

Indicators of Physical Abuse

- 1. Location:** There are certain areas of the body that are typical sites of accidental injury as well as other areas that are more suggestive of inflicted injury.
- 2. Appearance:** Often what the injury looks like—seriousness, coloration, size, shape, depth—can lead us in determining how it happened or what implement may have caused the injury. The age of the child and their cognitive, social and emotional developmental level must also be considered.
- 3. Frequency:** How often a child is injured or how and where they are injured can be very revealing. The frequency can sometimes be determined by physical evidence on the child such as scars or injuries at different stages of healing.
- 4. Caretaker's Explanation:** If a caretaker of the child is denying that they are the perpetrator of abuse (when in fact they are the named perpetrator), they will need to give some explanation for how the injury occurred. The Caseworker must look for consistency and compatibility between the injury and the "story" given by the alleged perpetrator.