Help Stop
Child Abuse

Welcome to Mandated Child Abuse Reporting Training!

Today, you'll learn all about how to recognize the various forms of abuse, how to respond to a child sharing a report of abuse, and who makes a report.

Nationally, we know that:

(Source: www.childhelp.org)

- Child abuse occurs at every socio-economic level, across ethnic and cultural lines and at all levels of education
- Child abuse is reported every 10 seconds on average
- More than 4 children in the United States die each day as a result of child abuse.
- Approximately 70% of the children that die from abuse are under age 4.
- More than 90% of juvenile sexual abuse victims know their perpetrator in some way.
- About 30% of abused and neglected children will abuse their own children.

The Law in Georgia

By Georgia Law, child abuse includes the following acts:

- Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker thereof, by other than accidental means; provided, however, physical forms of discipline may be used as long as there is not physical injury to the child.
- Neglect or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker thereof.
- Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child.

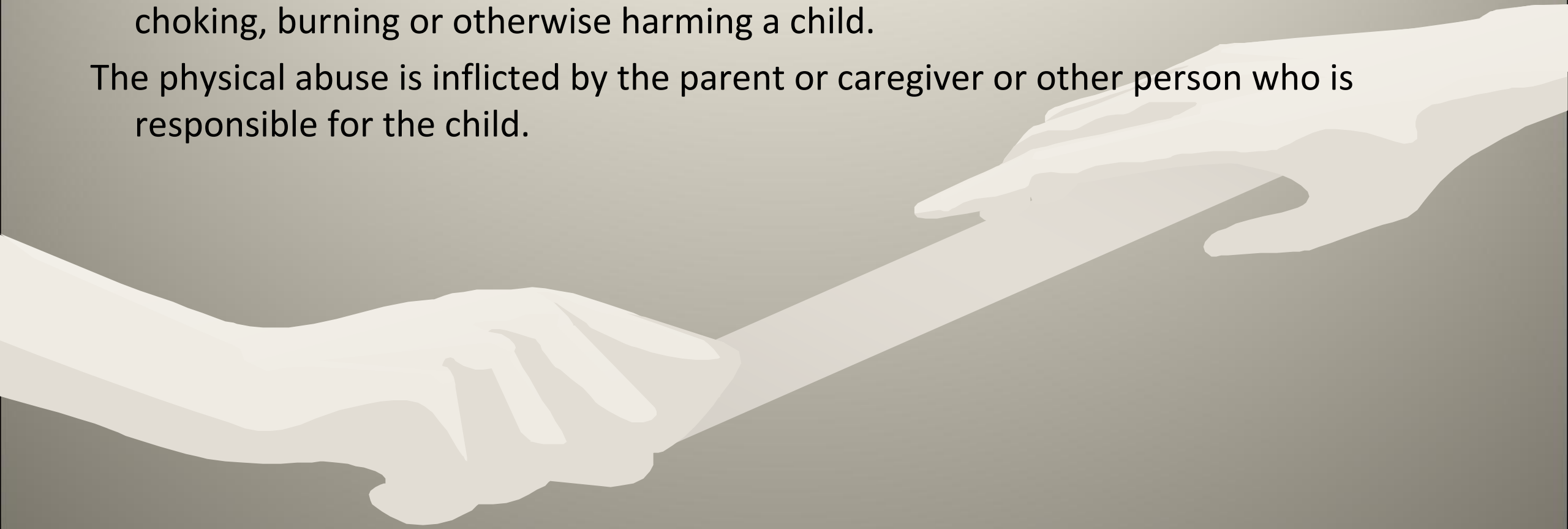
Definition of Child Abuse

"Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker thereof by other than accidental means . . ."
O.C.G.A. § 49-5-180(5)(A).

Definition of Physical Abuse

Non-accidental physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, burning or otherwise harming a child.

The physical abuse is inflicted by the parent or caregiver or other person who is responsible for the child.



Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse

Physical Signs

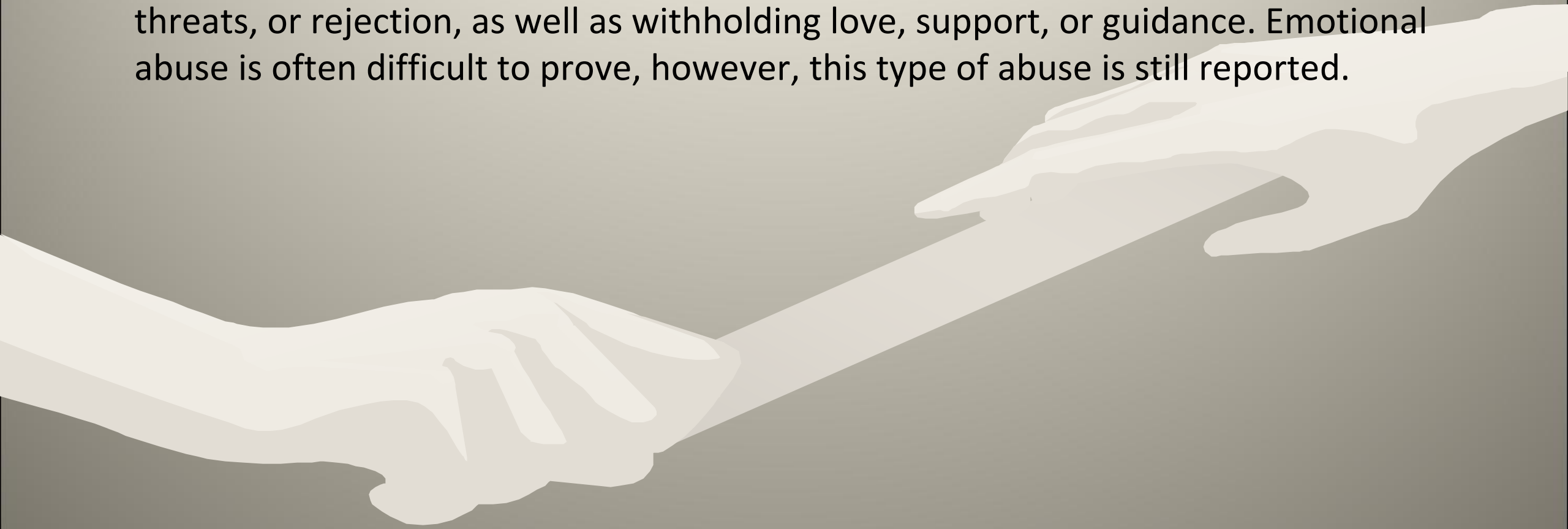
- Unexplained bruises & welts
- Unexplained burns
- Unexplained fractures/dislocations
- Bald patches on scalp

Behavioral Signs

- Cautious of adult contact
- Aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Afraid to go home
- Manipulative behavior
- Poor self-concept

Definition of Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse (or psychological abuse) is a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance. Emotional abuse is often difficult to prove, however, this type of abuse is still reported.



Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

Physical

- Speech disorders
- Behind in physical development
- Failure to thrive
- Hyperactive/disruptive behavior

Behavioral

- Bad Habits
- Conduct/learning disorders
- Behavior extremes
- Suicide attempts
- Behavior development lags

Definition of Neglect

"Neglect or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker if said neglect or exploitation consists of a lack of supervision, abandonment, or intentional or unintentional disregard by a parent or caretaker of a child's basic needs for food, shelter, medical care, or education as evidenced by repeated incidents or a single incident which places the child at substantial risk of harm." O.C.G.A. § 49-5-180(5)(B).

Neglect

Neglect is the failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect may be:

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision)
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment)
- Emotional (e.g., inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs).

Possible Signs of Neglect

Physical Neglect

Not Providing:

- Adequate food & clothing
- Appropriate medical care
- Supervision
- Proper weather protection (heat & coats)

Can include:

- Abandonment

Behavior

- Stealing food
- Constant fatigue
- Inappropriate seeking of attention

. . . more Possible Signs of Neglect

Educational

- Failure to provide appropriate schooling
- Failure to provide special education needs
- Allowing excessive truancies

Psychological

- Lack of any emotional support and love
- Never attending to the child
- Spousal abuse
- Drug & alcohol abuse including allowing child to participate in drug and alcohol use.

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Definition of Sexual Abuse

"Sexual abuse means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in non-consensual sexual activities."

Specific examples are provided in **O.C.G.A. § 49-5-180(8.1).**

Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Pain when urinating
- Excessive masturbation

Behavioral Indicators

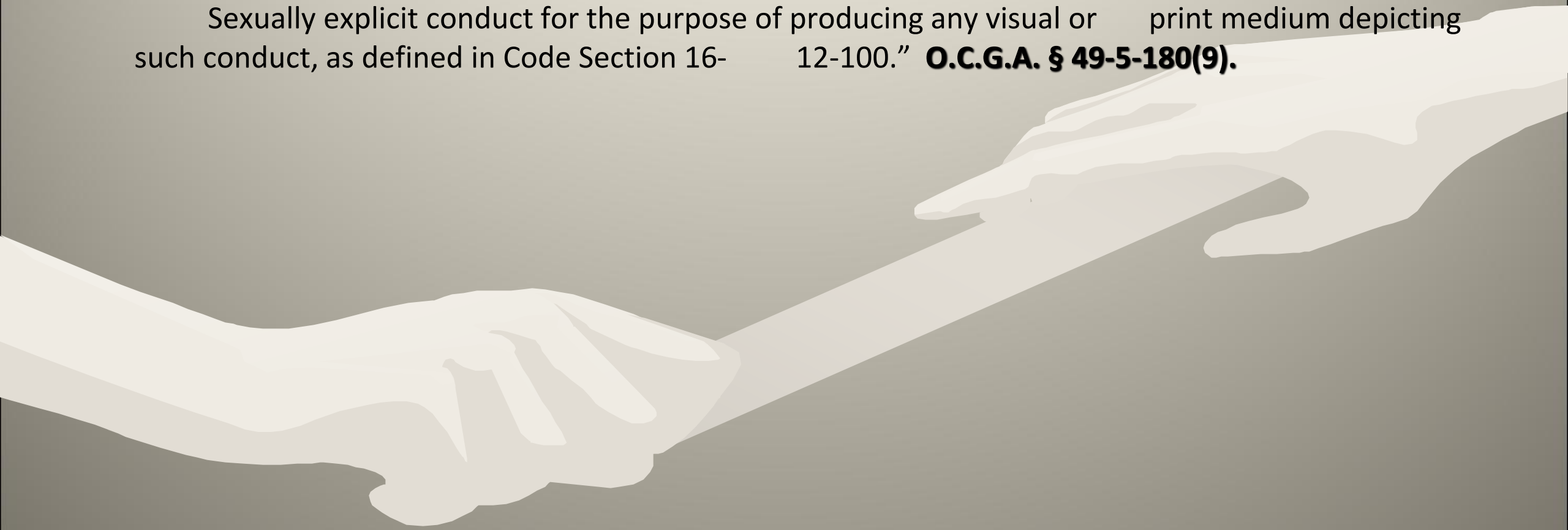
- Sophisticated sexual knowledge
- Aggressive acting out
- Poor peer relationships
- Reports sexual abuse
- Sexually acting out on younger children

Definition of Sexual Exploitation

"conduct by a person who allows, permits, encourages, or requires a child to engage in:

(A) Prostitution, as defined in Code Section 16-6-9; or

Sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual or print medium depicting such conduct, as defined in Code Section 16-12-100." **O.C.G.A. § 49-5-180(9).**



When can a child be left at home alone?

Home Alone

DHR policy states:

- Children 8 or younger should NEVER be left alone.
- Children 9 -12 may be left alone for up to two hours at a time. (based on maturity level)
- Children 13 & older who are sufficiently mature may be left alone and may act as a baby-sitter as authorized by parents or caretakers for up to twelve hours.

A child shares that he or she is being abused.

How to respond is very important!

Some appropriate responses to child/student are…

Good Responses to a Student

- I'm glad you told me.
- It is not your fault this happened.
- (Sexual) abuse is wrong.
- I will do whatever I can to help and support you.

Responses to avoid are…

Responses to Avoid

- Are you sure this is happening?
- Are you telling me the truth?
- Why are you telling me this?
- Let me know if this happens again.
- Why didn’t you stop it?
- What did you do to make this happen?

Who are mandated reporters?

Mandated Reporters

- Georgia Law states that ALL school employees are mandated reporters.
- This includes:
  - ✓Teachers
  - ✓Counselors
  - ✓Administrators
  - ✓Para pros
  - ✓Nurses
  - ✓Bus Drivers
  - ✓Cafeteria Staff
  - ✓Custodial Staff
  - ✓Office Staff
  - ✓And…

ANY OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE!

In addition, Georgia Law says…

- In 2012 House Bill 1176 included anyone volunteering in the school setting including going on field trips must also receive mandatory child abuse training. These volunteers are also mandated to report child abuse immediately.
- Volunteers report abuse or suspected abuse to the school counselor in our school district.

Georgia Law says…

- Reporters are immune from liability.
- Reporting will be kept confidential.
- Failure to report is illegal and considered a misdemeanor.

If information about abuse is shared with a mandated reporter, what should he or she do?

Suspected abuse MUST be reported immediately!

Per O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5,

Again, a report must be made within 24 hours.

Remember <u>every employee and volunteer</u> in the district is a mandated reporter. Every child needs to be treasured, protected and nurtured. When a child is neglected or abused, someone must step in to ensure the child's safety. Hence school counselors report any reasonable suspicion of abuse immediately to the Division of Family and Children Services via Child Protective Services.

Just think . . .

You might just save a student’s life!