

# What is child abuse and neglect?

Every month, Montgomery County Children Services receives more than 500 calls about suspected child abuse or neglect. The first step in helping children is to recognize the signs of maltreatment.

**Physical abuse** is a nonaccidental physical injury to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or other person responsible for a child.

**Neglect** is the failure of a parent or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs physically, medically, educationally or emotionally.

## Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms

Suspect child abuse or neglect? Report it: 937-224-KIDS (5437) \*You can remain anonymous  
Child in immediate danger? Call 911!

### Physical abuse

- Has unexplained injuries, such as burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has unexplained injuries particularly to the head, neck or torso
- Has fading bruises or other noticeable marks after an absence from school
- Seems scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn or aggressive
- Seems frightened of his or her parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Shows changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Abuses animals or pets

### Neglect

- Is frequently absent from school
- May exhibit characteristics of being excessively hungry, including asking for food
- Lacks needed medical care (including immunizations), dental care or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Concerns of alcohol or drug use impacting the care of children
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

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## Sexual abuse

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Experiences bleeding, bruising or swelling in their private parts
- Suddenly refuses to go to school or runs away
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a sexually transmitted disease before age 14
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment

## Emotional abuse

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as being overly compliant or demanding, extremely passive or aggressive
- Is either inappropriately adult (e.g., parenting other children) or inappropriately infantile (e.g., frequently rocking or head-banging)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Shows signs of depression or suicidal thoughts
- Reports an inability to develop emotional bonds with others

## How & What to Report

Reporting your concerns is not making an accusation; rather, it is a request for an investigation and assessment to determine if help is needed. **Call 937-224-KIDS (5437). Immediate risk? Call 911.**

- Name of child victim
- Name of all adults in the home
- Address or location of the family
- Contact information
- Ages of the children
- What is the harm to the child?
- Special needs of the children
- Name of the person suspected of harming the child
- Who holds custody, if not the parents?
- Does the alleged perpetrator have continued access to the child?
- Protective capacities of parents and family strengths
- Resources or supports for the family
- Tribal or military affiliation
- The last time the child was seen
- Are the police involved?
- Any other information that may be helpful in ensuring safety?