Red Flags: Potential Indicators of Abuse

Remember that any potential indicator of abuse should not be considered in isolation, but may provide helpful clues when considering the entire context of a given situation. Some behavioral indicators of abuse that a child may exhibit and a mandated reporter or other concerned adult might observe include:

- Fear of physical contact
- Clings to adults
- Timid
- Easily frightened
- Depression
- Absence of affect
- Withdrawn from others
- Low self-esteem
- Self-injurious behaviors
- Delinquent behavior
- Poor school performance
- Truancy
- Cruelty to other children
- Cruelty to animals
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Lack of interest or involvement in activities
- Layered clothing or inappropriate clothing
- Inappropriate sexual behavior, precocious sexual knowledge, promiscuity
- Poor hygiene