

Physical and Behavioral Indicators of Abuse[1]

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 • Self-destructive • Withdrawn and/or aggressive—behavioral extremes • Arrives at school early or stays late as if afraid to be at home • Chronic runaway (adolescents) • Complains of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
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

<p>Sexual Abuse</p>	<p>Sexual abuse may be non-touching (obscene language, pornography, exposure) or touching (fondling, molesting, oral sex, intercourse)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing • Pain, swelling, or itching in the genital area • Difficulty walking or sitting • Bruises or bleeding in the 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
<p>Emotional Abuse</p>	<p>Emotional abuse may be name-calling, insults, put-downs, etc., or it may be terrorization, isolation, humiliation, rejection, corruption, ignoring</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

[1] From the Handbook on Child Safety for Independent School Leaders, by A. Rizzuto and

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