Types of Child Abuse

Type of Abuse	What It Is - Definition	VT Statute	Indicators	Reporter Considerations
Physical Abuse	Child physical abuse is the infliction of physical injury or serious physical injury by a person responsible for the child's welfare. Injuries can range from minor bruises to severe fractures or even death. Physical discipline, like spanking, is not considered abuse if it doesn't cause bodily injury.	"Physical injury" means death or permanent or temporary disfigurement or impairment of any bodily organ or function by other than accidental means. "Serious physical injury" means, by other than accidental means: (A) physical injury that creates any of the following: (i) a substantial risk of death; (ii) a substantial loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ; (iii) a substantial impairment of health; or (iv) substantial disfigurement; or (B) strangulation by intentionally impeding normal breathing or circulation of the blood by applying pressure on the throat or neck or by blocking the nose or mouth of another person. (Source)	Unexplained or frequent injuries such as bruises, burns, fractures, bite marks, or frequent visits to the ED with bodily injuries. Sudden changes in behavior, extreme fearfulness, withdrawal, aggression, fear of going home or fear of caregivers.	• Do I have information about details of the injury? • Have I seen an injury? • Has the child/youth disclosed an injury? • Was the injury caused by a parent, caregiver or other individual responsible for the child? • What is the severity? • Was the injury inflicted intentionally or was it an accident? • What additional information would be helpful to understand what happened? • Is a medical evaluation for injuries necessary? • Has the child been to the doctor?
Sexual Abuse	Child sexual abuse is any interaction between a child and an adult (or another child) that includes sexual activity (touching or non-touching) or any kind of sexual exploitation. In Vermont, this can include human	"Sexual abuse" consists of any act or acts by any person involving sexual molestation or exploitation of a child, including: (A) incest; (B) prostitution. (C) rape; (D) sodomy; (E) lewd and lascivious conduct involving a child; (F) aiding, abetting, counseling, hiring, or	Emotional and behavioral changes are more common than physical signs in children who have experienced sexual abuse. Typically, we see notable disruption in mood, affect, and behavior.	• What is the age of the child/youth you are concerned about? • What is the age of the person who is alleged to have engaged in sexually inappropriate or abusive behavior? • What is the relationship between the child/youth and

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	trafficking, allowing the child to engage in prostitution, sexual assault, voyeurism, exhibitionism, exposing the child to pornography, or any other activity where the child is used for the sexual pleasure of another person. This can also include having, looking at or sending child pornography, except in situations where images are shared between mutually consenting minors, including the minor whose image is shared.	procuring of a child to perform or participate in any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, or other presentation that, in whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sadomasochistic abuse involving a child; (G) viewing, possessing, or transmitting child pornography, with the exclusion of the exchange of images between mutually consenting minors, including the minor whose image is exchanged; (H) human trafficking; (I) sexual assault; (J) voyeurism; (K) luring a child; or (L) obscenity. (Source)	age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behavior, fear of going home or fear of caregivers. Physical signs of sexual abuse may include genital pain, itching, swelling or bleeding, difficulty walking or sitting, urinary tract infections, sexually transmitted infections, or pregnancy.	the alleged individual (parent, caregiver, extended family, community member)? • What is the nature of the abuse (in the home; online; hands-on; exploitative)? • What additional information do you know about the alleged abuse? • Is there documentation available to support the concern? • What do you know about the child's experience?
Emotional Maltreatment	Child emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior that negatively affects a child's emotional or psychological development or sense of self-worth.	(5) "Emotional maltreatment" means a pattern of malicious behavior that results in impaired psychological growth and development. (Source)	This can include excessive criticism, threats, rejection, and withholding love or support. Also may include humiliation, insults, scapegoating, making a child perform degrading acts or other behaviors that occur as a pattern and have a demonstrated negative impact.	• Are you aware of a pattern of behavior that is malicious? • What is the impact of the behavior on the child? • What do you know about the nature of the caregiver's behavior toward the child/youth (self-report, observation, other report, etc.). • What are the developmental and psychological needs of the child/youth? • Is the caregiver responding to the child/youth's psychological needs.

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				• What additional information do you know/need? • Is there documentation available to support the concern?
Neglect	Child neglect is the failure of a parent or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs, such as housing, education, medical or emotional needs.	Neglect: The failure to supply a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter or health care, including medical or non-medical remedial health care permitted or authorized under state law (33 VSA § 4912(6)(B)).	Signs of neglect may include poor hygiene, malnutrition, inadequate clothing for weather conditions, living in an unsafe environment, or consistent lack of appropriate supervision.	• Is the family experiencing poverty? While poverty is a risk factor for neglect, the presence of poverty alone does not mean a child is unsafe, unloved, or that a parent lacks the capacity to care for his or her child. • Have you considered the extent to which some of the observed behaviors may represent a lack of resources versus a parent's failure to provide? • Poverty can make it more challenging for parents to meet their children's physical needs and create stress affecting their emotional responsiveness. • Are the caregivers experiencing challenges with their own mental health and safety? This can impact their ability to assess for danger and respond effectively to their children's physical and to provide responsive care. • Are the caregivers impacted by their own trauma and stress? Unresolved trauma and stressors from a parent's past

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				can impact their ability to provide responsive care for their child
Risk of Harm*	Risk of harm means a significant danger that a child will suffer serious harm by other than accidental means, which harm would be likely to cause physical injury, or sexual abuse.	"Risk of harm" means a significant danger that a child will suffer serious harm by other than accidental means, which harm would be likely to cause physical injury, or sexual abuse, including as the result of: (A) a single, egregious act that has caused the child to be at significant risk of serious physical injury; (B) the production or preproduction of methamphetamines when a child is actually present; (C) failing to provide supervision or care appropriate for the child's age or development and, as a result, the child is at significant risk of serious physical injury; (D) failing to provide supervision or care appropriate for the child's age or development due to use of illegal substances or misuse of prescription drugs or alcohol; (E) failing to supervise appropriately a child in a situation in which drugs, alcohol, or drug paraphernalia are accessible to the child; and (F) a registered sex offender or person substantiated for sexually abusing a child residing with or spending	Indicators that a child may be at risk of harm include reports of a single, egregious act that has caused the child to be at significant risk of serious physical injury; the production or preproduction of methamphetamines when a child is present; failing to provide supervision or care appropriate for the child's age or development a registered sex offender or person substantiated for sexually abusing a child spending unsupervised time with a child.	• Is the caregiver aware that their behavior could/would inflict harm? • What is the specific harm you are concerned about? • Who is at risk of harm? • What additional information do you know about the circumstances that create risk? • Is there documentation available that explains or illustrates the risk?

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		unsupervised time with a child. (Source)		
Abandonment	Child abandonment happens when a person, usually a parent or guardian, does not want or cannot take care of a child. This can mean they are unwilling to have the child live with them, they haven't made proper plans for the child's care, or they can't be found after leaving the child with someone else who is also unable or unwilling to care for the child.	Occurs when a parent or person responsible for the child's welfare fails or ceases to provide for the needs of the child and has not made arrangements for the child's care. The situation must exist beyond a reasonable time based on the child's age and developmental level. Policy #50	A caregiver is unwilling to have physical custody of the child. Caregiver is unable, unwilling, or has failed to make appropriate arrangements for the child's care. Caregiver has left the child with a care provider and the care provider is unwilling or unable to provide care or support for the child. The location of the caregiver is unknown, and reasonable efforts to locate the caregiver have been unsuccessful.	• Are you familiar with or do you know the most recent caregiver(s)? • Are you aware of any circumstances that have changed for the child that may indicate abandonment? • Has someone who was caring for the child contacted you? What are the circumstances of this contact? • Has the child reported that are taking care of themselves, that they don't have parents? • Has the child disclosed something about caregiving that indicates that the caregiver is absent?

*** Harm can occur by:**

(A) Physical injury or emotional maltreatment.

(B) Failure to supply the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or health care. As used in this subchapter, "adequate health care" includes any medical or nonmedical remedial health care permitted or authorized under State law. Notwithstanding that achild might be found to be without proper parental care under chapters 51 and 53 of this title, a parent or other person responsible for a child's care legitimately practicing his or her religious beliefs who thereby does not provide specified medical treatment for a child shall not be considered neglectful for that reason alone.

(C) Abandonment of the child.