



SIGNS THAT A CHILD MAY BE A VICTIM OF ABUSE:

- Frequent bruises or broken bones
- Frequent school absences
- Sudden emotional withdrawal
- Sudden aggressive behavior
- Nightmares
- Acting out in school
- Displays of irrational fear of certain places, situations or people
- Regression to an earlier stage of development such as bed-wetting or thumb-sucking
- Social isolation
- Inadequate personal hygiene



REPORTING CHILD ABUSE IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Every year in Florida, tens of thousands of children are subjected to child abuse, which can take the form of physical or sexual abuse, neglect, abandonment or mental injury. Many more continue to suffer because the abuse is never reported. Under Florida law, anyone who suspects a child may be abused or neglected has a responsibility to report it.

REPORTING ABUSE

Reporting is simple and confidential. Even if you do not have all of the information about the child's case, you can still report the abuse. Your information could be critical to saving a child's life.

Telephone: 1.800.962.2873
Fax: 1.800.914.0004
TDD: 1.800.453.5145
Web: FloridaAbuseHotline.com

HOW TO REPORT ABUSE:

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THE SIGNS AREN'T ALWAYS THIS OBVIOUS
DON'T MISS THE SIGNS
REPORT CHILD ABUSE

Report Abuse: 1.800.962.2873



www.DontMissTheSigns.org



SEXUAL ABUSE

Statistics document that 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys are sexually abused before their 18th birthdays, usually by someone they know, love and trust.

Sexual offenders often target children who have unstable or busy home lives, are eager to please or are loners. They often “groom” a child for abuse by establishing trust with the child and his or her parents; providing special attention, gifts or experiences; and gradually testing a child’s boundaries to accept increasingly inappropriate touches without telling.

SIGNS A CHILD MAY BE SEXUALLY ABUSED

- An adult takes an unusual interest in a child
- A child becomes withdrawn, starts doing badly in school, is unable to sleep or reverts to more childlike behavior, such as bed-wetting
- Self-harm in an older child



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I report anonymously?

Most people can report abuse anonymously. Under Florida law, certain professionals must provide their names and contact information, including doctors, nurses and other health care workers, mental health counselors, law enforcement officers, judges, teachers and other school or day care personnel. This information is kept confidential and is not part of the public record.

What if I’m not sure?

If you suspect a child is being abused, your responsibility is to report it and allow the appropriate authorities to investigate. Your job is not to investigate yourself or to wait until you are completely sure.

Should I talk to the child or the parent first?

No. If you suspect a child is being abused, you should report it to the abuse hotline.

What if a child discloses abuse to me?

You should listen calmly and record as many details as possible. You should not promise to keep the information confidential, but you should tell the child that you will get them help.

WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN GUARD AGAINST ABUSE

Teach children:

1. To have at least three trusted adults they can talk to about anything.
2. That their bodies are their own, and they should tell a trusted adult if anyone tries to touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
3. No one should ask them to keep secrets from their parents or trusted adults. Safe secrets (like a surprise party) are ones that are eventually told and make everyone smile.

