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

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.