Who’s Protecting Our Children?

Human Growth and Development
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Terms

- **Abuse**: Includes physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse
- **Child Protective Services (CPS)**: A government agency that investigates reports of abuse and neglect of children
- **Emotional and verbal abuse**: Rejecting children, blaming them, or constantly scolding them, particularly for problems beyond their control
- **Mandated reporter**: A person who is required by law to report maltreatment
Terms

- **Neglect**: Failing to provide for a child's basic needs, including food, water, a place to live, love and attention

- **Physical abuse**: Intentionally causing an injury to a child

- **Sexual abuse**: Includes any inappropriate sexual behavior with a child, including touching or taking photographs
Child Abuse
Types of Child Abuse

- Physical
- Neglect
- Sexual
- Emotional
Physical Abuse

- Physical signs
  - Unexplained
    - Bruises or welts
    - Burns
    - Fractures or dislocations
    - Bald patches on scalp
Physical Abuse

- Behavioral signs
  - Student states he/she “deserves” punishment
  - Fearful when others cry
  - Behavioral extremes (aggressive, withdrawn)
  - Frightened of parents or caretakers
  - Afraid to go home
  - Child reports injury by parents or caretakers
  - Needy for affection
  - Manipulative behaviors to get attention
  - Unable to focus – daydreaming
  - Self abusive behavior or lack of concern for personal safety
  - Wary of adult contact
Neglect

- Physical signs
  - Not meeting basic needs (food, shelter, clothing)
  - Failure to thrive (underweight, small for age)
  - Persistent hunger
  - Poor hygiene
  - Inappropriate dress for season or weather
  - Consistent lack of supervision and emotional care
  - Unattended physical problems or medical needs
  - Abandonment
Neglect

- Behavioral signs
  - Begging or stealing food
  - Early arrival or departure from school
  - Frequent visits to the school nurse
  - Difficulty with vision or hearing
  - Poor coordination
  - Often tired or falling asleep in class
  - Takes on adult roles and responsibilities
  - Substance abuse
  - Acting out behavior
  - Educational failure
  - Verbalizing lack of caretaking
Sexual Abuse

- Physical signs
  - Difficulty walking or sitting
  - Torn, stained, or bloody undergarments
  - Pain, swelling, or itching in genital area
  - Pain when urinating
  - Vaginal or penile discharge
  - Bruises, bleeding, or tears around the genital area
  - Sexually transmitted diseases
Sexual Abuse

- Behavioral signs
  - Unwilling to change for gym or participate in PE activities
  - Sexual behavior or knowledge inappropriate to child’s age
  - Sexual acting out on younger children
  - Poor peer relations
  - Delinquent or runaway behavior
  - Report of sexual assault
  - Drastic change in school performance
Sexual Abuse

- Behavioral signs
  - Sleep disorders/nightmares
  - Eating disorders
  - Aggression
  - Withdrawal
  - Fantasy
  - Self abuse
  - Substance abuse
  - Repetitive behavior (hand washing, pacing, rocking)
Emotional Abuse

- Physical signs
  - Speech disorders
    - Stuttering
    - Baby talk
    - Unresponsive
  - Failure to thrive (underweight, small for age)
  - Hyperactivity
Emotional Abuse

- Behavioral signs
  - Learning disabilities
  - Habits of sucking, biting, rocking
  - Sleep disorders
  - Poor social skills
  - Extreme reactions to common events
  - Unusually fearful
  - Overly compliant behaviors (unable to set limits)
  - Suicidal thoughts or actions
  - Self abuse
  - Difficulty following rules or directions
  - Child expects to fail so does not try
Mandated Reporters

- Teachers
- Doctors
- Nurses
- Social workers
- Counselors
- Psychologists
Reporting Child Abuse in Texas

- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
  - 1-800-252-5400
    - The Abuse Hotline is toll-free and open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
  - TxAbuseHotline.org
    - Report cases online and get a response within 24 hours
Reporting Child Abuse in Texas

• Information to have on hand before reporting child abuse (if known):
  • Name, age, address of the child
  • Your name and contact information
  • A brief description of the situation and child
  • Current injuries, medical problems or behavioral problems
  • Parents’ names and names of siblings in the home
  • Names of relatives in or outside the home
  • Explain how you know about the situation
Responding to a child who is abused or neglected
Responding to Abused Children

- Remain calm
- Believe the student
- Listen without passing judgment
- Tell the student you are glad he/she told someone
- Assure the student that abuse is not his/her fault
- Do what you can to make sure the student is safe from further abuse
- Do not investigate the case yourself
Treatment for Abused Children
Treatment

- Protection from further harm
- Improve family communications
- Encourage healthy friendships
- Teaching children to care for themselves and make healthy choices
- Help children to have realistic expectations of parents who may have problems
- Provide a safe place to release anger, disappointment and sadness
Preventing Child Abuse
Prevention

- Education and knowledge can prevent child abuse.
Resources for Abused Children
Resources and References

Websites:

- Childhelp
  National Child Abuse Statistics
  This website gives informative information on child abuse statistics in America.
  http://www.childhelp.org/pages/statistics#stats-sources

- HealthyChildren.org
  Safety and prevention: What to know about child abuse
  The American Academy of Pediatrics gives valuable information and the signs and symptoms of child abuse.

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Resources and References

- Child Welfare Information Gateway
  National Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month
  Information on child abuse prevention awareness month and activities to do for each day of the month.

- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
  Texas Child Protective Services (CPS)
  This website gives an overview of CPS and specific information its responsibilities.
  [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_protection/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_protection/)
Resources and References

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Textbooks: