Physical Assessment Suggestive of Child Abuse

1. Fractures in children less than 2 years of age.
2. Injuries in various stages of healing.
3. Frequent injuries.
4. Bruises or burns in patterns (e.g. iron or cigarette burns, cord marks, bite or pinch marks, and bruises to head, neck, back or buttocks).
5. Widespread injuries over the body.
6. Obvious physical neglect (malnutrition, lack of cleanliness).
7. Inappropriate dress (e.g. very little clothes in winter).

History Suggestive of Child Abuse

1. The history does not match with the nature or severity of injury.
2. The parents' and/or caregivers' account is vague or changes.
3. The "accident" is beyond the capabilities of the child (e.g. a 12 month old that burns himself by turning on the hot water in the bath tub).
4. There is a delay in seeking help.
5. The parent and/or caregiver may be inappropriately unconcerned about the child's injury.

Characteristics of the Abused Child

1. If less than 5 years old, is likely to be passive.
2. If over 5 years of age, is likely to be aggressive.

3. Does not look to the parent (the abuser) for support, comfort, or reassurance.

4. May cry without any expectation of receiving help.

5. May be quiet and withdrawn.

6. May be fearful of the parent (the abuser).

Characteristics of the Abuser

1. Crosses all religious, ethnic, occupational, educational, and socioeconomic boundaries.

2. May resent or reject the child.

3. May have feelings of worthlessness about self or about the child.

4. May have unrealistic expectations of what the child is capable of doing.

5. May be very critical of the child.

6. Oftentimes the abuser is repeating what was learned as a child (the abuser was more than likely abused as a child).

7. May be overly defensive rather than concerned.