

Know the 10 Signs of Child Abuse



*Be aware that some children may show ALL or NONE of these signs.
Trust your instincts. Suspicion of abuse is enough of a reason to take action.*

- 1. Changes in behavior.** Abuse can lead to many changes in behavior. Abused children often appear scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn or more aggressive.
- 2. Returning to earlier behaviors.** Abused children may display behaviors shown at earlier ages, such as thumb-sucking, bedwetting, fear of the dark, or fear of strangers. For some children, even loss of acquired language or memory problems may be an issue.
- 3. Fear of going home.** Abused children may express apprehension or anxiety about leaving school or about going places with the person who is abusing them or exhibit an unusual fear of a familiar person or place.
- 4. Changes in eating.** The stress, fear, and anxiety caused by abuse can lead to changes in a child's eating behavior, which may result in weight gain or weight loss.
- 5. Changes in sleeping.** Abused children may have frequent nightmares or have difficulty falling asleep and as a result may appear tired or fatigued.
- 6. Changes in school performance and attendance.** Abused children may have difficulty concentrating in school or have excessive absences, sometimes due to adults trying to hide the child's injuries from authorities.
- 7. Lack of personal care or hygiene.** Abused and neglected children may appear uncared for. They may present as consistently dirty and have severe body odor, or they may lack sufficient clothing for the weather.
- 8. Risk-taking behaviors.** Young people who are being abused may engage in high-risk activities such as using drugs or alcohol or carrying a weapon.
- 9. Inappropriate sexual behaviors.** Children who have been sexually abused may exhibit overly sexualized behavior or use explicit sexual language and may exhibit symptoms of a genital infection.
- 10. Unexplained injuries.** Children who have been physically abused may exhibit unexplained burns or bruises in the shape of objects. You may also hear unconvincing explanations of a child's injuries.



ChildSafe

*Our mission is to restore dignity, hope, and trust
to children traumatized by abuse and neglect.*

Share the Facts & Learn How to Help

For over six years, Bexar County has had the highest or second highest rate of confirmed victims of child abuse or neglect and one of the country's highest rates of child deaths as a result of abuse and neglect.

WHO HELPS THESE CHILDREN?

ChildSafe provides intervention services to help children and their families heal from the trauma of child abuse. Providing prevention and education services, ChildSafe also helps individuals and the community understand child abuse and neglect issues and how we, as a community, can eradicate them in Bexar County. We help restore trust and dignity to children and their families traumatized by sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect.

ChildSafe has an exceptional education team which provides evidence-based trainings, prevention programs for children and adults, and mandatory trainings for professionals.

This important work is not done by ChildSafe alone. Our team includes Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Children's Hospital of San Antonio/Center for Miracles and Methodist Specialty & Transplant Hospital Forensic Nurse Examiners Programs, Bexar County District Attorney's Office, San Antonio Police Department, Bexar County Sheriff's Office, and other law enforcement agencies in Bexar County. Together we ensure that victims become survivors, and perpetrators are prosecuted.

ChildSafe knows it is possible to recover from abuse. But it is not something a child or a family can do alone. ChildSafe services coupled with an understanding of early intervention to trauma are vital to the child's long-term healthy development. ChildSafe will make a difference in the life of an abused or neglected child.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Talk to Your Children

Parents, talk to your children about abuse. Only 30% of the victims we see have previously learned about abuse. And over 80% of the time, children know their abusers.

Make a Gift

Ensure ChildSafe has the funds needed to serve the children of Bexar County. ChildSafe is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Volunteer

Call to see how you might help ChildSafe as an ambassador who speaks about abuse in the community, an assistant or trainer in one of our prevention initiatives, an assistant with collection drives, or as a waiting area volunteer who engages children in activities as they wait. There is always room for one more person to help with our important mission.

CHILDSAFE PROVIDES THESE SERVICES

- Forensic interviews of victims and families recorded with state-of-the-art equipment, greatly reducing the number of times a child must tell, and relive, their abuse
- Professional education for those who work in schools, law enforcement and the judicial system, daycare providers, parents and other caregivers, as well as children, such as:
 - Recognizing and reporting child abuse
 - Darkness to Light's *Stewards of Children* – a 2-hour facilitator-led training that addresses child sexual abuse in the context of today's issues
 - radKIDS® training – empowering children as they learn to replace fear, confusion, and panic about dangerous situations with confidence, personal safety skills, and improved self-esteem
- Trauma-specific treatment modalities and support services for children and their families
- Emergency services to help families including: clothing, toiletries, assistance with bills, and in some cases, a new place to live
- Victim advocacy and court orientation which are vital to children and families who must navigate the legal system
- Family Enrichment Adventure Therapy (FEAT), a trauma-informed therapeutic program which promotes empowerment, communication, and trust amongst family members through outdoor, adventure-based activities
- Multi-disciplinary Enhancement Program (MEP) ensures timely access to a full array of services for all children making an outcry of abuse within ChildSafe's official service area. This is done through building and strengthening relationships with our Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) partners by establishing a working protocol with each partner and facilitating MDT meetings twice a month.

What To Do If You Suspect Abuse

Write it down:

- How did you discover the abuse?
- What did you ask? And, what did the child tell you?

Call:

- **San Antonio Police Department** 911 or 210.207.7273
- **Bexar County Sheriff's Department** 210.335.6000
- **Child Protective Services** 800.252.5400
- **Children's Hospital of San Antonio** 210.704.2190
- **Methodist Specialty & Transplant Hospital** 210.575.8168
- **ChildSafe** 210.675.9000