

# Signs & Symptoms of the Sexually Abused Child

*It is Our Responsibility as Adults to look for & Notice the Signs & Symptoms!*

The below listed Signs & Symptoms may be indicators of other forms of abuse or distress that the child may be experiencing... and may not necessarily point towards sexual abuse. Some of these Signs & Symptoms may indicate some type of medical issue. This is not an all-inclusive list.

**Disclosure by Child:** Not Guaranteed / Possible, but Unlikely

**Physical Evidence:** Not Enough / Possibly Caused by Something else / Children's Bodies Resilient

- Gradual and/or sudden changes in behavior such as Isolation, Introverted, Withdrawal, Fearfulness, Agitation, Excessive Crying, Depression
- Aggressive/Disruptive Behavior
- Excessively Active
- Cruelty to Others / Cruelty to Pets
- Change in or Loss of appetite
- Recurring Nightmares; Disturbed Sleep Patterns, Fear of the dark
- Sudden Change displaying Immature Behavior for their age
- Regression to a more Infantile Behavior (Bedwetting / Thumb Sucking / Excessive Crying)
- Torn or Stained Underclothing
- Vaginal or Rectal bleeding, Pain, Itching, Swollen Genitals, Vaginal Discharge or an STD
- Unusual Interest in and/or Knowledge of Sexual Matters
- Expressing Affection in ways that are Inappropriate for a Child of that Age
- Inappropriately Exposing their Body/Genitals at Home and/or in Public
- Sexual Acting Out / Inappropriate Sexual Play (with Self, Other Children, Adults, Pets, Toys)
- Excessive Masturbation
- Fear of a Certain Person or an Intense Dislike of being Left Somewhere or With Someone
- Trying to Avoid a Familiar Adult
- Fear of People of the Same Sex and/or Age of the One Who is Abusing Them or Has Abused Them
- Afraid of Places Similar to Where the Abuse Occurs or Occurred
- Overly Compliant Behavior
- False Maturity / Mature Appearance and/or Behavior, Inappropriate for their Age (Acting / Dressing Older) / Heightened Sense of Responsibility / Devotion to Duty
- Unusual/Strange/Inappropriate Interaction Between a Child & a Specific Person
- Unhealthy/Odd attachment to a Specific Person
- Change in Behavior Only Around a Specific Person
- Difficulty Walking or Sitting
- Wearing Many Layers of Clothing
- Afraid to be Left Alone
- Excessive Daydreaming
- Unable to go to Bathroom or Refuses to go; More than Likely Only Around a Certain Person
- Pretending to be Sick or Actually Becoming Sick / Recurring Health/Medical Issues
- Sudden Loss of or Lack of Interest in Friends, School, Sports, Other Activities, Etc...
- Difficulty Learning in School / Inability to Concentrate / Short Attention Span / May Appear to have a Learning Disorder / Appears to be Hyperactive (may even be Diagnosed as ADD or ADHD)
- Hesitant to Change Clothes for Gym Class
- Fear of Physical Activities at School

**A Child @ Play:** Watch & Listen! You may be surprised at what you can learn by observing a child during playtime. This is applicable primarily with younger children that still play with toys. That is why so many Therapist use Play Therapy when dealing with younger children.



**See Page 2 for Additional Information concerning Pre-Teens / Teens...**

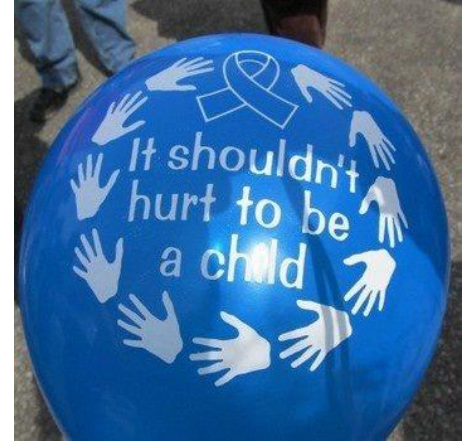


# Signs & Symptoms of the Sexually Abused Child - Continued

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## Additional for Pre-Teens / Teens

- Extreme and/or Unexplained Anger
- Running Away
- Delinquent Behavior
- Low Self-Worth
- Self Destructive Behavior / Self-Harm / Self Mutilation (Cutting / Burning)
- Seductive / Promiscuous Behavior
- Low Self-Esteem vs. Something to Prove
- Eating Disorders
- Addictions (Drugs / Alcohol / Sex / Pornography)
- Anxiety
- Mood Swings
- Happened or Happening to a "Friend"
- Sudden Change in School Performance & Behavior
- Arriving at School Early / Staying Late
- Unexplained and/or Excessive Fear
- Lack of Trust in Self & Others
- Difficulty Forming Relationships / Poor Peer Relationships / Avoidance of Relationships
- Signs of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
- Suicidal Thoughts / Attempts and/or Suicide



SpeakingOut against Child Sexual Abuse

NATIONAL  
HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING  
HOTLINE

1-888-373-7888

**National Child Abuse Hotline**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**1-800-4-A-Child**

1-800-422-4453

