

## 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.

| <b>CHILD INDICATORS</b> |  |  | <b>CARETAKER INDICATORS</b>  |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
|                         | <b>Physical Signs</b>  | <b>Child's Behavior</b>  |  |
| <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 (on soles, palms, back, buttocks)</li> <li>- immersion (sock or glove-like)</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> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reports injury by a parent (or threatened injury)</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• withdrawn or aggressive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>• offers 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>• torn, 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 in 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-abusing 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>• 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 CARELINE: 1-800-842-2288 (24 hours a day)**