





CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

How to Report a Tip

 **Call** 713.222.TIPS (8477)

 **Text** TIP610 plus your tip to CRIMES (274637)

 Use our **Mobile App**
Download app name: Crime Stoppers Houston

 Go to [crime-stoppers.org](https://www.crime-stoppers.org)

Tipsters will remain anonymous and could be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$5,000.



Child abuse is any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.



FORMS OF ABUSE

Physical abuse:

Any physical injury resulting in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child.

Sexual abuse:

Any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child.

Emotional abuse:

A pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth.

Neglect:

The failure to provide for a child's basic needs to sustain health and life of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Did you know?

- In 2015, Texas had 66,721 confirmed victims of child abuse/neglect including 6,360 in Harris county.
- In 2015, Texas suffered 171 child abuse/neglect related deaths including 25 in Harris county.
- In Texas, more than 3 children die from abuse or neglect on average every week with 182 children being confirmed victims daily and more than 7 children maltreated every hour.
- The median age for reported abuse is 9 years and 95% of child abuse occurs by someone known to the victim.
- Most abuse occurs due to unreasonable expectations of children's behavior and/or actions and 40% of confirmed cases of child abuse involve the use of alcohol or other drugs.
- Not all perpetrators are adults: an estimated 23% of reported cases of child sexual abuse are perpetrated by individuals under the age of 18 and approximately 40% are abused by older/larger children whom they know.
- Researchers estimate that 1/3 of abused/neglected children will grow up to abuse their own children.



KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE:

- The three key prevention tools are assertiveness, resiliency and empathy.
 - o **Assertiveness** can help your child communicate more efficiently and positively. Practice using assertive statements and talk about how aggressive and passive statements are not effective.
 - o **Resiliency** will help them recover from setbacks, adapt well to change, and keep going in the face of adversity. We cannot prevent every unpleasant situation from happening to our children but we can help them bounce back. Build resiliency in your child by:
 - practicing coping skills
 - instilling a positive sense of self
 - boosting a desire to achieve by practicing goal setting
 - encouraging them more than praising them
 - o **Empathy** is the ability to understand how others would feel. Use emotion words with your child. When asking them about their day, ask them specific things that made them feel happy, sad, frustrated etc., then ask them what emotions they observed in others. Connecting words to emotions can help your child communicate their feelings more effectively.
- Discuss the roles of people in their lives. For example the role of their coach is to teach and lead them in a sport not to teach them about personal or private subjects.
- Get to know your child's friends and their parents.
- Familiarize yourself with developmental milestones to better understand what to reasonably expect from your child.
- Behavioral changes are more common than actual verbal disclosures of abuse such as: depression, anxiety, withdraw from family, friends, normal activities, fear of certain places or people, loss of appetite, etc.
- Personal safety should be a continuous topic of discussion.
- Be a good listener and practice open communication.
- Believe your child if they tell you that someone has made them feel uncomfortable. If your child acts up or shows distress when being left with a caretaker trust your instincts and your child's.
- Seek counseling if any abuse has occurred or attempted. Physical symptoms of abuse heal but the emotional effects can last a lifetime.



MONITOR YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR

- Parenting can be difficult: seek social connections and support from other parents.
- Practice positive discipline techniques and understand the difference between discipline vs. punishment:
 - o Discipline attacks the behavior and is used to teach and guide
 - o Punishment attacks the child and is used to shame and scare
- Cool down before disciplining your child.
- It is normal to feel frustrated from time to time but it is never ok to harm your child.
- Practice stress management.
- If you find yourself becoming agitated, call family, a friend, or a neighbor for help.
- Be mindful when expressing displeasure towards the undesired behavior that you do not express displeasure in your child as well, for example breaking a window is "bad" but does not make your child "bad". They may have made a bad choice, discuss what they could have done differently.
- Set a good example, our children are the best imitators.
- Show your child that conflicts can be settled without hitting and/or yelling.
- Babies cry because it is their only form of communication: tend to their cries in a timely manner.