



# Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

The most common way to identify maltreatment is through the child and parent's behavior. Here is a list of the key physical and behavioral indicators of each type of maltreatment. A combination or pattern of indicators should especially alert you to the possibility of maltreatment.

	CHILD INDICATORS		CARETAKER INDICATORS
	Physical Signs	Child's Behavior	Caretaker Behavior
<b>PHYSICAL ABUSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unexplained bruises, welts or abrasions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in various stages of healing</li> <li>- in shape of object (cord, rope, belt buckle)</li> <li>- human bite marks</li> </ul> </li> <li>unexplained burns               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cigarette, cigar (on soles, palms, back, buttocks)</li> <li>- immersion (sock or glove-like; circular on buttocks or genitalia)</li> </ul> </li> <li>unexplained broken bones               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- skull, nose, facial structure</li> <li>- in various stages of healing</li> <li>- multiple or spiral fractures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reports injury by a parent (or threatened injury—"at-risk" situation)</li> <li>shrinks from adult's touch</li> <li>frightened of parents</li> <li>afraid to go home</li> <li>withdrawn or aggressive</li> <li>complains of soreness, moves uncomfortably</li> <li>wears clothing inappropriate to weather</li> <li>reluctant to change clothes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>often vague, illogical, contradictory or no explanation of child's injury</li> <li>attempts to conceal child's injury</li> <li>delays, or does not seek medical treatment for injury when warranted</li> <li>uses harsh discipline inappropriate to child's age and transgression</li> <li>has unrealistic expectations of child</li> <li>significantly misperceives child (e.g. sees child as bad, stupid, different)</li> <li>misuses alcohol or drugs</li> </ul>
<b>SEXUAL ABUSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tom, stained or bloody underwear</li> <li>difficulty walking or sitting</li> <li>pain or itching in genital area</li> <li>bruises or bleeding in external genitalia</li> <li>frequent urinary or genital infections</li> <li>venereal disease, especially pre-teens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reports sexual assault by caretaker</li> <li>reluctant to change clothes</li> <li>withdrawal, fantasy or infantile behavior</li> <li>bizarre sexual behavior or detailed sexual knowledge, especially in young children</li> <li>poor peer relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extremely protective or jealous of child</li> <li>sexually abused as a child</li> <li>misuses alcohol or drugs</li> <li>non-abusive caretaker/spouse is frequently absent from home</li> </ul>
<b>EMOTIONAL ABUSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speech disorders</li> <li>lags in physical development</li> <li>failure-to-thrive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sucking, biting, rocking in older child</li> <li>antisocial, destructive (and self-destructive)</li> <li>sleep disorders, inhibition of play</li> <li>compliant/passive or aggressive/demanding</li> <li>inappropriately adult or infantile</li> <li>developmental lags (emotional, intellectual)</li> <li>attempts suicide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>excessively blames or belittles child</li> <li>repeatedly ignores or rejects child</li> <li>treats siblings unequally</li> <li>seems unconcerned about child's problems</li> <li>unreasonable demands or impossible expectations without regard to child's developmental capability</li> </ul>
<b>NEGLECT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>constant hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress</li> <li>consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or for long periods</li> <li>lack of needed medical or dental care</li> <li>abandonment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arrives early at school, stays late; often absent; often falls asleep in class</li> <li>begs, steals food</li> <li>constant fatigue, listlessness</li> <li>says there is no caretaker</li> <li>shunned by peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>misuses alcohol or drugs</li> <li>maintains chaotic home</li> <li>consistently fails to keep appointments</li> <li>demonstrates apathy or hopelessness</li> <li>has mental health problems</li> </ul>

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call the Child Protection Hotline: 242-1211 or 911. Your call is anonymous.