



NEWS RELEASE

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WORKSHOPS TO AID PROFESSIONALS IN CHILD-ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS

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The Federal Law Enforcement Center in conjunction with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention will present three workshops this spring for police officers, prosecutors, and social workers who work with child-abuse cases in 22 southern Indiana counties.

The workshops will be co-sponsored by the University of Southern Indiana and the Child Advocacy Center, Inc., and are funded in part by a grant obtained from the W. R. Kellogg Foundation by Mrs. Melissa Vandever, USI assistant professor of nursing and director of the Kellogg Foundation Community Project Grant.

Mrs. Vandever notes, "When society intervenes in family life because of child abuse, the goals are to protect the child from harm, to minimize any further trauma to the child, to protect society from the offender, and to hold offenders accountable for their actions. The complexity of these goals requires the involvement of many different community agencies and professionals."

Mrs. Virginia Combs, president of the Child Advocacy Center and a supervisor at Family and Children's Services, Inc., Vanderburgh County, said a major goal of the series will be effective investigation. "When professionals work together from a shared information base, the investigation is more efficient and effective," she said.

Robert H. Farley, deputy U.S. marshal assigned to the Federal Child Exploitation Strike Force, will conduct the workshops. He has had more than 14 years of experience with the Cook County (Chicago) Sheriff's Department, investigating crimes against children. The first session will be held Thursday and Friday, February 21-22, at the Holiday Inn, Evansville. It will address recognition of child neglect and physical abuse, providing participants with techniques to identify and investigate cases of soft tissue injury, including burns, welts, bruises, and lacerations, as well as fractures and visceral trauma.

The second workshop will be held April 4-5 and is designed to guide investigators through the complex interviewing process in a fair and objective manner that allows a child to provide information without leading questions. The third workshop will cover sexual abuse and exploitation of a child; dates have not been set yet. For information, contact Mrs. Vandever, 812/428-7256.

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