

## Detailed FAQs: *iLook Out for Child Abuse*

### 1. What is *iLook Out for Child Abuse (iLookOut)* about?

- *iLookOut* is an interactive, online mandated reporter training designed specifically for people who work or volunteer at child care programs—including family child care, Head Start, child care centers, pre-schools, and nursery schools. We refer to this diverse group of people in what follows as “child care providers.”
- *iLookOut* is a learning program that includes
  - Interactive, online mandated reporter training
  - Resources for ongoing learning
  - Learning games for professional development credit
- *iLookOut* also involves research that
  - is studying how best to prepare child care providers to protect children from abuse
  - will invite child care providers to complete mandated reporter training at different time-points, depending on which of 3 groups they are in (see Question #6)
  - is entirely voluntary—which means you may choose to participate, and may stop at any time, though we hope you’ll find it interesting and informative, and that you’ll want to keep participating

### 2. Why is *iLookOut* needed?

- There are ~700,000 confirmed cases of child abuse each year in the U.S., and there is strong evidence the true number of abused children is 2-3 times this number.
- It’s estimated over 800,000 children <5 years-old are abused each year in the U.S., and we know that almost 1/3 of children this age are in some kind of child care program.
- Because child care providers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse, it’s important to know the signs and symptoms of abuse, and when and how to report suspected abuse.
- Child care providers deserve to have training that is specifically designed for them—because when you’re dealing with very young children, and especially when you have a relationship with the family it can be very challenging to know exactly when you need to act to help protect a child.

### 3. Where do I go to do *iLookOut* and how much does it cost?

- All activities involved with the *iLookOut* program are FREE.
  - Support for this project comes from the Penn State *Center for the Protection of Children* and a research grant from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).
- The mandated reporter training for this project is online
  - You can access it on a desktop, laptop, or tablet—and if you have tiny fingers and amazing eyesight, you could use your smartphone, but we don’t recommend it.
  - You can complete the *iLookOut* mandated reporter training in one sitting, or do part of it and then come back at a later time to finish it up.
- Instructions on how to participate will be sent to owners/operators and directors of licensed child care programs along the I-95 corridor. (see Question #6)
  - We will ask owners/operators/directors to share these instructions with people who work or volunteer at *their* child care program.
  - We also ask that these materials NOT be shared with people who *don’t* work or volunteer at their child care program—because for the research to be done well (so that we can know what works and

what doesn't), it's important that the training be made available to the different groups at different points in time. (see Question #7)

#### 4. What do I get from participating?

- Completing the *iLookOut* training will
  - Satisfy your State requirements for mandated reporter training
  - Give you 3 hours of free professional development credit
  - Help you better understand how to protect children from abuse
- The *iLookOut* training explains
  - Signs, symptoms, and risk factors for abuse
  - What, how, and when to report suspected child abuse
  - Your role as a mandated reporter
- The learning program as a whole will also provide
  - Opportunities for additional professional development credit
  - Handouts, fliers, and exercises that you can use to stay engaged and up-to-date
  - Learning games that you can use on your smartphone, tablet, or computer
- Your participation will help research whose goal is to protect children from abuse

#### 5. What is the research about?

- This project will evaluate the effectiveness of the *iLookOut* learning program by:
  - Comparing *iLookOut* to other mandated reporter training
  - Seeing what people learn from *iLookOut* (compared to other training)
  - Asking child care providers to evaluate how helpful *iLookOut* is
  - Determining if *iLookOut* helps child care providers make better reports of suspected abuse

#### 6. How are participants chosen?

- We will invite child care providers in Maine who work or volunteer at any licensed child care program:
  - Located along the I-95 corridor
  - Open for business before Feb. 1, 2018
- All child care providers in Maine will have the opportunity to complete the *iLookOut* training, but it will be rolled out to different groups in different years. (see Questions #7 & #8)
- Child care programs will be randomly assigned to 1 of 3 groupings
  - This assignment is carried out by a computer program that takes into account the size, location, and other characteristics of child care programs, and then makes sure each of our 3 study groups includes an equal number of child care programs with similar characteristics.
  - This randomization process is like shuffling a deck of cards, so there's an equal chance that a given child care program will wind up in any one of the 3 groupings.
  - The *iLookOut* study team has no control or influence over which group your child care program will be assigned to.

- This random assignment is important to make sure that we can accurately measure how effective *iLookOut* is. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to compare the outcomes of each group, which would then make it hard to determine which mandated reporter training best prepares child care providers.
- For this study to work as designed, child care programs that open for business *after* Jan. 31, 2018 will not be eligible to participate.
- In the final year of the research study (which begins in August, 2020), *iLookOut* will be made available to ALL child care providers throughout Maine –including child care programs outside the I-95 corridor, as well as those that opened for business after Jan. 31, 2018.

## 7. What are the 3 groups, and how will I know which one I'm in?

- The biggest difference between the 3 groups involves when you will be invited to complete the *iLookOut* training.
  - Some child care providers will be invited Aug. 1, 2017, others will be invited in August 2018, and others in August of 2019.
- Additionally, 1 of these groups will be invited to also complete a separate online, mandated reporter training, which will allow us to compare *iLookOut* to standard forms of training.
- You'll know which group you're in when you go to the website and register for the training. But whichever group you're in, know that you *will* be invited to complete the *iLookOut* training, but in some cases not right away.

## 8. Can I choose when will I get to do *iLookOut*?

- Unfortunately, no.
- Because we're trying to determine the best way to help child care providers learn about child abuse and mandated reporting, there needs to be some kind of separation in terms of when the different groups get access to the *iLookOut* training.
  - Otherwise, it would become very hard to figure out whether the outcomes being measured were due to the *iLookOut* training, as opposed to something else (like a new law, or a big story in the news).
- That said, child care providers in each of the 3 groups will get the chance to complete the *iLookOut* training, and in the final year of the research study (which begins in August, 2020), *iLookOut* will be made available to ALL child care providers throughout Maine.
- To help ensure that the research results are accurate and valid, we ask that child care providers not try to access the *iLookOut* training until we invite you to go to the website.

## 9. What do I have to do? (Benefits and burdens)

- If you are an owner/operator/director of a child care program, the *iLookOut* team will send you materials for you to share with anyone who works or volunteers at your child care program.
- Once you receive materials from either the *iLookOut* team or the owner/operator/director of your child care program, we will ask that you:
  - Visit the *iLookOut* website and enter the license number for your child care program
  - Read about the research project
  - Give permission to use your de-identified data for this research (see Question #10)
  - Complete the registration information (~10 min)
  - Answer questions about child abuse and its reporting (~10 min)

- Watch a video-based story and complete interactive learning exercises (~2.5 hours)
  - This can be done in one sitting, or over multiple sessions
  - If you are in the group that is asked to complete a separate online, mandated reporter training, you would watch a ~40-minute training instead, and then will be asked the next year (Aug., 2019) to complete the interactive *iLookOut* training
- Answer the same questions as you did at the beginning of the learning program about child abuse/reporting to see how much you learned (~10 min)
- Answer questions about how good you thought the training was (~5 min)
- Download an app (to your smartphone, computer, laptop, or tablet) so we can send you:
  - A certificate for professional development credit
  - A certificate of your having completed State-required mandated reporting training
  - Additional learning opportunities
  - Additional opportunities for free professional development credit
- Complete a 1-page survey once per year (~2 min)
- The app that you will be asked to download to your phone allows you to receive brief learning games and other educational resources that:
  - Can help you remember key points from the training
  - Give you opportunities to practice applying what you learned
  - Provide opportunities to earn additional (free) professional development credit
- This process of sending learning games and resources is referred to as “**ping-ing**”
  - Pings will include learning games, updates, resources, quizzes, videos, and more
  - Many ping activities will take less than a minute, others several minutes
  - We plan to send 1 or 2 pings per week, which you can choose to open or not
  - Depending on which group you’re in, we plan to send out pings for 1, 2, or 3 years
- Because your participation involves being part of a research study, you *always* have the option to stop participating (at any time, for any reason) —though we hope you’ll find it interesting and informative, and want to keep participating.
- Recruitment for this project will begin in August 2017, and close at the end of July 2020.

## 10. Privacy and Protection?

- Will my personal information be shared with others?
  - No.
    - We keep all of your personal information confidential.
    - We use a unique number called a “code number” to protect your identifiable information. So, when we analyze the results, your data (i.e., your responses to questions and learning exercises) will not be linked to your name.
    - Your data will be added to all the other information we gather so that we can see if *iLookOut* was more helpful for particular kinds of child care providers –for example, those who work in family child care, or rural settings, or people below 30 year old, etc.
- Who will see the results of my training?
  - The person in charge of training records at your child care program will know that you have successfully completed the training, but your answers and score will not be shared with that person.

- If you choose to send your certificate of completion to QRIS, they will know you have successfully completed the training, but again your answers and score will not be shared.
- As with other professional development activities, agencies that monitor child care programs may review the *iLookOut* training certificates as part of their process for ensuring that a child care program is in compliance with licensing regulations.
- Who oversees this project?
  - Like other research institutions, the Penn State College of Medicine has an “Institutional Review Board” (or IRB) that makes sure that all aspects of this research project meet institutional and Federal privacy and ethical requirements.
    - This includes ensuring that: participants know what the study is about and that their involvement is voluntary; data are being collected and stored appropriately; and the researchers are being honest and professional in how we conduct the study.

### 11. Who’s doing this?

- This project is sponsored by the Penn State *Center for the Protection of Children* and also by the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).
- The team that developed *iLookOut* has worked closely with key stakeholders in Maine to make sure that
  - This project addresses the needs and concerns of Mainers
  - The training is approved for mandated reporter credit by OCFS and Maine Roads to Quality
- *iLookOut* was created by a multi-disciplinary team of experts in child abuse, early childhood education, online learning, mandated reporter training, law, ethics, child advocacy, and instructional design.

### 12. Who is making money from this project?

- No one.
  - The Penn State Center for the Protection of Children is a non-profit entity that is affiliated with the Penn State Children’s Hospital and Penn State College of Medicine, which are also non-profit organizations. This means that their purpose is to provide services and carry out projects in order to promote a cause, rather than to generate profit for owners or shareholders.
  - No money is being collected from Maine child care providers or programs, or state agencies.
  - The Director of *iLookOut* is a salaried employee of the Penn State College of Medicine and the Penn State Children’s Hospital, and makes no money from this project –though he and his colleagues hope it does make a positive difference for children.

### 13. Why Maine?

- There are many reasons that Maine rose to the top of our list of places to evaluate *iLookOut*.
  - Maine’s data collection system regarding child abuse reports is among the nation’s best
  - Maine’s Office of Child and Family Services
    - Deeply understood the value of developing evidence-based training to help child care providers recognize and report suspected abuse.
    - Provided excellent constructive feedback to the *iLookOut* team to help us improve the quality and usefulness of this project
  - The more contact we had, the more we enjoyed partnering with Mainers to create what we hope will become a national standard for best practices in mandated reporter training.