

WARNING SIGNS

Signs to Watch for in children who may be victims of sexual abuse

Keep in mind that observing a single sign mentioned below, does not mean a child is, or has been a victim of sexual abuse. However, if several of these signs begin to emerge and are recurring, it might be a time to start asking questions and/or seeking help.

- Sudden mood changes; anger, fear, withdrawn, insecurities
- Sleep problems or nightmares
- Change in eating habits; refuses to eat and/or increases
- Seems distracted or distant and doesn't want to talk
- Writes or draws pictures of a sexual nature
- Talks about a new friend and/or is secretive about a new friend
- Asks friends or siblings to play sexual games or acts in sexual ways
- Mimics adult-like sexual behavior with stuffed animals, dolls, or toys
- Has a new or sudden fear of a particular person or specific place
- Onset of thumb sucking or bed-wetting at an older age
- Is resistant to remove clothing at appropriate times (bed, bath, toileting)

There are other signs and symptoms that can be shown by a child and this is not an exhaustive list. Please do not wait if you suspect something has happened to a child. It is far better to question early than to try to repair the damage.

If you suspect something, keep a journal or take notes and record or document things being said or done by a child that you can look further into.