

Procedures for reporting child abuse

- The Children's Act lists a number of people who have an obligation to report child abuse to the police, department of social development or designated child protection organisation.
- The Act defines a "designated child protection organization" as an organisation designated in terms of section 107 to perform designated child protection services.
- Once a report has been made, the safety and well-being of the child must be ensured;
- Conduct an investigation and write an assessment report;
- Initiate proceedings if the investigation substantiates the reported child abuse or neglect.
- Take measures to assist the child including counselling, mediation, prevention and early intervention services, family reconstruction or rehabilitation, behaviour modification, problem solving or referral to another suitable qualified person or organization.
- If removing the child is not in his/her best interest, notify the police so that they can take action against the offender.

What parents should do in preventing child abuse?

Support – children at all times.

Understand – that abuse is not any child's fault.

Protect – children need to be believed at all times when they report abuse.

Persevere – encourage children in reporting but supporting them while undergoing emotional situations especially after abuse.



Organise – other parents to form support groups in fighting the scourge of child abuse in schools and communities.

Report – cases of abuse when it happens to them but also when it happens to children.

Take action – Everyone need to know that abuse cannot be tolerated and has no space in the schools and communities.

This information was made possible by:

Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre to end violence against women. They can be contacted @ 011 403 4267

For more information contact the Department of Basic Education:

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Parents Speak Out Against Child Abuse!



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Parents have the responsibility of assisting teachers in managing schools. It is therefore important for them to be informed about roles and responsibilities especially in supporting the prevention of child abuse in schools. It is in their best interest that schools are governed properly in promoting effective teaching and learning.

For purposes of setting the scene, this brochure/pamphlet will share information on Child Abuse.

What is Child Abuse?

Any form of harm or ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on a child. These include but not limited to:

- Assaulting a child or inflict any other form of deliberate injury to a child;
- Sexually abusing a child or allowing a child to be sexually abused;
- Bullying by another child;
- A labour practice that exploits a child; or
- Exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child's psychologically or emotionally.

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse – is an injury resulting from physical aggression. Even if the injury was not intended, the act is considered physical abuse. The injury form physical abuse may be the result of:

- Beating, slapping, or hitting
- Pushing, shaking, kicking, or throwing
- pinching, biting, choking, or hair pulling
- burning with cigarettes, scalding water, or other hot objects
- severe physical punishment including corporal punishment

Sexual Abuse – is any sexual act between an adult and a child, including penetration, intercourse, incest, rape, oral sex. Other examples include;

- fondling – touching or kissing a child's genitals, making a child fondle an adult's genitals
- forcing a child to undress, spying on a child in the bathroom or bedroom
- exposing children to adult sexuality – performing sexual acts in front of a child, exposing genitals, telling 'dirty' stories, showing pornography to a child
- commercial exploitation – sexual exploitation through child prostitution or child pornography
- Incest

Emotional / Psychological Abuse - can be a pattern of behavior by parents or caregivers that can seriously interfere with a child's cognitive, emotional, psychological or social development. It can include:

- ignoring
- rejecting
- exploiting or corrupting
- isolating and;
- verbally assaulting a child

Factors to note contributing to child abuse

- Child abuse is mainly about the abuse of an adult's power, authority and responsibility.
- The power differences between adults and children make it extremely difficult for many children to say no to adults, or to avoid abusive situations.
- Girl children are particularly vulnerable in a society where males take it as their right to own and control the lives of women as well as children

- Socio-economic factors like poverty and unemployment fuel anxiety, frustration and aggression in our communities.
- Survival sex"- where parents exploit their own children for their family to survive.
- Transactional sex such as "sugar daddy" relationships.

Signs and effects of child abuse

- Depression, feelings of guilt, withdrawal, acting out, lowered self-esteem, phobias, nightmares, bedwetting.
- Refusing to go to school and refusing to be left alone with individuals.
- Cutting one's body, attempted suicide, a sense of powerlessness, and distrust of adults.
- Adolescent pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, unusual or excessive itching of the genitals or anal area, bleeding around the vagina or rectum.
- It can persist well into adulthood for some individuals
- Long-term effects can include depression, substance addiction (drugs and alcohol), problems relating sexually to partners, eating disorders, problems associated with trust, self-blame and powerlessness.
- Violence becomes normalized in young children's lives.

Myths contributing to child abuse

- AIDS can be cured if an infected person has sex with a virgin.
- Not having sex is bad for your mental health