

# Child maltreatment...a community responsibility

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Child maltreatment is a community problem. No single agency has the necessary knowledge, skills, resources or mandate to provide the assistance to abused and neglected children and their families that they need.

Communities should develop and implement programs to strengthen families and prevent the incidence of child abuse and neglect.

## **Abusive parents...who are they?**

Most parents do not intend to harm their children. Abuse and neglect may be the result of a combination of psychological, social, situational and societal factors.

Abusive parents have

- often been abused themselves as children
- never had a role model to show them positive parenting skills
- lack knowledge of normal child development

Many abusive adults have the capacity to change their behaviours with help, counselling, support and resources.

Intervention must be sensitive to culture, values and religion.

The response to abusive and neglectful families must first consider the safety of the child and then help the family in a non punitive and non critical manner.

If you suspect that a child you know is being abused or neglected contact the Children's Aid Society

## **Children should remain with family**

Wherever possible, children should grow up in their own family as long as their safety can be assured.

Many families need advice and referral to a community service that can provide support, mentoring, education or relief from the ongoing demands of family life.

A referral to the children's aid society can provide an assessment of the safety of the child and a protection plan to provide support to the child and the family.

If parents cannot or will not meet the needs of the child, the CAS may have to remove the child from the home.

It is the responsibility of all persons in the community to report their suspicions of child abuse and neglect to the CAS

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