



Recognizing Physical Abuse & Neglect of Children

To report suspected child abuse or neglect call 1-800-478-4444

Physical Abuse is any non-accidental injury or threat to a child by a parent or adult caretaker. This includes unexplained cuts, fractures, bruises, welts, shaking, burns and internal injuries.

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the child:

- Has questionable burns, bites, bruises, broken bones or black eyes;
- Has fading bruises or marks after noticeable absences from school or day care;
- Seems frightened of the parents/caregivers and protests or cries when it is time to go home from school or day care;
- Shrinks at the approach of adults; explains an injury in way that is not believable, based on the type of injury.

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the parent or other caregiver:

- Offers a conflicting or unconvincing explanation for the child's injury or refuses to explain an injury;
- Describes the child as bad, stupid, different; only speaks of the child negatively;
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child.

Physical Neglect is failure to provide the child or children with adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical or dental care and the supervision needed for the children to be healthy and safe. It is important to distinguish between willful neglect and a parent 's failure to provide the basic necessities of life because of poverty or cultural norms. A combination or pattern of physical indicators, child behavior and caretaker characteristics indicate inattention to the basic needs of a child and the possibility of physical neglect occurring.

Consider the possibility of physical neglect when the child:

- Is frequently absent from school;
- Begs or steals food or money from classmates;
- Lacks proper clothing for the weather;
- Is considered dirty, has an unkept appearance and severe body odor;
- Lacks medical or dental care, immunizations or glasses;
- States there is no one home to care for them.

Consider the possibility of physical neglect when the parent or caregiver:

- Appears indifferent to the child; Apathetic; Depressed;
- Chaotic life style; Always in a crisis; Consistently fails to keep appointments;
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs;
- Leaves young children unsupervised.



Recognizing Emotional Abuse & Neglect of Children

To report suspected child abuse or neglect call 1-800-478-4444

Emotional Neglect is the consistent failure by the parent or caregiver to provide support, attention and affection required for the child's healthy development.

Emotional Abuse is the chronic pattern of behaviors toward the child, such as belittling, humiliating or ridiculing, which are detrimental to the child's emotional well being.

Mental Injury is the severe emotional maltreatment which includes a pattern of terrorizing, isolating and/or verbally attacking the child, impairing the child's capacity to function in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Consider the possibility of emotional neglect or abuse when the child:

- Exhibits chronic pattern of biting, head banging, or unexplained bedwetting;
- Shows patterns of extremes in behavior; may be overly compliant or demanding, extremely passive or aggressive;
- Behaves either inappropriately adult-like or regresses to infantile behavior;
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development, delays that are not attributed to a developmental disability or existing medical condition;
- Is self-destructive; Starts fires or destroys property around them;
- Has sleep disorders, such as nightmares or fear of going to sleep;
- Experiences hypochondria, hysteria, obsessions, phobias or eating disorders.

Consider the possibility of emotional neglect or abuse when the parent or caregiver:

- Constantly blames, belittles or berates the child;
- Is unconcerned about the child;
- Refuses to consider offers of help for child;
- Overtly rejects the child;
- Isolates, ignores or acts indifferent to the child.
- Has unreasonable demands or impossible expectations for the child without regard to the child's developmental capacity or ability.
- Treats siblings unequally, singling out one child.

A child's sense of trust in the world is shattered when a parent or caregiver hurts them, belittles, humiliates or ridicules them, rejects them, or when they witness violence between family members.

We all have a responsibility for the welfare of children in our community.



Recognizing Child Sexual Abuse

To report suspected child abuse or neglect call 1-800-478-4444

Child Sexual Abuse is defined as the exploitation of children for the sexual gratification of the abuser. It includes a continuum of behaviors from sexual exposure to inappropriate touching including rape and incest, as well as being exposed to pornography or forced into prostitution. Child sexual abuse is a crime. Legal definitions of child sexual abuse vary according to the age of the child, what was actually done to the child, any injury, and the offender's relationship to the child. Alaska law states children can never consent to sex. It is NEVER the child's fault.

Child sexual abuse occurs in ALL social, ethnic and economic groups to children of all ages. Abuse happens to both girls and boys. While children are abused by strangers, most children are victimized by someone they know and trust – a parent, relative, neighbor, family friend, teacher, coach, child care provider, or clergy. Although most abuse is by men, women can also offend.

Child sexual abuse thrives in silence, as abusers urge the child “not to tell their little secret.” Children stay silent for many reasons – because they feel embarrassed or guilty, or they don't want to upset anyone. They may fear the abuser, who may threaten to harm the child, family members, or their pets if the child “tells the secret.” A child may be confused by the gifts, affection and attention they receive from an abuser who makes them feel special, yet demands sexual involvement. Young children may be unaware of what abuse is.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the child:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting;
- Experiences recurrent urinary tract infections;
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym class;
- Demonstrates sexual knowledge beyond their age;
- Is pregnant or contracts a sexually transmitted disease;
- Experiences a sudden drop in academic performance;
- Is withdrawn, depressed or has few friends;
- Has unexplained gifts or money.
- Abuses alcohol or drugs; Runs away.

Children are vulnerable to sexual abuse because:

- They are easily influenced by adults.
- They are naturally trusting and curious.
- They enjoy and deserve love, affection and attention from adults.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when a parent or other caregiver also:

- Severely limits the child's contact with other children and is unduly protective;
- Describes marital difficulties involving family power struggles or sexual relations;
- Abuses alcohol and/or other drugs;
- Lacks social and emotional contacts outside of the family;

All adults in the community have a responsibility for keeping children safe.