



*In Collaboration with Heath Mobile Veterinary Services*

## **RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT AND STEPS TO MAKING A REPORT**

### **How Do I Recognize Child Abuse or Neglect?**

#### **Physical Signs May Include:**

- Any injury (bruise, burn, fracture, abdominal or head injury) that cannot be explained
- Trouble walking or sitting

#### **Psychological Signs May Include:**

- Watchful and “on alert” behavior
- Shying away from touch, flinches at sudden movement
- Acts either inappropriately adult (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumb-sucking, tantrums)
- Extremely passive or aggressive behavior
- Appears to be afraid of adults

#### **Environmental Signs May Include:**

- Unsanitary living conditions:
  - Dirt, bugs, or rodents in house
  - Soiled bedding and clothes
  - Overflowing garbage/trash containers
  - Odor of urine, ammonia, fecal matter, decay, decomposition in house
- Consistently poor hygiene
- Wears clothing too small or inappropriate for the weather
- Frequently unsupervised, left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations and environments

### **Who Should I Call?**

- Contact 911 or local law enforcement if life-threatening situation that needs to be dealt with immediately
- Contact Texas Abuse Hotline 800-252-5400 or report on-line to [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)

### **What Should I Say?**

Be prepared to provide your name, contact information, physical address of property, child’s name and/or physical description, suspected abuser’s name and/or physical description (if known), and explanation of suspected harm to the child.