

Sexual Abuse: Child may have difficulty walking or sitting; suddenly refuses to participate in gym or some other physical activity; states having nightmares or bedwetting; has a sudden change in appetite; demonstrates unusual or sophisticated knowledge or behaviors of a sexual nature; may report sexual abuse.

Examples of “red flags” that are indicative of an abuser, or has the potential to abuse:

- Was a victim of childhood abuse
- Breaks or throws things when angry
- Physically violent with others
- When uses alcohol or drugs becomes violent, cruel, or negative
- Verbally abusive
- Blames others for anything that goes wrong
- Controlling of others, possessive or jealous
- Shows paranoid behavior
- Quickly changes moods without a reasonable explanation
- Has unrealistic expectations of others
- Disregards personal boundaries of others
- Is demeaning of others, often puts them down

Emotional Abuse: Child exhibits extremes in behavior such as being overly compliant, passive, or aggressive; has inappropriate adult or infantile-like behavior; delays in emotional or physical development; has attempted suicide; or reports a lack of attachment to the parent.



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Please report any suspicion of child abuse, past or present, to law enforcement!



Do you have questions?
Call Us! We can help!

Child Abuse

Signs and Symptoms



To create a safe environment for children is of paramount importance for the Church, and everyone in the Church is responsible for ensuring that this exists. No one can say, 'It's not my job.'

Teresa M. Kettelkamp, Former Director
Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection

What is Child Abuse?

The Child Abuse and Treatment Act defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum: any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent, caretaker or any adult which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act, which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a minor child.

According to the 2013 National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System report, 9 out of 1,000 children were found to be victims of maltreatment. The greatest numbers of children were victims of neglect (78.3%), followed by physical abuse (17.8%), sexual abuse (9.5%), and emotional abuse (7.6%).

Over 61% of these referrals were made by professionals that are required by law to be a mandated reporter; most of the remaining referrals were made by persons like yourself who were concerned for the welfare of a child or youth who may have been victims of abuse. Unfortunately, child abuse is common and often goes unreported.



The Four Kinds of Child abuse are:

Physical Abuse: A non-accidental physical injury, ranging from minor bruises to broken bones or death that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver or other person who has responsibility for the child. It does not include spanking by a parent or legal guardian that is reasonable and age appropriate and does not cause bodily injury to the child.

Neglect: Failure of a parent, guardian or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs, such as adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical treatment, supervision, educational needs, inattentive to emotional and psychological needs causing failure to thrive, or allowing a child to use drugs and/or alcohol.

Sexual Abuse: Is any sexual behavior with a child including physical acts such as touching the child's private areas of the body and/or having the child touch the adult or a third party in a sexual manner, intercourse, indecent exposure, production of or viewing of pornography, and any form of sexual exploitation by word or deed.

Emotional Abuse: Seriously affects a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This can include constant belittling, criticism, threats, rejection, and name-calling, using derogatory terms to describe the child, isolating the child from normal social encounters with their peers, withholding love and affection, and teaching or encouraging the child to learn inappropriate behaviors or activities.



What factors Contribute to Abuse?



Risk factors for abuse include: parental or caregiver depression or a mental illness that is poorly treated or managed; parental history of childhood abuse; domestic violence in the home; alcohol and/or drug abuse by the parent or caregiver; poverty; parental immaturity and poor parenting skills.

Child abuse can occur outside of the home, however, most often children are abused by someone they know, not a stranger!

Signs to look for in Abuse:

Physical: Unexplained bruises, burns, broken bones or black eyes, fading bruises or marks noticeable after an absence from school, frightened of their parent or caregiver and may not want to go home, shrinks at the approach of an adult, reports injury at hands of the parent or caregiver.

Neglect: Frequently absent from school, begs or steals food or money, lacks medical or dental care when necessary, consistently dirty or has severe body odor, inappropriate clothing for the weather, states that no one is home to care for them.