

CHILD ABUSE: Recognise & Report



As we restrict our movements again in this third lockdown, children are once again less visible to those professionals who seek to support and protect them – Social isolation due to **COVID-19 makes it harder for authorities to identify child abuse cases.** That's why it's important for essential workers with potential access to family homes to be able to recognise signs of abuse and know where to report their concerns.

Types of abuse:

Neglect

- Lack of care or supervision
- Child deprived of food, clothing, hygiene, safety, mental stimulation, etc.

Physical

- Child is deliberately physically hurt or is at risk of being physically hurt
- E.g.: Shaking child, using excessive force

Emotional

- Child's need for affection, approval, security are not met
- E.g.: Excessive punishment, exposure to domestic violence

Sexual

- Child is used for someone else's sexual gratification/arousal

Possible signs of abuse:

Neglect

- Child says no one is at home to provide care
- Is being cared for by an inappropriate adult
- Is often dirty/has severe body odour
- Lacks enough/appropriate clothing for weather
- Lacks medical or dental care
- Lacks enough food/water
- Begs or steals food/money
- Abuses alcohol/drugs

Physical

- Child has unexplained injuries (burns, bites, bruises, black eyes, broken bones)
- Reports injury by parent/caregiver
- Is scared of parents/caregivers
- Shrinks when approached by adults
- Is scared/anxious, depressed, withdrawn, aggressive
- Abuses animals/pets

Emotional

- Child shows extreme behaviours (is too passive/aggressive or too submissive/demanding)
- Acts too old or too young for their age (e.g. is parenting other children or often rocking/banging head)
- Expresses depressive/suicidal thoughts

Sexual

- Child has difficulty walking/sitting
- Has bleeding, bruising, swelling around private parts
- Attaches very quickly to strangers/new adults
- Shows unusual, sophisticated sexual knowledge or behaviour
- Reports nightmares/bedwetting
- Observes/shares sexual images online
- Parent/caregiver observes/shares sexual images online in presence of children

WHEN to report:

You should report abuse when:

- You witness an incident/sign (outlined above) consistent with abuse
- A child says or indicates in some other way that they've been abused
- An adult or child admits that they've committed abuse
- Another person shares that they've witnessed or know about a child being abused

HOW to report:

- You can report your concerns in person, by phone, or by email to **the local Tusla Children and Family Services centre in the area where the child lives.**
- You can choose to keep your report **anonymous.**
- You should contact Tusla even if you're unsure about reporting; they will talk to you and decide what to do.
- If a child is in immediate danger, contact the Gardaí at 112/999 or www.garda.ie

CONTACTS

www.tusla.ie

TUSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

**If child is in
immediate danger,
contact the Gardaí
at 112/999 or
www.garda.ie**

**Waterford/Wexford
Duty Social Work Team
053 9198201**

You are legally protected:

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 protects you when reporting suspected child abuse to Tusla or an Garda Síochána IF you believe your report is true and your report is not malicious.