



# CHILD ABUSE

## Look for the signs

Contact Your County's Local Social Services Agency

### Signs of Physical Abuse

**The child may have unexplained:**

- bruises, welts, cuts or other injuries
- broken bones
- burns

**A child experiencing physical abuse may:**

- seem withdrawn or depressed
- seem afraid to go home or may run away
- shy away from physical contact
- be aggressive
- wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries

### Signs of Sexual Abuse

**The child may have:**

- torn, stained or bloody underwear
- trouble walking or sitting
- pain or itching in genital area
- a sexually transmitted disease

**A child experiencing sexual abuse may:**

- have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively
- fear a particular person
- seem withdrawn or depressed
- gain or lose weight suddenly
- shy away from physical contact
- run away from home

### Signs of Neglect

**The child may have:**

- unattended medical needs
- little or no supervision at home
- poor hygiene
- appear underweight

**A child experiencing neglect may:**

- be frequently tired or hungry
- steal food
- appear overly needy for adult attention

### Look for the Patterns

Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

#### If a child tells YOU about abuse:

**Be a good listener.** Show that you understand and believe what the child tells you. Encourage, but don't pressure him/her to talk. Ask open ended questions.

**Be supportive.** Tell the child he/she did the right thing by coming to you. Stress that he/she is not to blame. Let the child know that you want to help.

**Don't overreact.** This can frighten the child or prevent him/her from telling you more. Do not talk negatively about the suspected abuser in front of the child.

**Document and report it.** Document your conversation as soon as you can. If possible, write down the child's exact words.

**Don't delay.** Never assume someone else will report the abuse. The sooner it's reported, the sooner the child and their family can be helped.

### WHO MUST REPORT ABUSE?

Doctors  
Nurses  
Social Workers

Police Officers  
Child Care Workers  
Any Witnesses

Any/All School Personnel



ne department  
of health and  
human services