# KNOW: The Basics About Child Abuse

## The WA State Legislature Definition

RCW26-44-020defines abuse and neglectas injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by any person under circumstances which indicate that the child's health, welfare, and safety is harmed. Abuse and neglect does NOT include the physical discipline of a child as defined in RCW 9A.16.100. (1)

## Scope of the problem

Childmaltreatment is a globalproblem with serious life-long consequences. Current estimates vary widely depending on the country and the method of research used.

Nonetheless, international studies reveal that nearly 3 in 4 children aged 2-4 years regularly suffer physical punishment and/or psychological violence at the hands of parents and caregivers, and 1 in 5 women and 1 in 13 men report having been sexually abused as a child. (2)

## In the United States

Child abuse and neglect are common.Atleast 1 in 7 children have experienced child abuse or neglect in the past year in the United States. This is likely an underestimate because many cases are unreported.

Children living in poverty experience more abuse and neglect. Experiencing poverty can place a lot of stress on families, which may increase the risk for child abuse and neglect. Rates of child abuse and neglect are 5 times higher for children in families with low socioeconomic status.

Child maltreatment is costly. In the United States, the total lifetime economic burden associated with child abuse and neglect was about $592 billion in 2018. This economic burden rivals the cost of other high-profile public health problems, such as heart disease and diabetes. (3)

# THE CONSEQUENCES FOR CHILDREN

Maltreatment causes stress that is associated with disruption in early brain development.
Extreme stress can impair the development of the nervous and immune systems.

Immediate results (3):

- Physical injuries, cuts, bruises, broken bones
- Anxiety
- Post Traumatic stress

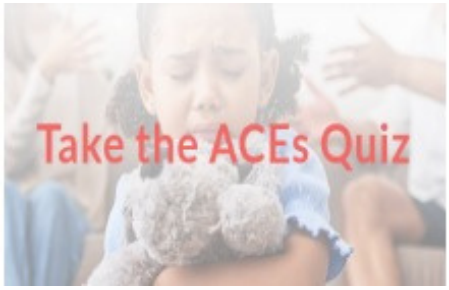
As adults, increased risk for behavioral, physical and mental health problems such as (2):

- Perpetrating or being a victim of violence.
- Depression.
- Smoking.
- Obesity.
- High-risk sexual behaviors.
- Unintended pregnancy.
- Alcohol and drug misuse.

Long Term issues can include (3):

- PTSD.
- Memory difficulties.
- Lower educational attainment.
- Limited employment opportunities.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES




## Know Your Own Risk Factors
## Take the ACEs Quiz

What is the ACEs Quiz? Researchers determined that 10 specific traumatic childhood experiences, or ACEs, could be linked to a higher likelihood of health challenges later in life, and that the likelihood of these negative effects increased with the number of "ACEs" a child experienced.

https://americanspcc.org/take-the-aces-quiz/

## Help Kids Stay Smart Online

NetSmartz is NCMEC's online safety education program. It provides age-appropriate videos and activities to help teach children be safer online with the goal of helping children to become more aware of potential online risks

https://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/resources

## Sources:

1.WA State Department of Children, youth and families:
2. https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/safety/what-is-abuse
3.World Health Organization:
4.https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-maltreatment
5.Centers for Disease, control and prevention:
https://www.cdc.gov/child-abuse-neglect/about/index.html#cdc_behavioral_basics_quick-quick-facts-and-stats