

CHILD ABUSE

To many, child abuse is narrowly defined as having only physical implications. In reality, child abuse is any act of omission or commission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development. This includes:

1. Physical abuse and corporal punishment resulting in a traumatic condition.
2. Physical neglect and/or inadequate supervision.
3. Sexual abuse and exploitation.
4. Emotional abuse.

CHILD ABUSE PHYSICAL INDICATORS

Physical Abuse

Unexplained bruises and welts: on face, lips, mouth, torso, back, buttocks and thighs in various stages of healing. Might reflect the shape of the article used to inflict the injury. (Example; electrical cord, belt buckle.)

Unexplained burns: cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks. Immersion burns (sock like, glove like, doughnut shaped on buttocks or genital area), patterned like electric burner, iron, etc., rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso.

Unexplained fractures: to skull, nose, facial structure, in various stages of healing, swollen or tender limbs.

Unexplained abrasions or lacerations to mouth, lips, gums, eyes or genital area, on back of arms, legs or torso.

Human bite marks.

Behavioral Indicators

Wary of physical contact with adults.

Apprehensive when other children cry.

Behavioral Extremes: Aggressiveness or extreme withdrawal to adults and other children.

Seems frightened of parents.

Afraid to go home, or cries when it is time to leave.

Reports injury by parents.

Seeks affection from any adult.

Physical Neglect

Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress for weather conditions.

Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities over long periods of time.

Unattended physical problems or medical needs, such as untreated or infected wounds.

Abandonment.

Behavioral Indicators

Begging, stealing food, delinquency.

Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departure), constantly falls asleep in class.

Rare attendance at school.

Alcohol or drug abuse.

Causes trouble in school.

States there is no one home to look after them.

Sexual Abuse

Difficulty in walking or standing.

Torn, stained or bloody under clothing.

Complains of pain or itching in genital area.

There is tearing, bruising, bleeding or specific inflammation of mouth, anus, or genitals or evidence of semen.

Venereal disease, especially in preteens under 13 years.

Pregnancy, especially in early adolescence.

Behavioral Indicators

Unwilling to change for gym or participate in physical education class.

Appears withdrawn, engages in fantasy or infantile behavior.

Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge.

Poor peer relationships.

Engages in delinquent acts, or run away.

Reports sexual assault by parent, relative or friend.

Emotional Abuse

Speech disorders.

Lags in physical development.

Failure-to-thrive.

Behavioral Indicators

Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive, cruelty and stealing).

Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play).

Behavior extremes (overly compliant, extremely passive or aggressive, very demanding or undemanding).

Overly adaptive behaviors (which are either inappropriate adult, parenting other children, or inappropriately infantile, rocking, head banging, or thumb sucking).

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, over 900,000 children are abused or neglected each year. More than half of all victims (54%) suffered neglect, while almost a quarter (23%) suffered physical abuse. Nearly 12 percent of the victims were sexually abused. About 1,100 children die each year because of abuse or neglect by their adult caretakers.

Each year in California, approximately 60,000 reports of child abuse incidents are submitted to the Department of Justice. 0 children were victims of physical abuse, 9,000 were sexually abused, and 25,000 children were victims of criminal neglect.

Child abuse and neglect are found in all cultural, ethnic, occupational and socioeconomic groups. It is a problem that requires our immediate and serious attention. It involves community cooperative efforts in prevention, education, reporting, training and education.

If you suspect that possible child abuse is occurring, please contact your local Law Enforcement Agency or call **Child Protective Services** at (800) 827-8724.

PREVENT CRIME

SEE IT!

HEAR IT!

REPORT IT!

**CRIME PREVENTION
IS EVERYONE'S
BUSINESS**

CALL

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**CHILD
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