

Appendix 4: Physical and Behavioral Indicators of Abuse

Type of Abuse	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Physical Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained bruises (in various stages of healing) • Unexplained burns, especially cigarette burns or immersion burns • Unexplained fractures, lacerations or abrasions • Swollen areas • Evidence of delayed or inappropriate treatment for injuries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self destructive • Withdrawn and/or aggressive - behavioral extremes • Arrives at school early or stays late as if afraid to be at home • Chronic runaway (adolescents) • Complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably • Wears clothing inappropriate to weather, to cover body • Bizarre explanation of injuries • Wary of adult contact
Physical Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abandonment • Unattended medical needs • Consistent lack of supervision • Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene • Lice, distended stomach, emaciated • Inadequate nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep in class • Steals food, begs from classmates • Reports that no caretaker is at home • Frequently absent or tardy • Self destructive • School dropout (adolescents) • Extreme loneliness and need for affection
Sexual Abuse	<p><i>Sexual abuse may be non-touching: obscene language, pornography, exposure - or touching: fondling, molesting, oral sex, intercourse</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torn, stained or bloody underclothing • Pain, swelling or itching in genital area • Difficulty walking or sitting • Bruises or bleeding in genital area • Venereal disease • Frequent urinary or yeast infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive seductiveness • Role reversal, overly concerned for siblings • Massive weight change • Suicide attempts (especially adolescents) • Inappropriate sex play or premature understanding of sex • Threatened by physical contact, closeness
Emotional Abuse	<p><i>Emotional abuse may be name-calling, insults, put-downs, etc., or it may be terrorization, isolation, humiliation, rejection, corruption, ignoring</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech disorders • Delayed physical development • Substance abuse • Ulcers, asthma, severe allergies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting) • Antisocial, destructive • Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play) • Passive and aggressive - behavioral extremes • Delinquent behavior (especially adolescents) • Developmentally delayed

Remember:

DISCIPLINE helps a child learn a lesson that will carry over and positively affect future behavior. ABUSE affects the future in a negative way, leading to anger, hatred and more deviant behavior.

DISCIPLINE enhances the child's sense of self worth, helping the child learn self-control and thus becoming comfortable within the family and in society. ABUSE robs the child of self worth and causes him/her to feel outcast and resentful.

DISCIPLINE is not shame or guilt. ABUSE is shame or guilt which satisfies the needs of the parents at the moment and destroys the self image of the child in a hostile manner.

DISCIPLINE is taught by example. But so is abuse!

Adapted from "Child Discipline: Guidelines for Parents" by Gary May. Copied from the National Children's Advocacy Center http://www.nationalcac.org/families/for_workers/abuse_indicators.html