

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

All babies and children need protecting from harm, this safeguarding factsheet will help you understand more about safeguarding and what the Early Years Foundation Years Statutory Framework requires of your childcare provider (including your reception class in school).

APPLICABLE TO
Parents and carers

KEY POINTS

Safeguarding is an umbrella term for the things we do in order to ensure that all children are safe from harm.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the framework for all registered providers caring for babies and children from birth until the 31st August following their 5th birthday. The EYFS refers to safeguarding and welfare requirements, here 'safeguarding' refers to the things we do to help all children to be safe and well, including: child protection, recruitment of suitable people, medication, accidents, illness and emergencies, suitability of the premises and equipment, health and safety.

The EYFS states that 'providers must be alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Providers must have and implement a policy and procedures to safeguard children.' This factsheet explains about child protection. Child protection means protecting children from physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect and knowing what to do if you are worried that a child is being abused.

You will be asked not to use your mobile phone or to take photos whilst dropping off and collecting from a childcare setting.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

Every EYFS setting has to have a designated person to take lead responsibility for safeguarding. Children's social care (and, in emergencies, the police) should be notified if there are concerns about the safety or welfare of a child.

It is important that all childcare professionals understand how to respond to any concerns regarding child protection, but child protection is everybody's business. As a parent/carer it is important to have an awareness of child

protection and knowledge of what to do if you have a concern about a child's welfare or the actions/behaviours of a staff member. Anyone who has concerns should make a referral to the local authority children's social care (You can find details on how to do so on your Local Authority website under 'Local Safeguarding Children Board'). Referrals (concerns for a child's welfare) may come from: children themselves, parents, teachers, a GP, the police, health visitors, family members and members of the public, etc.

WHAT IS CHILD PROTECTION?

There are 4 categories of abuse identified under the term of child protection – physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect. It is an essential requirement that all practitioners understand what the categories of abuse are and what the signs and symptoms are for each. Equally as parents and carers too, it is also good to have an awareness of these.

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Of course children fall and bump themselves as part of growing up, this is not physical abuse. It is important to talk to your child's key person about any known injuries your child has. It is equally important for your childcare provider to inform you of any accidents and injuries that your child has whilst with them.

Some of the signs that a child may be being physically abused are:

- Children with frequent injuries;
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; and
- Children with unexplained:
bruises or cuts;
burns or scalds; or
bite marks.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. Emotional abuse can be very difficult to spot but sometimes over a period of time there are signs. This could include deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. Not giving a child opportunities to express their

views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

There are more obvious signs of emotional abuse in the form of bullying. This includes online bullying by a child's peers through social networks, online games or mobile phones.

Some of the signs that a child may be being emotionally abused are:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong;
- Parents, carers or adults who withdraw their attention from a child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder';
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is not what happens to everyone. Sexual abuse can have a serious and long-term impact on mental health.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Some of the signs that a child may be being sexually abused are:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have;
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and

WHAT IS CHILD PROTECTION?

- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.

Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Like emotional abuse neglect is not always straightforward to identify. Neglect can also be present in an unborn child through drug and substance abuse for example.

Some of the signs that a child may be being neglected are:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;
- Children who are left hungry or dirty;
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat;
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence;
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;
- Children who fail to receive basic health care; and
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment – a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Nowadays children have increasingly more access to the internet on smart phones, tablets or computers. There is a lot of advice and support available on-line to help keep your children safe on-line, e.g. set up passwords on your phone, tablets and computers. Use the parental controls to help ensure that they are viewing appropriate content – remember that when using free wi-fi whilst out and about that the parental controls may not be activated.... Talk to your child about how to stay safe on-line, why not access Child Exploitation and Online Safety E-learning training via the PACEY website? Although it is written for childcarers this provides information about protecting children on line and understanding the risks involved in using technology. See pacey.org.uk/training-and-qualifications/training-from-pacey/online-training/child-exploitation-and-online-safety-e-learning/ for more information.

Other Types of Abuse

Domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutation, child trafficking are more examples of child abuse – for more information please visit the site: nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/

REFERENCES

Department for Education Early Years Foundation Stage (2014)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - a guide to practitioners (2015)

Prevent Duty Guidance (2015)

RESOURCES

PACEY IS THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS

We promote best practice and support childcare professionals to deliver high standards of care and learning. We have 30,000 members – childminders, nannies and nursery workers – working around England and Wales. Every day they demonstrate their commitment to the highest standards of care and help children get the best start in life.