

Recognizing Abuse & Neglect

What is Child Abuse?

To help prevent child abuse, you need to understand what it is. It's any mistreatment of a child that results in harm or injury. There are four basic types of child abuse, though children often experience more than one kind of abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes actions such as beating, burning, or punching a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may involve criticizing, insulting, rejecting, or withholding love from a child.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes rape, touching or fondling, or involving a child in pornography.

Neglect

Neglect includes failure to provide for a child's basic physical, medical, or emotional needs. Leaving a young child home alone or failing to provide needed medical care may also be considered neglect.

How to Report Abuse

In Texas, you have two ways to report child abuse or neglect.

- 1-800-252-5400
- www.txabusehotline.org

[Texas Department of Family and Protective Services](http://www.txabusehotline.org)

Signs of Child Abuse

What Are the Signs of Abuse?

Children who are abused might show physical signs or sudden changes in their behavior or school performance. These signs don't prove that children are being abused, but they could be a signal that the children or their families need help. When children talk about being abused, take them seriously. Take steps to get help!

General Signs of Abuse

- Abused children might seem:
- Nervous around adults or afraid of certain adults.
- Reluctant to go home (coming to school early or staying late, for example).
- Very passive and withdrawn or aggressive and disruptive.
- Tired a lot, or they might complain of nightmares or not sleeping well.
- Fearful and anxious.

Signs of Neglect

- Missing school a lot.
- Begging for food, stealing food, or stealing money for food.
- Lacking needed medical or dental care.
- Being frequently dirty.
- Using alcohol or other drugs.
- Saying there is no one at home to take care of them.

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained burns, bruises, black eyes, or other injuries.
- Apparent fear of a parent or caretaker.
- Faded bruises or healing injuries after missing school.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Difficulty walking or sitting, or other indications of injury in the genital area.
- Sexual knowledge or behavior beyond what is normal for the child's age.
- Running away from home.

Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Acting overly mature or immature for the child's age.
- Extreme changes in behavior.
- Delays in physical or emotional development.
- Attempted suicide.
- Lack of emotional attachment to the parent.