

What can I do for my children?

Educate

Tell your children that it is never okay for someone to touch them in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. (A rule of thumb: no one should touch them in places that their swimming suit would cover.)

Listen

Make sure your children know they can always come to you if someone is hurting, scaring or threatening them in some way. If it's not you, explain to them the importance of telling someone they trust— again and again until someone believes them.

Develop

Create a list of people, phone numbers and resources (including the police) for your children to use if they find themselves in trouble.

Notice

Know your child. Be aware of changes in behavior. Pay attention to your child's activities and who is involved in those activities.

Plan

Think ahead. Go over possible scenarios with your children.

About Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana

Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana is a state-wide, non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. PCAL is supported by volunteers throughout Louisiana who work to stop child abuse in their communities. Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana offers hospital, school and community-based programs to educate parents, children and others on detecting, reporting and, most importantly, preventing child maltreatment.

Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana needs your help to continue critical prevention services. Volunteer opportunities exist throughout the state in programs, public awareness and fund raising efforts.

For more information on how to get involved with PCAL, please call our



Parenting is hard. We can help.

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How to know if your child has been ABUSED

Physical and Behavioral Indicators for Parents



Prevent Child Abuse
Louisiana

As child physical and sexual abuse continues to be a problem in our communities, it is important for parents to know some of the indicators of abuse. Educating your children is one of the most important things you can do to prevent abuse. But, understanding the identifying signs is equally important. Because so many victims of abuse find it difficult to come forward, it is vital that parents are able to spot and respond to suspicious indicators. **

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruises or welts
- Human bite marks
- Bald spots
- Unexplained burns (i.e. cigarette or immersion burns)
- Unexplained fractures, lacerations or abrasions

Behavioral Indicators

- Self-destructive
- Withdrawn and aggressive-behavioral extremes
- Uncomfortable with physical contact (e.g. flinches at raised hands)
- Complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably
- Afraid to go to the places where abuse occurs (school, daycare, home)

SEXUAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bruises or bleeding externally
- Pain or itching in genital area
- Venereal disease
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections

Behavioral Indicators

- Withdrawal, chronic depression
- Excessive seductiveness
- Role reversal, overly concerned for siblings
- Poor self-esteem, self-devaluation
- Lack of confidence
- Peer problems, lack of involvement
- Massive weight change
- Suicide attempts (especially adolescents)
- Hysteria, lack of emotional control
- Sudden school difficulties
- Inappropriate sex play or premature understanding of sex
- Threatened by physical contact, closeness

***Please note that there may be other signs of abuse not included in this brochure. Also, many of these indicators may occur for reasons other than abuse.*

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED

- Give your child comfort and support. DO NOT show anger, shock or disgust. You do not want your child to feel any worse.
- Reassure your child that you still love him/her.
- Tell your child that the abuse is not his/her fault. Blame the abuse, not your child or yourself.
- Contact local law enforcement officials. It is likely that your child is not the only victim.
- Seek professional help. Being the victim of abuse is a very traumatic experience for a child.