

HOW TO SPOT THE SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN TEXAS

THE STATISTICS



>7

Children are Maltreated Every Hour



184


Children are Confirmed Victims Daily



>4

Children Die Weekly On Average

Physical Abuse Indicators

- Unexplained bruises, welts, burns, fractures, lacerations or abrasions 
- Fading bruises or other noticeable marks after an absence from school¹
- Wary of adult contact
- Appear nervous when other children cry
- Behavioral extremes:
 - Aggressiveness or withdrawal
 - Frightened of parents or significant persons
 - Afraid to go home
- Reports injury by parents
- Learning problems not attributed to specific physical or psychological causes²
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen²



Neglect Indicators

- Begging, stealing food or money
- Extended stays at school (early arrival or late departure)
- Constant fatigue, listlessness, or falling asleep in class 
- Alcohol or drug abuse 
- Delinquency
- Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress
- Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or over long periods
- Unattended physical problems
- States there is no one at home to provide care¹

Important Considerations

Sometimes a family's inability to meet basic needs of a child may be perceived as child abuse or neglect. If the child's health or safety is at risk, then child welfare intervention could be required. However, we support programs that help families to meet the child's basic needs such as: [2-1-1 Texas - 211texas.org](https://www.211texas.org) and [Help Me Grow - helpmegrownorthtexas.org](https://www.helpmegrownorthtexas.org).

Sexual Abuse Indicators

- Sexually-transmitted disease
- Pregnancy at an early age
- Evidence of physical trauma to the genital area or mouth
- Odd or unusually shaped bruises
- Complaints of itching, pain or discomfort around genital area
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Extreme passivity when touched
- Abrupt change in appetite
- Suddenly refuses to go to school
- Seductive behavior with classmates, teachers, other adults
- Inappropriate sexual touch and behavior or extreme reluctance to be touched by an adult
- A knowledge of sex inappropriate for the child's age or developmental level
- Refusal to undress for physical education
- Reluctance to be with a certain person
- Attaches quickly to strangers or new adults

Emotional Abuse Indicators

- Lags in physical development
- Speech disorders
- Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.)
- Conduct disorders (anti-social, destructive, etc.)
- Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)
- Psychoneurotic reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias, hypochondria)
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children) or inappropriately infantile¹
- Signs of depression or suicidal thoughts¹



Do you suspect someone of child abuse or neglect?

Report your concerns to DFPS. All Adults in Texas are mandated reporters, and professionals, like teachers, must report abuse within 48 hours. All reports of suspected abuse are anonymous. DFPS will handle any necessary investigation of child abuse or neglect.

Call the Texas Child Protective Services Hotline **1-800-252-5400** or report online at [txabusehotline.org](https://www.txabusehotline.org) – both are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



THE IMPACT OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT ON THE CHILD AND FAMILY

Severe and chronic child adversity can disrupt development and compromise a child's healthy future. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), are traumatic events like child abuse and neglect or having a caregiver with substance use, mental health, family violence, or incarceration challenges. These events can disrupt neurodevelopment and increase the likelihood of negative health, behavioral, educational, and economic outcomes.

Over 24% of Texas children will experience two or more ACEs before their 18th birthday, however, ACEs do not have to dictate the future of a child. Prevention strategies (such as home visiting programs, access to high quality childcare, substance use intervention, and treatment for mental illness) can reduce the prevalence and impact of ACEs and increase a child's opportunity for cognitive and emotional development health, productive, and economic wellbeing.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [TEXPROTECTS.ORG](https://www.txprotects.org).

¹ Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2019). What is child abuse and neglect? Recognizing the signs and symptoms. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.
² Prevent Child Abuse America. Child Physical Abuse Prevention - [preventchildabuse.org/what-we-do/child-physical-abuse-prevention](https://www.preventchildabuse.org/what-we-do/child-physical-abuse-prevention)