



TABLE 9.4 Four Main Types of Child Maltreatment

Term	Definition
Physical abuse	Characterized by the infliction of physical injury as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, or otherwise harming a child. The parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child; rather, the injury may have resulted from overdiscipline or physical punishment.
Child neglect	Characterized by failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Neglect can be physical, educational, or emotional.
Physical neglect	Includes refusal or delay in seeking health care, abandonment, expulsion from the home or refusal to allow a runaway to return home, and inadequate supervision.
Educational neglect	Includes the allowance of chronic truancy, failure to enroll a child of mandatory school age in school, and failure to attend to a special educational need.
Emotional neglect	Includes such actions as marked inattention to the child's need for affection, refusal or failure to provide needed psychological care, spousal abuse in the child's presence, and permission of drug or alcohol use by the child. This assessment of child neglect requires consideration of cultural values and standards of care as well as recognition that the failure to provide the necessities of life may be related to poverty.
Sexual abuse	Includes fondling a child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials. Many experts believe that sexual abuse is the most underreported of child maltreatment because of the "conspiracy of silence" that so often characterizes these cases.
Emotional abuse (psychological abuse/ verbal abuse/mental injury)	Includes acts of omission by the parents or other caregivers that have caused, or could have caused, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders. In some cases of emotional abuse, the acts of parents or other caregivers alone, without any harm evident in the child's behavior or condition, are sufficient to warrant Child Protective Services intervention.

SOURCE: Based on 42 U.S.C. § 5101 *et seq.* Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Public Law 101–36, 2003.