
Emotional Abuse Indicators:

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags (such as failure to thrive, unmet milestones in development, delayed speech)
- Continual self-deprecation ('I'm ugly, stupid, worthless, etc')
- Overreacting to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behavior (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong
- Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely demanding; extremely passive or extremely aggressive)
- Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver
- Acts either inappropriately adult (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumb-sucking, tantrums)

WHEN A CHILD TELLS...

Stay calm, find a quiet place to talk to the child without others hearing, believe what you are being told, listen, but do not press for information. Acknowledge that the child may have anger, sadness or even guilty feelings about what happened, but stress this was not the child's fault. **DO NOT PROMISE YOU WILL KEEP IT A SECRET, YOU MUST REPORT IT TO THE CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE.**

WHERE TO GET HELP

Report the abuse to the school resource officer or designated contact within your school, contact the Child Abuse Hotline

**1-800-96-ABUSE
(1-800-962-2873)**

Guardians For New Futures, Inc.

1850 SW Fountainview Blvd.
Suite 201
Port St. Lucie, FL 34986

Phone: (772) 807-3868
Fax: (772) 807-3869
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CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Although the items listed within this flyer may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help you recognize that something is wrong. It usually takes several indicators to support a reasonable cause to suspect abuse. Generally the Abuse Hotline will not initiate a child protective investigation on the basis of just one indicator. Nevertheless, IF YOU SUSPECT CHILD ABUSE, CONTACT THE HOTLINE.

**1-800-96-ABUSE
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Physical Abuse Indicators:

- Unexplained and recurrent bruises and welts and burns (face, lips, mouth, back, torso, thighs, butt, genitals, circular burns possibly from cigar, cigarette, match tip, scalding or immersion burns: sock-like, glove-like, dry contact burns, rope burns, burns shaped like iron, electrical burns, heating coils, burns on the legs, neck, torso, arms and wrists)
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression toward others
- Fear of physical contact – shrinking back if touched
- Fear of suspect being contacted when child discloses they are being abused

Neglect Indicators:

- Constant hunger
- Consistent poor hygiene
- Constant tiredness (falls asleep in class, fatigued and listless)
- Clothing is frequently insufficient or inappropriate for the weather
- Emaciation (face appears lined/elderly, pinched/sharp)
- Untreated medical problems (untreated injuries, illnesses, psychological problems)
- Compulsive scavenging (Begs, steals, hides or hoards food, protective over food)
- Consistently arrives very early for school and/or stays very late.
- Is frequently absent from school
- Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations and environments

Note: a child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening to them.

Sexual Abuse Indicators:

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age. Exhibits bizarre, sophisticated, or unusually sexual behavior or knowledge. Behaves in a sexually provocative manner toward peers or adults.
- Engages in sexualized play, possibly including issues of force.

Sexual Abuse Indicators continued:

- Medical problems: chronic itching, pain in genitals, venereal diseases, difficulty sitting or walking, bruises or bleeding in genital or anal area, inner thighs, odor coming from genital area, frequent urinary tract or yeast infections, pregnancy, especially in pre-teens.
- Other extreme reactions include: depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, drug and alcohol abuse/overdoses, anorexia, sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Personality changes: becomes insecure and clinging, engages in delinquent behavior, poor social skills with other peer groups, detaches from reality, engages in infantile behavior such as rocking or head banging. Regressing to younger behavior patterns such as, thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys.
- Becomes isolated and withdrawn, is not allowed to socialize outside of school, sudden decline in school performance, trying to be “ultra-good” or perfect, over-reacting to criticism, inability to concentrate.
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter, parent, family member or friend.
- Starts to wet again, day or night, nightmares, becomes worried about clothing being removed.

