

# *iLook Out for Child Abuse*

*Center for the Protection of Children, Penn State Hershey*

## **Project Overview**

*iLook Out for Child Abuse* is a multi-media, online learning program that prepares early childhood professionals to be responsible mandated reporters of suspected child abuse — providing a high-level overview that opens people’s eyes to the problem of child abuse, and also helps them see themselves as agents for protecting children from abuse.

*iLookOut* focuses on early childhood professionals because:

- newborns, infants, and toddlers are particularly vulnerable to maltreatment;
- childcare settings pose special challenges for reporting suspected abuse; and
- this population has received less attention than K-12 school personnel

Delivered via a learning management system, *iLookOut* uses an interactive storyline that is engaging, motivational, and highly accepted by childcare professionals. In a randomized control trial, *iLookOut* was shown to

- increase knowledge about child abuse
- improve awareness of one’s responsibilities to report suspected abuse
- change attitudes about reporting children at risk for abuse

*iLookOut* is intended to prime childcare providers for additional education by helping them identify with the vulnerability of children, and also feel empowered and responsible to enlist child protective services when there is “reasonable suspicion” that a child is being abused.

## **Content:**

*iLook Out for Child Abuse* helps learners:

- Understand and recognize possible abuse, including
  - What does and does not constitute child abuse
  - How and where abuse occurs
  - Risk factors for abuse
  - Signs and symptoms of abuse
  - Consequences of abuse
  - Strategies and resources for responding to suspected abuse
- Understand their responsibilities as mandated reporters of suspected abuse, including
  - Legal responsibilities as a mandated reporter
  - Steps for carrying out these responsibilities
  - Consequences of failing to report suspected abuse
  - legal immunity so long as a report is made in good faith
- Become empowered and motivated to protect children who are at risk for abuse, including
  - What to do when there are barriers to reporting suspected abuse
  - How to initiate a dialogue with colleagues about concerns involving child abuse

**Core Team**

- Andy Belser, MFA —Professor of Theatre, Penn State University Park
- Bill Doan, MFA PhD —Professor of Theatre, Penn State University Park
- Rick Fiene, PhD —Director, Research Institute for Key Indicators
- Robert Hamm, PhD —Director of Clinical Decision Making Program, University of Oklahoma
- Karl Kapp, PhD —Professor of Instructional Technology, Bloomsburg University
- Benjamin Levi, MD PhD —Professor of Humanities & Pediatrics, Penn State College of Medicine
- Rick Fiene, PhD —Director, Research Institute for Key Indicators
- Ben Mathews, JD PhD —Health Law Program, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane
- Jennifer Meka, PhD —Director, Cognitive Skills Program, Penn State Hershey
- Claudia Mincemoyer, PhD —Director, Penn State Better Kid Care Program
- Nicole Verdiglione, BA —Project Manager, Penn State Children's Hospital
- Chengwu, Yang, MD PhD —Biostatistician/Psychometrician, Penn State Hershey

**Affiliate Team**

- Sue Cromwell, PhD —Director of Workplace Learning and Performance, Penn State University Park
- Mandy Mundy, BA —Lead Trainer, Network of Victims Assistance
- Cathleen Palm —Executive Director, Center for Children's Justice