**GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ABUSE**

* Child Abuse Defined

An act purposely done to a child by another person in a position of power or trust, which mentally and/or physically harms a child.

* Four types of child abuse: physical, neglect, emotional and sexual.

I. **PHYSICAL ABUSE** includes, but is not limited to, assault, shaking, slapping, burning, kicking, or strangling that is not the result of accident.

II. **NEGLECT** is maltreatment and/or negligence that damages a child’s health or safety. Abandonment, lack of supervision (A child must be 10 or older to stay home alone; 12 to “baby-sit” another child.), health hazards at home, failure to seek needed medical treatment for the child, and refusing or ignoring a child’s need for affection, stimulation, and nurture are included. Failure to provide for a child’s education is also considered neglect.

III. **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** causes psychological injuries by inflicting verbal and emotional cruelties on a child. These cruelties may include confinement, extreme discipline, lack of nurture, and permitting drug and alcohol abuse in the home.

**IV. SEXUAL ABUSE** involves any sexual contact, inappropriate kissing and touching, exposure to pornographic/sexually explicit materials, and verbal stimulation.

* **SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE**

-- any admissions from the child about abuse
-- any verbal statements from the child of being uncomfortable or fearful when interacting with adults or in certain situations
-- self-destruction behavior and/or substance abuse
-- physical injuries that are not explained, or the explanation is improbable
-- sexual knowledge or sexualized behavior inappropriate for the age and development of the child
-- promiscuity
-- irritation, pain or injury to genital areas
-- venereal disease
-- depression
-- flat affect
-- passivity and/or withdrawal
-- running away
-- hyperactive, disruptive, and/or aggressive behavior
-- continued neglectful appearance of the child
-- ritualistic compulsive behaviors
-- nightmares
-- parents are immature, evasive, blaming, aggressive, defensive, uninvolved, isolated, and/or substance abusers
-- history of abuse
-- ritualistic behavior

The more signs present, the more likely abuse has occurred and/or is occurring.