

## **Checklist for Use in Suspected Cases of Physical Child Abuse**

Adapted from the U.S. Department of Justice

*Portable Guides to Investigating Child Abuse:*

*Recognizing When a Child's Injury or Illness is Caused by Abuse*

(June 1996)

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- Have you asked about the child's family history, substance abuse or other environmental factors in the home, and the parents' marital status, employment history, or unrealistic expectations of the child?
- How could the child's behavior or the caretaker's stress have contributed to the crisis?
- Could the child do what the caretakers told you he or she did?
- Is the child a "target" child (a child perceived by the caretaker(s) as having negative characteristics), or are there target children present?
- Was there any delay in treatment or was hospital "shopping" involved?
- What are the locations, configurations, and distributions of the bruises, welts, lacerations, abrasions, or burns?
- Do the injuries appear to have been caused by the hands or an instrument? Can you determine what instrument might have been used?
- Are multiple injuries (in various stages of healing) present?
- Are the injuries in areas commonly targeted in abuse (the back, from the neck to the back of the knees including the shoulders and arms)?
- Can you determine the positions of the offender and the child during the attack?
- Is there any evidence of attempts to hold the child in a certain position or at a certain angle during the attack? Are there such control marks on the wrists, forearms, or biceps?
- Was a careful check made for injuries on the head, mouth, ears, and nose?