

Child Abuse in America

Children are suffering from a hidden epidemic of child abuse and neglect. Over 3 million reports of child abuse are made every year in the United States; however, those reports can include multiple children.

A report of child abuse is made every ten seconds.

Almost **five children die every day** as a result of child abuse. Approximately 80% are under the age of 4.

It is estimated that between 50-60% of child fatalities due to maltreatment are **not recorded as such on death certificates.**

More than 90% of juvenile sexual abuse victims know their perpetrator in some way.

Child abuse occurs at every socioeconomic level, across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions and at all levels of education.

About 30% of abused and neglected children **will later abuse their own children**, continuing the horrible cycle of abuse.

Statistical information may be found at www.childhelp.org



Being a parent is one of the hardest jobs in the world. It can be overwhelming at times. Most parents want to do a good job of raising their children. But unlike other jobs where you get special training, most parents are left to do the best they can, with what they know from their own experience. There's no need to feel that you are all alone or that no one cares.

Resource Information

The National Child Abuse Hotline:
1-800-422-4453
www.childhelp.org

San Diego County's Child Welfare Services Child Abuse Hotline:
1-858-560-2191 or 1-800-344-6000
http://sdpublic.sdcountry.ca.gov/healthy-kids-and-families/child_services/

Counseling Services:
1-760-725-9051
www.mccscp.com/child-abuse

New Parent Support Program:
1-760-725-3884
<http://www.mccscp.com/new-parent-support-program>

Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS):
1-760-621-4533
<http://www.focusproject.org/home>



Counseling Services
1122 E Street
Camp Pendleton, CA 92055
760-725-9051 office/ 760-725-0312 fax
www.mccscp.com/child-abuse



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

*Counseling Services
Bldg 1122/520512
760-725-9051*



DEFINITION:

Child abuse is any injury or a pattern of injuries to a child that is non-accidental.

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

PHYSICAL:

Any non-accidental injury to a child

EMOTIONAL/VERBAL:

Any attitude or behavior which interferes with a child's mental health or social development

NEGLECT:

Failure to provide for a child's physical needs

SEXUAL:

Any sexual act between an adult and child



The Biggest Myth about Child Abuse

The biggest myth is that the dangers to children come from strangers. In most cases, the perpetrator is someone the parent or child knows, and is often trusted by the child and family.

*“Child abuse casts a shadow the length of a lifetime”
- Herbert Ward*

PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Burns, bruises, black eyes, or other injuries that are suspicious or unexplained
- Unkempt or dirty appearance
- Malnourishment
- Inadequate medical or dental care
- Sexually transmitted disease/ urinary tract infections
- Wetting and soiling accidents not related to toilet training
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Pain during urination and/or bowel movements

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Depression and/or general anxiety
- Fear or anxiety about a particular person/place
- Being passive and withdrawn, or aggressive and disruptive
- Sudden changes in behavior
- Abrupt change in eating habits
- Major change in school performance
- Nightmares/other sleep problems
- Frequent absence from school or reluctance to go home
- Sudden mood swings
- Acting out sexual behavior with toys/other kids

HOW TO INTERVENE

It can be daunting to insert yourself into a situation in which a parent is mistreating a child. Using a positive approach is the best strategy for effective intervention.

- Avoid disapproving looks or comments, which may only increase the parent's anger and impatience.
- Distract the parent with conversation. For instance, ask “Children can be difficult to shop with, can't they?”
- Find something to praise about the child or parent, such as “I like your shoes. Where did you get them?”
- Interrupt a child's disruptive behavior by starting a conversation with him/her.
- If a child is in danger and it's not safe for you to intervene, call 911.

ALWAYS take it seriously when children speak of being abused, or if you have suspicions:

- *Provide a safe physical and emotional environment for the child*
- *Remain calm and listen carefully to what the child says*
- *Be supportive and comforting.*
- *REPORT IT to the police or your local Child Welfare Services agency immediately.*