

Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse





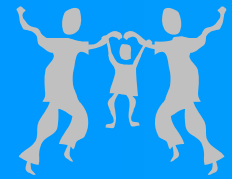
Who Potentially Abuses?

- Unbonded caretakers, i.e.. boyfriends/girlfriends
- Raised in a non-nurturing or abusive home
- Poor self-concept or depression
- Poor/absent/violent spousal relationship
- Isolated-physically, socially, emotionally
- Unrealistic expectations of child
- Crisis & stress in family
- Substance abuse in family
- Young parent



Types of Abuse

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional or Mental
- Neglect



Definition: The intentional injury of a child, ranging from minor bruises and lacerations to severe neurological trauma and death.

Types of Physical Abuse

Burning

Shaking

Beating

Scalding

Kicking

Suffocating

Hitting

Tying Up

Throwing

Biting

Choking

Pinching



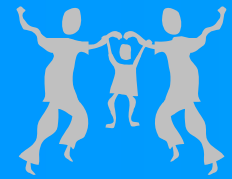
The following are physical indicators of physical abuse:

1. Unexplained bruises/welts on face, mouth, torso, buttock, thighs that are:
 - ❖ In various stages of healing, clustered, forming regular patterns, reflecting shape of object (loop, cord, etc.)
 - ❖ Regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation
2. Unexplained fractures (skull, nose, facial) in various stages of healing, often spiral fractures
3. Unexplained lacerations or abrasions (mouth, lips, eyes, external genitalia)



The following are behavioral indicators of physical abuse:

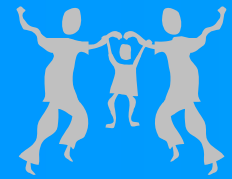
- Unable to explain injury or explanations are inconsistent with the injury
- Frightened of parent or caretaker, afraid to go home
- Reports intentional injury
- Changes in behavior or school performance
- Poor self-image
- Wary of adult contact, guarded
- Behavioral extremes
- Suicidal thoughts



Definition: Sexual abuse occurs when an adult exploits a child for sexual gratification. Sexual abuse is not limited to intercourse. Exposing oneself to a child and fondling a child's genitals are considered sexual abuse. So is using a child for production of pornographic materials.

There may be no physical signs. Possible symptoms include:

- Pain and/or bleeding in anal or genital area
- Difficulty walking, sitting
- Displays age-inappropriate play with toys, self or others
- Inappropriate knowledge about sex
- Child reports sexual abuse
- Venereal disease or pregnancy



The following are some behavioral indicators of sexual abuse:

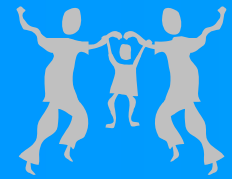
- Unwilling to change clothing
- Poor peer relationships
- Lack of privacy in home
- Delinquent or running away behavior
- Masturbating excessively
- Overly affectionate with others
- Self-destructive behaviors
- Promiscuity
- Sudden, unexplained change of behavior



Definition: Emotional abuse may occur when a parent/caregiver fails to provide the understanding, warmth, attention, and supervision the child needs for healthy psychological growth. Also, when a parent/caregiver ignores, terrorizes, blames, belittles or otherwise makes a child feel that he's worthless and incompetent.

Physical Indicators

- Speech disorders
- Failure to Thrive
- Motor coordination delays
- Emotional delays
- Signs of unexplained fear or panic



The following are behavioral indicators of emotional abuse:

- Habit disorders; sucking, biting, rocking
- Conduct disorders; antisocial, destructive
- Behavior extremes
- Overly adaptive behavior
- Attempted suicide or self-destructive behaviors
- Low self esteem
- Problems with attention



Definition: Neglect occurs when the parent fails to provide a child with basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or proper supervision

Physical Indicators

- Failure to Thrive
- Dirty/hungry children
- Medical neglect
- Body Odor
- Lack of dental care
- Inadequate shelter
- Safety issues, i.e.. access to guns



The following are behavioral indicators of neglect:

- Lack of parental response
- Excessive sleeping
- Begging for food
- Attention seeking behaviors
- Excessive absences from school
- Child/caretaker abusing drugs or alcohol



The following individuals are required under Florida Law, Chapter 39.201 to report if they suspect a child is being abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare:

- Medical professionals
- Mental Health professionals
- Social Workers
- Day Care Workers
- Professional Child Care Workers
- Teachers
- Law Enforcement
- Judges



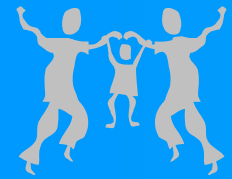
You may call 1-800-96-ABUSE or fax your report to 1-800-914-0004. You can find the fax form at www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/howtoreport.shtml. The reporter needs to be prepared to give the following information:

1. Description of suspected abuse, neglect and/or exploitation
2. Description of injuries/threats and date of occurrence
3. Names of victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses, including birth dates, addresses, telephone and social security numbers
4. Your name and means to contact (required for professional reporters of child abuse and neglect)
5. Frequency of suspected abuse and last known incident



The following are common concerns and questions about reporting abuse:

1. “I don’t want the family to get in trouble.”
2. “Do I have to give my name?”
3. “I’m afraid the family will come after me.”
4. “I’m afraid the parents will hurt the kids for telling.”
5. “Nothing will happen anyway.”
6. “I told the child that I would not tell anyone.”



- Do what you can in your community to have a voice for the youngest and most vulnerable of our citizens
- Involve your organization, your church, your local schools and your neighbors
- Raise funds and awareness for fighting child abuse in your community
- Let your legislators know you care about child abuse prevention efforts and VOTE



If you are interested in more information about your local and regional child abuse prevention task forces, go to the following website:

<http://mchneighborhood.ichp.edu/captf>

If you have any questions regarding child abuse prevention, you can e-mail them to:

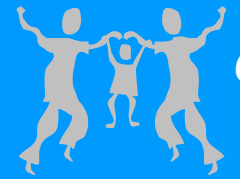
capp@peds.ufl.edu

For general information on child abuse and neglect and how you can help, go to the Partnership for Strong Families', Department of Children and Families' and the Child Advocacy Center's websites:

www.pfsf.org

www.dcf.state.fl.us/cf_web

www.childadvocacycentergainesville.org



*Eliminating child abuse
depends on all of us!*

*Join us and take action.
A child is depending on YOU!*