

The professional's role

Materials Needed

- **Handout B-1 “The Professional’s Role” and Teacher’s Key**

Distribute **Handout B-1**. Give time for each participant to write down the potential signs of abuse and neglect. We have all heard stories of people who have been questioned regarding a child's injury or condition. For example, a father takes his three-week old infant to the emergency room with an injury. The ER physician diagnoses a spiral fracture of the leg. But because the father cannot explain the injury, and such fractures are *usually* the result of physical trauma, the physician contacts CPS to file a report of suspected abuse. The father is shocked and maintains his innocence. Facilitate a short discussion on the potentially conflicting roles a professional carries out:

- Identifying children who are neglected or abused.
- Protecting children from any type of harm.
- Establishing trusting relationships with family members.

The Professional's Role

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination, you should take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse.

The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect:

The Child:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.



Parent or other Adult Caregiver:

- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.
- 21.

The Parent and Child Together:

- 22.
- 23.

The Professional's Role

TEACHER'S KEY

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination, you should take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse.

The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect:

The Child:

- ☐ Shows sudden changes in behavior or performance
- ☐ Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parent's attention
- ☐ Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes.
- ☐ Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- ☐ Lacks adult supervision
- ☐ Is overly compliant, passive or withdrawn
- ☐ Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones or black eyes
- ☐ Offers conflicting explanations as to how the injury occurred
- ☐ Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- ☐ Is frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- ☐ Shrinks at the approach of adults
- ☐ Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver

The Parent or other Adult Caregiver:

- ☐ Shows little concern for the child
- ☐ Denies the existence of- or blames the child for- the child's problems in school or at home
- ☐ Asks providers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- ☐ Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- ☐ Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- ☐ Looks primarily to the child for care, attention and satisfaction of emotional needs
- ☐ Offers conflicting, unconvincing or no explanation for the child's injury
- ☐ Describes the child as "evil" or in some other very negative way
- ☐ Uses harsh physical discipline with the child

The Parent and Child Together:

- ☐ Rarely touch or look at each other
- ☐ Consider their relationship entirely negative

