

# Child Abuse and Neglect

## Know the Signs:

As Wisconsin keeps physically healthy by staying Safer at Home, children have fewer interactions with many of the professionals trained to observe and mandated to report suspected child abuse. It is critical now, more than ever, for families, friends, and neighbors to be aware of the signs of child abuse and neglect and to know how to report those signs to their local child welfare agencies.

### Signs of Neglect

- Poor hygiene, odor
- Inappropriately dressed for weather
- Needs medical or dental care
- Left alone, unsupervised for long periods
- Failure to thrive, malnutrition
- Constant hunger, begs, or steals food
- Extreme willingness to please
- Frequent absence from school
- Arrives early and stays late at school or play areas or other people's homes



To report a case of child abuse or neglect, contact the county or tribe where the child or child's family lives. If the agency is not known, contact the closest county or call **9-1-1**. Contact information for county and tribal child welfare agencies is available on [dcf.wisconsin.gov](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov).

### Signs of Physical Abuse

- Bruises, welts on face, neck, chest, back
- Injuries in the shape of object (belt, cord)
- Unexplained burns on palms, soles of feet, back
- Fractures that do not fit the story of how an injury occurred
- Delay in seeking medical help
- Extremes in behavior: very aggressive or withdrawn and shy
- Afraid to go home
- Frightened of parents
- Fearful of other adults

### Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Pain, swelling, or itching in genital area
- Bruises, bleeding, discharge in genital area
- Difficulty walking or sitting, frequent urination, pain
- Stained or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease
- Refusal to take part in gym or other exercises
- Poor peer relationships
- Unusual interest in sex for age
- Drastic change in school achievement
- Runaway or delinquent behavior
- Regressive or childlike behavior

### Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Low self-esteem
- Self-denigration
- Severe depression
- Unusual level of aggression
- Severe anxiety
- Extreme withdrawal
- Failure to learn

