UNIT: Decisions That Affect Children

COMPETENCIES:
1. Identify and discuss some possible stresses of childhood (e.g., divorce, lack of adequate financial resources, moving, pronged illness, death, working parents, new siblings, peer pressure, physical or emotional neglect, family members with special needs, etc.). (Options 2, 3, and 6)
2. Discuss the possible short-term and long-term effects of challenging situations on children. (Options 2 and 3)
3. Identify and explore positive, healthy strategies for coping. (Options 4 and 6)
4. Describe the various types of child abuse and identify the symptoms of each. (Options 5 and 7)

OVERVIEW/SUMMARY:
Abuse is intentional physical, mental, or emotional hurt to a person. Child abuse is a tragic and very serious problem in our society. It affects people of all races, religions, cultures, and economic status. It is vital that we take measures to end this violence. Many factors, including child abuse, may cause stress in children's lives. These factors may include divorce or separation, poverty, moving, prolonged illness, pressure to achieve, difficulties in school, death in the family, working parents, new siblings, peer pressure, or family members with special needs. Children who are experiencing high levels of stress may have difficulty learning to interact appropriately. Children need help in coping with these crises in their lives.

MOTIVATOR:
Have the students take the "STRESS TEST FOR CHILDREN." Have the students pretend they are children. As each item is read, have the students place a mark next to any applicable experiences they have had during the past year. Then use the "STRESS TEST FOR CHILDREN--KEY" transparency and have them total their scores. As a class, discuss where they are on the scale. Stress can have serious effects on children.

LESSON OPTIONS/SUPPLIES:

OPTION 1

OPTION 2--Competencies 1 and 2
CHILDHOOD STRESS: The teacher should present the information "CHILDHOOD STRESS" to the class.
OPTION 3--Competencies 1 and 2
STRESSORS: Using resources available in the classroom, assign small groups of students a childhood stressor to research. (TEACHER NOTE: You will have to provide resource materials to aid students in this presentation.) Have students present the stressor to the class, discussing the short-term and long-term effects of the stressor. They should also identify methods of coping and dealing with the stressor. Stressors may include:
- divorce or separation
- poverty
- moving
- prolonged illness
- pressure to achieve
- school difficulties
- pressure to achieve
- competition
- death
- working parents
- new siblings
- peer pressure
- physical neglect
- emotional neglect
- family members with special needs

OPTION 4--Competency 3
GUEST SPEAKER: Invite an expert on child abuse (physiologist, counselor, social worker, etc.) to talk about child abuse, the types of abuse, symptoms, and resources available to parents and children involved in child abuse. Be sure to include what they should do if they believe child abuse is occurring.

OPTION 5--Competency 4
ABUSE: Present the information "Abuse."

OPTION 6--Competencies 1 and 3
BAG LUNCHES: Complete the activity as explained in "BAG LUNCHES."

OPTION 7--Competency 4
VIDEO: Show an appropriate video on child abuse. There are many excellent videos available; check with the Family Support Center or other local agencies. Some suggestions:
- "Come in from the Storm" series (20 minutes each):
  1. The China Doll (emotional abuse--divorce)
  2. The Diary (physical abuse)
  3. The Necklace (sexual abuse)
- "Rachel and Marla" (physical and emotional abuse)
RESOURCES:
"Come in from the Storm" series
Teen Entertainment Education
7777 Alvarado Rd., Suite 113
LaMesa, California 92041
(619) 698-9567

"Rachel and Marla"
MTI/Coronet
1-800-777-8100
$325, 24 minutes

The Hurried Child--Growing Up Too Fast, Too Soon"
David Elkind
ISBN: 0-201-03967-2

TEACHER NOTE: You may wish to utilize the following resources to aid you in providing material for student's research in Option #1. These resources may also have suitable videos and films you could show your class.

County Human Services Department
Family Support Center
Local hospital community education department
County Child Abuse Prevention Council
School district special services department
March of Dimes
Articles from magazines
Pediatricians
Social Services

Key Facts About Children in Utah
757 E South Temple, Suite 150
SLC, Utah 84102
Fax #364-1186
Phone # 364-1182

"Teach Your Children How to Protect Themselves"
Transcript from Oprah
1-800-777-8398
Fax # 1-201-992-9303
$4 each