

178 Lane County cases

Course views child abuse

By HEIDI SWILLINGER
Of the Emerald

The bruises on the baby's leg are purple, running from the top of the thigh to well below the knee.

An accident, claims the mother — the infant fell down the stairs.

But the marks are on the inside of the leg, and the faint but tell-tale impression of fingerprints indicates the child has been abused.

Nearly 2,000 cases of child abuse were reported in Oregon last year, and 178 occurred in Lane County.

"This is not a problem that is relegated to the uneducated poor," Gretchen Teeple told participants of the Child Abuse Workshop held at the Valley River Inn Monday and Tuesday.

Child abuse victims come from families of every race, religion and socio-economic background, she said.

More than 100 people came from all over Oregon to attend the two-day workshop, held primarily for school and law enforcement officials and others who work with abused children.

Teeple, a counselor at Guy Lee Elementary School in Springfield, joined Washington pediatrician Shirley Cooke-Anderson in discussing both the behavioral and physical indicators of child abuse.

The realm of child abuse is wide, Anderson said. It ranges from physical abuse to emotional neglect to sexual assault.

Physical indications of child abuse can be as subtle as listlessness and consistent hunger or as obvious as unexplained bruises, burns and fractures.

But "children can be, and often are, physically or sexually abused without ever showing a mark or a scar," Anderson cautioned.

Teeple advised workshop participants to pay particular attention to children who are frightened to go home, children who are wary of adult contacts, and children who exhibit extreme aggressiveness or withdrawal.

Victims of sexual abuse often use unacceptable sexual language coupled with "a tone of intense comprehension and clarity of meaning," Teeple said.

Anderson suggested using a combination of common sense and instinct to determine whether or not a child has been abused.

For instance, she said, there is a difference between "clean dirt and dirty dirt. If you have to



Graphic by Max DeRungs

air out a room (that a child's just been in), that's dirty dirt."

Accident-prone children are a reality, but a child who consistently has welts or lacerations in various stages of healing should arouse suspicion, Anderson said.

Parents who respond inappropriately or without concern to a child's wounds probably should be questioned closely, she said. And a parent's explanation of an injury should be reasonable.

"(A parent's) changing history to meet questions is a very significant thing," she said.

But according to Anderson, the easiest way to determine whether or not a child has been abused is to ask the child.

"Just ask the question," she urged. "The answer may not be easy, but the question is."

Mike Lutz, supervisor of protective services for Eugene and West Lane County, said his agency will respond to any report of suspected or actual child abuse.

People sometimes fail to report incidents because they can't provide proof, but the burden of proof lies with the Children's Services Division and the police, not the person reporting the incident, Lutz said.

"All the reporting party needs to do is be concerned."

He said the privacy of anyone reporting child abuse will be guaranteed "up to the point of going to court." Anonymous reports are accepted, but not encouraged.

People who suspect that a child has been abused should call 686-7544.

Palestinian groups blast Israel's 'war of genocide'

A plea for "all peace-loving people to oppose the continuing Israeli war of genocide against the Palestinian people" headlined a Tuesday meeting held by the Organization of Arab Students and the General Union of Palestine Students.

"A lasting peace can only come from a realization of Palestinian rights to self determination," said organization spokesman Khalid Abdul-Lateel.

Abdul-Lateel told a group of about 20 that developments since the 1978 Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon have "endangered the problems relating to any lasting peace settlement (in the Middle East)."

The meeting was prompted by

Israeli air raids on Palestinian targets Friday. The bombings resulted in an appeal by Palestinian members to the United Nations Security Council urging an end to the raids that have claimed the lives of approximately 400 Lebanese soldiers and civilians.

A statement issued Monday night by Secretary of State Alexander Haig delaying the shipment of 10 jet fighters to Israel was dismissed by the OAS-GUPS organization as "insignificant."

Members of the Palestinian student organization say that Israel is ready to attack any Arab state to stress Israeli dominance, and that this dominance is

backed by the United States government.

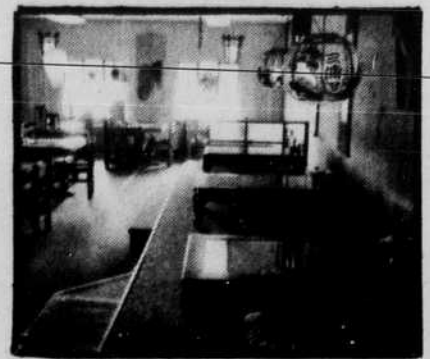
Referring to Haig's statement, Abdul-Lateel said, "We would like to see such kind of action but certainly don't see it as any kind of significance as far as a U.S. stand goes."

He added that the delay was a matter of "conducting policy" on the part of the United States, and that the F-16s would likely be sent at a later time.

In a final statement made at Tuesday's meeting, Abdul-Lateel spoke of "wanting to create an alliance with any democratic and peace-loving nations — any groups that will oppose Israeli expansionism, leading to the realization of the mutual interests of the Arab people."

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