



# CHILD ABUSE LOOK FOR THE SIGNS

Dial 1-800-96-ABUSE



## 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- Seem withdrawn or depressed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- Seem withdrawn or depressed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.** 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.



Call or Report it Online At:  
<http://dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report>  
800-962-2873

## Who Must Report Abuse?

Doctors  
Nurses  
Social Workers  
Police Officers  
Child Care Workers  
Any Witnesses  
Any/All School Personnel