

sports coach UK

Safeguarding and Protecting Children (Refresher)

Signs and Effects of Child Abuse



The effect of child abuse will be individual to each child. However, the effects could include:

Physical: delayed development, lack of friends

Emotional: delayed development, difficulties in trusting

Sexual: general fearful outlook, withdrawal; conversely, overly affectionate

Neglect: delayed emotional and/or social development

The signs of child abuse are outlined in the following tables:

Table 1 Physical Abuse

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
The child has:	The child:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> injuries they cannot explain, or explain unconvincingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is reluctant to have parents contacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> injuries that have not been treated, or have been treated inadequately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> injuries on parts of the body where accidental injury is unlikely, such as the cheeks, chest or thighs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> runs away or shows fear of going home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bruising that reflects hand or finger marks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> flinches when approached or touched
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cigarette burns or human bite marks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is reluctant to get changed for PE or school sport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> broken bones, particularly if they are under the age of two 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers up their arms and legs with a long-sleeved shirt, even when it is hot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> scalds, especially those with upward splash marks, tidemarks on arms, legs or on the body, e.g. caused from standing in hot water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows signs of depression or moods that are out of character with their general behaviour
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is unnaturally compliant to parents.

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Table 2 Emotional Abuse

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
The child has:	The child:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to grow or thrive, particularly if they are thriving away from home, e.g. on trips or at matches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has compulsive nervous behaviour; such as hair-twisting or rocking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> suddenly develops speech disorders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is excessively deferent towards others, especially adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has delayed physical or emotional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is unwilling or unable to play
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows an excessive lack of confidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has an excessive fear of making mistakes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows an excessive need for approval, attention and affection
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-harms or self-mutilates, or attempts suicide
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows an inability to cope with praise
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is reluctant to have parents contacted.

Table 3 Sexual Abuse

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
The child has:	The child:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any sexually transmitted disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes sexual drawings or uses sexual language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recurrent genital discharge or urinary tract infections, • without apparent cause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has an apparent fear of someone
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possesses unexplained amounts of money or • receives expensive presents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • runs away from home
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes a parental role at home and functions beyond their age level
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has nightmares or wets the bed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not allowed to have friends, particularly • in adolescence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is self-harming, self-mutilating or has • attempted suicide
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alludes to secrets they cannot reveal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is reluctant to get changed for PE or school sport
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displays sexualised behaviour or knowledge, particularly in young children
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has eating problems, such as anorexia or bulimia
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abuses drugs or other substances.

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Table 4 Neglect

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
The child:	The child:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is constantly hungry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is tired all the time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is in an unkempt state; frequently dirty or smelly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequently misses school or is late
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is losing weight or constantly underweight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fails to keep hospital or medical appointments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is left alone or unsupervised on a regular basis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has untreated medical conditions – is not being taken for medical treatment of illness or injuries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has few friends
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a compulsive stealer or scavenger, especially of food.