



Warning Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

There are some common warning signs of child abuse and neglect but just because you see a warning sign, doesn't necessarily mean the child is being abused. Look for a pattern of abusive behavior.

Emotional Abuse

- Child is excessively withdrawn, seems fearful and/or anxious of doing something wrong.
- Child will exhibit extreme behavior patterns. This includes being extremely compliant, extremely demanding, extremely passive or extremely aggressive.
- Child and parent /caregiver seem unattached.
- Child acts in age-inappropriate ways. For example, the child acts younger than they are by expressing infantile actions such as thumb-sucking and tantrums. The child can also act too much like an adult.

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises, welts and cuts that cannot be explained.
- Child seems "on alert" for a majority of the time seemingly waiting for something bad to happen.
- Injuries on child has a pattern of a hand or marks from a belt.
- Child flinches at sudden movements, seems afraid to go home and shies away from touch.
- Child wears clothing that is inappropriate for the weather. For example, long sleeves on a hot summer day.

Neglect

- Clothes are ill-fitting, dirty or not appropriate for the weather.
- Child's hygiene is consistently bad. This includes not bathing, unwashed hair and/or noticeable body odor.
- Illnesses and physical injuries on child go untreated
- Child is frequently left alone or left unsupervised.
- Child misses school on a regular basis.



Sexual Abuse

- Child has trouble walking or sitting.
- Child is knowledgeable in sexual acts which are inappropriate to their age.
- Child will go out of their way to avoid a specific person.
- Child will avoid changing their clothes in front of other people or take part in physical activities.
- Child contracts an STD or becomes pregnant at a very young age.
- Child runs away from home.

Source: helpguide.org