

Recognising child abuse

Type of Abuse	Physical examples	Behaviour Indicator
Physical	<p>Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body; • Bruising which reflects hand marks or fingers (from slapping or pinching); • Cigarette burns; • Bite marks; • Broken bones; • Scolds. • Fear of parents being approached for an explanation; • Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts; • Flinching when approached or touched; • Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather; • Depression; • Withdrawn behaviour; • Running away from home.
Emotional	<p>Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, e.g. hospital or away from parents' care; • Sudden speech disorders; • Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress. • Neurotic behaviour, e.g. hair twisting, rocking; • Being unable to play; • Fear of making mistakes; • Self harm; • Fear of parents being approached about their behaviour.
Sexual	<p>Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain or itching in the genital/anal areas;

	<p>part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas; • Sexually transmitted infections; • Vaginal discharge or infection; • Stomach pains; • Discomfort when walking or sitting down; • Pregnancy. • Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn; • Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people; • Having nightmares; • Running away from home; • Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or development level; • Sexual drawings or language; • Bedwetting; • Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia; • Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts; • Saying they have secrets that they can't tell anyone about; • Substance or drug abuse; • Suddenly having unexplained sources of money; • Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence); • Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.
Neglect	<p>Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); • Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; • Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or • Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. <p>It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children; • Constantly dirty or 'smelly'; • Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight; • Inappropriate dress for the conditions. • Complaining of being tired all the time; • Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments; • Having few friends; • Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised.