

## RESOURCE MATERIALS

### WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Engaging in any sort of sexual activity with a child.
2. Denial of proper or necessary subsistence, education, medical care, or other care necessary for the child's health.
3. Use of restraint procedures on a child that cause injury or pain.
4. Administration of prescription drugs or medication without the ongoing supervision of a licensed physician.
5. Providing alcoholic beverages or controlled substances.
6. Commission of any act, other than by accidental means, that threatens or results in any injury or death to the child.

## TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

**Physical Abuse** is any non-accidental physical injury to a child caused by an adult which results in or threatens serious injury. Often adults who physically abuse children do not intend to seriously injure the children but get carried away by anger and frustration in their own lives.

**Neglect** is the failure of a parent or guardian to provide a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or supervision. Neglect is a chronic problem often resulting, not from poverty, but from lack of knowledge as to the proper care required by children.

**Sexual Abuse** is any physical contact with a child by an adult or older child in a position of power over the child for the sexual gratification of the adult or older child. Other terms for sexual abuse include child molestation, incest (if the abuser is a member of the child's family), or child pornography. Usually, child sexual abuse is not violent, and the child knows the abuser.

**Emotional Abuse** is an important factor in all forms of child abuse. To be hurt so much by someone who should care and protect is very damaging to the emotional development of a child. Adults who do not physically harm a child may cause emotional harm by using words which threaten, harshly criticize, ridicule or harass.

## WHO SHOULD BE AWARE?

In the blessing of the parents during the rite of Baptism the celebrant states that they will be "...the first teachers of their child.....may they also be the best of teachers...."

Parents and guardians are the primary educators of their children. They are responsible for initiating a working relationship with those adults to whom they entrust the care and education of their child/children. Parents and guardians are also the first role mode for the child's faith formation, values, attitudes and behaviors. Educators and care givers work in partnership with parents/guardians.

Any person who functions under the auspices of the Diocese, its parishes, schools or other institutions, in a regular, significant relationship/role with children (e.g. teacher, employee, catechist, youth minister/coordinator of youth ministry, scout leader, coach or server coordinator) has been given a sacred trust. These adults must be vigilant to guard against situations that can inflict harm, or that give rise to suspicions of potential child abuse. All engaged in ministry to and with children in our Diocese are obligated to fulfill the policies and procedures regarding child abuse and neglect.

### **SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE**

1. A child has unexplained burns, bruises, broken bones, black eyes.
2. A child has fading bruises after an absence from class or regularly scheduled activity.
3. A child shrinks from the touch of adults or appears unusually fearful of adults.
4. A child reports injury by an adult.

### **SIGNS OF NEGLECT**

1. A child is frequently absent.
2. A child begs/steals food or money.
3. A child lacks medical or dental care, glasses, immunizations.
4. A child is consistently dirty, has severe body odor.
5. A child lacks sufficient food.
6. A child abuses alcohol or drugs.
7. A child states that no one provides care.

### **SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

1. A child exhibits a change in behavior such as loss of appetite, nightmares, inability to sleep or withdrawal from usual activities and peer relationships.
2. A child returns to bedwetting or thumb sucking.
3. A child has genital pain, itching, swelling or bleeding.
4. A child indicates fear of a person or an intense dislike of being left somewhere or with a particular person.
5. A child shows unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters, expressing affection in ways inappropriate for a child of his or her age.

### **SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

1. A child shows extremes in behavior.
2. A child is either inappropriately adult or infantile.
3. A child is delayed in physical or emotional development.
4. A child reports lack of attachment to parents.
5. A child is exhibiting extremes of behavior, overly anxious to please, to assume blame or extremely passive or aggressive, demanding or undemanding.

### PROCEDURES IN PLACE IN THE DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON AIMED AT PREVENTING CHLD ABUSE

1. A child may receive scheduled, individual instruction or counseling from church personnel only with the consent of the child's parent or guardian.
2. A child may participate in an organized program sponsored by a parish or school only with the written consent of the child's parent or guardian.
3. At least two adults must be present for any activity for children sponsored by a parish or school.
4. No child may be disciplined physically or corrected with abusive language.
5. Church personnel must obtain the consent of a child's parent or guardian before inviting or allowing the child to visit in an adult's home.
6. Release children only to parents or guardians.
7. Have minors use the "buddy system" when they go on trips away from school or church property.
8. Ordinarily, rooms where instruction or counseling is given should contain at least one window.

**Some Guidelines When You Suspect a Child is Experiencing Sexual Abuse:**

1. **Keep calm. Never panic or overreact.**
2. **Believe the child. Never doubt the child.**
3. **Reassure the child. Never blame the child.**
4. **Listen to and answer the child's questions.**
5. **Never pressure the child to talk about or avoid talking about the abuse.**
6. **Never confront the offender**
7. **Respect the child's privacy. Never discuss the abuse in front of inappropriate other parties.**

**REPORT THE ABUSE IMMEDIATELY TO THE PROPER AUTHORITIES.**

Delaware : Division of Family Services  
hot line number : 1-800-292-9582.

Maryland : Department of Social Services in the Maryland County where the allegedly victim resides or if different, where the abuse is alleged to have occurred. Hot line 1-800-492-0618.

**Did you know that in the United States :**

**Every two minutes a child is abused.**

**50%- 90 % of abuses are not reported.**

**Often there are no physical signs.**

**One in four girls and one in six boys are victimized by age 18.**

**85% of the time the child knows and trusts the abuser.**

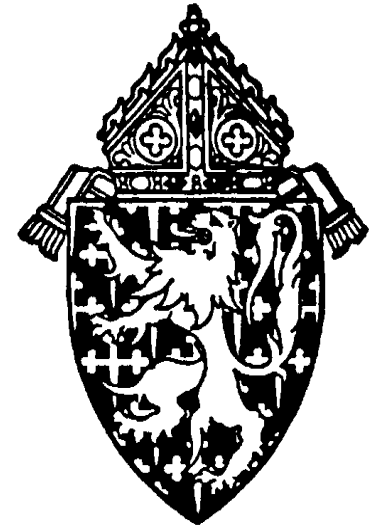
For additional information

Human Resources Office  
1626 North Union Street  
Wilmington Delaware 19806

302-573-3126

**DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON**

**FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S CHILDREN**



**INFORMATION  
FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS  
AND THE PARISH /SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY**

## WHAT YOU CAN TEACH YOUR CHILD

Many parents/guardians have spent time on this issues with their family. If you have not yet done so you may find this list helpful.

1. Talk to your child on a daily basis and listen to what they are saying.
2. Teach your child about good touch and bad touch.
3. Teach your child the correct names for body parts from the earliest years.
4. Teach your children that their body is their own and they have a right to privacy in dressing, bathing and sleeping.
5. Help your child understand there are people who might try to touch them in an inappropriate manner, even people they might know.
6. Tell them that they should not keep secrets from you, even if someone has threatened to harm them or you.
7. Play "what if games" with your child. Create situations that could be confusing and ask the child what he or she might do. Listen closely.

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**MYTH:** Children make up stories or lie about sexual abuse.

**FACT :** While children do make up stories they seldom lie about sexual abuse. Moreover, children who have not been abused do not usually have explicit knowledge of intimate sexual behaviors. Statistics indicate that most reports of child abuse are true.

**MYTH:** Abuse is most often committed by strangers.

**FACT:** Most abuse is committed by someone the victim knows and trusts.

**MYTH:** Children and youth are sexually abused because their parents/guardians neglected to care for, or supervise them properly.

**FACT:** Offenders use a range of tactics to gain access to their victims. The offender alone is responsible for occurs. Many offenders are experts in manipulating both the victim and those who care for the victim.

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For Additional Resources please click on the **For the Sake of God's Children** website at [www.cdow.org](http://www.cdow.org)

