

OLG's Safeguard the Children News Corner - #6

OLG's Safeguard the Children Committee welcomes you to a series of articles to help educate our entire community to prevent child abuse in all its forms. We will present information regarding the various types of abuse, some signs of abuse, and how to report suspected abuse. We will keep you posted about opportunities for educational programs as well as general information and statistics through this series. We welcome your questions and input.

Contact Loretta Haemker at OLG School: 344-4126 or call the Ministry Office: 342-4505.

Possible characteristics of abusive or neglectful parents or caretakers.

These characteristics are suggested guidelines only.

- They appear isolated from family supports such as friends, relatives, and neighbors and community groups.
 - They appear to be misusing alcohol or drugs.
 - They are overcritical of the child and seldom, if ever, discuss the child in positive terms.
 - They are reluctant to give information about the child's injuries or condition. When questioned, they are unable to explain the condition, or offer far-fetched or contradictory explanations.
 - They believe that harsh punishment is necessary for children.
 - They are difficult to locate, appear to lack control, or fear losing control.
 - They consistently fail to keep appointments, discourage social contact, and never participate in school activities or events.
 - They fail or delay to take the child for medical attention: routine check-ups or dental care, or for treatment of injury or illness.
 - They have unrealistic expectations of the child, expecting or demanding behavior that is beyond the child's years or ability.
 - They ignore the child's crying or react with impatience to this behavior.
 - They keep the child confined, perhaps in a crib or playpen, for extended periods of time.
- They may choose a different doctor or hospital each time the child needs attention or care.
- They refuse to consent to diagnostic studies.
 - They respond inappropriately to the seriousness of the child's condition: either by overreacting, seeming hostile or antagonistic when questioned even casually.
 - They seem to lack understanding of children's physical, emotional, and psychological needs.
 - They seem to trust no one.
 - They seldom touch or look at the child.
 - They under-react, showing little concern or awareness and seeming more preoccupied with their own problems than those of the child.
 - They, themselves, experienced abuse or neglect as children.

If you notice any of these behaviors, talk to the parents or caretakers. Often parents and caretakers have exhausted their resources and are unaware that some of their actions may be harmful to children.

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If you have a reasonable suspicion that someone is abusing a child, call the child abuse hotline for L.A. county: (800) 540-4000, (TTD line 800-272-6699)
Ventura County: (800) 754-7600
Santa Barbara county: (800) 367-0166.
To contact law enforcement (within L.A. County), with reports of sexual abuse call the L.A.P.D. Sexually Exploited Child Unit: (213) 485-2883,
L.A. Sheriff's Dept.: (323) 526-5000,
or the District Attorney, Sexual Crimes and Child Abuse Unit: (213) 974-9790.
If the child is in immediate danger, call 911.

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