

Child Abuse Prevention



Know the Signs

Child abuse is the maltreatment of a child. Child abuse can be classified into different categories.

Child abuse is the emotional, physical, or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a child or children.

- Emotional abuse refers to behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Examples include shaming, rejection, withholding love, and threatening the child.
- Physical abuse includes the use of physical force, such as hitting, kicking, shaking, or other show of force directed toward a child.
- Sexual abuse often involves, but is not limited to, engaging a child in sexual acts, rape, or inappropriate touching.
- Neglect is a common form of abuse and is often among the most difficult to identify. Neglect occurs when the child's basic needs are not adequately met, putting the child in harm's way. Often neglect involves failing to provide a child with access to food, clothing, or medical care.

Look for unexplained or poorly explained injuries, depression, fear of a certain adult, difficulty trusting others or making friends, sudden changes in eating or sleeping, inappropriate sexual behavior, poor hygiene, secrecy, or hostility.

Get Involved

Volunteer your time

Get involved with other parents in your community. Anything you do to support children and parents can help reduce the isolation and stress that often leads to abuse and neglect. Talk to your neighbors about looking out for one another's children. Encourage a supportive spirit among parents. Show that you are involved.

Support prevention programs

Too often, intervention occurs only after abuse is reported. The ultimate goal is to stop child maltreatment before it starts. Strategies that support parents and teach positive parenting skills are very important. Positive parenting skills include good communication, appropriate discipline, and responding to children's physical and emotional needs. Programs to prevent child maltreatment also improve parent-child relationships and provide parents with social support. Programs for parents can take many different forms. They may occur in parents' homes, in schools, in medical or mental health clinics, or in other community settings. Prevention programs have been proven to stop abuse before it occurs, and to help keep families safely together.

Take Action

Be a nurturing parent.

Support and encourage your children as they are learning and growing. Provide them with care and attention as they are developing.

Promote child development by supporting families.

Societal investment in the well-being of children and families can create confident, knowledgeable, and prepared parents that can form the foundation for families in which children are more stable, healthier, and better prepared to learn. Effective parenting and nurturing familial relationships lay the foundation for children's healthy development and for a stable, productive society.

Healthy family environments can be the product of:

- Parents that feel comfortable seeking assistance or advice with regard to their parenting and do not feel that asking for help promotes a poor reflection on their parenting abilities;
- Parents that understand their children's developmental stages and hold reasonable, age-appropriate expectations of their children;
- Communities that have a range of support and services available to families and children.

To Report Abuse

If you witness a child being harmed, see evidence of abuse, or if a child tells you about abuse, make a report to Licking County Children Services at

740-670-8888.