**School Age Child Abuse**

**School age and the types of abuse that are most often seen in this age**

     School-Age is an important part of the formative life-stage of the child. For the school-age staff each child is part of the different audience and it is not possible to adopt a uniform code of discipline to take their care.  Ann Cattanach (2008) makes a significant observation and writes, “It is important for us to recognize that children are individuals, not belongings.”(p.14)Child abuse is a subtle subject that relates to the emotional world of the children.

**The types of abuse that are most often seen in this age**

     “A child can be harmed by overt actions like hitting or kicking, but a child can also be harmed when an adult fails to provide for the child’s well-being...” ([www.virtuallabschool.org](http://www.virtuallabschool.org)) Abuse is not by the parents alone. Any one that interacts with the child can commit the act of abuse like a family member, coach, teacher and a faith leader etc. Some of the common abuses are neglect, physical abuse, emotional harm, sexual abuse and exploitation. The abuse can be “out-of-home” or “extra-familial.”

**Warning signs and physical and emotional assessment findings the nurse may see that could indicate child abuse.**

     Each one of us owns the responsibility to report one’s suspicion of child abuse and neglect. An abused child feels guilty, confused and ashamed. He is afraid to reveal something about the abuse. He is aggressive, angry for no particular reason and engages in hyperactivity. Rebellious and defiant behavior, unexplained injuries, bruises or burns etc. trouble in walking, sitting and complains of genital pain, are pointers to the abuse of child.

**Cultural variations of health practices that can be misidentified as child abuse**

      If the child acts and reacts as per one’s culture it should be viewed as the difference and not disorder or deficiency. Majority culture teachers or nurses have problems in perfectly understanding different practices. For example, in a case a student having welt on his body gave the religious defense from a Christian scripture. In certain cultures folk medicine practices are prevalent to treat the injuries, fever etc. and to judge them by western standards of medicine is not appropriate.

**The reporting mechanism and nurse responsibilities related to the reporting of suspected child abuse.**

     Contact the Child Protection Office and the main intake unit number. Give all the information that you own about the abuse. Based on that report, nurse will proceed as per the prescribed medical discipline applicable in US. These are standard procedures.

**References Cited**

Cattanaach, Ann (2008).*Play Therapy with Abused Children*: London. Jessica Kingsley

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*Keeping School-Age Children Safe: Introduction to Child Abuse*... <https://www.virtuallabschool.org/school-age/child-abuse-id-reporting/lesson-1Web>: Accessed

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