

# Prevent Abuse and Neglect through Dental Awareness



P.A.N.D.A

## WHAT IS P.A.N.D.A.?

P.A.N.D.A. stands for Prevent Abuse and Neglect through Dental Awareness. Over 3 million reports of child abuse are documented each year. By state law, dentists in every state are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to authorities.

Published research indicates that up to 75% of all reported cases of child abuse and neglect involve injuries to the head, neck and face areas, which are areas dental professionals routinely observe. Studies show that dental professionals are five times more likely to report suspected child abuse and neglect if they know the warning signs. The P.A.N.D.A. program aims to educate dental professionals, and others, about how to identify the warning signs of child abuse and neglect.

The P.A.N.D.A. coalition provides a variety of educational programs and seminars for dental professionals. Contact Delta Dental of Arkansas at 855-40-PANDA (855-407-2632) or [panda@deltadentalar.com](mailto:panda@deltadentalar.com) to schedule a P.A.N.D.A. educational program.

## WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Loose or fractured teeth
- Bruises or cuts
- Cigarette burns
- Absence of hair from hair pulling
- Immersion or rope burns
- Human bite marks
- Child is dressed inappropriately for the weather (covering bruises, etc.)

## BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

- No eye contact
- Wary of parents
- Fear of touch
- Apprehensive when others cry
- Aggressiveness
- Overly compliant or passive
- Dramatic mood changes
- Suicide attempts

## WARNING SIGNS OF NEGLECT

- Child is dirty, unkempt or displays poor oral hygiene
- Rampant cavities in a child's mouth
- Untreated pain, infection, bleeding or trauma
- History of a lack of follow-through for care
- Evidence of poor supervision

## IMPORTANCE OF A STRAIGHT STORY

- Obtain stories from child and parent separately. Do the stories match?
- Is there history of similar injuries in the past?
- Is the injury consistent with the child's history?

**If you suspect child abuse or neglect, contact the  
Arkansas State Police Child Abuse Hotline at 800-482-5964.**

Delta Dental of Arkansas • 855-40-PANDA (855-407-2632) • [panda@deltadentalar.com](mailto:panda@deltadentalar.com)

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Insuring Healthy Smiles

# Dental Office Protocol

*for identifying suspected child abuse and neglect*



**P.A.N.D.A.**

Prevent Abuse *and* Neglect  
through Dental Awareness\*

## STEPS IN IDENTIFYING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

1. **General physical assessment of the patient.** Although general physical examinations may not be appropriate in the dental setting, be aware of obvious physical traits that may indicate abuse or neglect (e.g. difficulty in walking or sitting, physical signs that may be consistent with the use of force).
2. **Behavior assessment.** Judge the patient's behavior against the demeanor of patients of similar maturity in similar situations.
3. **Health histories.** If you suspect child maltreatment, it can be useful to obtain more than one history, one from the child and one separately from the adult.
4. **Orofacial examination.** Look for signs of violence, such as multiple injuries or bruises, injuries in different stages of healing, or oral signs of sexually transmitted diseases.
5. **Consultation.** If indicted, consult with the patient's physician about the patient's needs or your suspicions.

## STEPS IN REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

1. **Documentation.** Carefully document any findings of suspected abuse or neglect in the patient's record.
2. **Witness.** Have another individual witness the examination, note and co-sign the records concerning suspected abuse or neglect.
3. **Report.** Call the appropriate protective services or law enforcement agency in your area, consistent with the law. Make the report as soon as possible without compromising the patient's dental care.
4. **Necessary information.** Have the following information available when you make the report:
  - Name and address of the child and parents or other persons having care and custody of the child
  - Child's age
  - Name(s) of any siblings
  - Nature of the child's condition, including any evidence of previous injuries or disabilities
  - Any other information that you believe might be helpful in establishing the cause of such abuse or neglect and the identity of the person believed to have caused such abuse or neglect

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