

## Reporting Child Abuse

Sometimes people think that child abuse is a private family matter. It is not. If you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, promptly report your concerns to the child welfare agency, provincial or territorial social services department or police force in your community. If necessary, a report can be made anonymously.

Reporting is not difficult or time consuming. In all cases, the person reporting is protected from any kind of legal action, provided the report is not falsely made and motivated by malice

## Where do I go for services?

Contact your local

- Child welfare agency
- Social service agency
- Police department
- Hospital
- Mental health Centre
- Distress Centre
- Other community service organization that provides counseling and support to children and families.

Many of these organizations are listed among the emergency telephone numbers on or near the first page of your local telephone directory.

Children who want help can also call the Kids' Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868.

## Statistics

- 35% of girls and 16% of boys between the grades 7 and 12 had been sexually and/or physically abused.
- Children who are exposed to physical violence in their own homes are more likely to display emotional disorders and hyperactivity.
- 1 in 3 females and 1 in 6 males in Canada experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18.
- 60-80% of offenders in a study of imprisoned rapists had been



# Preventing Child Abuse



Box 403, 203 Patricia St.  
Hudson Bay, SK S0E 0Y0  
Phone~ (306) 865-3064  
Fax~ (306) 865-3391

hbfamilyandsupport@sasktel.net  
www.hbfamilyandsupport.ca

24 Hour Crisis Line  
(North East Region)  
1-800-611-6349

## What Can Be Done To Prevent Child Abuse?

Most abusive parents do not consciously set out to harm their children. If there are more and better efforts to assist troubled families, parents at risk of abusing may be reached and helped before they resort to violence. Prevention is a good investment, in terms of both the personal and social costs that can be saved.

- Parenting education can help parents to better understand normal child development and to have a more nurturing and enjoyable relationship with their children. Positive approaches to parenting can help parents with children of any age.
- Encourage your local school board to develop and implement child abuse prevention programs. Abused children tend to repeat the pattern of abuse and prevention is one of the most effective means to stop the cycle of violence.
- If a child tells you about an abusive situation or experience, be supportive. Show the child that he or she is believed and ensure that the occurrence is promptly reported to the appropriate authorities.
- You can assist by teaching children how to recognize and say no to abusive or exploitative behavior. Children should know that they have the right to be free from abuse and exploitation.
- You can help the children and adults in your life find information and assistance to prevent an abusive or neglectful pattern from developing.

## What Are Some Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse?

If you suspect child abuse, but aren't sure, look for clusters of the following physical and behavioral signs.

### Some signs of physical abuse

- Unexplained burns, cuts, bruises or welts in the shape of an object
- Bite marks
- Anti-social behavior
- Problems in school
- Fear of adults
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Self-destructive or suicidal behavior
- Depression or poor self-image

### Some signs of emotional abuse

- Apathy
- Depression
- Hostility
- Lack of concentration
- Eating disorders

### Some signs of neglect

- Unsuitable clothing for weather
- Being dirty or unbathed
- Extreme hunger
- Apparent lack of supervision

### Some signs of sexual abuse

- Inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual acts
- Seductiveness
- Avoidance of things related to sexuality or rejection of own genitals or bodies
- Nightmares and bed wetting
- Drastic changes in appetite
- Over compliance or excessive aggression
- Fear of a particular person or family member
- Withdrawal, secretiveness or depression
- Suicidal behavior
- Eating disorders
- Self-injury

Sometimes there are no obvious physical signs of sexual abuse and a physician must examine the child to confirm the abuse.

