



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

How to Report a Tip

 **Call** 713.222.TIPS (8477)

 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 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.

Did you know?

- Every year more than 3.6 million referrals are made to child protection agencies involving more than 6.6 million children
- The United States loses on average between four and seven children every day to child abuse and neglect
- Today, 185 Texas children will be victims of abuse
- In one year, more than 65,000 cases of Child Abuse were confirmed in Texas alone
- 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18
- 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused before the age of 18
- A report of child abuse is made every 10 seconds
- Over the past 10 years, more than 20,000 American children are believed to have been killed in their homes by family members



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.

Texas law requires that any person suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately make a report to 1-800-252-5400 or 911 if there is an emergency.



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 may 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.