



# CHILD ABUSE

## *Look for the Signs*

Dial 1-800-96-ABUSE

### *Signs of Physical Abuse*

**The child may have unexplained:**

- Bruises, welts, cuts or other injuries
- Broken bones
- Burns

**A child experiencing physical abuse may:**

- Seem withdrawn or depressed
- Seem afraid to go home or may run away
- Shy away from physical contact
- Be aggressive
- Wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries

### *Signs of Sexual Abuse*

**The child may have:**

- Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- Trouble walking or sitting
- Pain or itching in genital area
- A sexually transmitted disease

**A child experiencing sexual abuse may:**

- Have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively
- Fear a particular person
- Seem withdrawn or depressed
- Gain or lose weight suddenly
- Shy away from physical contact
- Run away from home

### *Signs of Neglect*

**The child may have:**

- Unattended medical needs
- Little or no supervision at home
- Poor hygiene
- Appear underweight

**A child experiencing neglect may:**

- Be frequently tired or hungry
- Steal food
- Appear overly needy for adult attention

### *Look for the Patterns*

Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

### *If a child tells YOU about abuse*

**Be a Good Listener** Show that you understand and believe what the child tells you. Encourage, but don't pressure him/her to talk. Ask open ended questions.

**Be Supportive** Tell the child he/she did the right thing by coming to you. Stress that he/she is not to blame. Let the child know that you want to help.

**Don't Overreact** This can frighten the child or prevent him/her from telling you more. Do not talk negatively about the suspected abuser in front of the child.

**Document and Report it** Document your conversation as soon as you can. If possible, write down the child's exact words.

**Don't Delay** Never assume someone else will report the abuse. The sooner it's reported, the sooner the child and their family can be helped.

### WHO MUST REPORT ABUSE?

Doctors	Police Officers
Nurses	Child Care Workers
Social Workers	Any Witnesses

Any/All School Personnel

**CALL OR REPORT IT ONLINE AT:**  
<http://dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report>

