

# Green Bear Guidelines

## Protecting Children with Disabilities



### Children with Disabilities . . .

- Are 4-10 times more likely to be abused than their non-disabled peers
- Have a strong dependence on caretakers - some children consider caretakers their only "friend"
- Are victimized by their caretakers 44% of the time.

### Protecting Your Child

- Background checks should be performed on all service providers caring for your child.
- Children should attend **developmentally appropriate** child abuse prevention programs. Many times children with disabilities are provided with **no** prevention education classes or one that is **not developmentally appropriate**. Request your child attend a developmentally appropriate class on body safety.
- Attempt to make children less dependent on caretakers and drop in unexpectedly on caretakers when they are caring for your child. When a child needs help with bathing or going to the bathroom, let them know this is okay, but the caretaker should not touch them in the part of the body their swimsuit covers other times.
- Some children with disabilities cannot verbalize feelings or fears. Look for nonverbal cues such as fearful behaviors, or trying to get away from caretakers.

### Know the Signs of Possible Abuse

- Sudden changes in, or unusual behavior
- Cuts and bruises
- Broken bones (not due to a medical condition)
- Burns
- Complaints about painful genitals.



*If abuse is suspected, contact Missouri's Child Abuse Hotline at  
1.800.392.3738.*