

Safeguarding 7 minute briefing: Physical Abuse

Remember.....

- Children may suffer physical abuse in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others.
- Children suffer physical abuse by an adult or adults or by another child or children
- Anyone can make a referral. Speak up!

What should you do if you have concerns?

- Talk to your DSL/DDSL. This couldn't be more important!
- Report the concern using the school's reporting system
- Follow up with your DSL/DDSL to see what action has been taken

Effects of Physical Abuse

- anxiety
- behaviour issues
- criminal behaviour
- depression
- eating disorders
- obesity
- risky sexual behaviour
- suicidal thoughts and/or attempts



What is Physical Abuse?

Deliberately physically hurting a child in a variety of different forms: hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Babies and disabled children also have a high risk of suffering physical abuse. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

What causes Physical Abuse?

Adults who physically abuse children may have:

- emotional or behavioural problems such as a difficulty controlling anger
- family or relationship problems
- experienced abuse as a child
- parenting difficulties inc. unrealistic expectations of children, not understanding a child's needs or not know how to respond
- health issues

Signs and Indicators

- 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.

Signs and Indicators- bumps and bruises

Bumps and bruises don't necessarily mean a child is being physically abused – all children have accidents, trips and falls. There's isn't one sign or symptom to look out for that will say a child is definitely being physically abused. But if a child often has injuries, there seems to be a pattern, or the explanation doesn't match the injury, then this should be investigated.

[Click here for quiz](#)

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