



## The Children's Assessment Center

### Signs/Symptoms/Behavior Indicating Possible Sexual Abuse

- Complain of pain while urinating or having bowel movements, indicating infection.
- Exhibit symptoms of genital infections.
- Have symptoms indicating evidence of physical trauma (abrasions or lesions) to the genital area.
- Begin wetting the bed.
- Experience a loss of appetite or other eating problems, including gagging without a logical explanation.
- Show an unusual fear of being in a particular area of the house or some other place.
- Wake up during the night sweating, screaming or shaking, or with nightmares.
- Masturbate excessively.
- Show unusually aggressive behavior toward family members, friends, pets or toys.
- Engage in persistent sexual play with friends, toys or pets.
- Have unexplained periods of panic, which might be flashbacks of abuse episodes.
- Regress to behavior too young for the stage of development they have already achieved.
- Initiate sophisticated sexual behavior (not developmentally appropriate for the child's age) toward other children or adults.
- Indicate a sudden reluctance to be alone with a familiar person.
- Engage in self-mutilation, such as sticking themselves with pins or cutting themselves with sharp objects.
- Withdraw abruptly from activity with a club or group that was formerly enjoyed.
- Suddenly not performing well in school.

- As an unusual amount of questions about human sexuality (particularly older children, ages 7 years old and up).
- Show an unexplained change in personality traits.
- Develop an unexplained fear of males or females. Or a fear of men, for instance, with mustaches, or of men or women wearing a certain color or style of clothes.
- Make sudden requests for locks on the door and other safety precautions and ask questions about protection.
- Express thoughts about death or suicide, or display suicidal actions.
- Develop an extreme fear of undressing in a physical education class or for a medical examination.
- Develop frequent unexplained health problems.
- Show symptoms indicating pregnancy.
- Does not want to attend school, when this was not a problem before.
- Begin to abuse drugs or alcohol.
- Become unusually dependent on parents when they were previously more independent.