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# MiPSAC

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The Michigan Professional Society on the Abuse of Children

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## What do Children Need?

*The basics for raising responsible children*

By Leni Cowling, MEd, LPC

There has been so much controversy in Child Protection over child rights or parents rights and where the lines are drawn. When the rights of both entities are respected, children can grow up in safe, secure environments and become conscientious, responsible adults. Unfortunately, there are sufficient numbers of children who are not doing well at all and their uncontrolled behavior is a national concern. When a seven year old takes a gun to school and kills a classmate, who should be accountable? The child? The parents? The gun manufacturers? The school? Due to the finger-pointing, there is controversy, and no one wants to be held accountable as the lawyers are quick to point out. As a CPS worker, I found parents most willing to deny their responsibility in their children's behavior. Having taught children for a number of years, I also know that children behave in the manner in which they are taught. I strongly feel that violence begets violence. Do children have

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## Michigan's Children's Law Update

*Article out of the Michigan Child Welfare Law Resource Center May 2000*

Submitted by Frank Vandervort  
The Michigan Child Welfare Law Resource Center

### FIA Policy Update

Effective May 1, 2000, the FIA issued a new CPS policy addressing children being transported in automobiles with drivers who are impaired by alcohol or other drugs. The new policy states:

**An allegation of neglect based solely on a child's being transported in a vehicle with a driver under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substance is not appropriate for CPS investigation, even if the child is injured in an accident. This situation is more appropriately handled through the community's traffic and criminal laws. (Emphasis in original.)**

### Interdisciplinary Update

The May 3, 2000 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) contains an article and editorial of interest to child welfare practitioners. In the article, Kyran P. Quinlan, et al, *Characteristics of Child Passenger Deaths and Injuries Involving Drinking Drivers*, researchers examined National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data regarding both deaths (years 1985-1996) and injuries (years 1988 - 1996) in which the driver had been drinking. Regarding child deaths, they found:

- ◆ 19768 children age 0 - 14 died.
- ◆ 5555 (28%) involved a drinking driver.
- ◆ Of the 5555, 3556 (64%) of the children

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rights? It is clear what children need to grow up to be able to cope in a complex society such as ours. I feel their rights should be addressed according to these needs:

1. **Physical Needs** These needs are necessary to develop healthy bodies and good health habits in the light of growing medical costs. These needs are nutritious food, adequate sleep, suitable clothing, a sanitary living environment, medical and dental care, and guidance in good health practices, such as immunizations, physical education, and safety and security.
2. **Emotional needs** These needs include stability in the home, knowledge of the adult caregivers, a sense of belonging, a feeling of being wanted by the group, a feeling of being able to contribute to that group with good self-esteem, intellectual training in the ability to think clearly and to solve problems wisely and without violence. There is a need for social approval and for encouragement in achievement with satisfaction in making things and doing jobs with a view towards vocational guidance and a share in community. There is a need for independence and guidance in self control and self direction. Family communication is the foundation for meeting many of these needs.
3. **Spiritual needs** These needs include compassion and emotional intelligence. It suggests the value of the individual and positive, supportive relationships to others. It teaches the appropriate aspects of friendship and love without exploitation. It sets the values of living which make goal setting attainable.
4. **Mental needs** These needs include access to education, access to mentoring, and access to resources to answer questions, encouragement for achievement and acknowledgement for attempts.

We know what works. Children do need to be protected as they are not able to provide for their own needs for quite a few years. When adults conceive a child, they must be able and willing to provide for that child's needs. To be unable, or unwilling to do so is not acceptable, as society is not designed to accommodate overflowing numbers of unwanted children. Tell me what you think? Leni

Rode with the drinking driver.

- ◆ The drinking driver of a car in which a child died was 6 times more likely to have a prior conviction for drinking and driving or to have had their license suspended or revoked.
- ◆ Of 5555 child deaths, researchers had information regarding use of child restraints in 3246 cases. Of that number, only 584 (18%) of the children who died were in car seat or seat belt.

Regarding the injury cases, they found:

- ◆ An estimated 2,322,000 child passengers were injured in automobile accidents.
- ◆ Of that number, 149,000 (6.4%) involved a drinking driver.
- ◆ 58,000 of the injured children were in the car with the drinking driver.
- ◆ Of the children injured while in the drinking driver's car, only 33.2% were using restraints.

The authors of this study caution that for several reasons these numbers are likely to underestimate the number of children who are actually injured or killed while riding with a drinking driver. Similarly, due to problems in collecting data, these numbers probably overestimate the use of restraints. Both the authors of this study and the author of the accompanying editorial, *Child Injuries and Fatalities From Alcohol Related Motor Vehicle Crashes: Call for a Zero-Tolerance Policy*, argue for a lowering of blood alcohol levels for criminal responses to come into play for more aggressive enforcement in applicable criminal laws.

It seems clear that this study and current FIA policy are at odds. Drinking and driving by children's caretakers presents a real and substantial risk of harm to children and should be taken seriously as an independent basis for SPS investigation and appropriate intervention.

#### TRAINING UPDATE

*University of Michigan, School of Social Work,  
Interdisciplinary Child Welfare Training Program,*

**Distance Learning Package,**  
**<http://www.sswumich.edu/icwtp>**

The training program is in its third year and



Provides training on the intersection of Child Welfare and parental problems of Substance Abuse, Mental Health, Domestic Violence, Dual Diagnosis and related legal issues. A distance learning training program is available on the World Wide Web to assist communities in developing plans for collaboration and case management on these issues. The website contains current information and state of the art materials in the form of slides, audiovisuals, articles, references and links to other websites.

**Additional Training:**

The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), in collaboration with the Family Independence Agency and the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice, is implementing statewide training for attorneys and social workers practicing in the child welfare arena. The primary goals of the county training's are to guide the participants through a series of fact patterns and events which illustrate the law and to develop solutions and plans to effect permanency for the children based on an accurate application of the law. For more information, contact Linda Glover at SCAO, (517) 373-7498 or e-mail at [gloverl@jud.state.mi.us](mailto:gloverl@jud.state.mi.us).

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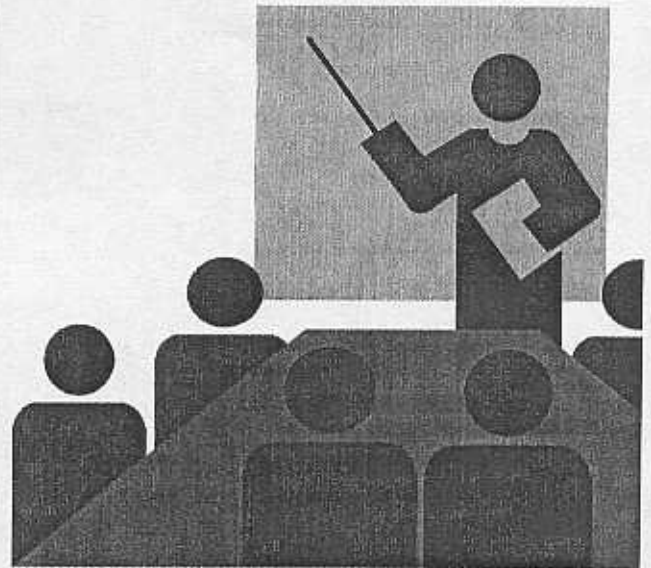
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Volunteers are always welcome for MIPSAC. Committees are: Membership committee (Vince Palusci)  
Legislative committee (Bill Ladd)  
Conference/training committee (Patricia Walsh)  
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**MIPSAC Goals**

- ◆ To bring together Michigan professionals working in the area of abused children
- ◆ To foster networking among Michigan professionals
- ◆ To be an information resource for Michigan professionals
- ◆ To sponsor quality training for Michigan professionals



**Reminder!**

Please renew your annual membership to APSAC. You need National membership for MIPSAC. Part of your annual dues to APSAC pays for MIPSAC membership automatically!

**APSAC**

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***Upcoming conferences and events***

April 23-28, 2001 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. **The Thirteenth Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.** For further information contact Pal-Tech, Inc. (703)528-0435, or e-mail: [13Conf@pal-tech.com](mailto:13Conf@pal-tech.com)