



Stop It Now![®] Minnesota

Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children

Visit us on the web at: www.stopitnow.org/mn

Email: stopitnowmn@projectpathfinder.org

Behavioral and Physical Warning Signs a Child May Have Been Abused

Some of these behavioral signs can show up at other stressful times in a child's life such as divorce, the death of a family member, friend or pet, or when there are problems in school, as well as when abuse is involved. Sexual development is a part of every human regardless of age. Any one sign doesn't mean the child was abused, but several of them mean there may be cause for concern.



Do you notice some of the following signs in children you know?

- Nightmares, fear of the dark, or other sleeping problems.
- Extreme fear of "monsters".
- Spacing out at odd times.
- Sudden mood swings: rage, fear, anger, or withdrawal.
- An older child behaving like a younger child, such as bed-wetting or thumb sucking.
- Fear of certain people or places (e.g., a child may not want to be left alone with a baby-sitter, a friend, a relative, or some other child or adult; or a child who is usually talkative and cheery may become quiet and distant when around a certain person).
- Sexual activities with toys or other children, such as simulating sex with dolls or asking other children/siblings to behave sexually.
- Refusing to talk about a "secret" he/she has with an adult or older child.
- New words for private body parts.
- Talking about a new older friend.
- Suddenly having money.
- Stomach illness all of the time with no identifiable reason.
- Loss of appetite, or trouble eating or swallowing.
- Cutting or burning herself or himself as an adolescent.
- Pain in or around the genitals, anus, or mouth.
- Genital sores or milky fluids in the genital area.
- Unexplained bruises, redness, or bleeding of the genitals, anus, or mouth.

If you answered "yes" to any of the last 3 questions, you need to bring the child to a doctor for a physical exam.

*If you see behaviors that concern you, call **1-888-PREVENT** for information, or visit us on the web at www.stopitnow.org/mn*

If you answered "yes" to some of these questions and do not know how to talk about these issues, or you want further information, please call our Helpline toll-free at 1-888-PREVENT (1-888-773-8368) Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (CST). You can call and have a confidential conversation with a professional about what you are seeing, learn about local resources, and what options are available to you.

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