When I reported abuse, I felt \_\_\_\_\_.  
(If you haven't reported abuse, reflect on how you might feel)

\_\_\_\_\_ Nervous \_\_\_\_\_ Afraid \_\_\_\_\_ Stressed \_\_\_\_\_ Anxious

### Part 5

This section will measure participants attitudes and beliefs regarding child abuse reports.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I believe the current system for reporting child abuse is effective.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
I would still report child abuse even if my school administration disagreed with me.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
I will consult with an administrator/supervisor before I make a report of	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

child maltreatment.					
I would be apprehensive to report child abuse for fear of retaliation.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
I feel emotionally overwhelmed reporting child abuse cases.	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

## Part 6

To determine, whether teachers report child abuse differently depending on the type of abuse, two vignettes will be included for section six. After each vignette, participants will be asked to rate their degree of certainty that child abuse occurred.

Vignettes:

Please answer the following questions assuming there is no further information available about the case and that no other services or referrals are possible at this time.

1. You observe a 7-year-old child in your class who has been quiet. He looks unbathed most of the time and his clothes are worn out. During summer, you notice the child wearing long sleeve shirts and shorts that appear too small for his size. Every week you notice bruises on his legs. Some are darker than others and appear newer. When you ask how he gets the bruises, he tells you that he falls a lot.

Based on this information, would you report this case?	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
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2. A 9-year-old girl in your class has become socially withdrawn and unwilling to participate in activities in class. The quality of her schoolwork

has deteriorated steadily over several months. You notice the child becomes distressed when the bell rings at the end of the day. During class you overhear the child telling a classmate she does not like living at home. The child is constantly falling asleep during class.

Based on this information, would you report this case?	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Undecided	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
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Walsh, Kerryann, Rassafiani, Mehdi, Mathews, Ben, Farrell, Ann, & Butler, Des.

(2010). Teachers' Attitudes toward Reporting Child Sexual Abuse:

Problems with Existing Research Leading to New Scale Development.

*Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 19(3), 310-336.

Modified by Carolina Cervantes and Nancy Garcia.

## Resources

Detecting and reporting child abuse is one of the most challenging tasks a teacher may face, but it is also one of the most important tasks a teacher can do. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We truly value the information you have provided. Please share or forward this survey to other K-12 teachers in Southern California. Your responses will be very helpful to us and to future teachers. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

**For additional information and training about mandated reporting and child abuse please refer to the following resources:**

### **Easy Steps for California Mandated Reporting**

<https://mandatedreporterca.com/Portals/0/Documents/california-mandated-reporting-steps-2020.pdf>

### **California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law: Issues and Answers for Mandated Reporters**

<https://mandatedreporterca.com/images/Pub132.pdf>

### **Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training – California Department of Social Services**

<https://mandatedreporterca.com/training/general-training>

### **Suspected Child Abuse Report**

[https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/childabuse/ss\\_8572.pdf](https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/childabuse/ss_8572.pdf)

### **Contact Child Welfare Services**

CPS Emergency Response Hotline Phone Numbers

[https://www.hwcws.cahwnet.gov/countyinfo/county\\_contacts/hotline\\_numbers.asp](https://www.hwcws.cahwnet.gov/countyinfo/county_contacts/hotline_numbers.asp)

APPENDIX D  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



December 22, 2020

**CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

Administrative/Exempt Review Determination

Status: Determined Exempt

IRB-FY2021-70

Carolyn McAllister Nancy Garcia, Carolina Cervantes  
CSBS - Social Work  
California State University, San Bernardino  
5500 University Parkway  
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Carolyn McAllister Nancy Garcia, Carolina Cervantes:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Recognizing Child Abuse in the Classroom " has been reviewed and determined exempt by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. An exempt determination means your study had met the federal requirements for exempt status under 45 CFR 46.104. The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants. Important Note: This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit the Office of Academic Research website for more information at <https://www.csusb.edu/academic-research>.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy. The forms (modification, renewal, unanticipated/adverse event, study closure) are located in the Cayuse IRB System with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action. The Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is due for renewal. Ensure you file your protocol renewal and continuing review form through the Cayuse IRB system to keep your protocol current and active unless you have completed your study.

- Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.
- Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.
- Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.
- Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at [mgillesp@csusb.edu](mailto:mgillesp@csusb.edu). Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2021-70 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive from participants and/or others related to your research may be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

*Nicole Dabbs*

Nicole Dabbs, Ph.D., IRB Chair  
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

ND/MG

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## ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES

The tasks for the research proposal were divided evenly between both researchers. In chapter 1, both researchers contributed an equal number of pages to each section of the chapter. In chapter 2, one researcher was assigned the introduction and completed half of the literature review. The other researcher was assigned the summary and did the other half of the literature review. In chapter 3, one researcher was assigned the following: introduction, sampling, data collection and instruments, protection of human subjects. Researcher 2 was assigned the following: study design, procedures, data analysis, and summary. Chapter 4 and 5 were split evenly, both researchers wrote the same number of pages. One researcher was responsible for the recruitment flyer while the other did the resource list. Both researchers worked together to formulate the survey questionnaire. The project was split evenly between both researchers.