

SIGNS OF ABUSE, WARNING SIGNS AND FORMS OF NEGLECT

The following signs may or may not indicate abuse, but the possibility should be considered. **Lifeworlds** recognises that many at-risk children with whom its staff and volunteers come into contact will exhibit some of the signs and symptoms listed below due to the living conditions in which they find themselves, the nature of which is one of abuse and exploitation.

Physical Signs of Abuse

- Any injuries whose characteristics do not coincide with the explanation offered for them
- Injuries to parts of the body that are not usually exposed to falls or rough play
- Injuries that did not receive medical attention
- Neglect - malnutrition, failure to thrive, constant hunger, eating or stealing food, untreated illness, inadequate care
- Reluctance to change clothes or participate in games or swimming, etc.
- Repeated urinary tract infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Bruises, bites, fractures, etc., that accidents can't explain
- Cuts, scrapes, substance abuse

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegation made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child excessively preoccupied with sexual matters or exhibiting detailed knowledge of adult sexual conduct or regularly involved in age-inappropriate sex play
- Sexual activity through words, games or drawings
- Child sexually seductive and provocative to adults
- Severe sleep disorders
- Hunger disorders: anorexia, bulimia

Emotional Signs of Abuse

- Regression or change in behaviour or mood, particularly when the child withdraws or becomes dependent (overly attached)
- Nervousness, hypervigilance
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden drop in performance or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Escape/ theft/ lies

Warning Signs and Some Forms of Negligence

Physical neglect

- Frequent parasitic or infectious diseases
- Damage to health due to irregularity in following prevention rules, such as the vaccination calendar
- Neglect of illnesses, such as unexplained delays in seeking medical resources, inadequate treatment
- Failure to follow recommendations and irregular monitoring of patients with chronic pathologies
- Skin lesions or repeated nappy dermatitis (untreated)
- Tooth decay (untreated)
- Growth and development deficits without a health problem to justify them
- Malnutrition without apparent underlying disease
- Carelessness when storing, preparing or offering food
- Obesity due to nutritional neglect or imposition
- Careless hygiene
- Lack of protection against accidents and violence by others
- Lack of weather protection
- Wearing clothes that are far inferior or contrast with the standard presented by their parents or offered to other siblings

Educational Negligence

- Lack of follow-up to schooling
- Allowing or encouraging school absenteeism or failing to deal with it
- Failure to enrol the child in school at the appropriate age

Emotional Neglect

- Inattention to the need for affection, love and protection
- Domestic violence against other family members
- Permission, encouragement or omission to use alcohol or other drugs by underage children
- Inducement to a sedentary lifestyle, inactivity
- Impediments to socialising and leisure time
- A child or adolescent left in the custody or care of a third party, unattended or unsupervised by guardians
- Refusal or expulsion from housing (home), including failure to search for a runaway child or adolescent and refusal to take them in on their return