

## Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

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Even if your child is not forthcoming about disclosing abuse, there are some important signs to look for that may indicate abuse. Be on the lookout for these signs not only in your own child, but in others on the team.

### MORE IMMEDIATE SIGNS

- Loses enthusiasm for sport, even for competition
- Doesn't want to practice, or skips out on practice without an explanation
- Stops trying in practice or competition, perhaps in hopes of getting kicked off the team
- Performance declines
- Avoids contact with a particular individual, such as a coach, assistant coach or athletic trainer
- Changes from outgoing to reserved, depressed and withdrawn
- Has a sudden mood change, such as a violent emotional outburst

### LONG-TERM SIGNS

- Poor self-esteem
- Trust issues
- Anxiety
- Feelings of isolation
- Depression
- Self-destruction
- Sexual maladjustment
- Substance abuse

Keep in mind that these behaviors individually do not necessarily indicate a child has been abused. You know your child and his or her behaviors better than anyone. But if several of these behaviors are present, there is probably something going on that is making the child reluctant to participate in their sport.

If you have observed these behaviors in your child, open up a conversation to find out what may be going on.