

Abuse is the intentional maltreatment of a child and can be physical, sexual or emotional in nature. Alternatively, neglect is the failure to give children the necessary care they need. The emotional scars of both types of maltreatment are often deep and no child deserves to be maltreated. Abuse from an adult can either be intentional or the effects of stressful situations. Even if maltreatment is the result of overflowing emotions, the maltreatment of a child can have serious repercussions.

Often, abusive adults were themselves victims of child abuse. They have never experienced, nor have they learned, acceptable ways of disciplining their children. They instead teach their children the same unacceptable ways of dealing with anger through violence. There are four distinguishable types of abuse:

- 1) Physical Abuse - Injuring a child by hitting, kicking, shaking, or burning, etc. him/her; also includes throwing objects at the child.
- 2) Emotional Maltreatment - Crushing a child's spirit with degrading derogatory verbal attacks, threats, or humiliation.
- 3) Sexual Abuse - Sexual contact with a child (incest, inappropriate touching, rape); pornographic use of a child.
- 4) Neglect - Failure to provide for a child's physical or emotional needs (food, clothing, shelter, medical care, physical or emotional attention); failure to provide guidance or supervision, abandonment.

All children deserve safe, stable, and nurturing environments to thrive. But Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can disrupt healthy brain development, leading to potential lifelong negative health outcomes.

The physical effects of child abuse and neglect are painful and may require medical attention. Studies have shown that the emotional effects of child abuse and neglect are profound: The abused child can develop low self-esteem, insecurities and emotional problems or has trouble building relationships.

Recognizing Child Abuse The first step in helping abused children is learning to recognize the symptoms of child abuse. Although child abuse is divided into four types listed above, the types are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child for example is often emotionally maltreated as well, and a sexually abused child may be also neglected. Any child at any age may experience any of the types of child abuse. Children over age five are more likely to be physically abused and to suffer moderate injury than are children under age five.

Parent and Child The parent and child rarely touch or look at each other

- Consider their relationship entirely negative
- State that they do not like each other

The Child The child shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance

- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, an overachiever, or too responsible, or
- Comes to school early, stays late, and does not want to go home

The Parent The parent shows little concern for the child, rarely responding to the school's requests for information, for conferences, or for home visits

- Denies the existence of -- or blames the child for -- the child's problems in school or at home
- Asks the classroom teacher to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- Demands perfection or a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve, or
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs.

None of these signs proves that child abuse is present in a family. Any of them may be found in any parent or child at one time or another. But when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination, they should cause the educator to take closer look at the situation and to consider the possibility of child abuse. That second look may reveal further signs of abuse or signs of a particular kind of child abuse.

To report child abuse or neglect contact your local DSS agency (704-694-9351 in Anson County) or, if this is an emergency, call 911.

Ten Ways to Help Prevent Child Abuse

- 1) Be a nurturing parent. Children need to know that they are special, loved and capable of following their dreams.
- 2) Help a friend, neighbor or relative. Being a parent isn't easy. Offer a helping hand: take care of the children so the parents can rest or spend time together.
- 3) Help yourself. When the big and little problems of your everyday life pile up to the point you feel overwhelmed and out of control.
- 4) Learn what to do if your baby won't stop crying. Never shake a baby -- shaking a child may result in severe injury or death.
- 5) Get involved. Children need your help to live a safe and healthy life. Ask your community leaders, clergy, library and schools to develop services to meet the needs of healthy children and families.
- 6) Help develop parenting resources at your local library.
- 7) Promote programs in school. Teaching children, parents and teachers prevention strategies can help keep children safe.
- 8) Monitor your child's television and video viewing. Watching violent films and TV programs can harm young children.
- 9) Volunteer with programs providing concrete supports to families. For more information about volunteer opportunities, visit NC DHHS: ([nc.gov/working/volunteer-opportunities](https://www.nc.gov/working/volunteer-opportunities)).
- 10) North Carolina law requires all adults to report suspected child maltreatment. If this is an emergency, call 911. If you have reason to believe a child has been or may be harmed, call your local DSS agency (704-694-9351 in Anson County). Learn more about how to recognize and report suspected child maltreatment at: [preventchildabusenc.org/resource-hub/recognizing-responding-to-child-maltreatment](https://www.preventchildabusenc.org/resource-hub/recognizing-responding-to-child-maltreatment).

Alternatives to Lashing Out at Your Child Tips to Prevent Child Abuse If You are a Parent

- Take a deep breath ... and another. Remember, you are the adult.
- Close your eyes and imagine you're hearing what you child is about to hear.
- Put your child in a time-out chair (remember this rule: One time-out minute for each year of age).
- Phone a friend.
- If someone can watch the children, go outside and take a walk.
- Decompress by taking a hot bath, splashing cold water on your face, hugging a pillow or listening to music.
- Pick up a pencil and write down as many helpful words as you can think of. Save the list.

Message to Motorists: Move Over or Slow Down for Stopped Emergency Vehicles

Every day, North Carolina law enforcement officers and other first responders take to the streets to keep people safe. And every day, they put their lives at risk to do so. One of the most dangerous parts of a first responder's job is stepping out on the side of the road, whether it is for a traffic stop, to assist a motorist, or to investigate a crash.

The N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program (NCGHSP) is partnering with the North Carolina State Highway Patrol and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to remind motorists to Move Over or Slow Down for stopped emergency vehicles during NHTSA's "Move Over, It's the Law," safety campaign.

"Since 2017, there have been 149 law enforcement officers killed in traffic-related incidents across the nation, including in North Carolina. We implore everyone to do their part to keep our officers and other first responders safe as they work to help motorists on our roadways. Move over if you see a stopped emergency vehicle, and if you can't move over, slow down as you pass them," said Colonel Freddy Johnson Jr., commander of the NC State Highway Patrol.

"This isn't just being a good citizen or polite driver - it's the law in North Carolina," said NCGHSP Director Mark Ezzell. "Motorists can face a \$250 or more fine for failing to obey it."

Move over laws are in place in all 50 states. When North Carolina's law was passed in 2002, it directed motorists to change lanes or slow down when passing a stopped emergency vehicle with flashing lights on the roadside.

In 2012, the law was revised to include "public service" vehicles. Public service vehicles are any vehicle used to assist motorists or law enforcement officers with wrecked or disabled vehicles, or is a vehicle being used to install, maintain or restore utility service, including electric, cable, telephone, communications and gas and displays an amber light.

This also includes NCDOT's IMAP emergency response vehicles and tow trucks. Find more information about North Carolina's Move Over laws here: [ncdps.gov](https://www.ncdps.gov).

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