

Parent Talk

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Child Abuse Prevention

Child abuse is a complex issue that impacts a large percentage of the population. As caregivers, therapists, and teachers, it can be hard to know what signs to look out for and how to help. Below, we provide some potential warning signs to keep an eye out for, as well as specific steps you can take if you suspect a case of child abuse or neglect.

Recognize Warning Signs

It's important to know the warning signs of child abuse. Once you're familiar with how children may respond to abuse, you'll be better prepared to get them the help they need. Keep an eye out for physical signs such as bruising, burns, or cuts. Some of these things may not be visible, so also look out for any physical signs of pain such as limping or recoiling when touched. Emotional and behavioral signs are equally important to keep an eye out for. Any major changes in disposition and mood (sadness, depression, anxiety, or fear) can be a red flag.

Look At What Kids Are Saying & Doing

Equally important as physical or behavioral warning signs are verbal confirmations or allusions to abuse. If a child begins referring to being physically or sexually abused, these things should be taken seriously and followed up on. Particularly when it comes to sexual abuse, children may start to say or do things they haven't before. You may also notice a child imitating acts of abuse such as becoming more physically aggressive with their friends or using inappropriate touching. If a child says or does something that causes you to think "where did they learn this from?" it could be a warning sign of abuse.

Make A Call

If you start to notice any of these warning signs and suspect a child may have been abused, it's vital to take the next step to help them. The Baker Center has partnered with the Department of Children & Families to manage the [Massachusetts Child Abuse Emergency Line](#). The Emergency Line is a statewide, after-hours emergency response system that ensures the safety of children who might be victims of abuse or neglect. You can contact the Emergency Line at (800) 792-5200.

Need more help?

Resources at The Baker Center are just a click away

Therapy & Treatment Services

[CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE THERAPY →](#)

Special Education

[MANVILLE SCHOOL →](#)

Therapeutic Summer Camp

[CAMP BAKER →](#)

College Preparation

[NEXT STEP →](#)

Featured Resources



Massachusetts Child Abuse Emergency Line

A statewide, after-hours emergency response system that ensures the safety of children across the Commonwealth. Operated by The Baker Center for the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF), we partner with DCF and Emergency Response Workers after-hours.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention

In this seminar, we will discuss risk and protective factors for childhood abuse and neglect, what actions you can take if you suspect child abuse or neglect, and some ways that we can work as a community of caregivers and providers to protect kids and set them up for success.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Protecting Childhood: Identifying Risk and Protective Factors for Child Abuse and Neglect

For most caregivers, parents, and community members, the well-being and safety of children is a top priority in daily lives. While many of us do our best to ensure the security of children in our families or in our communities, there will always be factors that remain outside of our control. The reality is that many children and teens face neglect and abuse day to day in the United States and beyond.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Protecting Childhood: Prevention Strategies for Caregivers, Community Members, and Mental Health Professionals

Some risk and protective factors on the community and resource level might feel far outside of an individual's control. Even so, there are still actions that community members can take to strengthen preventative factors for children, and the action of one person can have an immense impact on a child's well-being and safety. Identifying these positive actions for caregivers of all kinds can ensure that we are all aware of the paths that we can take for preventing child abuse and neglect.

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