

# How to Recognize and Prevent Child Abuse



In a time of increased predatory behaviors against children, it's vital that you do what you can to protect them. When adults or even family members betray the trust of a child, it changes that child's world, sometimes forever.

If abuse is present in a child's life, there are likely clues that stand out as possible indicators. It's essential to stay alert to behaviors noticeably out of the ordinary for child(ren) you know.

## Behaviors signaling child abuse or neglect

- Sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- No medical attention received for physical or medical problems
- Learning problems (or trouble concentrating) without physical or psychological causes
- Always watchful, as though expecting something bad to happen
- Overly compliant, passive or withdrawn
- Comes to school and stays late and/or does not want to go home
- Reluctant to be around a particular person
- Discloses maltreatment

In addition, you can help protect children who may be at risk—specifically from people they trust—by engaging in abuse prevention strategies on a more personal level.

## What you can do to prevent abuse

- Get to know your neighbors. A smile or a word of encouragement can go far.
- Be an active community member. Lend a hand at schools or faith-based organizations.
- Support organizations that dedicate time to prevention and protection of victims.
- Learn how to recognize and report signs of child abuse and neglect.

Reporting your concerns to officials can go a long way in keeping a child from experiencing major suffering and long-term abuse.

In the case of the [Turpin children in Perris, California](#), neighbors stated that they felt something was “off” about the family but said nothing, not wanting to cause conflict. If you’re a witness of odd behavior, take a moment to consider what could happen if you don’t speak up.

## Long term effects of childhood abuse

Studies show that childhood physical and mental abuse can lead to:

- Insecurities
- Social anxiety
- Overall feelings of restlessness

That type of damage to a child’s sense of security can stunt emotional growth later in life and lead to multiple failed relationships as an adult.

Several now-adult victims of convicted criminal [Larry Nassar](#) testified in court that they still feel dirty and damaged by his abuse from several years ago.

With hope, perseverance and hard work, some people overcome childhood horrors and live a productive life; however, others are not so fortunate.



## Help raise money to aid prevention

Pinwheel Place uses the national symbol of child abuse prevention—the pinwheel—to aid fundraising efforts throughout the community. Consider inviting your friends and family to organize an event in your neighborhood to create a pinwheel garden.

**Start Your Garden**

Our little ones are the future. They deserve a fair chance to achieve their dreams.

## More resources on child abuse and neglect

The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline (800.4.A.CHILD) offers crisis intervention, resources, and referrals to support services (in 170 languages). <http://www.childhelp.org/pages/hotline-home>

<https://www.childwelfare.gov>