Common Signs and Symptoms of Abuse and Neglect

Physical Abuse

Physical Signs
Bruises and welts: on face, lips, mouth, torso, back, buttocks, thighs in various stages of healing.
Burns/ bite marks/injuries to both eyes or cheeks
“Grab-marks”/fractures/ head injuries
Lacerations or abrasions

Behavior Symptoms
Fear of parents and/or fear of going home
Reports of injury by parents
Wariness toward adult contact
May wear concealing clothing to hide bruises or injuries
Manifestations of low self-esteem
Suicide attempts

Signs of Neglect
Young children routinely left alone at home
Lags in physical development
Poor hygiene
Inappropriate dress for the weather
Constant hunger
Malnourished appearance
Lack of needed medical care

Sexual Abuse

Physical Signs
Difficulty in walking or sitting
Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
Pain or itching in genital area
Painful discharge of urine and/or repeated urinary infections
Venereal diseases, especially in preteens
Pregnancy, especially in early adolescent years
**Behavioral Symptoms**
Sexualized behavior; sexual knowledge that is beyond their age
Fear of being alone with specific adults
Increased startle response
Imitating sexual behavior with dolls or peers
Changes in mood and/or social behavior
Increase in regressive behaviors, such as bedwetting after fully toilet trained

**Emotional Abuse**

**Behavioral Symptoms**
Trouble sleeping
Inhibition of play, fighting or other aggressive behaviors with peers or often younger children
Behavior extremes (compliant, passive, aggressive, demanding, overly adaptive behavior, inappropriately adult, inappropriately infantile
Developmental lags (mental, emotional)
Poor grades, truancy
Suicide attempts
Very poor self-esteem and self-image