

Child Protection in Australia



One of the main responsibilities of a parent is to ensure their children are safe. Causing harm or putting children or young people at risk of harm is against the law.

In Australia, there are national laws that provide guidance on child protection however each state and territory has its own laws that govern how child protection interventions work. There are national principles that each state implements, including:

- what is in the best interest of the child
- the importance of early intervention and support for families
- culturally appropriate care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement
- Principles participation of children and young people in decision- making processes.

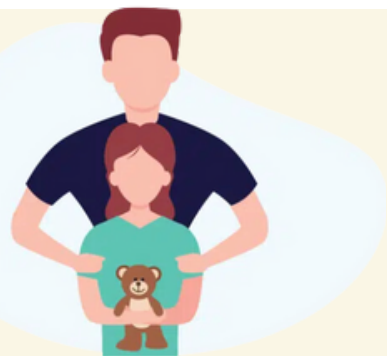
In NSW, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is the main government department that implements the NSW Child Protection laws. However, protecting children from harm is a responsibility shared with the wider community. The law says that DCJ can be called by anyone in the community who thinks a child or young person is at risk of harm. When DCJ gets a report that a child or young person may be at risk, it has the responsibility to establish whether the report is right and to take action where needed.



People who work with families and children are considered mandatory reporters and are legally required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to authorities.

If you think a child or young person is at risk of harm from abuse or neglect, contact the Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11. The helpline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and staffed by qualified caseworkers.

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SEXUAL ABUSE

is when someone involves a child or young person in sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust.

It can include having or sharing sexual images of a child or young person, developing a special relationship with a child or young person to pursue sexual activity, and sexual touching.

A child under 16 years cannot legally consent to sexual activities.

Child sexual abuse is a crime.

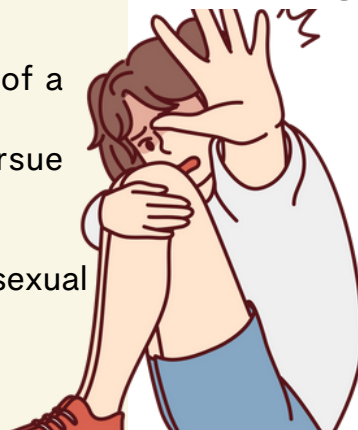
PHYSICAL ABUSE

is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries caused by a parent, caregiver or anyone else.

It might include shaking, slapping

or beating a child (especially around the head, or with a stick, belt or other object), cigarette burns, tying a child up, strangling or female genital mutilation

Serious physical abuse of a child is a crime.



NEGLECT

happens when parents or caregivers are unwilling or unable to give a child or young person what they need for their growth and development (like a safe place to live, food, clothing, medical and dental care, education and adequate care and supervision). This might include keeping a child or young person home from school so they can work in the family business, leaving a young child unsupervised, or expecting them to parent younger siblings.



FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

is when there is violent, abusive or bullying behaviour/actions towards a partner, former partner or family member to scare and control them. It can happen at home or outside the home. It can include coercive control, stalking or tracking, or forcing procedures like marriage or reproductive control.

Children are impacted if they live with a parent or caregiver who is using or experiencing violence, even if they do not witness the violence or are personally abused,

Domestic Violence is a crime.



EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Serious psychological harm can be caused when a parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of a young person or child, especially if it happens repeatedly and over time.

Emotional abuse includes criticising or shaming, withholding affection, isolation, threatening violence, name-calling or public humiliation.



For more information, including translations in many languages, please visit:

<https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/information-for-multicultural-families-and-communities>