

Remember:

- Not all children will respond to maltreatment in the same way – some might act out, while others might withdraw into themselves – look for a significant change in how this child behaves.
- Some children are naturally more talkative and forthcoming than others. **We cannot assume maltreatment due to an unwillingness to talk.**
- Children of the same age but of **different developmental levels** may behave very differently.
- **Be mindful of cultural differences** and biases that both you and the family may have.

Support & Referrals

A report to the SCR is one tool to keep children safe and should only be used by mandated reporters when they are legally obligated to make a report. In your professional role, you may encounter families whose needs would be met by a **wide variety of community-based services.**

If possible, a “warm hand-off” is always better than a simple referral; this means that you assist the family with outreach to the resources and supports, guiding them through the process.

Find more resources:

<http://nysmandatedreporter.org>

OCFS HEARS Family Line

1-888-55HEARS (1-888-554-3277)

NYS Office of Children and Family Services

The Office of Children and Family Services serves New York's public by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of our children, families and communities.

For more information about OCFS, please visit our website at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov>

For resources and more information for mandated reporters:
<http://nysmandatedreporter.org>

The Mandated Reporter Hotline for child abuse and maltreatment reports:
1 (800) 635-1522



Mandated Reporting



SIGNS OF ABUSE & MALTREATMENT





As a professional who works with children and families, it is important to understand, and be alert to, indicators of maltreatment and abuse.

These indicators can help you determine whether signs or behaviors you witness are indicators of possible abuse or maltreatment.

Physical Indicators may include:

- Unexplained fractures, burns, welts or lacerations
- Suspicious injury or bruising including where the:
 - location of the injury may be atypical
 - explanation provided for the injury doesn't match the pattern of injury
 - bruise or laceration is shaped like an object (e.g. a handprint or looped cord)

(continued...)

- Excessive corporal punishment, in which:
 - The child lacks the capacity to understand the corrective quality of the discipline
 - A less severe method is available and likely to be effective
 - The punishment is inflicted due to the parent's rage
 - The child receives injuries or bruises as a result
 - The length of punishment surpasses the child's endurance
 - Unattended physical problems, medical or dental needs
 - Pain or itching in the genital area
 - Lags in physical development/growth
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Sometimes, the victims of abuse or maltreatment do not exhibit any physical indicators. In these cases, you can look for behavioral indicators.

Behavioral Indicators may include:

- A significant change in the child's demeanor including:
 - not acting like themselves
 - acting oddly shy or attention-seeking
 - a sudden drop in grades or lack of interest in activities
- Engaging in self-destructive behaviors
- Isolating from peers
- Begging for or stealing food
- Consistent fatigue
- Lingering in school/reluctance to go home
- Use of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Infrequent school attendance
- Sudden new sexual behavior or knowledge that is inconsistent with the child's development, age, circumstances or past behaviors



Educational Neglect:

Poor school attendance, in and of itself, is not a reasonable cause to suspect maltreatment. A report of suspected educational neglect should be called in to the SCR *only when there is an identifiable harm or imminent risk of harm to the child due to the parent or other person legally responsible failing to provide the minimum degree of care regarding the education of the child.*

School personnel should first try working with the student, family, and community agencies to identify needs and resources available to meet those needs.