

Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse and Neglect

- Signs and symptoms alone do not confirm abuse
- Understanding family dynamics and child development are critical to abuse and neglect assessments.

Child Neglect

Behaviors

Attachment disorders
Abnormal eating habits

Physical Indicators

Malnourishment
Chronic illness
Dirty clothes, hair, body odor

Child Physical Abuse

Behaviors

Unusually fearful
Unable to explain injuries
Inconsistent explanation
Overly eager to please adults
Aggressive behaviors

Physical Indicators

Surface area injuries
Imprint, loop or wrapping injuries
Injuries at various stages of healing
Cigarette burns
Unexplained injuries

Child Sexual Abuse

Behaviors

Regression
Sudden changes in behavior
Sexual acting out
Nightmares
School problems
Fire-starting
Promiscuity
Eating disorders
Truancy

Physical Indicators

Headaches, stomach aches
Pain in genital area
Bladder or vaginal infections
Sexually transmitted diseases
Pregnancy
Poor hygiene