Keeping Children & Families Safe During COVID & Social Distancing

"It is clear now more than ever that no one agency, system, or institution can tackle the complexities of child abuse and neglect in isolation. Tennessee Kids Need Us to protect them."

128,611 calls were received by the TN Child Abuse Hotline in 2019.

Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse
- Unexplained fractures or injuries
- Previous injuries in various healing stages
- Patterned injuries consistent with objects of abuse (cigarettes, belts, hands)
- Burns on extremities, buttocks or genitals
- Frightened or shy, untrusting, or avoidant approach of adult caregiver
- Emotional turmoil (anxiety, deprived, suicidal; developmental delays)
- Self-isolation or undue aggression
- Fear of going home; many school absences
- Abuses animals or pets

Possible Indicators of Neglect
- Poor growth or weight gain or being overweight
- Poor hygiene
- Lack of clothing or supplies to meet physical needs
- Taking food or money without permission
- Hiding food for later
- Poor record of school attendance
- Lack of appropriate attention for medical, dental or psychological problems or lack of necessary follow-up care

Possible Indicators of Emotional Abuse
- Delayed or inappropriate emotional development
- Loss of self-confidence or self-esteem
- Social withdrawal or a loss of interest or enthusiasm
- Depression
- Avoidance of certain situations, such as refusing to go to school or ride the bus
- Desperately seeks affection
- A decrease in school performance or loss of interest in school
- Loss of previously acquired developmental skills

Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse
- Soreness or bruising, pain or itching in genital or anal areas
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Nightmares or bedwetting
- Unexplained loss of appetite
- Becoming isolated or withdrawn
- Excessive masturbation or sexual play
- Abuses children, animals or pets
- Attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment
- Obsession with pornography or viewing sexually explicit photos
- Repeated runaway or suicide attempts
- Self-destructive behavior/self-injury/cutting, risky or delinquent behavior

About 60% of children who are sexually abused are by the people the family trusts.

Nationally, neglect is the most common form of abuse. Three-out-of-five (nearly 61%) of victims were neglected only, more than 10% were physically abused only, and 7% were sexually abused only. Yet the statistics indicate a more complex problem where children experience multiple forms of abuse.

In 2018, more than 15% of kids were poly-victimized (suffered two or more forms of abuse).

Legal Responsibilities and Referent Rights
- All Tennessee adults are mandated reporters.
- It is against the law for anyone to impede or prevent a report from being made.
- Referents are protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action for reports made in good faith.

To report suspected abuse or neglect of a child in Tennessee call the designated school line at 855-209-4226 or make a report online at apps.tn.gov/carat/