

If you come across a child who is in need of help, or if you have a suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected, contact us to discuss these suspicions. Your name will be kept confidential and no legal action will be taken against you unless the report is malicious.

## Types of Abuse

**Physical Abuse** is any act by the parent or guardian which results in trauma or injury to any part of a child's body. Children often explain injuries by saying they had an accident while playing or they got it while fighting with a sibling.

**Emotional Abuse** is an attack on the child's self-concept and self-worth. It is a pattern of ongoing behaviour by the parent or guardian that seriously interferes with the healthy development or the mental or emotional functioning of the child. Emotional abuse often happens along with other forms of abuse, such as neglect or physical abuse.

**Sexual Abuse** is the inappropriate exposure or subjection of a child to sexual contact, activity or behaviour by a parent or guardian. Sexual abuse can include "non-touching" activities (e.g. obscene phone calls/conversations, indecent exposure or exhibitionism, masturbation in front of a child, deliberate exposure to others engaged in sexual activities, exposure to any forms of pornographic material).

**Neglect** is failing to provide age appropriate basic care such as food, clothing, shelter, love and affection, medical and dental care, education, and protection from harm. If the parent or guardian cannot or will not provide these things to a child, it is neglect.

## Indicators of Abuse

The following may indicate the possibility of child abuse:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries, especially in places of the body that children do not normally injure during regular play or movement
- Burns which leave a pattern outlining the object which was used to make the burn, such as a cigarette, an iron, or an electric stove burner; burns on the hands, feet or buttocks caused by scalding water; and rope burns caused by being tied
- A child who is continually hungry, unsuitably dressed for the weather and/or always dirty

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- A young child who is often left alone



- A child who is usually aggressive, angry, and hostile to other people
- A child who demonstrates withdrawn behavior, who refuses to participate or dress appropriately for physical activities
- A child who shows unusual knowledge of sexual matters beyond their age of development, who exhibits sexualized behaviour around adults or other children
- A child who hints or talks out rightly about sexual abuse
- A child or adolescent who repeatedly runs away from home
- An adolescent who is extremely withdrawn or aggressive

## What happens after I call?

- After a call is received and assessed for assignment, a caseworker will meet the child to determine if there are problems that may require support.
- If there is a caseworker already involved with the child/family, the concerns will be forwarded to that caseworker.
- In situations involving confirmed sexual or physical abuse, the police are notified and when possible, joint interviews by the caseworker and the police will be arranged.
- If appropriate, family enhancement services may be offered to the parent, family and/or child, which may include in-home support or professional counselling.
- In a case where the child cannot remain in the home, the caseworker will develop an intervention plan for the child. If the removal is temporary, the plan must include helping not only the child, but also the family to overcome the difficulties they have for caring for the child. If the removal is permanent, a plan for adoption or other permanent arrangements will be made.

## What happens after I call?

To report a child who may be in need of intervention, you can call an Edmonton Region CFS Neighbourhood Centre, or you can call the Crisis Unit (after hours, weekends and holidays) at 780-422-2001, 780-427-3390 or 1-800-638-0715.

For more information on physical, emotional or sexual abuse, as well as the signs of neglect, please call Edmonton Region Child and Family Services, call 780-427-2250 or visit our website at [www.humanservices.alberta.ca/edmontoncfs](http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/edmontoncfs).

