

Indicators of Neglect, Physical and/or Emotional Child Abuse

Caution: Because quite often other causes can be attributed to the observed behaviors, no *one* of the following necessarily indicates an abusive situation unless otherwise noted.



INDICATORS OF NEGLECT

- failure to thrive (child extremely small in size)
- inappropriate dress for weather
- strong and unpleasant body odors
- dirty, unkempt
- unattended medical conditions (e.g. infected minor burns)
- chronic hunger, tiredness or lethargy
- clingy, indiscriminate attachment
- self-isolation
- depression, passivity
- assumption of adult responsibilities and concerns

INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- hostile, aggressive behavior towards others
- extreme fear or withdrawn behavior around others
- self-destructive (self-mutilates, bangs head, etc.)
- destructive (breaks windows, sets fires, etc.)
- verbally abusive
- out-of-control behavior (seems angry, panics, easily agitated)
- fractures, lacerations, bruises that cannot be explained
 - or explanations are improbable
- burns (from cigarette, rope, scalding water, iron, radiator, etc.)
- facial injuries (black eyes, broken jaw, broken nose, bloody or swollen lips)
 - with implausible or nonexistent explanation
- pattern of bruising (e.g., parallel or circular bruises) or bruises in different stages of discoloration, indicating repeated trauma over time

INDICATORS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- speech disorders
- eating disorders
- lags in physical development
- failure to thrive
- hyperactive/disruptive behavior
- low self-esteem; puts self down or apologizes constantly
- extremely approval seeking
- hostile, verbally abusive, protective
- inability to be autonomous or make choices, fears of rejection