

## RISK FACTORS & CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse and neglect occurs in all types of families regardless of race, ethnicity, education or income.

Perpetrators of child abuse do not fit any typical profile, but there are some factors that can increase the risk of a caretaker becoming abusive.

### **Child Characteristics:**

- Premature birth
- Colic
- Physical disabilities
- Developmental disabilities
- Chronic illness
- Emotional/behavioral difficulties
- Unwanted child

### **Parental Characteristics:**

- Low self-esteem/depression
- Poor impulse control
- Substance abuse
- Abused as a child
- Teenage parent
- Unrealistic expectations of child's behavior
- Negative view of themselves and their children
- Punitive childrearing style

### **Social/Situational Stresses:**

- Isolation
- Family/domestic violence
- Non-biologically-related male in the home
- Poverty
- Unemployment/financial problems
- Single parent
- Animal abuse (It is important for school personnel to pay close attention to the behaviors of children who are known to have abused animals, often as a way of gaining some control over a weaker family member).

### **Truancy-Common Reasons:**

- Child abuse and neglect
- Family issues-health, finances, conflict
- Child babysitting siblings
- Substance abuse of parent/child
- Teen pregnancy
- Dating violence/control
- Special education needs not identified
- Child feels unsafe at or on way to school
- Parent value on education
- Child deceased