

Understanding Child Abuse:

Types, Warning Signs, and Reporting

Child abuse is a severe issue that affects more than 600,000 children in the U.S. every year. Prevent Child Abuse St. Joseph County is dedicated to increasing awareness and empowering our community's citizens to protect children and create a safe, healthy dynamic between children and their families.



... Types of Child Abuse ...

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Harm or injuries inflicted on a child, such as hitting, punching, or shaking.

EFFECTS

Physical abuse can lead to physical injuries, emotional trauma, and even death. In 2021, an estimated 1,820 children died from abuse and neglect in the United States.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Any form of sexual exploitation, molestation, or inappropriate behavior directed towards a child.

EFFECTS

Can cause severe psychological, emotional, and physical trauma, with long-lasting effects on the child's well-being.

NEGLECT

Failure to provide the necessary care, supervision, and support needed for a child's well-being.

EFFECTS

Neglect can result in physical, emotional, and developmental harm, as well as impair the child's overall growth.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

The use of words, actions, or neglect causing severe emotional or psychological harm to a child.

EFFECTS

Emotional abuse can affect a child's self-esteem, mental health, and overall development.

Warning Signs of Child Abuse

PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS	EMOTIONAL INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, or other injuries on the child's body.• Frequent injuries or injuries in multiple stages of healing.• Inappropriate clothing to hide injuries or unusual behaviors related to physical touch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden changes in behavior, such as aggression, withdrawal, or extreme shyness.• Fear or avoidance of specific individuals or places.• Age-inappropriate knowledge or sexual behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low self-esteem, depression, or excessive fear and anxiety.• Extreme mood swings or emotional outbursts.• Social withdrawal and difficulty building trust in relationships.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

If you suspect child abuse, **report it immediately**.
Your actions can save lives and protect the future of our children.

Prevent Child Abuse of St. Joseph County

pcasjc.org | 574.235.9231 ext. 110

St. Joseph County Department of Child Services

574.232.3042

Child Protective Services

To report abuse: 800.800.5556

Report suspected child abuse immediately to the local child protective services or law enforcement agency. Provide detailed information about your concerns, including the child's name, age, and any supporting evidence or observations.

Prevent Child Abuse of St. Joseph County is committed to preventing child abuse through education, advocacy, and support services. For more information and resources, visit Prevent Child Abuse St. Joseph County's website at www.pcasjc.org