When parents maltreat their children, they are placed in the impossible position of having a parent that is simultaneously their source of safety and their source of fear (Hesse & Main, 2006). This contributes to the development of disorganized attachment and negative beliefs about the trustworthiness of others and negative beliefs about the children’s own self-worth.

IT IS ESTIMATED that 80-90% of maltreated children develop disorganized attachment (Cyr et al., 2010).

Disorganized attachment is especially problematic because it is associated with life long relationship problems and psychopathology.

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**PEERS AND FRIENDS**

Maltreated children are more likely than their non-maltreated peers to...

- Struggle with making and keeping friends
- Exhibit heightened aggression toward peers
- Experience withdrawal from peer interactions
- Have friendships that are characterized by greater conflict and betrayal
- Be involved in relationships that include victimization and manipulation
- View other people's behavior as hostile, and may then respond more aggressively
- Bully other children and are more likely to be bullied by their peers
- Struggle with managing their emotions, which can lead to more aggressive behavior

**SCHOOL**

Maltreated children are more likely than their non-maltreated peers to...

- Repeat a grade
- Achieve lower grades
- Lower educational goals
- Higher rates of expulsion
- More unexcused absences
- Perform worse on standardized tests
- Experience withdrawal from peer interactions

However, having friends can protect maltreated children from feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, and victimization by peers.

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

**CHILD PARENT PSYCHOTHERAPY (CPP)**

Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) is an intervention for parents and their children aged birth to 5 years old. The therapist meets with the parent and child together and works to improve the parent-child relationship. Research shows that it helps improve the attachment relationship among maltreated children.

**INTERPERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR ADOLESCENTS (IPT-A)**

Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Adolescents (IPT-A) is an intervention for teenagers with feelings of sadness or depression. It is a short-term therapy focused on relationships and social support. Recent research shows that it is especially helpful for reducing depressive symptoms among teenagers with maltreatment histories, including sexual abuse.

Learn more about other ways to help at [NCTSN.ORG](http://NCTSN.ORG)

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