

What To Do If You Suspect Abuse

If you have reason to believe that a child is being abused or neglected, and that the abuse is by a parent or caretaker, please contact the Department of Children & Family Services at 1-855-4LA-Kids (1-855-452-5437). If you believe the abuse is by someone other than the parent or other caretaker, call your local police or sheriff (911).

Internet Safety Tips

- ☺ The computer should be in an open area, not in a child's room.
- ☺ Assure your children that you know you can count on them to use the Internet responsibly.
- ☺ Use filtering software designed to help parents limit the websites children can access.
- ☺ Instruct your child to never give out personal information online, including her full name, gender, age, school, address, or teams.

Victim Assistance Coordinator
Diocese of Lafayette

Bishop J. Douglas Deshotel has appointed Mr. Joseph Pisano, Jr. as the Victim Assistance Coordinator for the Diocese of Lafayette. Mr. Pisano's number is (337) 298-2987.

Additional Resources

Local Resources:

Children's Advocacy Center (Hearts of Hope)
P. O. Box 53967
Lafayette, Louisiana 70505
337-269-1557
www.theheartsofhope.org

Diocese of Lafayette
Office of Safe Environment
1408 Carmel Drive
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501
337-735-9439
www.diolaf.org

For more information about child abuse, visit these websites or visit your local library:

Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana
www.pcal.org

Child Abuse Prevention Association
www.childabuseprevention.org

Other Prevention Information:

Child Welfare Information Gateway
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW
Eighth Floor
Washington, DC 20024
800-394-3366
www.childwelfare.gov

Prevent Child Abuse America
228 South Wabash Avenue, 10th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
312-663-3520
www.preventchildabuse.org

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 550
Arlington, VA 22201
800-843-5678
www.missingkids.com

Reproduce as needed



Safe Environment for the
Protection of Children
and Young People

Child Abuse And Neglect Prevention Tips For Parents



Diocese of Lafayette
Office of Safe Environment
1408 Carmel Drive
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501
(337) 735-9439
www.diolaf.org

What Is Child Abuse?

Child Abuse is defined as an injury inflicted on a child by an adult or older child that might not be intentional, but is not accidental. It is usually classified as physical abuse, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. **Child Neglect** is harm caused by withholding life's necessities - food, clothing, shelter, medical care and education.



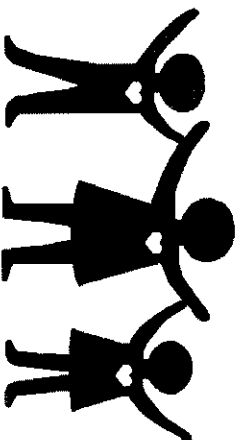
What To Do If A Child Has Been Abused

- Believe the child - children rarely lie about abuse
- Comfort the child. Tell the child the abuse was not his or her fault
- Commend the child for telling you about the experience
- Assure the child that you will protect him or her
- Stay calm and objective in handling your own anger and confusion
- Show the child that he or she is loved, accepted, and an important part of the family
- Report the abuse to the police, the local child protective services agency, or a child hotline - the first priority after abuse has been disclosed
- Take the child to a physician or hospital for an examination
- Seek counseling for the child and for all members of the family

Recognizing Signs of Child Abuse

Below are some indicators of child abuse which can help you recognize an existing or potential problem of abuse:

- Change in behavior habits or school work
- Sudden, dramatic changes in personality or activities
- Depression, sadness or suicide attempts
- Inability to stay awake or to concentrate for extended periods
- Detailed and age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behavior
- Acting out sexually
- Nervousness around adults
- Not wanting to be around or alone with certain people
- Fear of being touched
- Fear or avoidance of bathrooms
- Overly submissive behavior
- Sleep problems, such as insomnia, frequent nightmares, or bedwetting
- Torn skin in and around the vagina or anus
- Unexplained bruises, bites, burns, lacerations, abrasions or swelling caused by other than accidental means
- Has fading bruises or other marks
- Aggression toward adults or other children
- Low self-esteem
- Poor hygiene



Build open and trustful relationships with children. Encourage your child to talk to you about their feelings and experiences. Teach children about personal safety and boundaries. Discuss safety rules and stories and problems. Explain to children that they have a right to do, especially if someone tells you about anyone. Never force them to do anything. Teach your children about personal safety and boundaries. Teach them about personal safety and boundaries. Choose babysitters who are trained and experienced. Teach children not to talk to strangers and not to get into a car with anyone. Set rules for using the internet and other technology. As members of the community, we have a responsibility to protect the dignity and privacy of our children, at school, at church, and at home. Recent statistics show that one out of every five children in the United States has been sexually abused. These statistics are critical in bringing attention to the issue of child abuse and the need for prevention and intervention programs.