

Suspecting Child Abuse or Neglect in the Home

No one ever wants to suspect child abuse or neglect. There are times, though, when you must follow your instincts. If you suspect abuse or neglect, your call can save a life. Read the following scenarios and answer the questions.

Scenario 1:

Clark walks in to pick up his son, Dakota, from your classroom. "Dakota, get your fat, lazy butt in gear. Your brother's got a soccer game tonight. We need to get moving." As he shuffles him out the door, you hear him say again, "Could you get any slower? Man, if I were as lazy as you, my dad would have beat the lazy out of me."

What evidence makes you suspect child abuse or neglect?

What steps would you take to respond to this situation?

Scenario 2:

The phone rings endlessly when you call Pablo's house. He hasn't been at your program for the past 3 weeks, and you have not been able to contact his mom. Your supervisor is asking whether Pablo's family has moved or withdrawn from the program. As you are about to hang up, Pablo and his mother walk in. You are very surprised to see Pablo's 3rd grade sister with them. School started hours ago. When you ask Pablo's mom where they have been and if everything is alright, she just shrugs. You ask Pablo's sister how school is going. She just says, "Ok," and looks at her mom. You suspect this girl has not been in school for weeks.

What evidence makes you suspect child abuse or neglect?

What steps would you take to respond to this situation?

Scenario 3:

Cheyenne's mom, Brandi, has just returned from a lengthy deployment. She was injured in the line of duty and has not been able to return to work. Cheyenne lived with her grandma during the deployment, but she has now returned back to live with Brandi. Since Brandi's homecoming, Cheyenne's attendance at your program has decreased. When Brandi does drop Cheyenne off at school, Brandi seems detached and rarely says more than a word or two to you. Brandi does not offer Cheyenne any goodbye hugs or kisses; she simply walks out of the classroom. You have also noticed that Cheyenne is coming to school very dirty and very hungry. This was not the case before Brandi's deployment.

What evidence makes you suspect child abuse or neglect?

What steps would you take to respond to this situation?