



WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

Children who are abused may show physical and behavioral signs. You may be a child's only lifeline to safety. Please pay attention to the treatment of children around you. Child abuse is everyone's business. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected in Illinois, call **1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)**.

Children who have been abused or neglected may be:

- Nervous around adults or afraid of certain adults
- Reluctant to go home
- Very passive and withdrawn—or aggressive and disruptive
- Often tired or complaining of nightmares, or not sleeping well
- Fearful and anxious
- Showing sudden changes in behavior or school performance

Possible signs of physical abuse:

- Unexplained burns, bruises, black eyes or other injuries
- Apparent fear of a parent or caretaker
- Faded bruises or healing injuries
- Injuries that do not match the explanation

Possible signs of neglect:

- Frequently missing school
- Begging for or stealing food or money
- Lacking needed medical or dental care
- Being frequently dirty
- Using alcohol or other drugs
- Saying there is no one at home to take care of him or her

Many of these signs may also be present in children exposed to violence in their homes and communities, like domestic violence and gang violence. These signs don't prove that a child is being abused. But they could be a signal that the child and his or her family may need help.

Also know the signs of an abusive adult. Consider the possibility of abuse if a parent or caretaker:

- Seems unconcerned about the child's welfare
- Denies problems at school or at home
- Blames the child for causing problems
- Sees the child as worthless or as a burden
- Avoids discussing the child's injuries or gives conflicting explanations for them
- Abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
- Seems isolated from other parents, relatives, or social supports
- Uses harsh physical discipline or asks other caretakers to use it
- Depends on the child for emotional support
- Seems indifferent to the child
- Seems secretive or tries to isolate the child from other children and adults
- Frequently blames, belittles, or insults the child

These signs don't prove that an adult is abusive. But they could be a signal that the adult may need help.



What to look for in a virtual setting:

- Sudden decrease in engagement
- Visible lack of hygiene or visible unexplained injuries
- Parent or caretaker does not allow the child to speak with you
- Parent or caretaker is always with the child or in the background

Possible signs of sexual abuse:

- Difficulty walking or sitting, or other indications of injury to the genital area
- Sexual knowledge or behavior beyond what is normal for the child's age
- Running away from home

Possible signs of emotional abuse:

- Acting overly mature or immature for the child's age
- Extreme changes in behavior
- Delays in physical or emotional development
- Attempted suicide
- Lack of emotional attachment to the parent



HOW TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

CALL THE DCFS HOTLINE:
1-800-25ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)



Have the following information about the child or children, if possible:

- Name
- Address
- Information about siblings
- Date of birth
- Phone number
- Parent/guardian's name

More information for calling the hotline:

- Identify if you are a mandated reporter.
- Tell the hotline right away if you think it is an emergency.
- Tell the hotline why you think the child or children are abused or neglected. Report the facts about what you have seen and/or heard.
- Give the hotline as much information about the abuse and the person responsible for the abuse as possible.
- You do not have to have proof of the abuse. If you suspect a child is being hurt, call the hotline.
- Sometimes the hotline will not be able to take the report. It is ok to ask the hotline worker for other resources or ideas to help the family.
- You can make a report to the hotline without giving your name.
- To learn more about the hotline or making a report visit the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services website at:

www.illinois.gov/dcfs

