



## Policies and Practices to Address and Prevent Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment

**For all staff and volunteers of Mission Waco Mission World, Inc. (MWMW).**

### Contents

Code of Conduct .....	Page 1
Participation .....	Page 2
Screening .....	Page 2
Educating Staff, Volunteers, Parents, and Adult/Child/Youth Program Participants .....	Page 3
Modifying physical spaces .....	Page 5
Reporting .....	Page 5
Facts on “Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect: Signs and Symptoms” .....	Page 7

### Purpose

To establish and foster a culture that clearly and explicitly makes child, youth and adult protection an overarching value and priority. All staff, adult volunteers, youth volunteers, participants, and parents should understand and adhere to this culture through overt training, education, communication and reinforcement.

### Code of Conduct

1. **Rule of 3.** The intention and goal at MWMW is that no adult or child/youth is in 1-to-1 situation. Preferably 2 of the 3 should be adults. (Exception only for mentoring program as mentioned elsewhere below).
2. **Secluded, one-to-one contact between adults and children/youth is prohibited.** In situations that require personal conferences, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youth. (See further guidelines below for any mentoring programs that may allow 1-to-1 in public or approved settings.)
3. **Youth who are volunteering must be monitored and supervised by adult leaders, and youth must demonstrate appropriate maturity to be chosen as volunteers and/or for youth leadership in our programs.**
4. **Respect the privacy of yourself and others.** Adult staff/volunteers and youth volunteers/leaders must respect the privacy of children and youth and their own selves in situations such as changing clothes and showering, intruding only to the extent that health and safety require. Do not share about your own sexual activities, including dreams or fantasies, or discussing sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the internet.
5. **Respect the dignity of all people.** Respond to others with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socio-economic status. Portray a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. Avoid the appearance of favoritism.
6. **Physical contact should only be in the presence of other adults and children and must be appropriate to the situation.** Educate leaders, staff, volunteers and participants about appropriate vs. inappropriate “touches”, respecting privacy and honoring a person’s right to establish personal physical boundaries.
7. **Overnight accommodations for adults and youth/children** will be arranged in the following manner: No solo adult staying with children/youth; 2 adults per room with children/youth; If beds are shared, then adults with adults, children with children, youth with youth; everyone fully dressed outside of bathrooms.

8. **Inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, and digital devices is prohibited.** While most adults and youth/children involved in MWMW programs use cameras and other imaging devices responsibly, the pervasiveness of cell phones with cameras has made it very easy to invade the privacy of individuals. It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in showers, dressing rooms, restrooms and other areas where privacy is expected by participants and privacy must be provided and protected.
9. **The possession of sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.), and the use of the internet to view or download any such material, is prohibited.**
10. **No secret organizations are permitted.** All aspects of MWMW programs are open to observation by parents and leaders.
11. **Hazing and bullying will not be tolerated.** Physical and emotional hazing and initiations, and verbal, physical and cyber bullying, are prohibited and may not be included as part of any MWMW activity.
12. **Discipline must be constructive and never imposed one-on-one.** Discipline of youth/children or adults should be constructive and reflect leadership and good character. Two-deep leadership and avoiding one-on-one contact are most important if and when discipline is to be administered. No form of physical discipline is acceptable, including spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical force may be used only to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child/youth or others.
13. **Display and expect an attitude of respect, dignity and safety.**

## Participation

**Goal:** Prohibit participation in any MWMW activity by any individual who poses a risk to child/youth/adult safety.

**Participation in MWMW activities is a privilege, not a right.** Anyone who is prohibited from participating in a child/youth-serving organization or who violates MWMW child/youth/adult protection Code of Conduct and policies can be barred from participating in MWMW, even if they have not been convicted of a crime. MWMW's Board of Review will have the final say on determinations of eligibility to participate in MWMW programs.

## Screening

**Goal:** To screen out individuals who have sexually abused children or youth or adults or who pose a risk of abusing children or youth or adults from any staff or volunteer positions with MWMW that work directly with children/youth or adults, or in some cases from all positions with MWMW.

1. **Written application** – for either staff or volunteer.
2. **Acknowledgement** from staff or volunteer that the following have been completed.
  - a. Read and understand this “Policies and Practices...” document
  - b. Either view a video or read a document that covers the warning signs of child abuse and neglect
3. **Criminal Background checks**
  - a. Background check is to be completed during the new staff hiring process or new volunteer orientation process. Volunteers pay a fee for the background check.
  - b. If working with children and youth, the background check is to be redone every 12-18 months. Monitoring of renewal due dates will be done at 2-3 times per year. Volunteers will pay an additional background check fee at that time.
  - c. If not working with children and youth, the background check will be redone every 3 years.
  - d. Names of staff and volunteers will be compared to listings in the National Sex Offender Registry [www.nsopw.gov](http://www.nsopw.gov)
4. **Questions to be included during interview/screening process**
  - a. How will questions be asked?
    - i. In person interview if for a staff position or volunteer who is working with children and youth, except for King's Club program and Groups program as mentioned below.
    - ii. For King's Club site leaders, the questions will be answered in person. For additional King's Club volunteers, the questions will be answered in written format.
  - b. Training for person reviewing the answers to questions

- i. Persons qualified to review the answers will be either a staff member, volunteer or work-study student of MWMW, and has read “Creating Organization Policies to Prevent Sexual Abuse” <http://www.preventconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/TabachnikJoan.pdf> and reviewed the *Screening* section of “Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving Organizations” <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/PreventingChildSexualAbuse-a.pdf> by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).
- ii. Any answers that need further review are reported to supervisor(s), and so on as needed.
- c. Questions (these at minimum; may also include other questions)
  - i. What type of supervisory situation do you prefer?
  - ii. What age/sex of youth do you want to work with? How would you feel about working with a different age/sex?
  - iii. Is there anyone who might suggest that you should not work with youth? Why or why not?
  - iv. Why do you want the job (or volunteer assignment)?
  - v. What would do in a particular situation (This will be a scenario that involves potential concerns or boundary issues.)
  - vi. What makes you a good candidate for working with youth? What would your friends or colleagues say about how you interact with youth?
  - vii. What other hobbies or activities do you enjoy?

#### 5. Additional screening situations

- a. **Staff or volunteers who will be serving in any 1-on-1 situations** with children or youth (for example, mentoring) will **additionally**:
  - i. **Be required to provide two written references** to reflect on whether or not the person is recommended to work/mentor youth or children in 1-on-1 settings.
    1. One from a pastor or spiritual leader
    2. One from a former supervisor if the setting is similar, or if not applicable, then from someone who has known the person for at least 5 years.
  - ii. **Be screened through internet search** as described below.
- b. For **Groups coming from other organizations or churches for multi-night stays**
  - i. The groups are expected to bring adults who are approved by their church/organization to supervise/interact with the children/youth from their group. If they will be volunteering with any children/youth in MWMW programs, a MWMW staff person will orient them to our interaction/site rules before serving and observe onsite during the serving.
  - ii. Background checks are required for all adults if two or more groups are sharing sleeping areas that will include children/youth.
- c. Additional screening for any staff or volunteer **may include internet search** for the person’s name to find additional relevant material. If any information is used to determine employment or volunteer status, it will be verified that it is the correct individual. Any concerning information will be reported to the screener’s supervisor, and so on as needed.

6. **Approval for staff and volunteers** is ultimately made by the Executive Director, or by staff assigned by E.D.

### **Educating staff, volunteers, parents and children/youth**

**Goal:** Promote a culture of child protection through awareness of, and compliance with, safety protocols.

#### **A. STAFF and VOLUNTEERS**

1. **All staff and volunteers are required to either view a video or written document about warning signs of child maltreatment/abuse/neglect and preventing sexual abuse.**
2. Various **training opportunities will be offered in an on-going fashion** and may include videos, workshops, online tools, conferences. Topics may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Safety protocols;
  - Appropriate vs inappropriate behaviors;
  - Recognition of abuse
  - Strategies to avoid abuse;
  - Reporting requirements

- There are some cases where issues of poverty may be misconstrued as child abuse or neglect, so if you have concerns or questions or are unsure, contact our staff, social workers or other trusted adults.

### 3. Specific orientations given at program level:

#### **STAFF: CHILDREN/YOUTH PROGRAMS**

- In staff and volunteer trainings, MWMW program staff will discuss that **a volunteer's relationship with a student is different than some of MWMW staff relationships with that student**. Core MWMW staff are well acquainted with student families for many years and therefore there is extra trust that is not given yet to volunteers or new staff.
- All staff and volunteers should **be aware of physical touch with other volunteers, staff and program participants**. Both the program participant and the staff or volunteer need to be a willing participant in all touch situations (except in situations when a child/youth is putting themselves or someone else in way of harm, then a staff/volunteer is allowed to appropriately restrain them). MWMW program directors are responsible to correct behavior when they observe concerning behavior. **Appropriate touch** (1) includes the willing participation mentioned above, and (2) is in public/group/visible settings. All new staff and volunteers are to use side hugs (of a short duration of time), high fives, fist bumps, etc. Staff and volunteers who are experienced with the program and children/youth/families and have exhibited discerning nurturing relationships may give an occasional bear hug. **Inappropriate/harmful touch** is patting the buttocks, intimate/romantic/sexual contact, Corporal punishment, or showing pornography or involving child/youth in pornographic activities. **Appropriate restraint** is the least amount of force or contact necessary to create safety for the child/youth or others. This is typically a "bear hug" from behind and removing them from the situation; or "safe hold" of picking up the child and setting them by you or in your lap with your arms around them until they are calm, with the goal of removing them from the situation. **Inappropriate restraint** includes things like excessive force, any type of hitting, or grabbing by the collar or dragging by the arm.
- **With regard to play fighting/ rough housing** with students, under no circumstances should staff or volunteers rough house.
- Use the **rule of 3 people present** so that no adult or child/youth is in 1-to-1 situation (exception only for mentoring program as mentioned elsewhere). Preferably 2 of the 3 should be adults.
- Policy is to have **2 adults on the vehicles** at all times. In case of emergency or unavoidable instances where there is only one adult, the adult should not be alone with one student. Change up the travel route if necessary so that 1-to-1 does not happen.
- Use the **open door policy or be in front of a visible window**. Do not be behind a closed door alone with a child.
- **Restrooms**. If a young child needs assistance in the restroom, 2 adults (one being a staff member) need to be in the restroom with the child. This is only when a child needs assistance. All children need to be encouraged to be in the bathroom alone.
- **If there is a gray area outside of these policies, please do not handle the situation yourself. Come and get the director of the program, or one of MWMW executive staff.**
- We will **lock doors of unused areas in the buildings**.
- All staff and volunteers must **wear nametags** provided by MWMW.
- **Different scenarios when MWMW and Parent/Caregiver care ends/begins** (see below under Parent and Caregivers section).

#### **B. PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS**

1. All parents and caregivers will be provided with information about MWMW's "Policies and Practices...".
2. Other education opportunities may include videos, workshops, online tools and feedback forums. Topics may include, but are not limited to:
  - The definition of different types of child maltreatment;
  - Prevalence of child maltreatment in the United States ;
  - Common myths about child maltreatment;
  - Warning signs for sexually inappropriate behavior;
  - Requirements of MWMW Code of Conduct including the mandatory reporting responsibility;

- How to talk with their child about sexuality and youth protection, focusing on what to do if they are concerned for their safety or the safety of others and emphasizing they will not be in trouble for communicating about this;
- The caregiver's responsibility if he/she suspects child maltreatment and how to report this within the MWMW context. Also, caregivers should be encouraged to contact law enforcement or child protective services immediately if they suspect child maltreatment;
- A list of resources available outside of MWMW.

### 3. Specific orientation given at program level:

#### **PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS: CHILDREN/YOUTH PROGRAMS**

- Mission Waco's care for the individual begins when the students are turned over from the school to MWMW staff. This is either when the students enter MWMW vehicles from school pick-up or are given to MWMW staff at West Ave. Elementary to walk across the street to the children's center.
- If the student does not get on the vehicles or is not in the pick-up line at West Ave Elementary, it is assumed by MWMW staff that the child is absent for the day even if the parent does not notify Mission Waco. If they are not picked up by us, it is assumed by MWMW staff that the student is still in the care of the school or the parent.
- **End of care for MWMW:**
  - Bus Route: End of care (MWMW) is when we see the student physically go inside their home.
  - Pick-up at Children or Youth Center: End of care (MWMW) is when the student is picked up by their parent.
  - Extra option for youth: On the Youth application, the parent/caregiver can give permission for their youth to walk home without having to get daily permission from the parent; or drive home if the youth drives their self to program. End of care (MWMW) is when the youth exits the youth center or building where program is taking place.
  - If a child/youth walks out of MWMW's building due to defiant behavior, we will contact the parent and/or police if necessary. Once the child leaves MWMW property, they are no longer under the care of MWMW. It is not that our staff will stop looking for the student, but they are no longer under the care of MWMW at that point since the child/youth walked out of program.

#### **C. PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS -- CHILDREN and YOUTH and ADULTS**

1. Training will be age appropriate.
2. Topics may include, but are not limited to:
  - Warning signs for inappropriate behavior;
  - The requirements of MWMW's Code of Conduct;
  - The importance of reporting suspected child, youth or adult maltreatment or inappropriate conduct;
  - The importance of telling children and youth that they should report any concerns to a trusted adult, and information about who is available within MWMW to whom they can report concerns;
  - The importance of looking out for the safety of others and reporting any violations of MWMW Code of Conduct.

## **Modifying Physical Spaces**

1. Post information on Prevention of Human Trafficking and Hotline numbers in MWMW buildings.
2. Post child- and youth-appropriate materials in children and youth centers so they know each one has the right to be respected, loved, etc. and to encourage them to reach out when they need help or are hurt.
3. Review physical spaces to see what improvements can be made to increase visibility in classrooms, offices, hallways, etc. so that children, youth and adults feel safe and seen. Examples include adding windows to interior doors, security cameras where appropriate, etc.

## **Reporting**

**Goal:** To respond quickly and appropriately to all inappropriate or harmful behavior, violations of MWMW children/youth protection policies, and suspicions of child maltreatment.

#### **Roles:**

1. The role of MWMW is **not** to investigate cases of alleged abuse, but rather to swiftly report these suspicions to authorities that have a mandate to investigate these allegations.
2. **All MWMW staff and volunteers should act responsibly and immediately report to law enforcement all cases of suspected child abuse.**

- Once any staff, volunteer, parent or child/youth has observed or has good cause to suspect a violation of law or MWMW Policies and Practices, he or she should **immediately report that to an appropriate MWMW staff member and any other trusted adult**. This also means that once any MWMW employee or volunteer has good cause to suspect child abuse may have occurred, he/she should immediately contact the local child protective services and/or law enforcement to report this concern.
  - **Internal reporting is done AFTER an official report is made to the proper investigative authorities.**
  - MWMW employees should not **interview children** regarding the allegations at hand, **leaving this to professionals who will be involved in the investigation**. However, MWMW employees and volunteers should document the context in which the observed, suspected or alleged abuse became known, any specific statements made by the youth related to these allegations, and any specific behavior witnessed related to this allegation.
  - Any allegation of a violation of MWMW policies and practices may result in a determination of ineligibility to participate in MWMW programs. Until and unless a successful appeal of an ineligibility determination is made, the person shall remain ineligible – even if acquitted in future criminal proceedings, subject to determination by MWMW Board of Review, which has the final authority in all eligibility determinations.
  - **MWMW Board of Review** will include at least one social work professional, one executive staff member, and one board member. Board of Review is appointed by executive director in consultation with Board Governance and Personnel committee. Legal counsel also may be consulted or included as needed.
3. MWMW should **retain all records documentation** related to youth protection concerns, and also to demonstrate MWMW's strong commitment to immediate reporting. This should be integrated with other incident reporting procedures, and complete records maintained by MWMW administrative office. The **administrative office should review** all of these incidents, maintain records of these incidents, and provide regular reports to MWMW leadership about these incidents and suggested new policies and procedures that may help improve protection efforts for children/youth/adults.
  4. Any **communication with the press and community** will be from Executive Director or staff member(s) specifically designated by ED for that particular incident. In the absence of the ED, the corporate or board officers will determine who will be designated who will speak on behalf of MWMW.
  5. It can be difficult to find the appropriate **balance between hyper-vigilance and under-reaction** to protection issues. All these measures are recommended, not because anyone is automatically suspected of inappropriate or illegal behavior, but rather because everyone in MWMW is expected to be partner in safety. In any case where the course of action is unclear, it should be a core MWMW ethic to err on the side of protection for the vulnerable child, youth or adult.
  6. While an allegation alone does not equate to guilt, MWMW requires MWMW employees and volunteers be **immediately suspended if an allegation is made**. This suspension should remain in effect during the course of the investigation or other proceedings. If criminal charges are being pursued, this suspension should remain in effect at least until such time as the case is disposed of, but in no case until and unless determined to be appropriate during consideration by MWMW in an appeal of the suspension.
  7. If criminal charges are not being pursued, the involved individual may apply to return to his/her former position through MWMW appeals process. In order to **be considered for reinstatement**, the individual must provide consent for the release of information to MWMW from all entities involved in the investigation of the allegations. Failure to do so will result in the suspension becoming a permanent ban from MWMW. MWMW will review all of the available facts, consult with external experts as indicated, and render a decision on potential return to MWMW programs. The decision of MWMW Board of Review will be final and may not be appealed further.
  8. If a MWMW employee or volunteer is **convicted of any child abuse or sexual offense incidents at MWMW**, his/her relationship with MWMW must be severed immediately – and permanently. This should be a lifetime ban from further involvement in MWMW activities, including a prohibition for the individual to attend any MWMW events in the future. **If the conviction is not related to incidents at MWMW**, the Board of Review will make a decision after reviewing information such as the scope of work and location of where the person might work/serve at MWMW (not with children/youth programs), as well as any information since the conviction that supports an opportunity to work or serve at MWMW.

9. Internally, any allegation of this type may cause a range of emotional responses from other MWMW employees and volunteers. In an effort to **properly communicate the facts to employees and volunteers** – and to discuss the issue as needed – MWMW may provide a simple, broad response to all MWMW employees (and volunteers as pertinent) about the steps taken by MWMW related to the incident (within appropriate confidentiality standards) to limit internal or external concern about a lack of responsiveness.

**10. Resources for Reporting:**

- Child or Adult Protective Services. Report abuse at 1-800-252-5400 (toll-free, 24 hrs/day, 7 days/week); or <https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx>
- Advocacy Center Waco. Crisis Intervention – immediate 24/7 response through the crisis hotline for children and adult survivors of violence, including stranger and non-stranger sexual assault. Crisis Intervention and Advocacy are available on a walk-in basis during normal business hours (8:30 am-12 pm and 1:-5:00 pm) at our main location 3312 Hillcrest Drive, Waco TX 76708. Call the hotline for more information at 254-752-7233 or toll free at 888-867-7233.

## **Recognizing Child Abuse & Neglect: Signs & Symptoms**

Summary provided below. See full brochure at

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/whatiscan.pdf>

“What is Child Abuse and Neglect? Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms” Year Published: 2019  
by Child Welfare Information Gateway, U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family, but a closer look at the situation may be warranted when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination.

If you do suspect a child is being harmed, reporting your suspicions may protect the child and get help for the family. Any concerned person can report suspicions of child abuse and neglect. Some people (typically certain types of professionals) are required by law to make a report of child maltreatment under specific circumstances—these are called mandatory reporters. For more information, see the Child Welfare Information Gateway publication, *Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect*. [https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/manda.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.pdf)  
For more information about where and how to file a report, contact your local child protective services agency or police department. An additional resource is the Childhelp® National Child Abuse Hotline (800.4.A.CHILD).

The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended and reauthorized by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum,

**“any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation (including sexual abuse as determined under section 111), or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm”** (42 U.S.C. 5101 note, § 3).

Additionally, it stipulates that **“a child shall be considered a victim of ‘child abuse and neglect’ and of ‘sexual abuse’ if the child is identified, by a State or local agency employee of the State or locality involved, as being a victim of sex trafficking** (as defined in paragraph (10) of section 7102 of title 22) **or a victim of severe forms of trafficking in persons** described in paragraph (9)(A) of that section” (42 U.S.C. § 5106g(b)(2)). For State-specific laws pertaining to child abuse and neglect, see Child Welfare Information Gateway’s State Statutes Search page at [https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state/](https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/).

**1. Recognizing Child Abuse** - The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect.

**A. The Child:**

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn

- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home ‘
- Is reluctant to be around a particular person
- Discloses maltreatment

#### **B. The Parent:**

- Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home
- Asks teachers or other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve

- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs
- Shows little concern for the child

#### **C. The Parent and Child:**

- Touch or look at each other rarely
- Consider their relationship entirely negative
- State that they do not like each other

#### **Other resources:**

- Risk Factors That Contribute to Child Abuse & Neglect.  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/factors/>
- Perpetrators of Child Abuse and Neglect.  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/perpetrators/>

## **2. Types of Abuse**

The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. It is important to note, however, that these types of abuse are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child, for example, is often emotionally abused as well, and a sexually abused child also may be neglected.

### **A. Signs of Physical Abuse**

Consider the possibility of physical abuse if the **child**:

- Has unexplained injuries such as burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn, or aggressive
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults

- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Abuses animals or pets

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury
- Shows little concern for the child
- Sees the child as entirely bad, burdensome, or worthless
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abusing animals or pets

### **B. Signs of Neglect**

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **child**:

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Seems apathetic or depressed
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs

### **C. Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **child**:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Experiences bleeding, bruising, or swelling in their private parts
- Suddenly refuses to go to school
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment



Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the

**parent or other adult caregiver:**

- Tries to be the child's friend rather than assume an adult role
- Makes up excuses to be alone with the child (2.C. Signs of Sexual Abuse continued)
- Talks with the child about the adult's personal problems or relationships

**D. Signs of Emotional Maltreatment**

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **child**:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression

- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Shows signs of depression or suicidal thoughts
- Reports an inability to develop emotional bonds with others

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child
- Describes the child negatively
- Overtly rejects the child

**3. Impact of Childhood Trauma on Well-being**

Child abuse and neglect can have lifelong implications for victims, including on their well-being. While the physical wounds heal, there are several long-term consequences of experiencing the trauma of abuse or neglect. A child or youth's ability to cope and even thrive after trauma is called "resilience," and with help, many of these children can work through and overcome their past experiences. Children who are maltreated often are at risk of experiencing cognitive delays and emotional difficulties, among other issues, which can affect many aspects of their lives, including their academic outcomes and social skills development. Experiencing childhood maltreatment also is a risk factor for depression, anxiety, and other psychiatric disorders. For more information on the lasting effects of child abuse and neglect, read *Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect*:

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/long\\_term\\_consequences](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/long_term_consequences) or see full brochure.