



THE POWER TO CREATE A **BETTER** FUTURE

If you suspect a child is at risk of being abused or neglected, it's time to get involved.

A child who is being abused may feel afraid to tell anyone about the abuse, especially if the abuser is a parent or other caregiver—instead, they may disclose abuse through nonverbal cues. For example, the child may suddenly have an apparent fear of adults or may be afraid to go home, which is why it is critical to watch for red flags.

Physical abuse signs and symptoms

- Unexplained injuries, such as bruises, fractures, or burns
- Injuries that don't match the given explanation
- Untreated medical or dental problems

Neglect signs and symptoms*

- Poor growth, weight gain, or hygiene
- Lack of clothing or supplies to meet physical needs
- Taking food or money without permission
- Eating a lot in one sitting or hiding food for later
- Poor record of school attendance
- Signs of untreated medical or dental problems

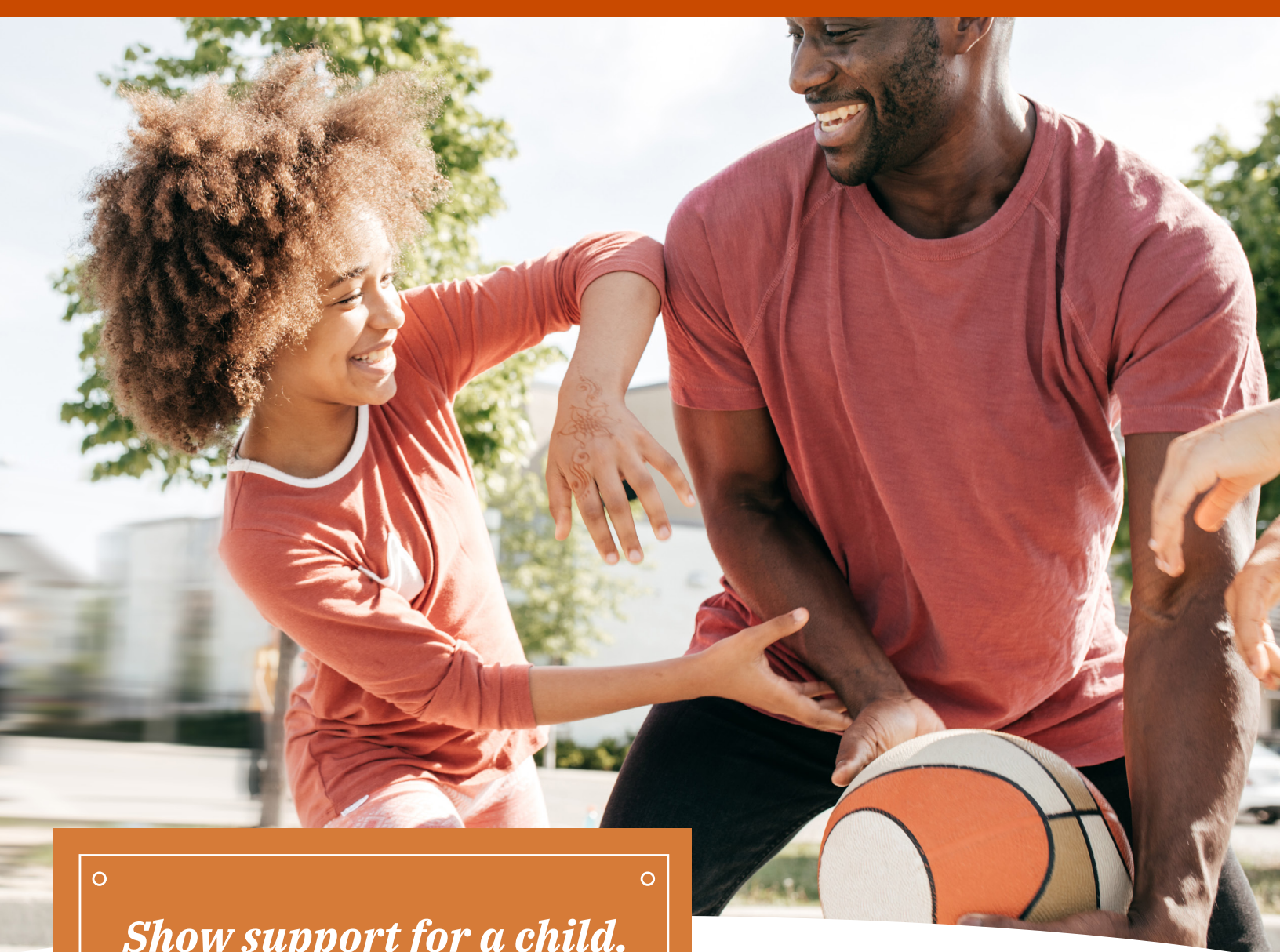
Sexual abuse signs and symptoms

- Sexual behavior or knowledge that's not age-appropriate
- Blood in the child's underwear
- Trouble walking or sitting or complaints of genital pain
- Abuse of other children sexually

Emotional abuse signs and symptoms

- Loss of self-esteem
- Depression
- Headaches or stomachaches with no medical cause
- Avoidance of certain situations
- A decrease in school performance

***Please note that families of any socioeconomic status can experience signs of neglect.**



Show support for a child.

When children disclose that they are experiencing abuse or neglect, it is seldom straightforward. Children sometimes try to alert adults by changing their behavior or by making vague verbal statements. They are looking for support and your response can help impact their ability to recover from the trauma.

What to Do:

- Remain calm
- Believe the child
- Allow the child to talk
- Show interest or concern
- Reassure and support the child
- Take action

What Not to Do:

- Panic or overreact
- Force the child to talk
- Promise anything you can't control
- Confront the offender
- Blame or minimize the child's feelings
- Overwhelm the child with questions

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**CREATE A
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Get the tools to create a better future for children and families. Visit **CreateABetterFuture.org**

If you are concerned that a child is being abused, seek help immediately.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT
HOTLINE 855-OH-CHILD**

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