## Child abuse

## This is taken in part from the UK government website and in part from the NSPCC. I have amended some of the text for ease. Though not a pleasant subject, it’s important in this day and age to have an understanding of the issues and subject matter. We at daisy chain have strict policy guidelines on this and are bound by law to report any cases or suspicions to the Dutch authorities.

## As this is a very emotive subject we would of course follow our policy with the upmost tact discretion and professionalism.

## If you have any suspicions our advice would be to do the same and seek advice.

If you are concerned about the wellbeing of a child, it is important that you report it to the relevant authorities or seek guidance from a professional person. Even if you’re not sure, it's always best to tell professionals about your concerns. Social services and the police can investigate concerns about a child's safety. Daisy chain website lists agencies to contact.

If you think that a child:

* is being abused
* has been harmed in any way
* is likely to suffer harm

You should contact the agencies responsible for Children’s Safety in the area that the child lives.

**What you will be asked**

You will be asked to give information such as:

* where the child lives
* their personal or family details, if known
* who cares for them
* your concerns

## What to report

Child abuse includes:

 Physical

 Sexual

Emotional abuse

Neglect

Even if you are not 100% certain that your suspicions are - it’s OK to report a concern.

## What is child abuse?

Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse.

An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It often happens over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event.

**Types of child abuse**

**Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. But it isn’t just physical violence – domestic abuse includes emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse.

Abusive behaviour can occur in any relationship. It can continue even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be abused or abusers.

Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people.

Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

It's often difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening, because it usually takes place in the family home and abusers can act very differently when other people are around.

**Signs**

Children who witness domestic abuse may:

* become aggressive
* display anti-social behaviour
* suffer from depression or anxiety
* Do not do as well at school - due to difficulties at home or disruption of moving to and from refuges.

**Things you may notice**

If you're worried that a child is being abused, watch out for any unusual behaviour.

* withdrawn
* suddenly behaves differently
* anxious
* clingy
* depressed
* aggressive
* problems sleeping
* eating disorders
* wets the bed
* soils clothes
* takes risks
* misses school
* changes in eating habits
* obsessive behaviour
* nightmares
* drugs
* alcohol
* self-harm
* thoughts about suicide

### Sexual abuse

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Sometimes the child won't understand that what's happening to them is abuse.

They may not even understand that it's wrong.

**How do you define child sexual abuse?**

There are 2 different types of child sexual abuse. These are called contact abuse and non-contact abuse.

**Contact abuse** involves touching activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child, including penetration. It includes:

* sexual touching of any part of the body whether the child's wearing clothes or not
* rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus
* forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity
* Making a child take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate.

**Non-contact abuse** involves non-touching activities, such as grooming, exploitation, persuading children to perform sexual acts over the internet and flashing. It includes:

* encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts
* not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others
* meeting a child following sexual grooming with the intent of abusing them
* online abuse including making, viewing or distributing child abuse images
* allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images
* showing pornography to a child
* Sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child exploitation).

Children who are sexually abused may:

**Stay away from certain people**

* they might avoid being alone with people, such as family members or friends
* They could seem frightened of a person or reluctant to socialize with them.

**Show sexual behaviour that's inappropriate for their age**

* a child might become sexually active at a young age
* they might be promiscuous
* They could use sexual language or know information that you wouldn't expect them to.

**Have physical symptoms**

* anal or vaginal soreness
* an unusual discharge
* sexually transmitted infection (STI)
* Pregnancy.

### Neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs. It's dangerous and children can suffer serious and long-term harm.

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and is the most common form of child abuse.

A child may be left hungry or dirty, without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, medical or health care.

A child may be put in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm.

They may not get the love, care and attention they need from their parents.

A child who's neglected will often suffer from other abuse as well. Neglect is dangerous and can cause serious, long-term damage - even death.

### Worried about a child?

The do something to help, even if just seeking the advice of a trained professional.

## Types of neglect

**Physical neglect**

Failing to provide for and meet a child’s basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter. Failing to adequately supervise a child, or provide for their safety.

**Educational neglect**

Failing to ensure a child receives an education.

**Emotional neglect**

Failing to meet and provide a child’s needs for nurture and stimulation, perhaps by ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them. It’s often the most difficult to prove.

**Medical neglect**

Failing to provide for and give appropriate health care, including dental care and refusal of care or ignoring medical recommendations.

## Meeting a child's needs

Neglect happens when parents or those who care can't or won't meet a child's needs. Sometimes this is because they don't have the skills or support needed, and sometimes it's due to other problems such as mental health issues, drug and alcohol problems or poverty.

Although professionals may be worried about a child, it's not always easy to identify neglect. There's often no single sign that a child or family need help. So, professionals look for a pattern of ongoing neglect before they step in.

## Defining a child's needs

Christine Cooper's parenting checklist gives a description of a child's basic needs. Published in 1985, it is still used by many practitioners today. There are 7 definitions:

### Basic physical care:

* Providing warmth and shelter
* adequate food and rest
* grooming (hygiene)
* protection from danger

### Affection (Which includes)

* physical contact
* holding
* stroking
* cuddling and kissing
* comforting
* admiration
* delight
* tenderness
* patience
* time
* making allowances for annoying behaviour
* and general companionship and approval

### Security

Continuity of care, the expectation of continuing in the stable family unit, a predictable environment, consistent patterns of care and daily routine, simple rules and consistent controls and a harmonious family group.

### Stimulation and innate potential

By praise and encouragement;

* Curiosity and exploratory behaviour
* By developing skills though responsiveness to questions and to play
* By promoting educational opportunities

### Guidance and control

### To teach adequate social behaviour which includes discipline within the child's understanding and capacity and which requires patience and a model for the child to copy, for example in honesty and concern and kindness for others.

### Responsibility

For small things at first such as self-care, tidying playthings or taking dishes to the kitchen and gradually elaborating the decision making that the child has to learn in order to function adequately, gaining experience through his/her mistakes as well as his/her stresses and receiving praise and encouragement to strive to do better.

### Independence

Neglect can have serious and long-lasting effects. It can be anything from leaving a child home alone to the very worst cases where a child dies from malnutrition or being denied the care they need. In some cases it can cause permanent disabilities.

Neglect can be really difficult to identify, making it hard for professionals to take early action to protect a child.

Having one of the signs or symptoms below doesn't necessarily mean that a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple, or persistent, signs then it could indicate there’s a serious problem.

**Children who are neglected may have:**

Poor appearance and hygiene:

They may:

* Be smelly or dirty
* have unwashed clothes
* have inadequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat
* seem hungry or turn up to school without having breakfast or any lunch money
* have frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants

**Health and development problems:**

They may have:

* untreated injuries, medical and [dental issues](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Dental-decay/Pages/Introduction.aspx)
* repeated accidental injuries caused by lack of supervision
* recurring illnesses or infections
* not been given appropriate medicines
* missed medical appointments such as [vaccinations](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/Pages/vaccination-schedule-age-checklist.aspx)
* poor muscle tone or prominent joints
* skin sores, rashes, flea bites, [scabies](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Scabies/Pages/Introduction.aspx) or [ringworm](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Ringworm/Pages/Introduction.aspx)
* thin or swollen tummy
* [anaemia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Anaemia-iron-deficiency-/Pages/Introduction.aspx)
* tiredness
* faltering weight or growth and not reaching developmental milestones (known as failure to thrive)
* poor language, communication or social skills

**Housing and family issues**

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

It isn’t accidental - children who are physically abused suffer violence such as being hit, kicked, poisoned, burned, and slapped or having objects thrown at them. Shaking or hitting babies can cause non-accidental head injuries (NAHI). Sometimes parents or minders will make up or cause the symptoms of illness in their child, perhaps giving them medicine they don’t need and making the child unwell – this is known as fabricated or induced illness (FII).

There’s no excuse for physically. It causes serious, and often long-lasting, harm – and in severe cases, death.

**Physical abuse** Signs, indicators and effects

## Physical symptoms

### [Bruises](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/physical-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/)

* commonly on the head but also on the ear or neck or soft areas - the abdomen, back and buttocks
* defensive wounds commonly on the forearm, upper arm, back of the leg, hands or feet
* clusters of bruises on the upper arm, outside of the thigh or on the body
* bruises with dots of blood under the skin
* a bruised scalp and swollen eyes from hair being pulled violently
* bruises in the shape of a hand or object

### [Burns or scalds](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/physical-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/)

* can be from hot liquids, hot objects, flames, chemicals or electricity
* on the hands, back, shoulders or buttocks; scalds may be on lower limbs, both arms and/or both legs
* a clear edge to the burn or scald
* sometimes in the shape or an implement for example, a circular cigarette burn
* multiple burns or scalds

### Bite marks

* usually oval or circular in shape
* visible wounds, indentations or bruising from individual teeth

### Fractures or broken bones

* fractures to the ribs or the leg bones in babies
* multiple fractures or breaks at different stages of healing

### [Other injuries and health problems](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/physical-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/)

### Emotional abuse

Children who are emotionally abused suffer emotional maltreatment or neglect. It's sometimes called psychological abuse and can cause children serious harm.

Emotional abuse at a glance

Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment or emotional neglect of a child. It’s sometimes called psychological abuse and can seriously damage a child’s emotional health and development.

Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child or isolating or ignoring them.

Children who are emotionally abused are usually suffering another type of [abuse or neglect](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/) at the same time – but this isn’t always the case.

## Official definitions of emotional abuse (England)

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 a child 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 a 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 cyber bullying), 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

# Emotional abuse Signs, symptoms and effects

There often aren’t any obvious physical symptoms of emotional abuse or neglect but you may spot signs in a child's actions or emotions.

Changes in emotions are a normal part of growing up, so it can be really difficult to tell if a child is being emotionally abused.

**Babies and pre-school children who are being emotionally abused or neglected may:**

* be overly-affectionate towards strangers or people they haven’t known for very long
* lack confidence or become wary or anxious
* not appear to have a close relationship with their parent, e.g. when being taken to or collected from nursery etc.
* be aggressive or nasty towards other children and animals

Older children may:

* use language, act in a way or know about things that you wouldn’t expect them to know for their age
* struggle to control strong emotions or have extreme outbursts
* seem isolated from their parents
* lack social skills or have few, if any, friends