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Children First



CHILDREN FIRST

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What is Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time

[Neglect](#) | [Emotional abuse](#) | [Physical abuse](#) | [Sexual abuse](#)

Neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and/or medical care.

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having his or her needs met in terms of necessary supervision and safety. A child whose height or weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation.

The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.

**[Signs & Symptoms of Neglect
\(http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/what-is-abuse/signs-and-symptoms-of-abuse/signs-and-symptoms-of-neglect\)](http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/what-is-abuse/signs-and-symptoms-of-abuse/signs-and-symptoms-of-neglect/)**

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Examples may include:

1. the imposition of negative attributes on a child, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
2. conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions;
3. emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer;
4. unresponsiveness of the parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
5. premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
6. unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself or herself in a certain way;
7. under- or over-protection of the child;
8. failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development;
9. use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
10. exposure to domestic violence;
11. exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology.

Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviour. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

Signs & Symptoms of Emotional Abuse
(<http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/what-is-abuse/signs-and-symptoms-of-abuse/emotional-abuse>)

Physical abuse

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction, or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

Physical abuse can involve:

1. severe physical punishment;
2. beating, slapping, hitting or kicking;
3. pushing, shaking or throwing;
4. pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling;
5. terrorising with threats;
6. observing violence;
7. use of excessive force in handling;
8. deliberate poisoning;
9. suffocation;
10. fabricated/induced illness
11. allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

Signs & Symptoms of Physical Abuse
(<http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/what-is-abuse/signs-and-symptoms-of-abuse/physical-abuse>)

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. Examples of child sexual abuse include:

1. exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;
2. intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
3. masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
4. sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal;
5. sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modeling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse;
6. consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of the criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case under the relevant legislation.

It should be noted that the definition of child sexual abuse presented in this section is not a legal definition and is not intended to be a description of the criminal offence of sexual assault.

Signs & Syntoms of Sexual Abuse (<http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/what-is-abuse/signs-and-syntoms-of-abuse/sexual-abuse>)

Child Protection & Welfare	Alternative Care Services	Family & Community Support	Educational Welfare Services	Domestic, Sexual & Gender Based Violence
Children First (http://www.tusla.ie/services/children-first/)	Foster Care (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/foster-care/)	Family Support (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/)	Statutory Services (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/service-strands/)	Local Services for Women (http://www.tusla.ie/services/dor/sexual-gender-based-violence/rape-crisis-centres/)
Definitions of child abuse (http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/definitions-of-child-abuse/)	Residential Care (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/residential-care/)	Guidance Documents (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/guidance-documents/)	School Support Services (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/school-support-services-under-the-deis-initiative/)	Sexual Assault Treatment (http://www.tusla.ie/services/dor/sexual-gender-based-violence/sexual-assault-treatment-units-satu/)
Advice, Guidance and Support (http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/advice-guidance-and-support/)	Registration and Inspection Service (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/registration-and-inspection-service/)	Family Resource Centres (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/family-resource-centres/)	Information for Parents and Guardians (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/)	Publications (http://www.tusla.ie/services/dor/sexual-gender-based-violence/refuges/)
Reporting Concerns (http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/concerns/)	Special Care (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/special-care/)	Participation Resources (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/family-resource-centres/)	Information for Schools (inc. Absence Reporting) (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/)	
Publications and Forms (http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/publications-and-forms/)	Higher Support (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/high-support/)	Participation Resources (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/family-resource-centres/)	Information for Schools (inc. Absence Reporting) (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/)	
Contact a Social Worker (http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker/)	After Care (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/after-care/)	Participation Resources (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/family-resource-centres/)	Information for Schools (inc. Absence Reporting) (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/)	
	Separated Children (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/separated-children/)	Participation Resources (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/family-resource-centres/)	Information for Schools (inc. Absence Reporting) (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/)	
	Seeking Asylum (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/seeking-asylum/)	Participation Resources (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/family-resource-centres/)	Information for Schools (inc. Absence Reporting) (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/)	
	Adoption Services (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/adoption-services/)	Participation Resources (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/family-resource-centres/)	Information for Schools (inc. Absence Reporting) (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/)	
	Assessment Consultation Therapy Service (ACTS) (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/assessment-consultation-therapy-service-acts/)	Participation Resources (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/family-resource-centres/)	Information for Schools (inc. Absence Reporting) (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/)	
	Parenting 24 Seven (http://www.tusla.ie/services/care/parenting-24-seven/)	Participation Resources (http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-support/family-resource-centres/)	Information for Schools (inc. Absence Reporting) (http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/)	

[consultation-therapy-
service-acts/](http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-community-support/pare/)

[\(http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-
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[Psychology Services
\(http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-
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[Early Years \(Pre School\)
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\(http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-
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