CHILD PROTECTION

CHILD ABUSE INDICATORS Children may experience multiple, overlapping types of abuse or neglect. Harm may be caused by adults, adolescents, or other children. You don't need to be certain, reasonable suspicion is enough to report. Authorities will assess and respond. Contact Child Protection Services in your state/territory

Domestic and Family Violence includes experiencing sustained violence in the home or witnessing an important person being hurt. It can underlie many of the following indicators.

Foetal Abuse refers to harm or risk to an unborn child from maternal substance use or violence during pregnancy.

		Physical	Sexual	Emotional/Psychological	Neglect
Physical indicators	The carer may **see...**	• Patterned bruises or burns *(e.g. belt buckle, cigarettes)* • Injuries at different healing stages • Repeated or unexplained injuries • Head, face, or scalp injuries *(incl. bald patches)* • Fractures in non-mobile children	• Bruising to breasts, thighs, or buttocks • Genital injury, infection or inflammation e.g., UTIs • Discomfort using the toilet or bed-wetting • STIs or foreign bodies in genitals • Anxiety-related illness	• Developmental delay, failure to thrive or gain weight • Bed-wetting or diarrhoea without clear cause • Difficulties in recognising, expressing, and managing emotions	• Ongoing medical, dental, or hygiene neglect • Chronic rashes, lice or poor nutrition • Consistently unsupervised • Inappropriate clothing or inadequate food • Neglect may not be deliberate
Behavioural indicators	The child may **say...**	• Unlikely differing stories of how an injury occurred • "Someone hurt me" • "I don't want to go home" • "I don't want to go with that person"	• "I don't like (name)" • Nightmares or can't sleep • "I want to run away from home" • "I'm not hungry" – frequently • Detail abuse	• "I am no good" • That someone says they are "bad" • "I want to run away from home" • Mimics what was said to them, to others	• "I'm not hungry" (frequently) • "No-one wants to play with me" • "I have no friends" • May not say much at all
	The child may **be...**	• Fearful or startled when touched • Shy, withdrawn, passive or uncommunicative • Overly compliant • Aggressive or disruptive	• Reluctant to participate in activities • Promiscuous or displaying advanced sexual knowledge • Lacking trust in others	• Withdrawn or overly dependent • Extremely demanding or constantly seeking attention • Fearful of consequences - may lie	• Constantly tired, hungry or lethargic • Disengaged or socially isolated • Irregular in attendance • Demand food or attention
	The child may **display...**	• Flinching if approached • Unlikely or differing stories about injuries • Poor personal hygiene • Behaviour that takes on an adult role	• Scratching or touching genital area • Poor peer relationships • Sexualised behaviour or knowledge beyond developmental stage, especially toward other children	• Signs of depression • Alienated from peers • Mimicking negative language or behaviour • Avoiding eye contact or interaction	• Poor hygiene • Begging or stealing food • Delay in social or emotional development