



AUGEO EMPOWERS

Academic research into online training from the Augeo Academy shows:

**‘ONLINE TRAINING ENABLES TEACHING STAFF TO RECOGNISE THE SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE AND FOLLOW THE CHILD ABUSE REPORTING CODE MORE EFFECTIVELY.’**

The child abuse reporting code, which came into effect on 1 July 2013, applies to all professionals who work with children, including teaching staff. The education system is the best place to detect child abuse at an early stage. Teaching staff interact with children every day and so are able to detect behavioural changes quickly. Teaching staff also have the opportunity to speak to the parents when there are concerns about a child’s safety. To do this, teaching staff need to have the right know-how, skills and attitude. Research shows that teaching staff feel they are insufficiently equipped to detect signs of child abuse and act in accordance with the reporting code. To meet this need, the Augeo Academy has developed a special online training course, ‘Primary and Special Needs Teaching Staff: How to work with the reporting code’. This course helps teaching staff to develop the know-how, skills and attitude they need as professionals in order to take appropriate action if they suspect a child may be being abused.

Around 20,000 primary education teaching staff have already taken this course.

After completing the course, 90% of teaching staff say they feel better equipped to detect signs of child abuse and domestic violence and take appropriate action.

Research shows that, after taking the Augeo Academy online training course, teaching staff have a significantly greater amount of knowledge about child abuse and feel better equipped to follow the steps set out in the reporting code. After the course, teaching staff are less likely to have doubts about what they should do, are less afraid of making a mistake, and have more confidence in partner organisations, such as Veilig Thuis, and other parties in the child-protection chain.

Teaching staff say that they believe taking the course has improved their:

- Communication skills: for example, they are better equipped to clearly explain to parents and children what action they are going to take on the basis of their concerns.
- Detection skills: for example, they know more about recognising particular tell-tale signs in the behaviour of a parent.
- Evaluation skills: for example, they are better at assessing the extent to which they feel equipped to change a child’s situation.

In total, 80% of teachers think their profession is best placed to detect the signs of child abuse but want to develop more know-how.

Teaching staff are in no doubt that detecting signs in children who are at risk of abuse and taking appropriate action is part of their job. A total of 80% of teaching staff agree with the following statement: “Teaching staff are the best placed professionals when it comes to noticing the signs of child abuse.”

All teaching staff consider continuing and additional training to be important, and would like to have the opportunity to receive such training at least once every six months or once a year.

It is striking that, prior to taking the Augeo course, teaching staff generally feel they do not have sufficient knowledge or all the skills they need to deal properly with this issue.

For example, teaching staff give themselves poor scores for their knowledge of certain key issues, such as how the reporting code works, how to share information properly, what information the reporting agency *Veilig Thuis* needs have to carry out its investigations, and why it is important not to report abuse anonymously.

After taking the online course, however, their knowledge has increased significantly. Before the course, teaching staff give themselves an average score of 4 out of 10 for relevant knowledge. After the course, that figure rises to 7 out of 10.

The online course results in a significant improvement in knowledge about all the aspects of child abuse covered in the research. In addition, after taking the course 50% of teaching staff say they regard the situation of one or more children in their immediate circle as more worrying than they did before the course. Their awareness of the importance and serious nature of this issue is therefore clearly greater as a result of taking the online course.

A total of 95% of teaching staff say they would recommend the course to other professionals. Teaching staff give the course an average overall score of 7.7 out of 10.

Teaching staff are very enthusiastic about the online course. They say it is not only informative, but also reflects their day-to-day work situation as well as their own ideas. It also encourages them to take action at an earlier stage if they suspect a child is being abused.

The final measurements for this research will be taken in about six months' time. We then hope to be able to determine whether the improvements generated by the course are lasting and whether any long-term changes in attitude have taken place. These include changes in the views of teaching staff regarding their own role in tackling child abuse, as well as the role played by schools and parents. It usually takes a long time to modify views and opinions, so the real impact of any changes can only be measured in the longer term.

### **Structure of the research**

On behalf of the Augeo Academy, PI Research has conducted research among a group of 109 teaching staff (with an average of 16 years' work experience) from 5 primary schools located across the Netherlands to determine the effectiveness of Augeo's online training course for primary-education teaching staff.

The researchers investigated whether and, if so, to what extent the course brings about a change in the knowledge, skills and attitude of teaching staff with regard to child abuse, and whether they feel better equipped as a result.

In order to measure this, the teaching staff were asked to complete a questionnaire before and after the online course, in which they score a set of statements on a 10-point scale.

If you would like more information about the results of this research or about the Augeo Academy's courses, please e-mail us at [info@augeoacademy.nl](mailto:info@augeoacademy.nl) or [elisel@augeo.nl](mailto:elisel@augeo.nl).