

Youth Program Support Committee Report for 2021 SCYM Business Meeting

The Youth Program Support Committee is comprised of Jessica Arjet (Austin), Anne Collins (Stillwater OK), Kirsten Dean (Austin), Cheryl Husbands (Norman) and Erika Mittag (Austin.)

There was no programming for children and youth at the virtual sessions offered in April and September 2020. We are offering a 45-minute session on Saturday afternoon this year, focusing on two books about systemic and individual racism: **The Skin You Live In** by Michael Tyler, Illustrated by David Lee Csicsko and **A Kid's Book About Racism** by Jelani Memory.

The number of children and youth in our monthly meetings is declining. Jessica Arjet, upcoming clerk of the Youth Program Support committee would like to form a working group with current parents to see what their hopes and wishes are for their children and youth and to see how we can reorganize our groupings to keep the children safe but not overwhelm them with adult presences. Please email Jessica at jessicaarjet@gmail.com to join in that working group.

Our yearly meeting has not yet adopted a Child Abuse Prevention Policy, even though our committee has been researching and attempting to write a policy that is appropriate for our situation for a number of years. This year, we have studied the policy from Pacific Yearly Meeting and adapted it to meet our needs. We offer the proposed **Policy for Prevention and Reporting of Child Abuse in South Central Yearly Meeting (SCYM) Programs and Activities**. The short title is **Child Abuse Prevention Policy**. Having a written policy will help protect children and youth, the adults who work with them and the life of our yearly meeting, should an abusive incident occur.

Key Components of the Policy include

- the legal definition of Child Abuse and what must be reported to state officials and how to do that;
- ways to prevent child abuse and the suspicion of child abuse
 - by screening staff and committee members with references and background checks;
 - by requiring that children and youth are never alone with a staff member who is not their parent, guardian or sponsor
 - by holding activities for children and youth in locations that are easily accessible by parents, guardians, sponsors and other

concerned adults, either in outdoor areas or in rooms with windows and/or open doors;

- by communicating SCYM policy, procedures and times for programming with parents, guardians, sponsors and staff
- and by communicating that parents, guardians, and sponsors are responsible for supervising their children except for when the children are participating in formal programs supervised by youth workers,
- a requirement that those working with minors receive education and training regarding child abuse prevention and reporting *before* programming begins, and training as to how they can get support *during* programming.
- Instructions for how to report suspicions of abuse, as required by law, and how to report suspicions to clerks within the yearly meeting.

There are 3 appendices focusing on 1) Texas statute, 2) application to be a Youth Worker at SCYM programming and 3) additional resources.

Implications of adopting this policy, in addition to protecting children, youth, staff and the yearly meeting, includes budgeting for background checks and storing sensitive personal information digitally. With the number of staff that we commonly were using in the past decade, we project an expenditure as high as \$475 for the first year. Background checks are valid for up to three years, so every third year might have a larger number of background checks required, with about half the amount projected for in-between years.

See attached PDF of proposed policy.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Collins,
SCYM Youth Program Support Committee, clerk