



### Consequences of Child Emotional Abuse

- Increased risk of lifelong depression, estrangement, anxiety, low self-esteem, inappropriate or troubled relationships, or lack of empathy.
- Delay in developmental progress of the abused child.
- Societal impacts such as economic, health, safety and social justice costs.



*Please share this brochure with a friend, family member, neighbor, or co-worker. Thank you for helping to raise awareness and helping to prevent child abuse and neglect in America.*

#### Prevent Child Abuse America Advocates to:

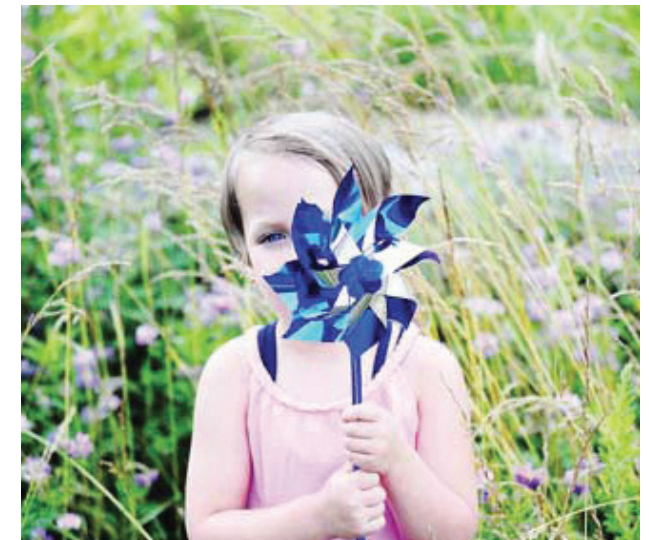
1. Raise awareness so the public recognizes the seriousness and signs of child emotional abuse.
2. Make mental health services available **when they are needed** to everyone suffering from emotional abuse.
3. Fund research, public policies, and programming that improves the public's understanding of child emotional abuse.

**Prevent Child Abuse America, founded in 1972 and based in Chicago, works to ensure the healthy development of children nationwide. Prevent Child Abuse America educates parents, the public, and policymakers that prevention is possible, that services and policies exist to prevent child abuse and neglect, and that together we can enhance not only the lives of children and their families, but the nation as a whole.**

[www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)



## Preventing Child Emotional Abuse



**Prevent Child Abuse  
America**

## Nature and Scope of Child Emotional Abuse

There are multiple and interrelated factors that lead to this type of abuse. Examples include, but are not limited to, a child with a disability, a parent struggling with depression or substance abuse, intimate partner violence, fathers who do not play an active role in their children's lives, a lack of community supports such as home visiting, and poverty. Some forms of maltreatment may be both physically and emotionally abusive. Further:

- An estimated 148,500 children experienced emotional abuse during the NIS-4 study year (2005–2006).
- This corresponds to 2.0 per 1000 children in the general 2005–2006 child population.
- Emotionally abused children represent 27% of all children counted as abused.
- The number of children who experienced emotional abuse decreased from an estimated 204,500 at the time of the NIS-3 to an estimated 148,500 in the NIS-4.

**Citation:** *Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS- 4) - January 2010*

## Definition of Child Emotional Abuse

Child emotional abuse is difficult to define because state definitions vary considerably. Most states agree that any recent act or failure to act on the part of parent or caretaker, which results in rejecting, isolating, terrorizing, ignoring, corrupting, verbally assaulting and over pressuring children are all types of emotional abuse. Some states recognize excessively harsh discipline and exposure to family violence as child emotional abuse.



## Actions You Can Take to Prevent Child Emotional Abuse

**If you are parent, caretaker, or member of the community you can:**

Ensure that health care professionals and the public increase their awareness about emotional child abuse in the community and among parents.

Support parents and caretakers so they can learn how to strengthen their connections with their children and express love for them.

Encourage families to form relationships with support services, such as parent support groups and early childhood education, that are available to them in the community.

Help educate the public on the stages of child development so people have appropriate expectations of children at the different stages of development.

Learn to recognize parent and caretaker behavior that: ignores a child, is verbally assaultive, over-pressuring, bullying, rejecting, and keeps the child isolated from friends and social interactions.

When you witness behavior you consider emotionally abusive, be kind, and break the moment.

Report abuse when you suspect it.