

## May 2005: What is Child Abuse?

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### Publisher's Pen: What is Child Abuse?

“Child abuse is a crime perpetrated on the innocent and defenseless.”

Peter Domenici.

Children are being reported to facilities at alarming rates. Many of us adults were abused as children, but we kept it secret, because it wasn't recognized by society, and we thought we deserved it. But, what exactly is child abuse? Where do we draw the line between parenting, religious or moral beliefs and abuse?

Indeed, it is a sensitive subject. It's easy to talk about the obvious and extreme examples of abuse that we read or hear about in the news almost every day. However, it is not easy to talk about what happened to us when we were kids, or what we witnessed happening to others.

Then there is the controversy in religious circles. Followers of the scriptures feel it is their duty to take the Bible literally when it comes to spanking their children. The problem is that this form of “parenting” happens mostly in anger. How else can an adult get up the nerve to hit a child - one who is powerless and attached to the leaders of the family until legal age? Too often, it's actually abuse and not good religion. I don't remember ever reading about Jesus threatening his followers with the belt. Or Buddha, or Muhammed.....

We need to examine how we think about abuse and rethink our strategies if that is what we resort to when stressed and angry. We need to be aware of what abuse is, and if we have issues from our own childhood, we must be willing to take the first step toward healing the wounds. And we need to have the courage to take the all of the steps toward prevention.

May we have courage to do our part to change the world for our children, and make it a better place for them and for us.

Smiles,

Elaine

Empowering Parents and Teachers:

How to identify the different types of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

## The Four Kinds of Child Abuse:

### Physical Abuse:

Hit hard enough with an object such as a belt, paddle, hand that leaves a mark, and the mark does not go away within a few minutes.

Pushed into something, or down to the floor.

Burned by something intentionally, such as cigarette, lighter, iron or stove.

Bitten so that a mark is left on the skin, or the skin is bruised or broken.

Any other action that hurts or leaves a mark, such as what would happen if choked, kicked or punched, pinched, or elbowed.

### Emotional Abuse:

Called names that are not funny to you, but instead make you feel hurt, sad or angry.

Being made fun of to the point that it makes you feel hurt, sad or angry. It's not a joke if it is at your expense.

Corrected to the point where you are continually told that you never do anything right, will never do anything right, and always do everything wrong.

Being told that you must be good, and then telling you that to be good, you must do things that are hurtful to you or make you feel very uncomfortable.

Threatening to do something bad to you hurt you or embarrass you, so that you are scared, sad or angry.

### Sexual Abuse:

When someone else touches the private parts of your body when you do not want them to, even if you have your clothes on, and it makes you feel weird.

The private parts of your body are the parts that are covered by your underwear or a bathing suit.

If someone wants you to touch their private parts, or shows you pictures of private parts of another person's body.

If someone wants you to do things that are shown in pictures of other people and their private parts.

Neglect:

Not having enough food or water a lot of the time.

Not taken to the doctor when you need it.

Not having warm clothes to wear when it is really cold outside.

Not allowed to come out of your room (or any room that you are made to stay in) for a long time.

Not given hugs, or told that you are loved.

Being left home alone, and not feeling safe because of it.

Empowering K.I.D.S. (Kids In Daily Situations):

Resources where you can learn more about what you can do to protect yourself.

- [www.childhelpusa.org](http://www.childhelpusa.org)

- [www.yellodyno.com](http://www.yellodyno.com)

- [www.childabuse.com](http://www.childabuse.com)

- [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

- [www.child-abuse.com](http://www.child-abuse.com)

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