

## Military OneSource Video — What is child abuse and neglect, and what can you do to help prevent it?

### Video transcript:

**Narrator:** What is child abuse and neglect, and what can you do to help prevent it?

Child abuse and neglect are taken very seriously in the military. It's a difficult subject, but it's important to talk about it to protect our children.

Child abuse and neglect refers to any act that harms a child under age 18 or threatens their welfare. The types of abuse may be physical, sexual or emotional abuse that affects a child's psychological well-being.

Neglect can mean a failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether physical, emotional, medical or educational.

For example, if a parent or caregiver withholds food from a child as punishment, that can be considered neglect.

Neglect might also mean not providing adequate supervision for a child.

As hard as it can be to imagine, abuse and neglect typically involves someone the child knows, such as a parent, relative, babysitter, caregiver or family acquaintance.

And it can happen anywhere, at home or wherever the child or youth is being cared for, such as school, a friend's home or at an extracurricular activity.

What are the signs of child abuse, and how can you help a child who may be at risk?

Knowledge is key. You can help protect a child by knowing the signs and red flags.

For example, if they seem afraid and frightened of a person, if they have unexplained injuries, if they seem to lack adult supervision, or don't receive care for a problem even after it's reported to the family.

There are other signs and indicators you can learn about, but the most important thing is to be informed, attentive and supportive; to be a trusted adult who's there for a child.

You can also learn to look for other risk factors, indicators that might increase the risk of abuse in a family.

For example, there may be a family history of abuse, or the parents might be new to parenting and need education and support; the family might be stressed, or a parent might be struggling or under pressure.

When should I make a report?

Sometimes it can be hard to know if you're seeing an isolated incident that's an example of poor judgment or lack of knowledge, or if this is a case of abuse or neglect.

In every case, always lean on the side of safety for the child.

Remember, child abuse and neglect can be prevented. Reporting provides an opportunity not only to prevent or stop abuse, but also to enable the family to get the help they need.

Regardless, we all have an obligation and sometimes a legal responsibility to take action to end child abuse and neglect.

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, you can contact your local Family Advocacy Program, or get in touch with a Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline at 800-422-4453.

And if you think a child is in immediate danger, call 911 or your installation's law enforcement office.

You can help keep military children safe and secure by reporting your concerns. To learn more about the signs of child abuse, risk factors and other ways you can help, go to [MilitaryOneSource.mil/Child-Abuse](https://MilitaryOneSource.mil/Child-Abuse).