

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse can occur in many forms—physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect. All of these are extremely hurtful. Sometimes an abuser might think what they are doing is okay because the child is not visibly harmed. However, all of these actions cause damage, even when it cannot be seen. If you have a concern for a child's safety or well-being, you can call 1.866.END.HARM (1.866.323.4276).

Examples of abuse include:

- Hitting, pinching, or biting a child hard enough to leave a mark.
- Pushing a child into a wall or knocking him/her to the floor.
- Calling a child mean names or telling the child that he/she is worthless, stupid, "a mistake," and/or should never have been born.
- Touching a child's private parts when there is no good reason to do so.
- Asking a child to touch his/her own or someone else's private parts.
- Not giving a child enough food or water.
- Leaving a child home alone or letting them play outside without supervision when he/she is too young.
- Leaving or locking a child in a room alone for several hours at a time.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

If you think a child is being abused, it is important to get help. If you do not get help, you may be putting the child at extreme risk. If you don't want to give your name or contact information, you can make an anonymous or confidential report. If you are afraid to make a report, you can still call and get more information about what can be done to protect a child. You can ask questions without making a report. The number to call is: 1.866.END.HARM (1.866.363.4276). If it is an emergency, call 911.

When You Need Help...

Most everyone who cares for children gets frustrated and angry at times. Children can push limits to the point that you might feel like doing something that could hurt them. If you are at the end of your rope, or even if you just need some ideas about how to make caring for children less stressful, you can call the Boys & Girls Town National Hotline, 24-hours a day, 1.800.448.3000, or the Parent Trust Hotline at 1.800.932.4673. They can provide interpretation and have TTY capability.