

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is when a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when a child is hurt from being struck or spanked.

- 28.3% of adults report being physically abused as a child.
- Physical discipline from a parent that does not injure or impair a child is not considered abuse; however, non-violent alternatives are always available.

Physical Abuse can result in:

- Bruises, Burns, Cuts and Scratches
- Internal Injuries
- Broken Bones
- Lifelong Injury
- Death

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is when a child is yelled or cursed at causing them emotional distress.

- 10.6% of adults report being emotionally abused as a child.
- Emotional Abuse can include rejecting, ignoring, shaming, humiliating, terrorizing, isolating and corrupting a child.
- Some signs of emotional abuse in children include:
 - Development delays
 - Bed wetting
 - Extreme emotions
 - Destructive behavior
 - Anxieties
 - Suicidal thoughts.
- Child abuse is a serious problem that hurts a child no matter their age, sex or color.
- According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), child sexual abuse is “any completed or attempted (non-completed) sexual act, sexual contact with, or exploitation (ie, non-contact sexual interaction) of a child by a caregiver.

**If you see signs of abuse call the National Child Abuse Hot-line.
1-800-4-A-Child or 1-800-422-4453 for text or call.**

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse can take shape various ways such as forcing a child to view or perform a sexual act, exposing the child to inappropriate behavior or talk or making them show their sex organs.

- 20.7% of adults report being sexually abused as a child.

Kids are much more likely to be sexually abused by someone who they know and trust. That makes it even more important to evaluate all the adults in your child's life to make sure that no one is going to hurt your child. You want to be very alert of your child's emotional state. Changes to mood, or if they are scared/not wanting to go to a certain place or are not comfortable with a certain person anymore. Especially when it comes to teachers, caretakers, or significant others. Carefully screen who your kids are with and don't leave them with someone you're not sure about. If they're afraid of a person, or uncomfortable with that person, listen to them and don't leave them with that person.

Some signs of sexual abuse in children include:

- Difficulty sitting, walking, bowel problems
- Torn, stained, bloody undergarments
- Bleeding, bruising, pain, swelling, itching in their genital area
- Frequent urinary tract or yeast infections
- Any sexually transmitted diseases or related symptoms
- Eating disorders, poor self-image, lack of confidence
- Bed wetting at an advanced age
- Recklessness, substance abuse, delinquency, running away
- Depression, anxiousness, aggression

Child Neglect

Child neglect is when a child is not properly fed, clothed, or looked after by a parent or caregiver. Child neglect comes in many forms. Physical, emotional, medical and educational are the four main types of neglect. Children need enough affection and attention to feel loved and supported.

Adults that care for children must provide clothing, food and shelter as well as a safe living environment and supervision. Parents and caregivers must provide appropriate treatment for injuries and illnesses and ensure the child stays safe and healthy. Parents and schools share the responsibility of making sure the child has access to opportunities for academic success.

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Preventing and stopping abuse

- Try to talk to your child about what they're going through in their everyday life. Doing so allows you to stay in tune with their personality and emotions which can help you identify when something is wrong or bothering them.
- Keep your children healthy, clothed and nourished. Denying them of these basic needs is neglect.
- If you or anyone else in the household have problems with substance abuse, getting help for this can help with the risk of potential child abuse in your home.
- Watch your words, angry punishing language can leave your children with emotional scars.
- Before disciplining your child take some time to calm down and think about how you're going to handle the situation instead of losing control and blowing up at your child.
- Take a time out if you feel like your emotions are going to cause you to overreact or lash out.
- Talking to someone or joining a support group for parents can help you with managing your emotions.
- Making your home violent free for your children is a good recommendation. Avoid violent television and other media as well as violent people. Keeping your children away from abusive or violent adults is also highly recommended.

Resources include:

1. Murray, Laura K, et al. "Child Sexual Abuse." Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Apr. 2014, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4413451.
2. "Child Abuse Education & Prevention Resources." Www.childhelp.org, Childhelp, 13 Jan. 2022, www.childhelp.org/child-abuse.
3. "Child Abuse and Neglect: What Parents Should Know." HealthyChildren.org, American Academy of Pediatrics, 13 Apr. 2018, healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/What-to-Know-about-Child-Abuse.aspx. Accessed 12/23/2019
4. Miller, Debbie. "Child Abuse and Neglect - Causes of Abuse and Neglect, Effects of Abuse on Children, Prevention of Child Abuse." StateUniversity.com, State University, education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1823/Child-Abuse-Neglect.html. Accessed 12/23/2019
5. Medical Staff. "What You Can Do to Prevent Child Abuse." Www.urmc.rochester.edu, University of Rochester Medical Center, www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?contenttypeid=1&contentid=1565. Accessed 12/23/2019
6. "Creating Positive Childhood Experiences." Www.cdc.gov, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 19 Mar. 2019, www.cdc.gov/injury/features/prevent-child-abuse/index.html. Accessed 12/23/2019
7. "Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention ." Www.cdc.gov, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 26 Feb. 2019, www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/. Accessed 12/23/2019

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