



## **Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse**

The presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that a child is being sexually abused, it should be enough to cause a concerned individual to closely observe the child, to try to uncover the source of the behaviors. If, at any time, a professional suspects a child is being sexually abused, she/he should report such suspicions to the appropriate social service agency.

### **Behaviors commonly displayed by children who have experienced sexual abuse**

- Depression
- Withdrawal--i.e.: child with few friends
- Isolation from peers
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Chronic runaway
- Increase in physical complaints--i.e.: headaches, chronic illnesses
- Hysterical paralysis
- Attention-getting behavior/inappropriately acting out
- Suicide attempts
- Physical abuse--self-inflicted (mutilation) or inflicted by parents
- Truancy--i.e.: skipping school/classes
- Drop in academic performance
- Poor self-image--reflected in choice of clothing, overall appearance, cleanliness
- Limited participation in organized social activities
- Overly seductive behavior
- Prostitution
- Promiscuous sexual behavior
- Heavy childcare responsibilities
- Heavy household responsibilities--i.e.: regular responsibility for laundry, meal preparation, etc.
- Overly restricted social activities

### **Behavioral signs among young children:**

- Excessive masturbation
- Enuresis (bedwetting)
- Encopresis (fecal soiling)
- Altered sleep patterns
- Severe nightmares
- Fears or phobias
- Regression in developmental milestones
- Learning problems
- Explicit knowledge of sexual acts
- Excessive curiosity about sex
- Precocious sex play
- Seductiveness
- Overly compulsive behavior
- Clinging/whining to a particular parent (non-abusive parent)
- Open sexual behavior after age 5-7

24-hour Crisis Line (701)293-7273  
www.raccfm.com

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