

Appendix B - Indicators of Possible Child Maltreatment

*Source: The Role of Educators in Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect by
Cynthia Crosson-Tower*

Warning Signs of Possible Neglect

Does the child regularly or frequently...

- Come to school in soiled clothing or clothing that does not fit or clothing that is in need of repair?
- Seem inadequately dressed for the weather?
- Seem to be hungry, hoarding or stealing food, while coming to school with little or none of his/her own food?
- Appear listless or tired?
- Report caring for younger siblings?
- Demonstrate poor hygiene, smell of urine or feces, or have very bad breath or dirty or decaying teeth?
- Seem emaciated or have a distended stomach?
- Have unattended medical problems?
- Steal, vandalize, or engage in other delinquent behavior?
- Miss school or is late to school?
- Have poor relationships?
- Appear withdrawn?
- Crave attention, even to the point of eliciting negative responses?
- Demonstrate destructive behavior without any apparent remorse?
- Exhibit low self-esteem?
- Have a conduct disorder or act oppositionally defiant?
- Have difficulty problem-solving or coping?
- Have difficulty with language comprehension and expression?

Warning Signs of Possible Physical Abuse

Does the child have...

- Bruises, especially around the head or face, abdomen, or midway between the wrist and elbow?
- Bruises that are different colors?
- Bruises that are in the shape of objects?
- Marks that may have come from an electrical cord or other whip-like object?
- Bruises on multiple parts of the body from possible blows from different directions?
- Complaints of soreness or stiffness or awkward movements that could be from pain?
- Bald spots (from severe hair pulling)?
- Adult-sized human bite marks?
- Burns, especially from objects such as cigarettes, irons, or other objects?
- Injuries for which the explanation given is inadequate?

Warning Signs of Possible Emotional Abuse

Does the child sometimes exhibit...

- Inappropriate affect, such as turning negatives into jokes or laughing when in pain?
- Withdrawal?
- Self-destructive behavior (e.g., cutting or mutilating)?
- General destructive behavior?
- Difficulties concentrating or learning new material?
- Compulsive attention to detail?
- Cruelty to others?
- Vandalism, stealing, cheating?
- Rocking, thumb-sucking, head-banging?
- Enuresis or encopresis?
- Substance abuse?
- Characteristics of an eating disorder?
- Frequent headaches or stomachaches or unexplained weight loss or gain?
- Delinquent behavior?

Warning Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

Does the child exhibit...

- Exceptional secrecy?
- In-depth sexual play with peers?
- Extreme compliance or withdrawal?
- Overt aggression?
- An inordinate fear of people from one gender?
- Extremely seductive behavior?
- A drop in school performance or sudden non-participation in school activities?
- Crying without provocation?
- Sudden phobic behavior?
- Feelings of little self-worth or talk of being damaged?
- A much older or more worldly appearance than peers?
- Suicidal ideation?
- Cruelty to animals, especially pets?
- Characteristics of an eating disorder?
- Self-mutilation (e.g., cutting)?

Does the child...

- Report sleep problems or nightmares?
- Attempt to run away from home?
- Set fires and enjoy watching them?