

Teaching Addendum

Types and Indicators of Child Abuse

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(From Safe Sanctuaries, Joy T. Melton, Discipleship Resources, 2008)

Indicators of Child Abuse: The following are among those characteristics that may be considered indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. When indicators are present, consider them warnings and investigate the situation more fully.

Physical Abuse: A person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child.

- Hostile, aggressive behavior toward others
- Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults
- Destructive behavior toward self, others and/or property
- Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage
- Burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises

Emotional Abuse: When a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty which sends a message to the child of worthlessness, being "bad," or worthlessness, being unloved and undeserving

- Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
- Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
- Failure to thrive
- Threatens or attempts suicide
- Speech and/or eating disorders
- Goes to extremes to seek adult approval
- Extreme passive/aggressive behavior patterns

Jesus said...

"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." Matthew 18:5

What We Must Know

Less than 20% of child abuse is perpetrated by strangers.

Who are abusers? Abusers are not easily recognized - they may look just like you or me! Abusers are people who have greater power in relation to a child, and they use that power to harm the child.

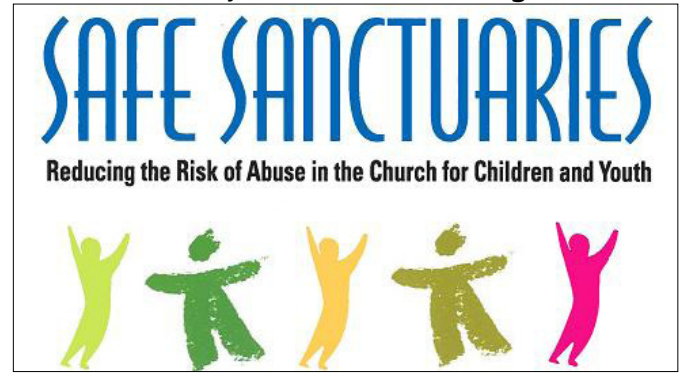
The **National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect** reports that there are more than two million incidents of physical abuse and/or neglect per year in the USA. That amounts to 30 out of every 1,000 children. That equates to one incident every 10 seconds around the clock, seven days a week!

Studies have estimated that 1 out of 3 girls is sexually abused before the age of 18. Similarly, studies indicate that 1 out of 7 boys have been sexually abused before the age of 18. Even more frightening is that these numbers may be underestimated since many children are reluctant to report abuse.

While **a church cannot guarantee** the safety of every person, every church can be responsible for reducing the circumstances that could lead to harm or injury.

Neglect: Abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety or welfare through negligence.

- Failure to thrive
- Pattern of inappropriate dress for climate
- Begs or steals food; chronic hunger
- Depression
- Untreated medical conditions
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- Poor hygiene



Sexual Abuse: Abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The child victim is never responsible for causing the abuse and is never to be blamed for the abuse. The child is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact

- Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for child's age and developmental stage
- Depression- cries often for no apparent reason
- Promiscuous behavior
- Runs away from home and refuses to return
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bruised/bleeding in vaginal or anal areas
- Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, extreme fatigue
- Sexually transmitted diseases

Ritual Abuse: Abuse in which physical, sexual or psychological violations of a child are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by a person or persons. Abusers may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse.

- Disruptions of memory or consciousness
- Unexplained mistrust and mood swings
- Flashbacks
- Eating disorders
- Fear of the dark, especially at sundown or a full moon
- Agitation or despair that seems to occur in cycles
- Fear of ministers, priests or others wearing robes or uniforms
- Nightmares or sleep disorders
- Any of the symptoms of sexual abuse