

# Franklin County Board of Education

## Extended School Program



Parent Handbook

Summer 2025

### Policies and Procedures

The Franklin County Extended School Program provides quality care for children in a safe and enriching environment. This program is offered during the hours when parents are working and there may be no adult supervision in the home. Children have the opportunity to engage in activities which benefit them emotionally, socially, physically and educationally. These activities include crafts, sports, games, art, music, and many other creative and cultural activities. The activities are conducted and planned by staff trained to meet the needs of children and to provide positive adult role models. The Extended School Program is a privilege extended by the school system and not a right. The program is self-sufficient and receives no federal, state, or local tax dollars.

We want to know how you and your child feel about the program and how we might better meet your needs. All questions concerning policies and procedures of the Extended School Program should be addressed to the site director at each school or the coordinator, Patty Priest. Should you have questions, or concerns about the program please feel free to call the school or the ESP Coordinator at the Board of Education.

ESP is located at the following school sites:

School	ESP Room		
Broadview Elementary Director	967-0132	307-3709	Rhonda Stevens, Site
Clark Memorial School	967-2407	968-5089	Dustin Glasner, Site Director
Decherd Elementary	967-548	967-1020	Mary Hill, Site Director
North Lake Elementary	455-6239	307-3674	Dana Knight, Site Director
Rock Creek Elementary	361-0244	361-0258	Tonya Henley, Site Director
Sewanee Elementary	598-5951	598-5231	Sara Hollis, Site Director
Franklin County BOE	967-0626	361-0123	Patty Priest, ESP Coordinator

### NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

Franklin County Schools in its educational activities with students does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, creed, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, color, age, and/or disability. Franklin County Schools does provide access to Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and other youth groups designated by federal or state law.

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Families are a vital part of ESP. The exchange of information about a child from the parents' and the staffs' perspective can be very helpful to the family and the Extended School Program. The staff will be able to better meet the needs of your child if we are aware of the things such as illness in the family, a change of residence, special fears, etc. Please keep all data on your child's information/registration form current. Working together, we can provide a program that is fun, educational, and enriching for your children.

## PARENTS' RIGHTS

Parents have the right to:

1. Know their children are in a safe environment where they are free to select from a variety of activities.
2. Know what types of programs and activities that are being planned and offer feedback on the kinds of activities children enjoy.
3. Know if their child is misbehaving and spend time talking with the staff concerning a solution.
4. Know when the children will be going any place other than where the program is usually held. EXAMPLE: Field Trips.
5. Voice special concerns and considerations not covered in this handbook. Share concerns with staff and the director at any time about anything they do not feel is in the best interest of the children.

## PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents have the responsibility to:

1. Observe the rules of ESP as set forth in this handbook and in any additional policy statements of the Franklin County Board of Education.
2. To share their concerns with the staff members, if problems arise.
3. Listen to concerns that staff members have about their child's behavior, and work for an agreeable solution to any problems that might occur. Address major concerns with the Site Director or ESP Coordinator.
4. Know about any change in policy and procedure.
5. Replace any equipment that their child is responsible for misusing or damaging.
6. Sign out their child at the end of the day; to notify a staff member when taking a child from the center; and to notify a staff member when another authorized person is picking up a child.
7. Inform the staff if a child has been exposed to a contagious illness.
8. Notify the staff of planned vacations and other absences at least one week in advance otherwise all fees must be paid for that period if notification is not given. **The 2 weeks of vacation time per year (August-July) will not be split into days. If you need more time, please drop your child from the program or you will be charged.**
9. Notify the staff of withdrawals at least one week in advance.
10. Pay fees on time. Fees are due on Friday prior to the week of childcare service.
11. To keep the child's record up to date with changes in phone number and address.
12. Pick up children on time.

## SUMMER PROGRAM Dates & Hours of Operation

(based on option available at each ESP Site)

You must select option 1, 2 or 3 and select the weeks that your child will be attending ESP for the summer. **Your child should attend the program for the option selected and must pay the weekly rate no matter how many days a week your child is in attendance.** Absolutely no drop-ins will be accepted. No refunds or credit will be issued for days your child is not in attendance.

Students must complete a registration separately for the summer program. Operation hours vary at each ESP site based on the options and the enrollment numbers (12 required daily) for each option. Not all options may be offered at each ESP site due to low enrollment or lack of ESP staff.

MAY – ESP is offering 4 full days for the week of May 27-30 at Decherd and Rock Creek before Summer Camp begins:

full days (7 am-6 pm)      \$80(1<sup>st</sup> child)      \$72(2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> child)  
(bring a sack lunch daily/snacks provided by ESP)  
We will **not** be open Memorial Day, May 26

## OPTIONS

JUNE - ESP is offering 3 Summer Program options in June for child care:

Choose option 1, 2 or 3:

1. ESP Summer Camp days after school child care  
Mon-Thurs  
3 pm-6 pm  
\$40
2. ESP Summer Camp + after school child care + full day Friday  
Mon-Thurs + Fri (bring a sack lunch on Fri)  
3 pm-6 pm + 7 am-6 pm  
\$40 + \$20 = \$60
3. ESP Summer Program – five full days  
Mon-Fri full days (bring a sack lunch on Fri)  
7 am-6 pm  
\$100

JUNE		1 <sup>ST</sup> Child rate based on option	2 <sup>ND</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Child rate
based on option			
June 2-6	Option 1, 2 or 3	\$40, \$60 or \$100	\$32, \$50, \$90
June 9-13	Option 1, 2 or 3	\$40, \$60 or \$100	\$32, \$50, \$90
June 16-18, 20	Option 1 or 3	\$30 or \$80	\$24 or \$72
June 23-27	Option 1, 2 or 3	\$40, \$60 or \$100	\$32, \$50, \$90

- ESP and Summer Camp will be closed on June 19, 2025– Federal Holiday. Summer Camp will meet Monday – Thursday, June 2-26

## JULY

ESP is only offering option 3 in July for child care:

Mon-Fri full days (bring a sack lunch daily/snacks provided by ESP)  
7am-6pm  
\$100

	1 <sup>ST</sup> Child	2 <sup>ND</sup> Child or 3 <sup>rd</sup> child
June30-July3	\$80	\$70
July 7-11	\$100	\$90
July 14-18	\$100	\$90
July 21-25	\$100	\$90

- **ESP will be closed July 4**
- **ESP will not be closed July 28 -July 31. Decherd and Rock Creek will be the open sites from 7:00AM. to 6:00PM.**
- **ESP will open for Fall 2025 on August 1 at all sites after 10:00 AM until 6:00PM. Students must bring a sack lunch, but snacks will be provided.**

Breakfast and lunch are provided by the Franklin County School Nutrition Program during the month of June Monday – Thursday through the Summer Camp Program. Children must bring a sack lunch on Fridays during the month of June and all days during the month of July. ESP will provide morning and afternoon snacks.

The ESP site must register and maintain a minimum of 12 children paid attendance daily for the site to open for the summer program. The ESP sites open for the summer program will be determined following the registration deadline of May 15, 2025. Parents will be notified following registration which ESP sites will be open and which options are available for the ESP Summer Program along with hours of operation for each site. Hours of operation may vary based on the enrollment numbers at each site. In the past few years Decherd and Rock Creek have been the summer sites.

#### REGISTRATION FEE

If your child has not been enrolled in ESP during the school year, you will be required to pay the \$15.00 registration fee at the time of summer registration. Complete all registration forms and paperwork and return by May 15, 2024.

#### PAYMENTS

All weekly fees must be paid on Friday in advance of services for the next week. A \$10.00 late fee will be charged for all payments made after Friday. Children should not attend until fees for the week have been paid. Past due payment of two weeks or more may result in your child being dropped from the program. Attempts will be made to collect all past due fees. Statements and notices will be sent to parents.

#### RETURNED CHECKS

All returned checks or delinquent accounts (two or more weeks fees are past due) are subject to a \$25 late fee. Checks should be made payable to ESP. Please write the child's name on the memo line at the bottom of the check. A valid phone number and address must be printed or written on the check.

#### PICK UP AND DROP OFF PROCEDURES

Please check with your school's site director for the specific location to pick up your child. Children must be personally checked in and out on the sheet. CHILDREN WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO WAIT FOR PARENTS IN THE PARKING LOT. THE PERSON PICKING UP A CHILD MUST BE AT LEAST 16 YEARS OLD AND BE AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION FOR YOUR CHILD. When the program is operating on a full day basis, children should be brought into the building, signed in by the parent, and an ESP staff member notified. Each child must be signed in as soon as he/she arrives for the program. Children will not be released to any person other than the parents or other persons authorized on the enrollment form. You must notify your local site director in writing if a person other than those authorized will be picking up your child.

### LATE PICK UP

Children must be picked up by 6:00 PM. A \$1.00 late fee will be charged for every minute late after 6:00 PM. The clock located in the school will determine the time. The late fee is due on the day the child is picked up late. If late pick up happens more than 4 times in a month, your child may be subject to dismissal from the program.

Example:	6:01 PM	\$ 1.00 late fee
	6:05 PM	\$ 5.00 late fee
	6:10 PM	\$10.00 late fee

NOTE: If a child has been left at the school until 6:30 and no one has contacted the school, it will be assumed that something very serious has happened to the family. In this situation family members and people designated on the registration form will be contacted. If no one is available from the list then proper authorities will be contacted. We always want to ensure the safety of your child in all instances.

### WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM

You must notify the site director one week in advance before withdrawing your child from the summer program due to the impact on staffing. Parents are responsible for fees during the one-week notice period.

### ILLNESS

Illness – You must notify the director as soon as the illness occurs. Prolonged illness may mean withdrawal of the child from the ESP summer program. Extended School Programs cannot provide care for sick children. Please do not send your children if they have a fever or a contagious disease. We are concerned for the health and welfare of each child; therefore, we require that your child be picked up as soon as possible in the event he/she becomes ill while at the program.

### MEDICATIONS

If your child is required to take prescribed oral medications during the program hours, ESP must have written directions on the medication as issued by the pharmacy. Medication must be brought to the ESP staff by the parent. Written instructions signed by the parent/guardian will be required and must include:

1. Child's name
2. Name of medication
3. Name of physician
4. Time to be self-administered
5. Dosage and directions for self-administration (non-prescription medicines must have label directions)
6. Possible side effects, if known, and
7. Termination date for self-administration of the medication.

All medication will be kept in a locked container by the staff. A record of any medication given will be maintained and kept in the child's file by the ESP Staff/Site Director:

1. Times medications administered
2. Noticeable side effects, and
3. Name of the ESP staff person administering medication to the child.

ESP follows the medication policy 6.405 of the Franklin County School Board and the Standards for School Administered Child Care Programs Rule 0520-12-01-.14.

HOLIDAYS -ESP will not be open on the following days:

MEMORIAL DAY- Monday, May 26

JUNETEENTH – Thursday, June 19

INDEPENDENCE DAY – Friday, July 4

### VACATION

Vacations – Two weeks' vacation per year may be used without fees (August 2024 – July 2025). Notification to the site director must be made one week in advance to avoid charges for attendance. Vacation weeks must be consecutive days and may not be broken into individual days.

### CLOTHING

Students must wear appropriate clothing to ESP. The school dress code applies to ESP also. Athletic shoes are to be worn in the gym.

### INSURANCE

All children in the program are encouraged to have medical insurance in case of an accident. Parents are not allowed to play with ESP students in the gym because of liability issues.

### MATERIALS BROUGHT TO ESP

ESP staff members are not responsible for lost or damaged items that children bring to ESP. Please label everything with your child's name. Do not send hand held video games. Cell phones are not allowed for use while in ESP. Anything not allowed during school is not allowed in ESP.

### DISCIPLINE

All children enrolled in an Extended School Program will be expected to follow rules established by the staff for safety and program operation. Children who are abusive to themselves and/or others, or who are continual behavior problems will be suspended and/or expelled from ESP. Our program is committed to positive reinforcement of good behavior. If a serious discipline problem occurs, the site director will contact you. Please encourage your child to cooperate with ESP staff and stress the importance of good behavior with your child. We want to keep the program fun for everyone. Please remember that attending ESP is a privilege.

### ESP Rules

1. Obey all school rules.
2. Respect your school by keeping it clean and safe.
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
4. Use indoor voices.
5. Walk quietly in the hallways, running is not permitted.

6. Follow directions the first time given.
  7. Always stay with the ESP staff.
  8. Teasing, name calling, and foul language are not acceptable.
  9. Be courteous and respectful always toward each other and staff.
  10. Take care of supplies & remember to clean up after yourselves.
  11. Use bathroom facilities appropriately & wash your hands.
  12. Treat others in a respectful manner. Be a good sport.
  13. To ensure a safe environment, conflicts will be settled peacefully. Students who feel they are unable to solve conflicts need to seek an adult for assistance. Students are responsible for their actions and need to avoid physical or verbal aggression.
- Being too loud can result in no talking**

#### ESP Playground Rules

1. Students will walk outside in a quiet, single file line.
2. Students will play only in designated areas and follow playground safety rules.
3. Only one person on a slide at a time with feet first.
4. Students will sit only on the swings one person at a time.
5. Students will share equipment, play together, and return equipment as directed. (Be a good sport).
6. Students will play nicely by keeping hands and feet to themselves.
7. Students will keep sand, dirt, grass, rocks, etc., on the ground.
8. Students must stay under ESP staff supervision. Students may not leave any area without permission.
9. Students will follow all directions issued by ESP staff.



Franklin County School System  
**Extended School Program Summer Registration Form**

1.802.4 – Administrative Procedure

Fee Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Received By: \_\_\_\_\_ Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:	School:	
Child's Full Name:	Grade:	Age:
Name Child Prefers to be Called:	Date of Birth:	
Mother's Name:	Father's Name:	
Mother's Address:	Father's Address:	
Home/Cell Phone:	Home/Cell Phone:	
Work Phone:	Work Phone:	
Place of Employment and address:	Place of Employment and address:	

**Transportation Information:**

To ensure the safety of your child, please list other adults to whom your child may be released or adults authorized to provide transportation for your child.

Name	Relationship	Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please list any adult who is NOT AUTHORIZED to pick up your child

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Other Information:**

Are immunizations current? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Please list any allergies or medical conditions of which the ESP staff should be aware:

Name of Physician:

Phone Number:

Address:

Does your child have any behavior issues or disabilities that the ESP staff should be made aware?

Please provide an Explanation on the bottom of this Registration Form.

# Franklin County School System

## Extended School Program Summer Registration Form

1.802.4 – Administrative Procedure

Not all ESP sites will be open for the summer program. An ESP site must maintain a minimum of 12 children in paid attendance each day for the site to be open. Parents will be notified which ESP sites will be open for the ESP Summer Program. Some ESP sites will be open full days and some ESP sites will be open hours outside of the Summer Camp hours in June.

Please select from one of the three options for the month of June and select July option for the weeks your child will be attending the ESP Summer Program. We must know the weeks you will need services to meet state guidelines on the number of ESP staff required. Thank you for your cooperation. Please note that payment will be due for the option 1, 2 or 3 you select and the weeks you select on this Registration Form on the Friday prior to the week of childcare service. And for the weeks your child is enrolled you must make payment even if your child does not attend on or more days during that week.

Hours of operation for Summer Camp sites may vary by site based on the option that met the enrollment requirements. Breakfast and lunch are provided by the Franklin County School Nutrition Program during the month of June on days the Summer Camp is in session. All Fridays and during the month of July children must bring a sack lunch. Morning and afternoon snacks will be provided.

Please select the weeks using a check mark if attending all 5 days of the week and/or circle the times for the days your child will attend the ESP Summer Program if attending only on specific days of the week.

Option	# of children	✓	Check each week your child will attend – only weekly child care rates available	Notes:
3			May 27-30	
1 2 3			June 2-6	
1 2 3			June 9-13	
1 2 3			June 16-18, 20	
1 2 3			June 23-27	
3			June 30-July 3	
3			July 7-11	
3			July 14-18	
3			July 21-25	
3			July 28-31	

☐ My child is not attending Summer Camp.

☐ My child is enrolled in Summer Camp at

School: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*NOTE:** ESP may not be open and available at all the schools offering Summer Learning Camp.

**Franklin County Schools**  
**Extended School Program Statement of Understanding**

1.8012.5 - Administrative Procedure

**Please read and initial:**

1. \_\_\_ My child has permission to participate in all ESP activities.
2. \_\_\_ I give permission for my child(ren) to be used in media releases that benefit the school or the school system. A signed Franklin County Schools Consent Form 40407.2 is on file at the school.
3. \_\_\_ I understand that all children are expected to follow the rules of the ESP center.
4. \_\_\_ I understand that all payments to the ESP must be made on the Friday prior to the week of service for a week/month in advance. If payment is not made children will not be allowed to attend ESP until the fees are paid in full with a \$10 late fee.
5. \_\_\_ I understand to receive vacation credit I must notify the site director one week in advance by completing the "Advance Notification of Absence/Withdrawal" form.
6. \_\_\_ I understand that I will assume all costs of injury to my child and property damages resulting from my child's actions. I waive, release and hold harmless the Franklin County School System from all legal and financial responsibilities.
7. \_\_\_ I will allow the use of my email to quickly receive updates when things change and to receive financial statements.  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ I do not have an email account that can be used.
8. \_\_\_ I will allow the use of my cell phone number's text messaging to quickly receive updates when things change.  
Cell phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ I do not have a cell phone please call my home phone: \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_ I understand that it is my responsibility to update any information provided to the ESP staff.
10. \_\_\_ I was given the opportunity for an on-site visit\* (limited to essential visitors only) prior to my child enrolling and give permission for my child to participate in the personal safety curriculum.
11. \_\_\_ I have received the following: Parent Handbook with policies, procedures, and requirements of the Franklin County Schools Extended School Program.
12. \_\_\_ I received the following documentation: Child Abuse Awareness information and the Tennessee Department of Education Summary of Child Care Approval Requirements.
13. \_\_\_ I understand that I must come inside the ESP classroom to sign in my child upon arrival and sign out my child upon pickup.

**Child's name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Signature of parent/guardian:**

### ESP Emergency Medical Form

This information is required from the parent/guardian of a child/children enrolled in ESP should your child become ill and require medical attention by the ESP staff or EMT personnel and/or transportation to a local health care facility, the following information will be very helpful to the medical personnel:

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's physician: name, address, phone \_\_\_\_\_

Is your child allergic to any medications or other items: If so, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain other health conditions, which would be valuable, helpful information to medical personnel: \_\_\_\_\_

In the event your child becomes ill or injured every effort will be made to notify the parents. In case the parents cannot be reached, please provide the following information.

Name, relationship, and phone number of relatives or another person to contact in an emergency: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance information:

Name of insured \_\_\_\_\_ Carrier Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ID no. \_\_\_\_\_ Group no. \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that by signing this, the ESP staff is granted permission to provide emergency treatment to my child. Additionally, EMT's or other medical personnel are granted permission to provide medical treatment as well.

Parent/Guardian's Signature Required: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# ESP Summer Schedule

2025

Hours	✓	Week - Date	Notes:
7:00 am - 6:00 pm		May 27-30	
7:00 am - 6:00 pm		June 2-6	
7:00 am - 6:00 pm		June 9-13	
7:00 am - 6:00 pm		June 16-18, 20	
7:00 am - 6:00 pm		June 23-27	
7:00 am - 6:00 pm		June 30-July 3	
7:00 am - 6:00 pm		July 7-11	
7:00 am - 6:00 pm		July 14-18	
7:00 am - 6:00 pm		July 21-25	
7:00 am - 6:00 pm		July 28-31	

### **Advance Notification of Absence/Withdrawal/Change**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ESP SITE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD(REN) NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

**Advance Notification of Absence:** If your child will be absent for a week for vacation, please provide written notice one week in advance with the dates of the vacation. If you do not provide written notice at least one week in advance you will be charged for the week of vacation. Two weeks' vacation per year may be used without fees with the required Advance Notification. This advance notice shall apply to full weeks (Monday through Friday) only. The vacation week must be consecutive days and may not be broken into individual days.

My child(ren) will be absent for the full week(s) of:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Withdrawal from ESP:** If you withdraw your child from the ESP program without advance notice of one week in advance, you will be charged for one week of absence, after that time we will not hold your child's spot in the program.

I am withdrawing my child(ren) from the Extended School Program.  
The last day my child(ren) will attend the program will be:

Last day attending ESP: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Change in schedule**

Please provide written notice one week in advance of the next week's/month's payment due date.  
Current days \_\_\_\_\_

Change to the following days of the week schedule

\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for the change in days \_\_\_\_\_

Effective - beginning the week/month of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved by ESP Site Director \_\_\_\_\_

# Franklin County Schools

## Consent Form

4.407.2

1 Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

2 Name of Parent/Guardian (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3 Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

4 I understand that my child's\* work (writings, drawings, etc.) may occasionally be published on the  
5 internet and newspaper. I give my permission to publish my child's\* work with identification as  
6 specified below.

7 Please circle "yes" or "no" for each of the following:

8 1. My child's\* work (writings, drawings, etc.) may be published on the internet and newspaper.

9 Yes No

10 2. My child's\* first name (may include last name) may be used to identify his/her work.

11 Yes No

12 3. My child's\* class (teacher/grade level/school) may be used to identify the work.

13 Yes No

14 Additionally, photographs, videos or audio recordings, and/or webcasts are sometimes taken, or  
15 recorded at school or school related activities and may be included on the school and school system's  
16 web-site and other social media as well as newspaper.

17 Please circle "yes" or "no" for the following:

18 • My child's likeness and/or voice may be recorded and exhibited as still photographs, videos,  
19 webcasts, or other similar media, including other internet applications.

20 Yes No

21 Please list any other restrictions you wish to include. \_\_\_\_\_

22 \_\_\_\_\_

23 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
\* Student Signature (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\* The student becomes an 'eligible student' when he/she reaches the age of eighteen (18), at which time all of the above rights become the student's right.

# Child Abuse

## 1.8012.7 - Administrative Procedure

The physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment or neglect of children by parents, guardians, or others responsible for a child's welfare. Physical abuse is characterized by physical injury, usually inflicted as a result of a beating or inappropriately harsh discipline. Sexual abuse includes molestation, incest, rape, prostitution, or use of a child for pornographic purposes. Neglect can be physical in nature (abandonment, failure to seek needed health care), educational (failure to see that a child is attending school), or emotional (abuse of a spouse or another child in the child's presence, allowing a child to witness adult substance abuse). Inappropriate punishment and verbal abuse are also forms of emotional or psychological child abuse.

Listed below are some common myths and facts about child abuse and neglect.

**MYTH #1: It's only abuse if it's violent.**

**Fact:** Physical abuse is just one type of child abuse. Neglect and emotional abuse can be just as damaging, and since they are more subtle, others are less likely to intervene.

**MYTH #2: Only bad people abuse their children.**

**Fact:** While it's easy to say that only "bad people" abuse their children, it's not always so black and white. Not all abusers are intentionally harming their children. Many have been victims of abuse themselves, and do not know any other way to parent. Others may be struggling with mental health issues or a substance abuse problem.

**MYTH #3: Child abuse doesn't happen in "good" families.**

**Fact:** Child abuse doesn't only happen in poor families or bad neighborhoods. It crosses all racial, economic, and cultural lines. Sometimes, families who seem to have it all from the outside are hiding a different story behind closed doors.

**MYTH #4: Most child abusers are strangers.**

**Fact:** While abuse by strangers does happen, most abusers are family members or others close to the family.

**MYTH #5: Abused children always grow up to be abusers.**

**Fact:** It is true that abused children are more likely to repeat the cycle as adults, unconsciously repeating what they experienced as children. On the other hand, many adult survivors of child abuse have a strong motivation to protect their children against what they went through and become excellent parents.



## Effects of child abuse and neglect

All types of child abuse and neglect leave lasting scars. Some of these scars might be physical, but emotional scarring has long lasting effects throughout life, damaging a child's sense of self, ability to have healthy relationships, and ability to function at home, at work and at school. Some effects include:

- Lack of trust and relationship difficulties.
- Core feelings of being "worthless" or "damaged".
- Trouble regulating emotions.

## Types of child abuse

There are several types of child abuse, but the core element that ties them together is the emotional effect on the child. Children need predictability, structure, clear boundaries, and the knowledge that their parents are looking out for their safety. Abused children cannot predict how their parents will act. Their world is an unpredictable, frightening place with no rules. Whether the abuse is a slap, a harsh comment, stony silence, or not knowing if there will be dinner on the table tonight, the end result is a child that feels unsafe, uncared for, and alone. This is abuse.

### Emotional child abuse

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me? Contrary to this old saying, emotional abuse can severely damage a child's mental health or social development, leaving lifelong psychological scars. Examples of emotional child abuse include:

- Constant belittling, shaming, and humiliating a child.
- Calling names and making negative comparisons to others.
- Telling a child he or she is "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake."
- Frequent yelling, threatening, or bullying.
- Ignoring or rejecting a child as punishment, giving him or her the silent treatment.
- Limited physical contact with the child – no hugs, kisses, or other signs of affection.
- Exposing the child to violence or the abuse of others, whether it is the abuse of a parent, a sibling, or even a pet.

### Child neglect

Child neglect – a very common type of child abuse – is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, or supervision. Child neglect is not always easy to spot. Sometimes, a parent might become physically or mentally unable to care for a child, such as with a serious injury, untreated depression, or anxiety. Other times, alcohol or drug abuse may seriously impair judgement and the ability to keep a child safe.

Older children might not show outward signs of neglect, becoming used to presenting a competent face to the outside world, and even taking on the role of the parent. But at the end of the day, neglected children are not getting their physical and emotional needs met.

## Physical child abuse

Physical abuse involves physical harm or injury to the child. It may be the result of a deliberate attempt to hurt the child, but not always. It can also result from severe discipline, such as using a belt on a child, or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age or physical condition.

Many physically abusive parents and caregivers insist that their actions are simply forms of discipline – ways to make children learn to behave. But there is a big difference between using physical punishment to discipline and physical abuse. The point of disciplining children is to teach them right from wrong, not to make them live in fear.

## Physical abuse vs Discipline

In physical abuse, unlike physical forms of discipline, the following elements are present:

- **Unpredictability.** The child never knows what is going to set the parent off. There are no clear boundaries or rules. The child is constantly walking on eggshells, never sure what behavior will trigger a physical assault.
- **Lashing out in anger.** Physically abusive parents act out of anger and the desire to assert control, not the motivation to lovingly teach the child. The angrier the parent, the more intense the abuse.
- **Using fear to control behavior.** Parents who are physically abusive may believe that their children need to fear them in order to behave, so they use physical abuse to “keep their child in line.” However, what children are really learning is how to avoid being hit, not how to behave or grow as individuals.

## Child sexual abuse: A hidden type of abuse

Child sexual abuse is an especially complicated form of abuse because of its layers of guilt and shame. It's important to recognize that sexual abuse doesn't always involve body contact. Exposing a child to sexual situations or material is sexually abusive, whether or not touching is involved.

While news stories of sexual predators are scary, what is even more frightening is that sexual abuse usually occurs at the hands of someone the child knows and should be able to trust – most often close relatives. And contrary to what may believe, it's not just girls who are at risk. Boys and girls both suffer from sexual abuse. In fact, sexual abuse of boys may be underreported due to shame and stigma.

Help for child sexual abuse:

1-888-PREVENT (1-888-773-8368) Stop It Now

1-800-656-HOPE Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

### Warning signs of child abuse and neglect

The earlier child abuse is caught, the better the chance of recovery and appropriate treatment for the child. Child abuse is not always obvious. By learning some of the common warning signs of child abuse and neglect, you can catch the problem as early as possible and get both the child and the abuser the help that they need.

Of course, just because you see a warning sign doesn't automatically mean a child is being abused. It's important to dig deeper, looking for a pattern of abusive behavior and warning signs, if you notice something off.

### Recognizing abusive behavior in yourself - Do you need professional help?

Do you feel angry and frustrated and don't know where to turn? Call **1-800-4-A-CHILD** to find support and resources in your community that can help you break the cycle of abuse.

Do you see yourself in some of these descriptions, painful as it may be? Do you feel angry and frustrated and don't know where to turn? Raising children is one of life's greatest challenges and can trigger anger and frustration in the most even tempered. If you grew up in a household where screaming and shouting or violence was the norm, you may not know any other way to raise your kids.

Recognizing that you have a problem is the biggest step to getting help. If you yourself were raised in an abusive situation, that can be extremely difficult. Children experience their world as normal. It may have been normal for your parents to call you stupid, clumsy, or worthless. Or it may have been normal to watch your mother get beaten up by your father.

It is only as adults that we have the perspective to step back and take a hard look at what is normal and what is abusive. Read the above sections on the types of abuse and warning signs. Do any of those ring a bell for you now? Or from when you were a child? The following is a list of warning signs that you may be crossing the line into abuse:

### CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE:

To get help or report abuse, call the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline at **1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)**.