



## CLUES FOR IDENTIFYING CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

One sign alone may not necessarily indicate child abuse. However, if a number are present it is prudent to consider the possibility of child abuse. If you suspect child abuse you may call the child abuse hotline (800) 540-4000 to consult with an on-duty worker.

### *Suspect Abuse or Neglect if a Child:*

- ◆ is habitually away from school and constantly late; arrives at school very early or stays very late because he/she does not want to go home.
- ◆ is compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative – perhaps having internalized his/her problem dealing with adults.
- ◆ is nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive, or destructive – perhaps acting out his hurt to secure attention.
- ◆ has an inordinate number of “explained” injuries such as bruises on his/her arms and legs over a period of time.
- ◆ exhibits an injury that is not adequately explained.
- ◆ complains about numerous beatings.
- ◆ complains about his/her mother’s boyfriend “doing things” when the mother is not at home.
- ◆ goes to the bathroom with difficulty.
- ◆ is inadequately dressed for inclement weather, e.g., only a sweater in the winter for outer wear.
- ◆ wears a long sleeved top or shirt during summer months to cover bruises on the arms.
- ◆ has clothing that is soiled, tattered or too small.
- ◆ is dirty and smells and/or has bad teeth, hair falling out, and/or lice.
- ◆ is thin, emaciated and constantly tired showing evidence of malnutrition and dehydration.
- ◆ is usually fearful of other children and adults.
- ◆ has been given inappropriate food, drink, and drugs.

### *Educators Should Also Suspect Child Abuse If the Parents:*

- ◆ show little concern for their child’s problems.
- ◆ do not respond to the teacher’s inquiries and are never present for the teacher’s visits or for the parent’s nights.
- ◆ take an unusual amount of time to seek health care for the child.
- ◆ do not adequately explain an injury.
- ◆ give different explanations for the same injury.
- ◆ suggest that the cause of an injury can be attributed to a third party.
- ◆ are reluctant to share information about the child.
- ◆ respond inappropriately to the seriousness of the problem.
- ◆ cannot be found.
- ◆ are using alcohol or drugs.
- ◆ have no friends, neighbors or relatives to turn to in a crisis.



*Educators Should Also Suspect Child Abuse If the Parents (continued):*

- ◆ have unrealistic expectations for the child or are very strict.
- ◆ were themselves abused, neglected or deprived as children.
- ◆ have taken the child to different doctors, clinics or hospitals for past injuries – often called “doctor shopping” or “hospital shopping.”
- ◆ are unusually antagonistic and hostile when talking about the child’s health problems.

Such clues can help you make an informed decision about reporting. You are not required or expected to make a unilateral investigation but only to report a suspected abuse.

## **INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE / NEGLECT CHECK LIST**

### **BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF ABUSED CHILDREN**

Tend to be fearful of physical contact initiated by adults. Apprehensive of approach by an adult.

Tend to be constantly alert for danger in the environment.

Tend not to turn to parents for safety, but endure life as if they were alone in a dangerous world.

Tend to be anxious, depressed, aggressive, and self destructive.

Tend to “fight back” at parents by refusing food, intentional defecation, bedwetting, truancy, fire setting, withdrawal.

Tend to be overactive, aggressive, hostile.

Complain of beating or other mistreatment.

### **BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF NEGLECTED CHILDREN**

May be habitually truant.

May be tired, lethargic, listless.

May be hostile, aggressive, disruptive, destructive.