



Quick help for

Definitions of Abuse

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a human eye, showing the iris, eyelashes, and the surrounding skin. The eye is looking slightly to the left. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the detail of the eye.

General Remarks

Abuse refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust which is non-accidental and which harms or threatens to harm [someone's] physical or mental health or [someone's] welfare.

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Parental Substance Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is generally defined as “any nonaccidental physical injury to the child” and can include striking, kicking, burning, or biting the child, or any action that results in a physical impairment of the child.



Emotional Abuse

Injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of the child as evidenced by an observable or substantial change in behavior, emotional response, or cognition;

and

injury as evidenced by “anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggressive behavior.”



Neglect

Failure of a parent or other person with responsibility for the child to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision to the degree that the child's health, safety, and well-being are threatened with harm.



- › **Physical neglect:** Abandoning the child or refusing to accept custody; not providing for basic needs like nutrition, hygiene, or appropriate clothing
- › **Medical neglect:** Delaying or denying recommended health care for the child
- › **Inadequate supervision:** Leaving the child unsupervised (depending on length of time and child's age/maturity), not protecting the child from safety hazards, not providing adequate caregivers, or engaging in harmful behavior
- › **Emotional neglect:** Isolating the child, not providing affection or emotional support, or exposing the child to domestic violence or substance use
- › **Educational neglect:** Failing to enroll the child in school or homeschool, ignoring special education needs, or permitting chronic absenteeism from school

Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is evidenced by activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.



- › The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity
- › Exposing a child's private areas
- › Fondling for sexual pleasure
- › Indecent phone calls, emails, sexting
- › Allowing a child to look at, or perform pornographic pictures/videos
- › Sexual intercourse
- › The exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices
- › The exploitative use of children in pornographic performance and materials