

Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect: Signs & Symptoms

<p>Recognizing Child Abuse The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The Child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance <input type="checkbox"/> Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention <input type="checkbox"/> Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes <input type="checkbox"/> Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks adult supervision <input type="checkbox"/> Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn <input type="checkbox"/> Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home 	<p>The Parent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shows little concern for the child <input type="checkbox"/> Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home <input type="checkbox"/> Asks teachers or other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves <input type="checkbox"/> Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome <input type="checkbox"/> Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve <input type="checkbox"/> Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs <p>The Parent and Child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely touch or look at each other <input type="checkbox"/> Consider their relationship entirely negative <input type="checkbox"/> State that they do not like each other
<p>Signs of Physical Abuse: Consider when the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes <input type="checkbox"/> Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school <input type="checkbox"/> Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home <input type="checkbox"/> Shrinks at the approach of adults <input type="checkbox"/> Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver <p>Consider when the parent or other adult caregiver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury <input type="checkbox"/> Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way <input type="checkbox"/> Uses harsh physical discipline with the child <input type="checkbox"/> Has a history of abuse as a child <p>Signs of Neglect: Consider when the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is frequently absent from school <input type="checkbox"/> Begg or steals food or money <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses <input type="checkbox"/> Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather <input type="checkbox"/> Abuses alcohol or other drugs <input type="checkbox"/> States that there is no one at home to provide care <p>Consider when the parent or other adult caregiver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Appears to be indifferent to the child <input type="checkbox"/> Seems apathetic or depressed <input type="checkbox"/> Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner <input type="checkbox"/> Is abusing alcohol or other drugs <p>Signs of Sexual Abuse: Consider when the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has difficulty walking or sitting <input type="checkbox"/> Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities <input type="checkbox"/> Reports nightmares or bedwetting <input type="checkbox"/> Experiences a sudden change in appetite <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Runs away <input type="checkbox"/> Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver <p>Consider when the parent or other adult caregiver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex <input type="checkbox"/> Is secretive and isolated <input type="checkbox"/> Is jealous or controlling with family members <p>Signs of Emotional Maltreatment: Consider when the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression <input type="checkbox"/> Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example) <input type="checkbox"/> Is delayed in physical or emotional development <input type="checkbox"/> Has attempted suicide <input type="checkbox"/> Reports a lack of attachment to the parent <p>Consider when the parent or other adult caregiver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child and overtly rejects the child <input type="checkbox"/> Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems 	

Child Welfare Information Gateway (2007). Retrieved from:
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm>