

# CHILD ABUSE

## Look for the signs

## Dial 1-800-96-ABUSE

Florida Statute 1006.061 - Pursuant to Chapter 39, all employees and agents of the district school board have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect: have immunity from liability if they report such cases in good faith; and have a duty to comply with child protective investigations and all other provisions of law relating to child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.

### Signs of Physical Abuse

The child may have unexplained:

- bruises, welts, cuts or other injuries
- broken bones
- burns

A child experiencing physical abuse may:

- seem withdrawn or depressed
- seem afraid to go home or may run away
- shy away from physical contact
- be aggressive
- wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries

### Signs of Sexual Abuse

The child may have:

- torn, stained or bloody underwear
- trouble walking or sitting
- pain or itching in genital area
- a sexually transmitted disease

A child experiencing sexual abuse may:

- have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively
- fear a particular person
- seem withdrawn or depressed
- gain or lose weight suddenly
- shy away from physical contact
- run away from home

### Signs of Neglect

The child may have:

- unattended medical needs
- little or no supervision at home
- poor hygiene
- appear underweight

A child experiencing neglect may:

- be frequently tired or hungry
- steal food
- appear overly needy for adult attention

### Look for the Patterns

Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

#### If a child tells YOU about abuse:

**Be a good listener.** Show that you understand and believe what the child tells you. Encourage, but don't pressure him/her to talk. Ask open ended questions.

**Be supportive.** Tell the child he/she did the right thing by coming to you. Stress that he/she is not to blame. Let the child know that you want to help.

**Don't overreact.** This can frighten the child or prevent him/her from telling you more. Do not talk negatively about the suspected abuser in front of the child.

**Document and report it.** Document your conversation as soon as you can. If possible, write down the child's exact words.

**Don't delay.** Never assume someone else will report the abuse. The sooner it's reported, the sooner the child and their family can be helped.

### WHO MUST REPORT ABUSE?

- |                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Doctors                  | Police Officers    |
| Nurses                   | Child Care Workers |
| Social Workers           | Any Witnesses      |
| Any/All School Personnel |                    |



Call or Report it online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>

