



# Kinship Link

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## Pro Kinship for Kids

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Pro Kinship for Kids  
Lower level Our Saviors  
Lutheran Church  
1400 S. State Street  
P.O. Box 666  
New Ulm, MN 56073  
Phone 359-2445 or  
1-800-642-5779  
Website:  
[www.prokinship.org](http://www.prokinship.org)

Newsletter by  
Kari Beran, Director



## April is Child Abuse Prevention Month What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is any maltreatment of a child that results in harm or injury.

Child abuse includes:

**Physical abuse** - an injury to a child that is not an accident; for example, hurting a child by hitting, biting, burning, or shaking.  
**Sexual abuse** - any sexual contact with a child, including exhibitionism, photographs or films, or prostitution.

**Physical neglect** - failure to give a child food, clothing, medical care, shelter, or supervision.  
**Emotional abuse and neglect** - an abusive parent may scare a child by threatening to leave him or her, or may be severely critical. A neglectful parent may not spend any time with the child or may never show the child any affection. A neglectful parent may not provide enough food or medical attention.

### Know the Warning Signs of Abuse

Children who are abused may show physical and behavioral signs. Please pay attention to the treatment of children around you. You may be a child's only lifeline to

safety. Child abuse is everyone's business. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, call child protective services at Brown County Family Services or call 1-800-CHILDREN to speak with someone at Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota.

General signs of abuse are present in children who seem:

- Nervous around adults or afraid of certain adults
- Reluctant to go home (for example, coming to school early or staying late)
- Very passive and withdrawn - or aggressive and disruptive
- Tired a lot or complaining of nightmares or insomnia
- Fearful and anxious
- Showing sudden changes in behavior or school performances

### Some Signs of Physical Abuse:

- Unexplained burns, bruises, black eyes, and other injuries
- Apparent fear of a parent or caretaker
- Faded bruises or

healing injuries after missing activities

### Some Signs of Sexual Abuse:

- Difficulty walking or sitting, or other indications of injury in the genital area
- Sexual knowledge or behavior beyond what is normal for age
- Running away from home

### Some Signs of Physical Neglect:

- Missing activities a lot
- Begging/stealing money or food
- Lacking needed medical or dental care
- Being frequently dirty
- Using alcohol or other drugs
- Saying there is no one at home to take care of them

### Some Signs of Emotional Abuse and Neglect:

- Acting overly mature or immature for age
- Extreme changes in behavior
- Delays in physical or emotional development
- Attempted suicide
- Lack of emotional attachment to the parent

## What is Child Abuse? continued

You should know the signs of an abusive adult. Always consider the possibility of abuse in a parent or caretaker if you see these items:

- Seems unconcerned about the child's welfare at school or at home
- Denies problems at school or at home, or blames the child for them
- Sees the child as worthless or as a burden
- Avoids discussing the child's injuries or gives conflicting explanations for them
- Seems isolated from other parents, and school and community activities
- Uses harsh physical discipline or asks other caretakers to use it
- Depends on the child for emotional support
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- Seems indifferent to the child
- Seems secretive or tries to isolate the children from other children
- Frequently blames, belittles, or insults the child

All these signs we have just been listing doesn't prove that a child is being abused. But, they could be a sign that the child and his or her family does need help. LISTEN! Be the help that is needed for you can end child abuse.



## How Money Traps Victims of Domestic Violence

A lesser-known crime that keeps perpetrators in charge and helps them continue the abuse is finances. For the millions of victims of domestic abuse - more than one in four women in the United States, according to the Department of Justice, are victims of a less-visible and often ignored long-lasting damage. It is financial abuse they are wrought with by their abusers. By blocking or controlling access to financial assets, abusers can coerce their victims into staying with them or coming back if they try to leave, locking them into a cycle of abuse. In fact, lacking financial knowledge or resources is the number one indicator of whether a domestic violence victim will stay, leave, or return to an abusive relationship. Financial abuse, whether you're talking about ruining her credit, getting her fired, or hiding the money is just as effective in controlling an abuse victim as a lock and key. Financial abuse is insidious: It can first appear as a considerate offer to take care of the bills, or a casual request to borrow money. But it escalates until the abuser has full control of every bank account, credit card, and

paycheck. This means that even if victims escape, they could have no way to rent a new apartment, find a job, or care for their children. Unfortunately, it seems that while the majority of abusers have discovered that truth, the rest of us in society have yet to catch up. 98% of domestic violence victims also experience financial abuse, yet only 78% of Americans have heard about financial abuse as it relates to domestic violence. Financial abuse is harder to identify than bruises and scars, and less likely to make headlines. But, it leaves its victims helpless and without resources for years, both during the abuse and if the victim can leave even after it. Financial abusers go as far as ruining their victims' credit score by taking out loans in their names, or harassing them at their workplace until they lose their job and their own source of income. Nearly eight million days of paid work are lost to domestic violence every year. Survivors of domestic violence have recounted being prevented from going to job interviews, or being forbidden to even look at bank statements or bills. This pure everyday stress of

being trapped in an abusive relationship doesn't allow much space for financial planning or education. It is all about you need to get through today. You can't think about what is happening tomorrow, let alone three years from now, five years from now, or what's in your 401K. Escaping an abusive relationship often means losing financial security as well as the means to regain it. The dilemma becomes: Either risk staying in an abusive relationship, or risk becoming homeless and facing poverty. So for victims who want to become survivors, financial empowerment training can make the world a little more manageable and financial independence a realistic goal. When we, as society, can finally establish a comprehensive accessible network of support and resources for survivors of abuse, escaping an abusive relationship will no longer make the victims more vulnerable to poverty, financial insecurity, or persistent fear. We will help victims be able to stand on their own feet, empower themselves, find the resources that are out there, and use them.