

# Protecting Children with Special Needs from **ABUSE**



**Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than children without disabilities.**

Your child may not understand abusive behavior, which includes neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse. Or he or she may understand and not be able to escape or stop it.

Studies have shown that children with behavior disorders face a greater risk of physical abuse. Children with speech/language disorders are at risk of neglect. Children with intellectual disabilities have a greater chance of being physically and sexually abused.

For physical abuse, look for such signs as bruises or other marks, broken bones and injuries to the head. Monitor your child's behavior for any sudden changes.

**Steps you can take to protect your child from sexual abuse include:**

- ❖ **Teach your child at an early age about body parts. Emphasize that no one is to touch these private areas except trusted adults you know about, such as a doctor.**
- ❖ **Talk about abuse and how to avoid it in a way that he or she can understand.**
- ❖ **Know all persons working with your son or daughter. Watch interactions closely for any signs of abuse. Often, parents and other caregivers may be the abusers. Make sure other adults in your child's life know the signs of possible abuse and how to report it.**
- ❖ **For a child who has difficulty speaking or is unable to speak, use pictures to help him or her understand what abuse looks like.**

Children with disabilities are especially vulnerable to abusers. Protect your son or daughter by providing information and keeping a close eye on him or her and the people in their lives.

