

Child Abuse

Child abuse occurs when a parent or guardian acts intentionally and as a result the child is hurt or is at risk of a physical, sexual, mental and/or emotional abuse or injury. In Puerto Rico the Law No. 246, oversees the safety, welfare, and protection of minors.



What are the types and forms of child abuse?

Neglect: Parents or persons in charge of any minor, must ensure, within their possibilities the ready access to the needs of food, access to health services, education, clothing, and safe housing for minors. In addition, the parents or child care providers must seek to have the basic and essential services for a healthy environment. Failure to do, is considered negligence for investigate.

Physical Abuse: Any non-accidental blow or injury caused by a single or multiple incidents is critical. This includes hair pulling, pushing, kicking, burning, vigorously shaking an infant, among others.

Emotional Abuse: Failure to provide an adequate environment for emotional development that allows for independence and security, including not showing affection or protection. In addition, acting in an antisocial manner in front of minors such as getting drunk, taking drugs, or allowing them to witness violent acts.

Sexual Abuse: Engaging in sexual conduct in the presence of a minor and/or using a minor, voluntarily or involuntarily, to carry out sexual conduct to satisfy the abuser.

Child Exploitation: Labor exploitation includes the distribution and sale of drugs, armed violence, domestic work, among others. While sexual exploitation includes prostitution, pornography, arranged marriages and/or exploitation for reproductive purposes.

Institutional Abuse: Occurs when an official of a public or private institution who has under his/her responsibility a minor for his/her care, education, treatment, or detention, but on the contrary, causes harm or puts the minor at risk of suffering physical, mental and/or emotional damage.

Risk Factors: are behaviors and conditions that increase the likelihood of child abuse.



- **Minor:** Unwanted children, with some physical or mental disability, behavioral problems, children between the ages of 0 to 3 years or in adolescence are more likely to be abused.
- **Parents:** Having been a victim of childhood abuse, use and abuse of alcohol or controlled substances, conflictive relationship or gender violence, low self-esteem, poor tolerance.
- **Family and Society:** Family with only one guardian (father or mother) lack of support network, and/or participation of a family member in criminal activities in the community.

Child Abuse Prevention

- Family Planning.
- Provide an atmosphere of harmony at home, maintaining healthy relationships, as couple and within the family.
- Avoid the use and abuse of alcohol and controlled substances.
- Teach minors healthy ways to resolve conflicts and manage frustration.
- If you are having parenting problems, seek professional help.
- Citizens must report by any means crimes or actions that threaten minors

Possible Consequences of Child Abuse

Abuse can have lifelong consequences. These include physical or mental disabilities, deformities, low self-esteem, depression, and interpersonal difficulties.



Social and Emotional Aspect

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can manage any emotional or physical concerns that may arise during and after a medical treatment, please visit your primary care physician or contact the following telephone lines:

Medical Counseling Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD: 1-844-347-7804

APS Healthcare

787-641-9133

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Hotline to Report Situations of Abuse, Institutional Abuse, Neglect, and Institutional Negligence

Phone: 787-749-1333

1-800-981-8333

Phone: 1-800-981-1333

24hr / 7 days

In case of emergency call 911

Family Guidance and Support Line

787-977-8022

1-800-981-8333

1-888-359-7777

7 days / working hours: 8:00 a.m.
to 10:00 p.m.

Report Child Exploitation

ICE PR:

787-729-6969

National Hotline Against Human Trafficking:

1-888-373-7888

Polaris Be Free Texting Helpline:

Send a message "BeFree" to 233733

References:

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<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/spanpacket2004.pdf>

http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/sp_long_term_consequences.pdf 08-2019

<https://www.healthychildren.org/Spanish/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Paginas/disciplining-your-child.aspx>

<https://adfan.pr.gov/AdministracionesAuxiliares/ProteccionSocial/Pages/default.aspx>