

OLG's Safeguard the Children News Corner - #2

OLG's Safeguard the Children Committee welcomes you to a series of articles to help educate our entire community to prevent child abuse in all its forms. We will present information regarding the various types of abuse, some signs of abuse, and how to report suspected abuse. We will keep you posted about opportunities for educational programs as well as general information and statistics through this series. We welcome your questions and input. Contact Loretta Haemker at OLG School: 344-4126 or call the Ministry Office: 342-4505.

General Neglect, Endangerment, Emotional Abuse, and Deprivation - Definitions

General Neglect: the failure of a parent or caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, or medical care/supervision (where no injury has occurred).

Endangerment: The parent or caretaker does not providing necessary safety and security for a child. *Examples of endangerment* - leaving children unattended in a car, "latchkey" kids, or exposing minors to drugs, alcohol, prostitution, etc.

Emotional abuse: excessive and repeated verbal assaults (belittling, screaming, threats, blaming, sarcasm), unpredictable responses, continual negative moods, constant family discord, and double message communication.

Emotional deprivation: the deprivation that children suffer when their parents do not provide the normal experiences which produce feelings of being loved, wanted, secure and worthy. This may occur when parents ignore their children because of drugs and alcohol, psychiatric disturbances, personal problems or other preoccupying situations.

Children who are victims of the abuse described above often exhibit certain behaviors. Some of the behaviors include: being withdrawn, apathetic or depressed. Also, common are eating disturbances, such as not eating or sudden over eating. Acting out, becoming a "behavior problem", becoming overly rigid and trying always to please, are frequently seen among abused children. Seeking out other adults for attention, affection and approval, is also a frequent behavior of an abused child.

Emotional abuse can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. If a child experiences enough degradation, the child may begin to live up to the image communicated by the parent or caretaker. Emotional abuse cases are extremely difficult to prove and cumulative documentation by witnesses over time is imperative. Refer such persons to treatment as soon as possible.



If you have a reasonable suspicion that someone is abusing a child, call the child abuse hotline for L.A. County: (800) 540-4000, (TTD line 800-272-6699);

Ventura County: (800) 754-7600

Santa Barbara County: (800) 367-0166.

To contact law enforcement (within L.A. County) with reports of sexual abuse call the L.A.P.D. Sexually Exploited Child Unit: (213) 485-2883,

L.A. Sheriff's Dept.: (323) 526-5000,

or the District Attorney, Sexual Crimes and Child Abuse Unit: (213) 974-9790.

If the child is in immediate danger, call 911.

