

# Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

No single sign confirms a child or youth is a victim of child abuse and neglect. However, the presence of multiple signs may indicate a need for concern and further assessment.

## Emotional Abuse

- The child has delayed physical or emotional development
- The child may show extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- The parent overtly rejects the child
- The parent constantly blames, belittles, or berates a child, is unconcerned about the child, and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems



## Neglect

- The child may wear dirty clothing, shoes too small or large, clothing often in need of repair or inadequate for the weather
- The child seems to be hungry; hoards, steals, begs for food or comes to school with little food
- The child may appear depressed or to lack energy
- The child may have dirty or decaying teeth, may demonstrate poor hygiene
- The child frequently reports caring for other siblings, or states there's no one at home to provide care
- The parent seems apathetic, depressed, appears to be indifferent to the child
- The parent abuses alcohol or drugs
- The parent may deny the existence of a problem and blame the child, school, or others for problems at home

## Physical Abuse

- The child has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones
- The child may have fading bruises or marks noticeable after absence from school
- The child seems frightened of parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- The child shrinks back at the approach of adults
- The parent offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury, or the explanation is not consistent with the injury

## Sexual Abuse

- The child has difficulty walking or sitting; may suddenly refuse to change for gym or other physical activities
- The child may demonstrate unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- The child may report unusual nightmares or bedwetting
- The parent may be secretive and isolated, jealous or controlling with family members
- The parent acts unduly protective of the child or severely limits contact with others

## Child Sex Trafficking

- The child or youth possesses money, cell phone or other material items that cannot be explained
- The child or youth reports participation in a sexual act in exchange for shelter, transportation, drugs, alcohol, money or other items of value
- The child or youth is accompanied by an overly controlling "friend," "partner," or "boss"
- The child or youth has signs of physical or sexual abuse; hesitant to explain tattoos or scars
- The child or youth may have low self esteem, anxiety, guilt or shame, be hostile or uncooperative, and demonstrate suicidal thoughts or actions

## Institutional Abuse

- Any form of abuse or neglect may occur while a child is in the care of an institution
- If maltreatment is caused by employees of the institution, it is institutional abuse
- Make a report immediately upon becoming aware maltreatment is occurring while in the care of an institution



We all play a role in preventing **child abuse and neglect.**

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