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A guide for mums, dads and carers of children
aged **4-11** years



Blackpool Safeguarding
Children Board



Welcome

Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) seeks to support parents and carers of children in the challenging and demanding task of raising and nurturing children to attain their full potential. We are very aware of the many pressures facing children, their parents and carers in the modern world and the need for support and advice to be available when appropriate.

This handbook for mums, dads and carers of children aged 4-11 years is a practical guide covering real issues that may be encountered by parents and carers. You will also find some useful contact numbers and website addresses where you can find further information. I hope that you find the contents both useful and informative.

Dennis Charlton
Chair
Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board

This handbook is one of two covering parenting issues from 4-18 years of age. These handbooks are available on the NHS Blackpool website at

www.blackpool.nhs.uk

or the Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board website at

www.blackpoolscb.org.uk



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Bedwetting and sleeping difficulties

How can I help my child?

// I tried to not get cross when I had to change the sheets again, and made sure I praised her for going all night without wetting the bed. It's made a huge difference and she's dry most nights now. //

- » Bedwetting may be a sign of a health problem but more often your child will learn to control their bladder at their own pace
- » Each child's sleep pattern is different
- » Sort out a bedtime routine
- » If your child often wakes in the night try to find out why

Between the ages of three and four years your child is likely to be dry during the day, with the odd accident. Remember, this is often not an instant change but a gradual process where more and more nights will be dry nights.

Bedwetting

It is not easy to know why some children take longer to be dry at night than others. However, bedwetting is not due to laziness or lack of will power. Although this may be stressful for you and your child, try not to lose your patience. It is rare for a child to wet or soil on purpose. If, after the age of seven, your child often wets their bed, the problem may be caused by a number of things. Talk to your child and reassure them that other older children experience this too. Discuss any concerns about your child with your doctor, health visitor or school nurse.

Sleeping difficulties

There are many different reasons why young children do not sleep through the night. Try to have a bedtime routine as this will help your child to relax. If you are often woken up during the night, arrange for a relative or friend who you trust to care for your child sometimes so that you can get some sleep.

Establishing a routine

Many children have difficulty getting to sleep at some time. It is important to get a regular night time sleep routine for your child by putting them to bed at a regular time each night. Make sure their room is warm and comfortable for them to relax in. Reading to your child at bedtime helps your child to unwind and relax. If your child is scared of the dark, try using a night light. A few favourite toys in the bed will be a comfort if your child wakes up during the night.



WARNING SIGNS

There may be none, but does your child seem to be unhappy? Has something happened in the family or in your child's life that is worrying them?



ACTION

Stay calm. Ensure your child goes to the toilet just before going to bed. Discuss any concerns with your health visitor, school nurse or doctor. Seek support for yourself.



WHAT TO SAY

Give your child the chance to discuss their feelings with you. Praise your child when they sleep through the night and don't tell your child off if they wet the bed.



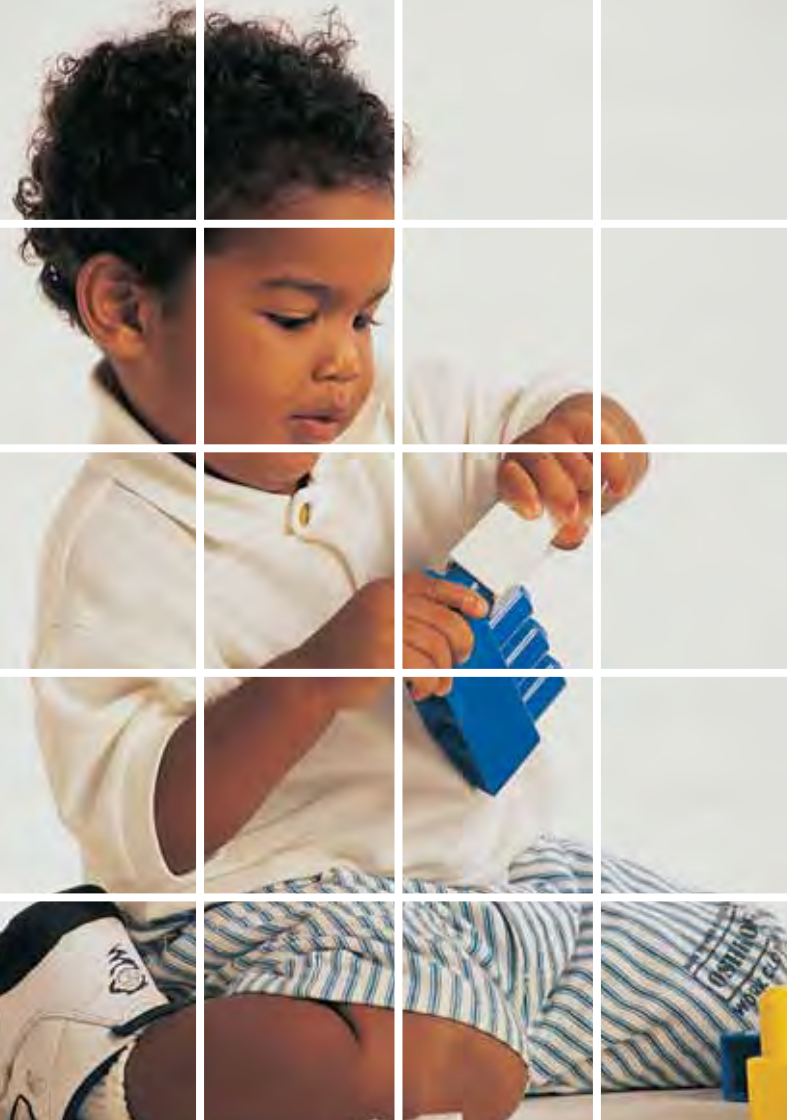
PREVENTION

Encourage your child to talk to you. If you want advice about things you can do to try to prevent wetting, discuss this with your health visitor, doctor or school nurse.



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor, school nurse or doctor
- Education & Resources for Improving Childhood Continence (ERIC)
0845 370 8008
www.eric.org.uk



Building blocks for good behaviour

Positive feedback

// I tell James off if he's naughty but I don't like criticising him too much. Hurtful comments could damage his confidence. I think it's better to highlight his good behaviour - that way he wants to behave well for me.



- » Children want approval so childhood is a good time to teach them positive behaviour
- » Use positive feedback to build up your child's self-esteem
- » Praise your child, explain why you're pleased with them
- » Children are happier if they have rules to follow
- » Use play to teach your child about good behaviour, too

Every day, your child learns new things. It's what makes childhood such an exciting time. Your child will learn from you and your example.

As a parent, you have an important job as you teach them about your values and beliefs. Start this when they're young and you'll see all your hard work pay off in the future when they grow into a happy teenager.

Childhood is a good time to teach them good behaviour because they respect and want to be close to you. Using positive feedback is a great idea. That means giving lots of praise to build up your child's self-esteem and talking about their strengths and not their weaknesses. Your opinion of your child has a huge impact on what they think of themselves and so being too critical can damage their confidence.

When your child does something good, praise them and explain why. So rather than saying, "Good girl" when they put their toys away, say, "You're a good girl for putting your toys away and helping me." Your child will learn the value of good behaviour.

You can use positive feedback when your child is misbehaving too. Make it clear that you're upset about their behaviour, not them. For example, instead of saying "You're a very silly child" if they do something wrong, try saying "That was a very silly thing to do". That way, your child won't see themselves as a bad person and will know they have the power to change their behaviour.

It's up to you to set rules and boundaries in your child's life - most children are happier living with rules. Be consistent. For example, don't tell your child off for jumping on the table one minute and then let them do it the next. Rules work better if your child knows why they exist.

Have fun with your child. Life is often so busy that many parents don't have time to sit down and spend time playing with their child. Play is important because it helps your child feel good about themselves. Having fun with your child is as important as them having their own friends and hobbies.



WARNING SIGNS

Is your child's self-esteem low? Do they say things like, "I'll never be able to do this right"? If so, their confidence has been damaged somehow.



ACTION

What you say to your child and how you treat them can hugely influence their behaviour as they grow up. Develop a good relationship with them before they reach their teens.



WHAT TO SAY

Praise your child when they're good and when they have done something difficult. Don't lose your temper when you discipline your child. Make it clear you're unhappy with their behaviour, not them as a person.



PREVENTION

You can help prevent problem behaviour when your child gets older by putting in the hard work now - it really is worth it!



CONTACTS

• Your local doctor, health visitor or school nurse



Bullying

The real story

// I knew something was wrong. They always singled her out. I'm so glad she talked to me as together we have sorted it out. //

- Bullying behaviour is **never** acceptable
- Bullying can take many forms
- Talk to your child if you think they are being bullied
- Speak to your child's school immediately if you have any concerns
- Children need to know how to protect themselves and get help
- Encourage them to speak up
- Your child could be pressurised into doing something they do not want to by their friends



What is bullying?

Bullying is deliberate, is meant to cause hurt or harm, is repeated and involves an imbalance of power. It can be carried out physically, verbally or in cyberspace - that means by text or email. Bullying is a frightening experience and it can make your child feel alone, damage their self-confidence and make them feel they are the only one this happens to. Bullying can have negative long-term effects, leading to depression and low self-esteem

What you can do:

- Listen to them and discuss ideas on how to sort the problem out.
- Plan what to do next together.
- Refer to the school Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Get them to write a bullying report, or write it for them listing all the incidents and take it to the school.
- Get them to keep a bullying diary.
- Meet with the school to work out a plan.
- If you are unhappy with the meeting or the action taken by the school to support your child follow the school complaints procedure.

Cyberbullying is a method of bullying and can be through text or email messages. Physical and verbal bullying are more common at this age.

Your child could be bullied into doing something they do not want to by their friends. Tell them that just because everyone else is doing something (like being horrible to someone) they do not need to follow the crowd. This is called 'peer pressure'.

Look out for unexplained injuries, missing items or money. They may be acting in a secretive way. If your child is being bullied they may not want to bother you about it. You need to know so that you can help this to stop. Bullying can happen at home with brothers or sisters. Point out that they should respect one another.

If your child is the 'bully' tell them this is wrong and help support them in stopping. Often children bully because they need help themselves and can be a result of an experience they have had. Try to be understanding.



WARNING SIGNS

Running away, staying away from school or unusual changes in behaviour, injuries with no explanation and loss or damage of their things.



ACTION

If they say they are being bullied - listen carefully and take this seriously. Talk to the school.



WHAT TO SAY

Tell them to refuse to put up with bullying, walk away, tell someone and avoid fighting. Listen and be there for them. Make sure they know something will be done.



PREVENTION

Talk to them about their school day. Teach them to respect others and to be kind. Teach them that prejudice and bullying is unacceptable.



CONTACTS

- Bully Free Zone
01253 295555
www.bullyfreezone.co.uk
- www.bullying.co.uk
- www.childline.org.uk
0800 1111
- www.kidscape.org.uk
08451 205 204
- www.ceop.police.uk



Childminding and daycare

How do I make the right choice?

// I was very careful to visit and discuss his needs at the after-school club. It now means I can work a full day knowing his needs are being met and that he is in a safe place. //

- » All registered childcare in England must meet national standards
- » Recommendations from friends are helpful but you should visit the childcare provider and ask to see their latest Ofsted inspection report
- » Financial support is available for many families to help pay for childcare
- » The NSPCC advise that the minimum age for a babysitter should be 16 years as then they are likely to be more aware of potential dangers and risks and could get help quickly if needed

Parents are often the best judge of which type of childcare suits their child. When you leave your child in the care of others, you should check that their needs are being met and respected. Make sure that your child is left in a safe place with well trained and experienced staff.

The main types of childcare are:

Group based

Full day care providers or day nurseries provide learning, development and care for children from birth to age five, called the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Different types of nurseries include private and voluntary, which must be registered and inspected by Ofsted.

Sessional daycare

Providers or pre-school playgroups provide play and education lasting a couple of hours for children aged two to five. They are usually registered and inspected by Ofsted.

Wraparound care

Provides childcare for three to four year olds who are attending a nursery education setting.

Breakfast clubs

Provide a safe place for children before school. These clubs are not registered with Ofsted and the staff who supervise them do not have to be qualified. Before and after-school and holiday clubs are usually registered and are often based on school premises.

Home based

Childminders are self-employed child carers who look after children in their own home. They must be registered with Ofsted and can offer flexible childcare including before and after school. Four or more childminders working together must register as Childcare on Domestic Premises.

Home child carers

Are often referred to as nannies or au pairs and care for children in the child's own home and often live in. They do not have to register with Ofsted but may choose to do so.

Ensure you have recommendations and that you feel confident leaving your child in their care.



WARNING SIGNS

Sometimes, children are not always able to tell you if something is wrong so look out for changes in their moods, what they do and physical appearance.



ACTION

Discuss your concerns with the childminder or the person in charge. If you are not satisfied with their response, contact the Family Information Service or Ofsted.



WHAT TO SAY

Tell your child who will be looking after them, where you are going, how long for and who they need to ask for their daily needs.



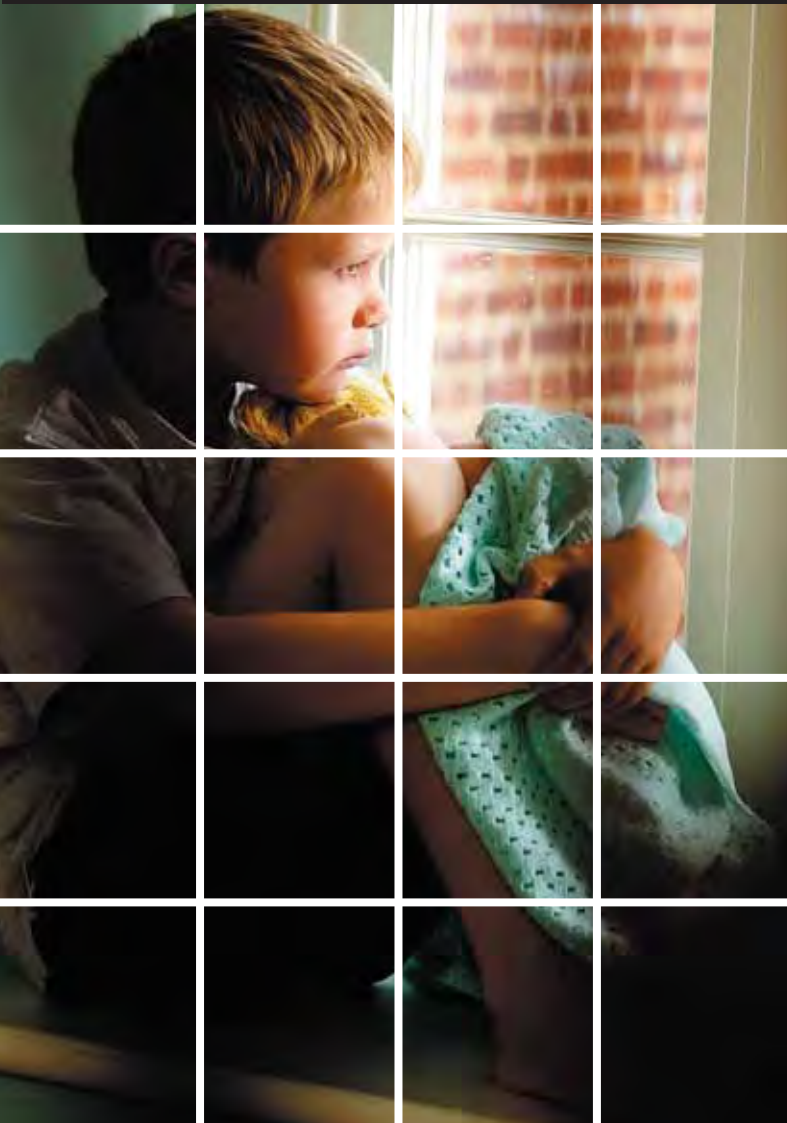
PREVENTION

Get recommendations. Look for experienced staff. Visit the place where your child will be cared for. Make sure you know what happens in emergencies.



CONTACTS

- Blackpool Family Information Service 0800 092 2332 www.blackpool.gov.uk
- www.ofsted.gov.uk 0300 123 1231
- www.daycaretrust.org.uk 0845 872 6251
- www.nspcc.org.uk 0808 800 5000



Children left alone

Common sense and the law

// *When mum goes out, I lock the door from the inside. She calls through the letterbox to say goodbye. I leave the lights on in case anyone tries to get in. Mum usually comes home in the night when I am asleep.* //

- » Children under 13 years should not be left at home alone
- » Children are not ready for this much responsibility
- » Leaving a child alone places them at risk of harm
- » It can be a lonely and frightening experience for them
- » Plan who you could contact for emergency care

If a child is not ready to be left alone they can feel sad, lonely and frightened. It can also be dangerous.

There are many possible risks, both physical and emotional. You can't rely on a child to let you know how much care they need. They may say that they do not mind being left and may find it fun at first, but they cannot fully know the possible risks and how to handle them.

Even ordinary things that happen in life can cause problems, such as being hungry, the weather outside getting stormy, the phone ringing or someone coming to the front door. They may also feel ill or there could be an accident or power cut. These are not things that a child would know how to deal with.

You should never leave your child and assume that someone will look out for them, unless you have already spoken to a trusted friend or neighbour and asked them to keep an eye out.

The police or social services may have to take action if they think that a child has been neglected by being left alone. Neglect happens when a parent or carer does not meet children's basic needs of food, shelter, security, attention or protection from danger.

Children under the age of 13 should not be left alone. While this is not the law, it is suggested as good practice. Children under this age cannot manage the responsibility of being left alone and this may be particularly true if they have a disability.

As a young person grows older, leaving them alone after school, for an evening or during the day is less worrying as long as they are prepared and know what to do if they are worried or need anything. Preparation for this is vital. If your child is 13 or over and you feel they can deal with this, tell them where you will be and who to contact in an emergency.



WARNING SIGNS

Parents who have limited support. A child who is often seen outside and all alone for long periods of time. Childcare arrangements that keep going wrong.



ACTION

If there is immediate risk of harm to a child, call the police.



WHAT TO SAY

If you are worried about a child being left alone, talk to the parent, a health visitor, school nurse, teacher or a social worker.



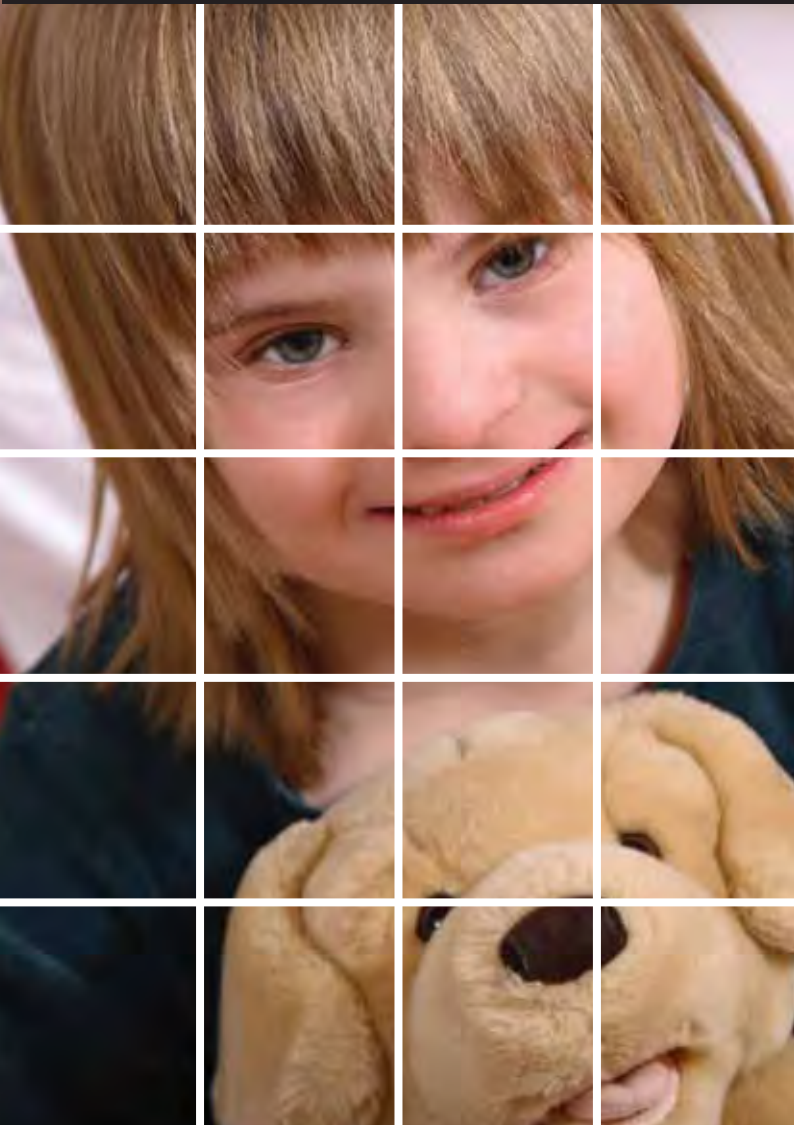
PREVENTION

Think about shared childminding and discuss this with neighbours, friends or other parents you have contact with. Find out about after-school clubs and holiday play schemes.



CONTACTS

- Blackpool Family Information Service 0800 092 2332
- www.nspcc.org.uk (leaflet on leaving children at home) 0808 800 5000
- Police 999 in an emergency or Police Enquiries 0845 125 3545 for general advice
- ChildLine 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk



Children with a disability

You're not alone

// When I found out that Josie had a disability I didn't know how I was going to cope. I just didn't think I'd be able to do it alone. Pretty soon I realised I didn't have to. You're not alone. //

- » Your child is protected by the Disability Discrimination Act
- » The Government, your local council, education and health authorities are there to help
- » You may be able to receive financial help to help you care for your child
- » Support groups and other organisations are out there to help you cope

Support and advice

The word 'disability' covers a very wide range of different conditions. Remember you and your child are not alone, there are support groups and organisations available to help you cope.

Legal protection

Your child is protected by law. The Disability Discrimination Act says it is against the law for anyone providing a service (including schools, businesses and organisations) to treat people with a disability less fairly than other people because of their disability. It also asks them to make reasonable adjustments to their services (like ramps or disabled toilets) so that people with a disability can use them too.

Health

Your doctor and local health service will give you the help and advice you need to discover and assess your child's disability. They'll help you plan the treatment, therapy, equipment and ongoing medical care that your child may need.

Benefits

There are several benefits that you could receive to help you with the costs of caring for a child with a disability. You should also get free dental treatment and prescriptions, help with the cost of glasses and sometimes help with travel to hospital, school meals and even not having to pay road tax.

Education

Depending on their kind of disability, your child may get better results by going a special school (a place specifically designed to meet their educational needs) or to a mainstream school with extra support through special needs provision. Your local authority and health service providers will help you assess your child's special educational needs and help you find the best way forward for their education.

Make contact

You're not alone, so make contact today and get the support you need.



WARNING SIGNS

Some disabilities are spotted early whilst others take time to appear or happen suddenly. If you think your child may have some form of disability, contact your health visitor, school nurse or doctor for advice.



ACTION

Don't think you have to go it alone. Get as much information as you can about your child's condition. Find out what services, support, benefits and advice is available and make contact.



WHAT TO SAY

Many organisations are set up to give support and advice to parents of children with a disability. Contact them and tell your story. There will be others out there in the same situation as you.



PREVENTION

You can't stop your child's condition but you can help by making sure that they get the best support available, by remembering they have rights.



CONTACTS

- www.blackpool.gov.uk
- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk 0845 4647
- www.carersuk.org 0808 808 7777
- www.cafamily.org.uk 0808 808 3555
- Benefit Enquiry Line 0800 882 200 www.direct.gov.uk



Choosing children's activities

Have fun and be safe

// *There are so many activities to choose from in local communities and parents and carers want to encourage children and young people to take part. But how do they know if they are safe?* //

- » Children have a right to have fun and be safe
- » Organisations should welcome questions about themselves and their activities
- » You have the right to the same standards of care from all organisations
- » Listen to your child and ask questions about the activities they take part in

Check it out

A good organisation will welcome questions about their activities and the safety of their surroundings. They should have a Child Protection Policy, including guidelines about keeping children safe and safer recruiting of staff and volunteers.

Questions you may want to ask:

- Are the staff and volunteers suitable to work with children?
- Is there a written code of behaviour?
- How does the organisation manage staff and volunteers?
- How does the organisation provide for personal care needs?
- Does the organisation have a Health and Safety Policy?
- What are the arrangements when children go on outings?
- Have the staff been CRB checked?

Be wary of:

- Behaviour that encourages rough play, sexual innuendo or embarrassing punishments.
- Staff who take charge and operate independently of guidelines.
- Staff who show favouritism or personally reward specific children.
- Staff who encourage inappropriate physical contact.
- Poor communication and lack of

parental involvement, leaving you feeling uneasy.

- Invitations for children to spend time alone with staff or volunteers.

Remember, listen to your children and ask questions about the activities they take part in.

Safe at all times

Parents and carers have a right and a responsibility to ensure that children are safe. Daycare activities, such as pre-school playgroups and crèches, are required to register with the local authority. Not all organisations have to register, yet they still have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for your child.

Voicing concerns

Organisations should tell you what to do if you or your child have any concerns. If you are concerned you must take action:

- Speak to other parents.
- Speak to the leader in charge.
- If you are not confident that they are the right person, talk to someone more senior.
- If you are unhappy about the response you receive, remove your child and contact the local authority for advice.



WARNING SIGNS

Activities where parents are discouraged from staying to watch or becoming involved. Children who drop out or stop going to an activity for no apparent reason. Behavioural changes.



ACTION

Find out as much information as you can about the organisation - ask other parents. Don't be afraid to ask questions.



WHAT TO SAY

Are the staff and volunteers suitable? What are their policies on child protection?



PREVENTION

Find out as much as you can before letting your child join an organisation or activity.



CONTACTS

- Blackpool Family Information Service 0800 092 2332 www.blackpool.gov.uk
- Children's Social Care (see Useful contacts page 47)
- www.nspcc.org.uk 0808 800 5000
- www.direct.gov.uk



Domestic abuse

How does it affect children?

// I crept downstairs because I heard arguing. Dad was shouting at Mum. I made sure that my sister did not see, but we still heard. //

- » Many children witness domestic abuse every year
- » Children often blame themselves for domestic abuse
- » Domestic abuse can affect children in serious and long-lasting ways
- » Domestic abuse is rarely a one off, but it usually gets worse and more frequent over time
- » Pregnant women are more vulnerable to domestic abuse
- » Where domestic abuse occurs in families, alcohol is often a factor

Domestic abuse is a major social problem affecting many families. It includes threatening behaviour, violence, psychological, sexual, financial or emotional abuse. It also includes forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so-called honour killings.

Children who see or hear violence can be affected in many different ways. Children do hear, they do see, and they are aware of violence in the family. They will learn how to act from what their parents do. It teaches children negative things about relationships and how to deal with people. For example:

- It can teach them that violence is the way to sort out arguments.
- They learn how to keep secrets.
- They often do not trust those close to them and think they are to blame for the violence, especially if it happens after an argument about them.

Many people find it difficult to understand why people stay in or return to violent situations. Fear, love, the risk of homelessness and financial issues can make it very difficult for partners with children to leave and some may just not want to.

Short-term effects

Children are affected in many ways by domestic abuse, even after a short time. These effects includes feeling frightened, becoming shy and quiet, bedwetting, running away, becoming aggressive, poor behaviour, issues with school, poor concentration and emotional upset.

Long-term effects

The longer children are around domestic abuse, the worse the effects on them are. These can include:

- A lack of respect for the non-violent parent.
- Loss of self-confidence, which will affect how they form relationships in the future.
- Being over-protective of the non-abusing parent.
- Loss of childhood.
- Problems at school.
- Running away.

If you are worried about domestic abuse, talk to someone who understands such as your health visitor, school nurse or the National Domestic Violence Helpline. If you are violent and have children, you need to seek help to stop what is happening.



WARNING SIGNS

Any abuse between adults will negatively affect children. Seek support and help as soon as possible. The longer it lasts the more damaging domestic abuse is.



ACTION

Report your concerns about yourself or someone else to the police. If you are worried that your child might be affected, talk to them about what is happening. Spend time together talking through the worries they have.



WHAT TO SAY

Children need time to talk about the feelings they have about abuse or violence. They need to know it is not their fault and that this is not the way it should be.



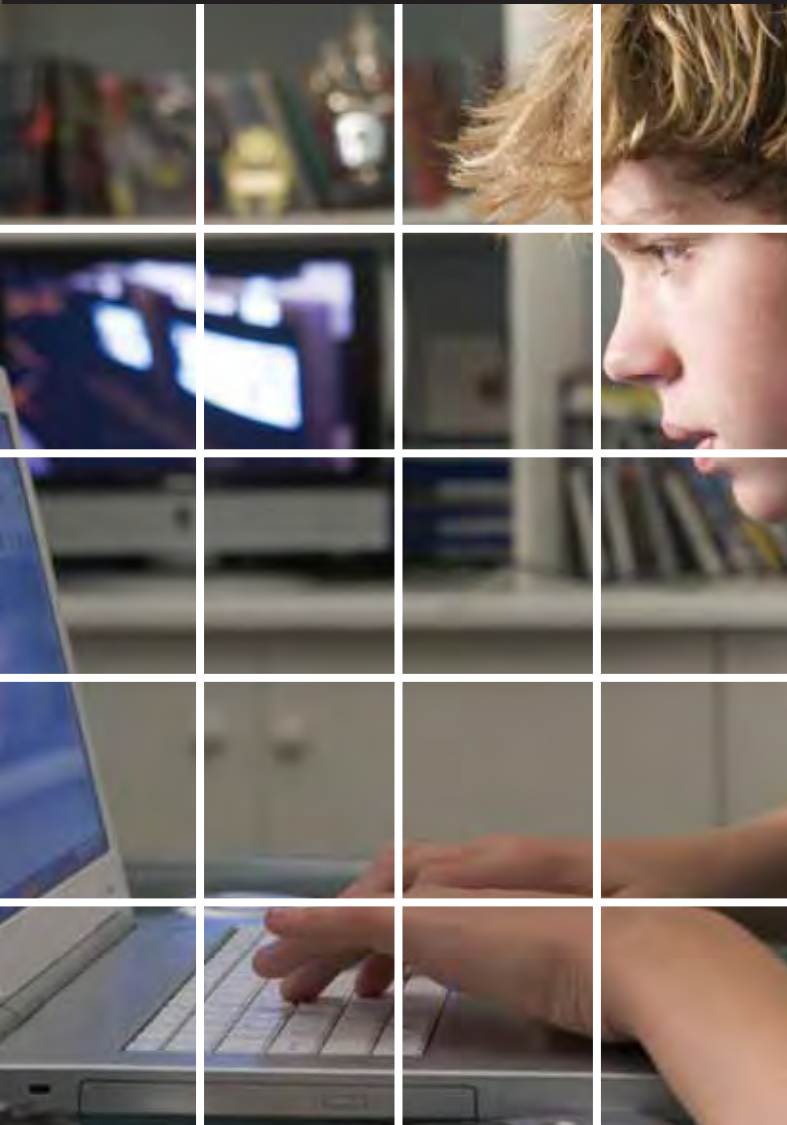
PREVENTION

An abusive partner can take responsibility for their actions by seeking help to stop. Make sure that you are a good role model for your children so that they learn better ways of acting.



CONTACTS

- National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247 www.womensaid.org.uk www.refuge.org.uk
- Your health visitor, school nurse or doctor
- Police 999 in an emergency or Police Enquiries 0845 125 3545



E-safety

New technology, old problem

// He is the same age as me. I haven't met him but we chat on the internet all the time. He's really funny. He wants to meet up tomorrow to play football. I can't wait to see what he's like. //

- » The internet can be fun and is useful
- » Have family internet rules to encourage safer use
- » Paedophiles have been quick to use the internet to approach children
- » It is important that parents understand the internet
- » Children can be bullied online and by text



The internet is a fantastic way for young people to find information, help them study and keep in contact with friends or meet new ones. Unfortunately, the internet is also an easy tool for child abuse. Paedophiles can use chatrooms and social networking sites to become friendly with children or young people, often by pretending to be another child. Other risks include people who want to get personal information like names, addresses or telephone numbers for fraud. Using the internet too much can lead to an unhealthy lifestyle.

Keep it safe

Keep an eye on what's going on by keeping the computer in a family room. Learn how to use a computer, access internet sites and try out a chatroom for yourself so you understand what can happen. Check out which sites your children are visiting to see if they are acceptable. Ensure they save chat logs and emails. Look for sites that have child friendly advice, warnings and how to report concerns.

You can buy software filters which block access to websites with a sexual content. These don't make internet use

totally safe, so take an active interest in the sites your child is browsing.

Set ground rules:

- Limit the amount of time your child spends on the internet.
- Talk about age appropriate websites.
- Tell them to never give out their real name, address, home or mobile phone numbers or any other personal details or post photos of themselves on the internet.
- They should always let you know if someone is asking questions or wanting details they don't feel happy about giving.
- Ensure social networking profiles are set to 'private' so only friends can view.

Make sure your child understands why there need to be rules. Explain that because they can't see or hear the people they chat to on the internet, they may not be who they seem. If your child keeps using the computer secretly, if you notice changes in how they act, problems sleeping, changes in routine or they are suddenly asking about sexual matters you could look into whether their internet use has anything to do with it.



WARNING SIGNS

Secrecy when using the internet, changes in behaviour, unusual sexual questions, leaving clues that they are having chats with others which you are not comfortable with, and meeting people secretly.



ACTION

Set up and stick to your internet use ground rules. Learn about the internet and how to use it yourself.



WHAT TO SAY

Discuss the dangers of using the internet and unsuitable websites. If they are worried about anything they must tell you.



PREVENTION

Keep the computer in a family room, with the monitor facing outwards, so you can see what's on screen. Make them aware of the dangers.



CONTACTS

- Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre (CEOP) 0870 000 3344 www.ceop.police.uk
- www.kidsmart.org.uk
- www.chatdanger.com



Healthy lifestyles

Looking after their health

// I encourage my children to be as active as possible. We do a lot of activities as a family which is good for my health too! //

- » Balance is the key to a healthy lifestyle
- » If you eat more calories than your body burns, you will put on weight
- » Obesity (being very overweight) is becoming more common in children
- » Act now and protect your children from secondhand smoke
- » Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep and exercise
- » Healthy teeth give you something to smile about

What you eat

Make sure your child eats a good variety of foods in sensible amounts - balance is the key! Make meal times fun and make time to sit down to eat and to enjoy the food together as a family. To get the best possible start to the day, it is important that children have a good healthy breakfast. Setting a good example is one of the best ways of encouraging healthy eating habits early in life.

Exercise

Food is used in our bodies to create energy. If we don't use it we put on weight. Encourage your children to be as active as possible. You and your child can get plenty of exercise just by walking to the shops or to school. Playing sport with your child is another great way to keep fit.

Sleep

As a parent you know that lack of sleep can affect your mood and ability to function at work or as a parent. The same is true of your children. Lack of sleep can impact on their behaviour and achievement at

school. Establish a good bedtime routine and agree a set time for bed. Children are growing and use lots of energy so can need up to 10 hours of sleep a night.

Teeth

Look after your children's teeth and take them to visit the dentist regularly. Make sure your child brushes their teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste. Children are especially at risk from tooth decay because of the sugary things they eat. Wherever possible, avoid sugary snacks and fizzy drinks, or find non-sugar alternatives. If your child has problems with their teeth, take them to the dentist. For assistance in registering with a dentist, phone the Dental Access Service on 01253 655200.

Smoking

If you smoke you should protect your child from secondhand smoke. This will reduce the risk of them becoming ill. Contact your doctor or local free Stop Smoking Service for support to stop smoking.



WARNING SIGNS

A healthy person should eat a balanced diet, be active, sleep well, have sufficient energy and generally feel that they enjoy life. If this isn't you and your family, perhaps some basic improvements could make a big difference.



ACTION

Ask your health visitor, school nurse or doctor for diet, exercise and general advice on a healthy lifestyle. Eat a healthy balanced diet. Go to the dentist regularly. Give up smoking.



WHAT TO SAY

Remind yourself that you can change your general state of health. Ask your family and friends for support in your decisions to change.



PREVENTION

Too much saturated fat, salt and sugar are bad for the body. Prevent ill health by balancing your lifestyle. Stop smoking.



CONTACTS

- Blackpool Healthy Schools Programme 01253 476714
- Blackpool Stop Smoking Service 0845 601 2186 or 01253 651570
- Your doctor, health visitor or school nurse
- www.healthystart.nhs.uk



Loss and bereavement

It's not their fault

// *Since her father died, my daughter seems to have disappeared into her own little world. I desperately want to help her but I don't know what to do. She just doesn't want to talk to me about it.* //

- » Share your loss - talking can help ease the pain
- » Loss or death affects everyone differently
- » Expect your emotions to change from one moment to the next. Grieving takes time and you will have good days and more difficult days
- » Understanding the process of grieving will help your child

Loss, such as divorce, separation or death of a loved one or pet is difficult for everyone. The loss of a close friend moving away can also be very tough on young people.

Children need a lot of support and understanding to help them work through their grief. There is no right or wrong way to react and everyone handles things in different ways.

There will be a range of feelings your child is likely to go through:

- Feeling numb as they try to understand what has happened.
- Anger at the person who left or died, at you, at others or themselves.
- Guilt, perhaps blaming themselves in some way for something they said or left unsaid.
- Fear for 'what will happen now' as life has changed forever.
- Sadness at never seeing that person again.

Their behaviour may change as they deal with their emotions and try to come to terms with their loss. They may find it hard to cope with day to day life. They may take their anger out on you, get into trouble at school,

find it hard to do schoolwork or want to go out with their friends more. Grief can take many different forms.

How you can help

It is easy for children to think they are the only ones who have lost someone and that no one else understands them, but talking to other people will help ease the process. Talk to your child about what has happened as much as they want to and encourage friends or a teacher to be there for them too. It may help if they talk to a bereavement counsellor.

Make sure the school knows of their loss and that they will need time and understanding as they work through their feelings. The organisation Cruse has a website aimed at young people (see Contacts) which helps explain how to deal with feelings.

If you too are suffering, then it is going to be especially hard for you to not only deal with your own emotions, but those of your children too. Try to keep talking to each other, so you can share your grief rather than each of you grieving alone.



WARNING SIGNS

Give your child as much time and patience as they need to cope with the loss. If you think they are having long-term difficulties, think about talking to a bereavement counsellor.



ACTION

Take your cue from your child. You may not be the person they find it easiest to talk to, so encourage others to be there for them. Always let them know you are there for them too.



WHAT TO SAY

Let your child know it is okay to talk about the person who has died. Let them know it's alright to still laugh or have fun - it doesn't mean you're grieving any less.



PREVENTION

Keep the lines of communication open as the more you talk, the easier the healing process will be. As a parent you can help your child through this difficult time.



CONTACTS

- Linden Centre
01253 595552
- Snowdrop Centre
01253 401911
- www.cruse.org.uk
0844 477 9400



Physical activity

Keeping fit

// *They just sit playing computer games all day or they're in front of the TV. They even have their meals there.* //

- » Many children don't take enough exercise to keep them healthy
- » Many children routinely travel to school by car or bus - a generation ago they would have walked
- » Encourage physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle
- » Lead by example

Keeping fit

Many children don't take enough exercise. Experts suggest one hour of accumulated activity which makes you slightly out of breath on most days of the week. Often this doesn't happen and as a result children are more at risk of being overweight and facing other health risks such as diabetes.

Get active

When people become more active they start to benefit straight away. Their heart and lungs become stronger and their level of fitness improves.

Many kinds of exercise can help tone muscles, helping you to look more toned up and feel stronger.

Exercise also burns calories which can help with weight control and prevent young people becoming overweight in the first place.

On your doorstep

Physical activity does not need to involve sport. Playing with a ball in the back garden or in the local park is a great start. Walking part or all of the way to school rather than going by car is also a good idea. Riding a bike or running around in a safe area, playing with friends all contributes to a healthier lifestyle.

Walking is a great form of exercise and just about anyone can do it. To get the best benefit walk briskly so that you feel slightly warm and breathe faster. You should never be out of breath - if you are, take it a bit easier. You could also visit your local leisure centre or swimming pool.

Encourage your whole family to be as active as possible and have fun together. Leading to a close family relationship.



WARNING SIGNS

Spending leisure hours playing computer games or sitting in front of the television for large parts of the day, eating junk food, showing signs of becoming overweight and no interest in exercise.



ACTION

Lead by example. Go for walks as a family. Ask about activities at the local leisure centre - many are designed for fun rather than competition.



WHAT TO SAY

Try to find out the kind of activities your child may like to try. Talk about what is available locally. Encourage them to go for a walk with you.



PREVENTION

More physical activity can help prevent a whole range of child and adult health problems including obesity and diabetes. The benefits of regular exercise (such as improved strength and flexibility) can last a lifetime.



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor, school nurse, health mentor, doctor and local leisure centre
- www.blackpool.gov.uk
- Healthy Start www.healthystart.nhs.uk



Positive parenting and self-esteem

Make them feel great!

// My mum's great - she always finds time to talk to me about stuff and make me feel special. I know I can talk to her about anything. //

- ▶ Children need to feel secure, loved and valued - this is the basis of self-esteem and confidence
- ▶ Noticing and praising good behaviour is the best way of having a positive effect on your child's behaviour
- ▶ Keep your expectations realistic
- ▶ Listen to and talk to your child
- ▶ Do things together with your child that you both enjoy and have fun

Positive parenting is about bringing out the very best in your child. Listen, praise, encourage their efforts, notice and reward good behaviour and do things together that you both enjoy. It is tempting to only point out where a child is going wrong and forget to notice the things that go right. By doing this you are giving your child attention for the unacceptable things that they are doing, rather than for the good things you would prefer them to do. It can also undermine your relationship with your child.

Attention and praise affects children so you need to use it in the right way. Not only will this have a positive effect on their behaviour, it will also make them feel happy, loved and secure. This is the basis of lifelong confidence and positive self-esteem.

Your child is beginning to learn to make their own decisions and slowly establish some independence. Their decisions might not always fit with yours - that is why tension is normal. Be friendly and supportive and let them know you have been through it and that you are always willing to listen.

Remember to give them the practical information they need about physical and emotional changes and reassure them that their development is perfectly normal. Keeping your child fit and healthy is something we often do without even thinking about it. Whether it involves getting your child to brush their teeth or reminding them to pay attention to personal hygiene, you are an important source of information and advice and a role model for your child.

A sense of self-esteem is your child's best protection from other difficulties. You can help to make them feel good about themselves in many ways - by being a good role model, giving good feedback, understanding and helping your child and being natural and affectionate.

If you feel you need support and advice in managing your child's behaviour, contact your child's school. You may also choose to attend a local parenting course.



WARNING SIGNS

There may be none. Have you noticed any changes in the way they act? Is your child trying to tell you something?



ACTION

Be involved and develop a good relationship with your child before they reach their teens. What you say and how you act can influence their behaviour as they grow up.



WHAT TO SAY

Let them know you are always there for them. Take time to talk about issues together.



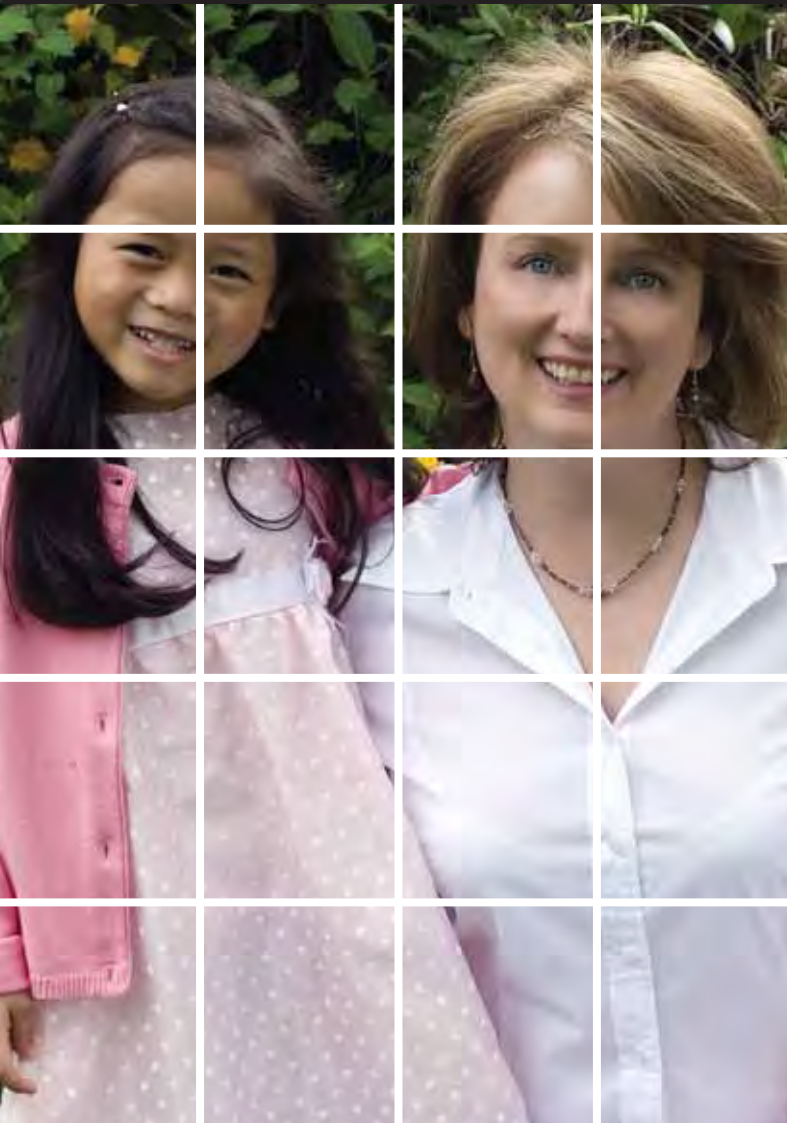
PREVENTION

Have fun with your child. Try to get them to make friends and have outside interests. Listen to your child's point of view. Help them think through choices.



CONTACTS

- www.familylives.org.uk
0808 800 2222
- www.youngminds.org.uk
0808 802 5544



Private fostering

Every child matters

My friend's daughter has just moved in with us and her parents are overseas so she's really missing them. Hopefully she'll start to feel more at home soon.

- » Private fostering is different from public fostering. Public fostering means that the local authority chooses a foster carer to look after a young person, but private fostering is a private arrangement
- » Over half of all private foster carers don't know that they have to tell their local authority that they're a private foster carer

In July 2005, the Government introduced new legislation and guidance on private fostering. Private fostering is when a child or young person aged under 16 (under 18 if they have a disability) is cared for and provided with accommodation for 28 days or more by an adult who is not a close relative. A close relative is an aunt, uncle, step-parent, grandparent or sibling but not a cousin, great aunt/uncle or a family friend.

There are many private fostering arrangements. These can include children and young people:

- Sent to this country for education or health care by parents from overseas.
- Living with a family friend as a result of parents separating or parents' ill health.
- Living with their partner's family.

Blackpool Council has a legal duty to ensure that any child or young person is in a suitable and safe private fostering arrangement. They make regular visits to the foster home to see the child and provide help and advice if necessary.

If you're a private foster carer, you must tell your local council. They would like to visit to check that the child living with you is safe and well, and also give you help and advice on how to look after your foster child if you need it.

If you're going to be a foster carer, you must notify Blackpool Council at least six weeks before your foster child comes to live with you. If you move home or the child moves out of your home to live elsewhere, you must also tell them.

What else should you remember? Before a child or young person comes to live with you, find out about them from their birth parents - for example, whether they have any medical problems or whether they require a special diet. Remember to register the child with your own doctor when they come to live with you.

Keep in contact with your foster child's birth parents, so you know where they are living, and they know that their child is okay. It's not always easy being a foster carer. Make sure you and the birth parents are clear about what you expect from each other.



WARNING SIGNS

Signs that a child is not being looked after properly include, they are always hungry or tired, look dirty, or are missing school.



ACTION

You must tell your local authority if you or someone you know is a private foster carer or has asked a private foster carer to look after their child as soon as possible.



WHAT TO SAY

If you know someone who is a private foster carer or the birth parent of a foster child, make sure they tell their local authority so that the child stays safe and well. That way, they can also get some help and advice.



PREVENTION

If you're thinking about asking someone else to look after your child, contact your local authority. They may know things about them that you don't.



CONTACTS

- Family Information Service 0800 092 2332
- Blackpool Social Care (Private Fostering) 01253 477910
- British Association for Adoption & Fostering (BAAF) 020 7421 2600 www.baaf.org.uk



Protecting children from harm

Myths and realities

// *Social work has changed a lot. In the past our approach to child protection wasn't very flexible. Now we work together with families to make sure they get the support before things reach a crisis.*

- » Parents are responsible for their children's safety
- » A social worker becomes involved once concern is shared
- » Decisions about abuse need careful assessment
- » Children are best cared for by their own families
- » Professionals want to work in partnership with families

Very few adults harm children on purpose. Most often, when harm does happen, families need support rather than being punished or their children being taken away.

Social workers and other professionals get involved when parents may be unable to protect their child from harm and need some help. In some cases the police will investigate with social workers to help protect children and decide whether an offence has been committed against a child.

Many myths exist about child abuse. Here are some facts:

1. Child abuse is not easy to recognise, prevent or stop.
A child cannot always clearly tell you what has happened. A careful assessment is needed to find out what has happened and what support and protection will best help the family. As a result it can be difficult to avoid some intrusion into family life. A social worker will ask questions about the family. They will consider how serious the incident is, how often it has happened and the effect on the child. All these things will help to decide

what should happen next to support and protect the child and family.

Social workers and the police have a duty (they have no choice about this) under The Children Act 1989 to look into concerns of child abuse.

2. Professionals are there to help the whole family.

Social workers have always been expected to make sure that children are safe. In order to do this well, they rely on information from parents, family and other professionals. The local community also play an important part in identifying and reporting concerns about child abuse. This helps to ensure that parents are offered support before things get worse.

3. Reporting child abuse hardly ever results in the child being taken away from home.

This is not the main aim of child protection investigations and it rarely happens. Social workers can only remove children from home with a court order, having shown there is serious risk. In emergency situations the police have the power to remove a child for 72 hours.



WARNING SIGNS

Social workers will get involved when they believe that physical injury, neglect, sexual or emotional abuse has occurred or is likely to occur. Contact the helplines listed below.



ACTION

A social worker (and sometimes a police officer) will meet with the family when abuse is reported. They will also talk with other professionals in order to make decisions about how best to help.



WHAT TO SAY

Make sure you know what child abuse is. If you are worried about your own or someone else's treatment of a child, seek advice about what practical and emotional support is available.



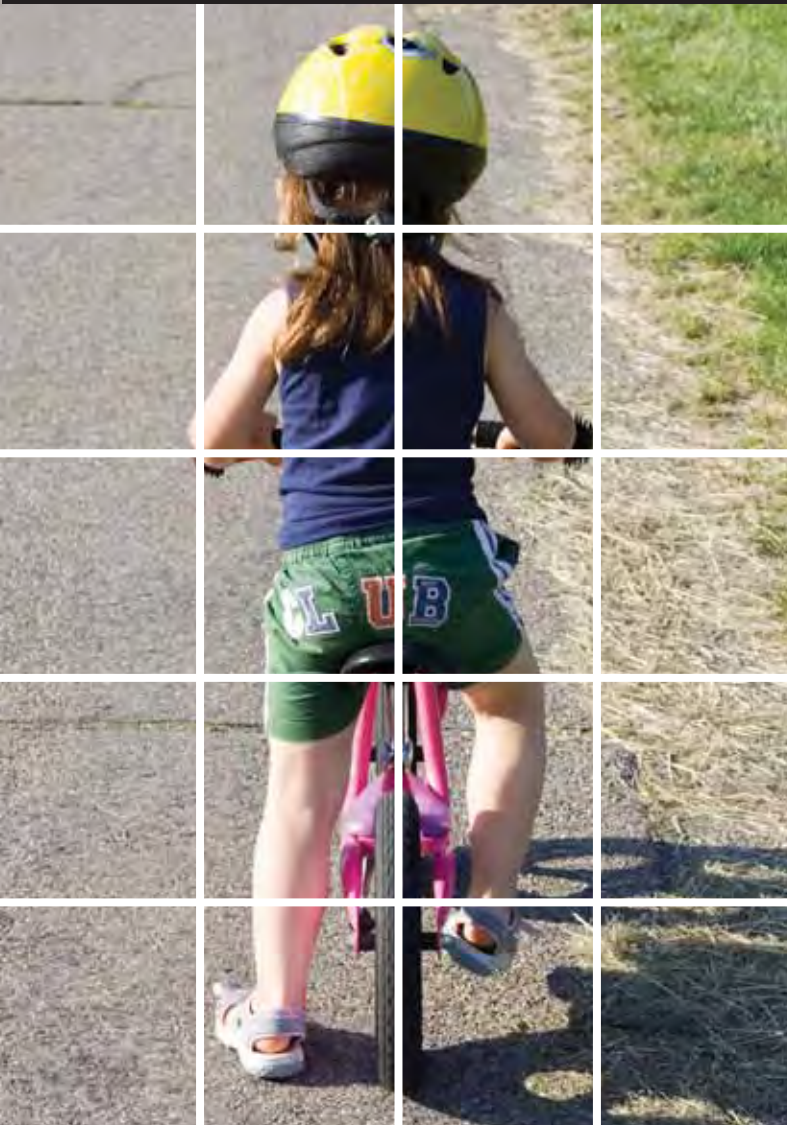
PREVENTION

It is important that children know what to do when they feel unsafe. Do they know who to talk to and how to get a safe place or person?



CONTACTS

- Blackpool Children's Social Care (see page 47 Useful contacts)
- www.nspcc.org.uk
0808 800 5000
- Family Lives
0808 800 2222
www.familylives.org.uk



Road safety

Basic rules for everyone

// One of Kylie's friends was nearly hit by a car last year - she ran across the road to get her football. Now we make sure that Kylie knows about the dangers and how to stay safe. //

- » It's vital to teach your child about road safety from an early age
- » Make sure they know the Green Cross Code (Stop, Look, Listen)
- » The road is not a playground - it's a very dangerous place
- » You can be fined if you don't use the proper car seat for your child's weight and height

It is vital that you and your child know how to keep safe on the road - whether you're crossing the road, cycling or driving in a car.

Crossing the road - Green Cross Code

- **Think.** Find the safest place to cross.
- **Stop.** Stand on the pavement near the kerb.
- Use your eyes and ears to **Look and Listen** for traffic.
- **Wait** until it's safe to cross.
- **Look and Listen.** When it's safe, walk across the road - don't run.
- **Arrive safe.** Keep looking and listening for traffic while you cross.

Make sure your child knows the Green Cross Code from an early age. They are never too young to learn it. Children tend to copy their parents, so be aware and set a good example. Remember that children can't judge speed or distance properly until they're at least eight years old, so knowing about the Green Cross Code is even more important.

Playing on the road

Teach your child that the road isn't a playground, it's a really dangerous place. If their ball accidentally goes onto the road they must ask an adult to retrieve it.

Cycling

If your child rides a bike on the road, it's vital to wear a helmet. In an accident it can prevent a serious head injury. Other things to check include that all the brakes work, the tyres are okay, the back reflector is clean and lights are working. Children should also be clearly seen, wearing bright colours or white during the day and reflective sashes or arm-bands on their clothing if they're cycling in poor light or at night. In the dark they must have lights on their bikes.

In the car

If you're driving children in the car, they need to be in a properly fitted, age-appropriate car seat. Make sure it's right for your child's weight and height. For further advice visit www.dft.gov.uk/think/focusareas/children



WARNING SIGNS

Never use a car seat that's been in a crash, is over ten years old or date of manufacture is missing, comes without instructions or is damaged or cracked.



ACTION

Teach your child the Green Cross Code. Children are most at risk when playing outdoors, when roads are wet and slippery and when it gets dark early.



WHAT TO SAY

From an early age, teach your child about road safety. Remember that children often copy their parents or carers, so be a good role model and cross the road sensibly and wear a seatbelt yourself.



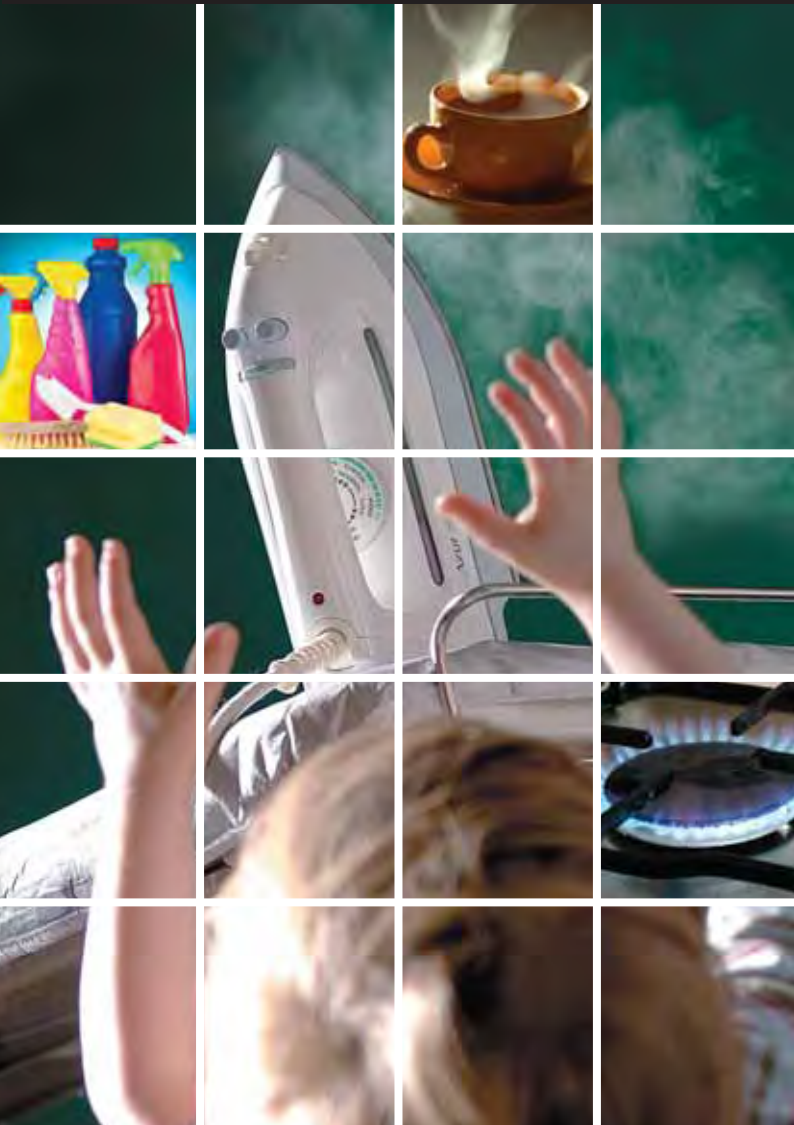
PREVENTION

The law says that children aged up to 12 or 135cm in height must use a child car seat or a booster seat in a car. Children must also use a seatbelt if there is one.



CONTACTS

• Think, a highway code for young road users: www.dft.gov.uk/think (You can also order free road safety leaflets from this website).



Safety inside the home

Making your home safe

// Before he was born I never thought about where I left things. Now everything in the house seems dangerous, so I have taken a few simple steps to make the house a more child friendly environment. //

- » Children learn by exploring their surroundings
- » Young children do not automatically know what is dangerous
- » Children need guidance to keep them safe at home
- » Remove all potential dangers from reach in your home
- » Watch your child and remove them from danger
- » Explain about safety to your child from an early age

Children learn about their world by exploring it. They are curious by nature and need careful and gentle guidance from a young age about what danger is and what to stay away from. Shouting at or smacking children will not teach them about safety.

Some dangers around the home:

- Make sure that all medicines and drugs are locked away well out of reach and your use of them is kept private to avoid your child copying you.
- Certain rooms are necessarily full of danger, such as the kitchen, and should remain out of bounds or made safe by the use of safety devices.
- Do not leave windows open and make sure you have safety locks fitted to them.
- Keep an eye on your children, especially near wires and sockets and use safety covers.
- Small children should never be left alone with pets. Even trained and good-natured animals can be tested when children are around.

- Make sure that irons, saucepans and hot drinks are kept out of the reach of children. Scalding and burns are common and avoidable accidents.
- Inhaling cigarette smoke is bad for children's health. Children will be affected by secondhand smoke and your smoking may encourage them to smoke when they are older.

Most accidents happen in the home, which is why it is important to ensure that your home is safe for all your family, especially for young children.



WARNING SIGNS

Identify any potential dangers that, if not removed, could harm your child.



ACTION

Make a list of these potential dangers and if possible remove them or protect your child from them by using safety devices.



WHAT TO SAY

Try to explain to your child why some activities are dangerous. If they understand that they may hurt themselves it may deter them.



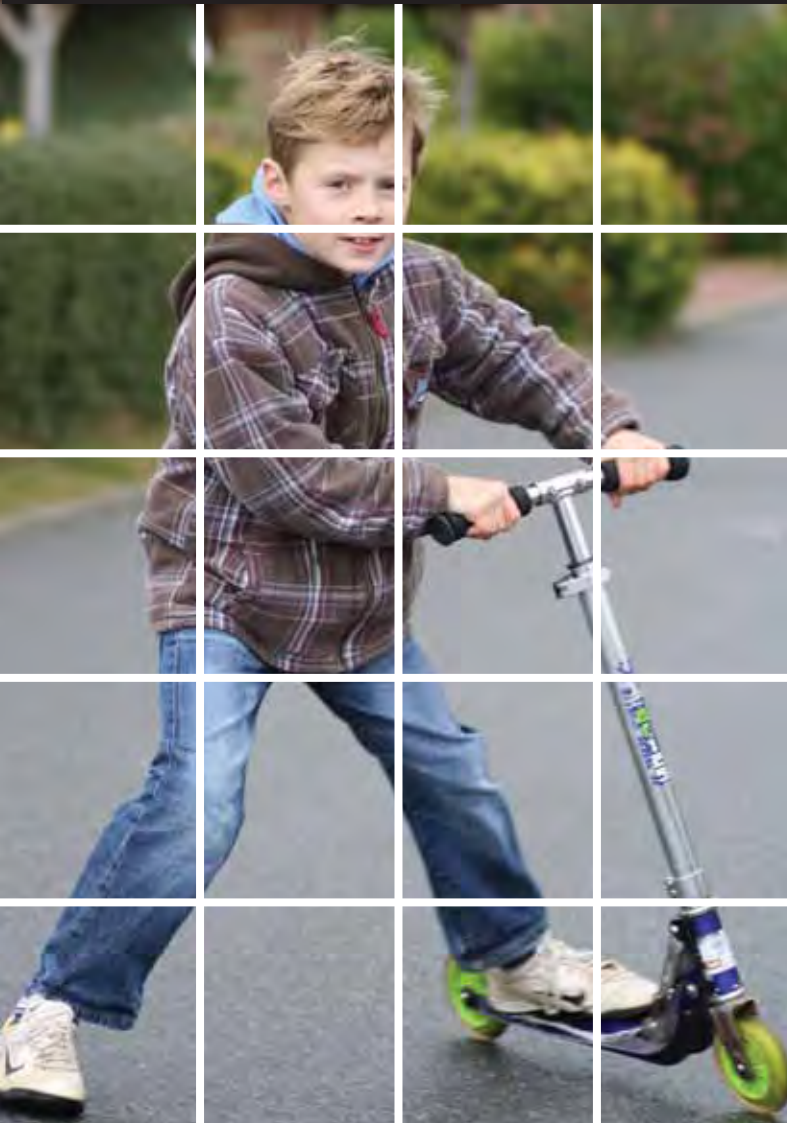
PREVENTION

Keep drugs, syringes, medicines and household chemicals out of reach of children and lock them away safely. Do this before your child is exposed to any hazard.



CONTACTS

- www.rospa.com
0121 248 2000
- www.capt.org.uk
020 7608 3828
- www.nspcc.org.uk
0808 800 5000



Safety outside the home

Are your children safe?

// I thought he was right behind me, but when I turned round, I couldn't see him anywhere. When I found him I just burst into tears with relief. //

- Remember other homes are not always child friendly
- Always check a garden is safe and secure before letting your child play
- Keep your child close when shopping
- Children under eight should not be allowed out alone
- Lead by example when using the road
- Most accidents are preventable

Some experts say there is no such thing as an accident and, according to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), most accidents that happen to young children, such as injuries from falls or drowning, could be avoided with adequate supervision.

If you are visiting friends or relatives, keep a closer eye than usual on your child as their house may not be as child friendly as yours. Look out for dangerous areas, such as knives sitting on countertops, drugs such as painkillers left within reach or open windows. Check that the garden is secure and there is no access to ponds or pools.

Keep your child away from roads and help them to understand the dangers of going near them alone. It's important to always be aware of where your child is when you are out. When shopping, always make sure your child stays close to you - it is easy for them to get lost in a shopping centre or large supermarket. Supervise playground activities -

ensure that playground equipment is suitable for your child's age group to prevent injury.

In the car, make sure your child is in an age-appropriate car seat and the seatbelt is secure. You should also check that the car seat is strapped in properly - many road accident injuries occur due to wrongly strapped seats, which do not restrain the child adequately on impact.

It can be difficult finding the balance between giving your child enough freedom to gain confidence and making sure they are safe. Children under eight should not be allowed out alone. Teach your child road safety from a young age, so it is habit for them to check for cars before crossing a road.

You may trust an older child to go out for short periods by themselves, but always agree a time for them to return or to phone you. Remind them never to go off with someone they don't know, whatever convincing story they may have.



WARNING SIGNS

When you are out you may be distracted and not see the signs that your child is at risk of injury. Your child is your responsibility. Keep a close eye on them.



ACTION

When visiting other people, or if you are out, look out for danger areas, such as low walls or broken glass. Always keep your child close to you when shopping.



WHAT TO SAY

Remind your child, whatever their age, to look before crossing a road. Set a good example. Ask them to take sensible precautions if they are old enough to be out by themselves.



PREVENTION

Most accidents involving children are preventable with adequate care and attention. Never leave a small child unsupervised and keep a close eye on them at all times.



CONTACTS

- www.rospace.com
0121 248 2000
- www.capt.org.uk
020 7608 3828
- www.nspcc.org.uk
0808 800 5000
- www.familylives.org.uk
0808 800 2222
- www.dft.gov.uk/think



Smoking

Secondhand smoke is dangerous for everyone

// I know that smoking is bad for me but I didn't know that secondhand smoke was endangering the health of my family too. Now I never smoke in the house or around my children and I am seeking help to give up.



- » Keep children's playing, sleeping and eating areas smoke free
- » Make your car a smoke free zone
- » Ask other people not to smoke around your child
- » Choose smoke free places when out and about with your family
- » Avoid smoking anywhere around your children
- » If you smoke, go outside and out of sight

Secondhand smoke is dangerous for everyone, especially children.

Secondhand smoke is made up of two types of smoke: mainstream (breathed in and out by smokers) and sidestream (smoke from the burning tip of a cigarette).

Breathing in other people's secondhand smoke can damage almost every organ in the human body.

Secondhand smoke is especially dangerous for children as they are growing up because:

- Smoking near children is a cause of serious respiratory illnesses, such as bronchitis and pneumonia.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of children developing asthma and can cause asthma attacks.
- Babies and children exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to get coughs and colds, as well as middle ear disease, which can cause deafness.
- There is also an increased risk of meningitis for children who are exposed to secondhand smoke.

Action

Keep your home and car smoke free at all times. Designate them both smoke free areas. Make sure everyone who comes into your home is aware of your smoke free home rules and explain it is to protect children and non-smokers. Protect children BEFORE they suffer.

Protecting your child

Most people underestimate just how toxic secondhand smoke is. Adults do not deliberately set out to endanger a child's health or put them at risk of becoming a smoker later in life. Yet every time anyone smokes around a child, whether indoors or outdoors, the child learns that smoking is acceptable. Think of the message on medicines 'KEEP OUT OF REACH OR SIGHT OF CHILDREN'.

Remember that smoking in the house, even with the door or a window open is still not ventilated enough to stop smoke drifting into other rooms and lingering for a long time. The best thing you can do is to keep them away from all cigarettes and smoky places.



WARNING SIGNS

A range of signs may indicate if a child is already suffering from the effects of secondhand smoke, including wheezing, coughing, asthma, chest infections, glue ear (difficulty hearing and often speech/language difficulties), or if they regularly suffer poor health.



ACTION

If you are worried about your child's health, take them to see your doctor. Never smoke around your children and seek help to give up. Create a clean air environment for your child.



WHAT TO SAY

Ensure that all people who come into your home are aware of your own 'No Smoking in the Home' rules that you have decided to put in place.



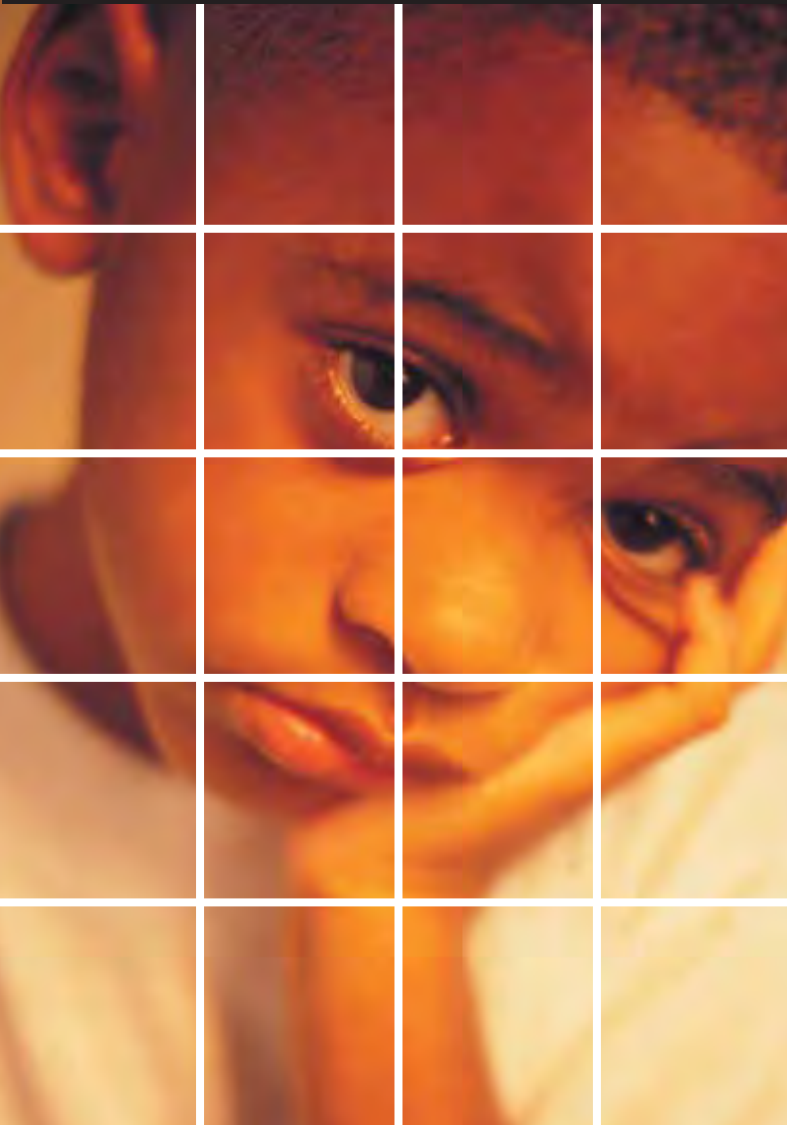
PREVENTION

Keep your home smoke free. Don't smoke around your children. Teach your children about the risks associated with smoking.



CONTACTS

- Blackpool Stop Smoking Service 0845 601 2186 or 01253 651570
- NHS Smoking Helpline 0800 022 4 332 www.smokefree.nhs.uk
- Your local doctor, community midwife or health visitor.



Stress and anxiety

Helping them cope

// *When my son fell out with his friends at school recently he got very upset and anxious. At first, I wondered what all the fuss was about but then I realised how important friends can be at his age.*

- » Children can feel stressed for many reasons
- » Being bullied at school and parents divorcing are two of the most common
- » Sometimes parents don't realise they are putting too much pressure on their child to do well at school
- » Exercise is a great way to reduce stress
- » It is normal to feel stressed sometimes
- » Children can pick up on their parents stress

Sometimes children get stressed and anxious, and there may be many reasons why this can happen:

- They are being bullied at school. Feeling in danger every day can greatly affect a child's state of mind.
- They are not getting on well with their friends. It's natural to want to fit in and falling out with friends can seem like a really important thing to a child.
- They are anxious about moving house or going back to school after the holidays.
- A family member, friend or pet has died. Sometimes children can blame themselves for these things even if they have nothing to do with it.

Another reason that children feel anxious is if their parents divorce or even just fight. When they see their parents arguing it can hurt a child's sense of security and can make them feel very alone and frightened. It is worse when parents make their children choose sides or say hurtful comments about the other parent in front of the child.

Some children worry about schoolwork, tests or exams. It's normal to want to see your child do well, but some parents may not realise that they are putting too much pressure on their child to succeed. Remember to be realistic about your child's abilities and encourage them to do their best.

As a parent be careful what you say, even when you don't think your child is listening to you. Sometimes children overhear parents talking about money worries or problems they are having at work and they start to feel anxious about these things themselves.

You will probably be able to help your child when they feel stressed. If their anxiety goes on for longer than a month, or if it greatly affects how they are at home or their behaviour at school, you might want to speak to their teacher or ask your health visitor, school nurse or doctor for help and advice.



WARNING SIGNS

Mood swings, trouble sleeping, nightmares, bedwetting, trouble doing schoolwork, stomach aches, headaches, preferring to spend time alone or overreacting to minor problems.



ACTION

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and a healthy diet. Exercise can greatly reduce stress, so encourage your child to be active.



WHAT TO SAY

Talk to your child about what is causing their stress. Tell them it is normal to feel stressed now and again, but it is also good to know how to relax and make yourself feel better when they're upset.



PREVENTION

Make time for your child every day so they know they can talk to you if they are worried. Look ahead to when your child may be stressed, e.g. before tests, and talk about it.



CONTACTS

- www.familylives.org.uk
0808 800 2222
- www.youngminds.org.uk
0808 802 5544



Worried about a child

Should you mind your own business?

// Every day I hear the child next door crying. Her parents are always shouting at her. Yesterday, in the street, I saw her mother hit her hard across the side of the head. This is probably none of my business but I am worried and not sure what to do. //

- » Protecting children is everybody's business
- » Adults have a responsibility to report abuse. Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual or involve neglect
- » If in doubt share your concerns about children with your local social work team
- » Reporting concerns rarely leads to a child being removed from their family

When we suspect, witness or are told that a child or young person has been harmed we can react in many different ways. We may feel guilt, anger, disbelief or denial. Some of these reactions can prevent help from getting to a family who need it.

Supporting families

All parents experience difficulties at times, but they can get help from other family members or close friends.

If someone you know is having difficulties, you could offer:

- A listening ear.
- Ideas to help with problems.
- Encouragement to get more help.
- Practical support for example childcare or shopping.

Many people do not report their concerns because they may:

- Fear that the child or young person will be at further risk of harm.
- Believe that nothing will be done.
- Believe that the child or young person will be taken away from their family.

- Worry that the family may find out who reported them.
- Ruin family relationships.

However there may be times when a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm and professional support is needed. It is best that action is taken early to stop things getting worse.

Long-term abuse is much more likely to cause problems for a child or young person as they get older. Even if you think an incident is just a one off, other professional agencies may already have concerns, so your information could be very important.

Reporting concerns

If you report your concerns to social services, you will be asked for your details and details of the worries you have. You should write down what you want to say before you speak to them so that you can remember everything. Remember, protecting children is everybody's business.



WARNING SIGNS

There are many possible signs of abuse, ranging from injury to changes in the way a child is acting. You could see something happen or a child may tell you they are being hurt.



ACTION

If you think that a child has been hurt, contact the duty social worker or the police. If you are unsure, you can speak to a confidential helpline such as the NSPCC.



WHAT TO SAY

Explain exactly what you have seen or been told. If you can, keep a note of dates, injuries and the exact words used. These will help you.



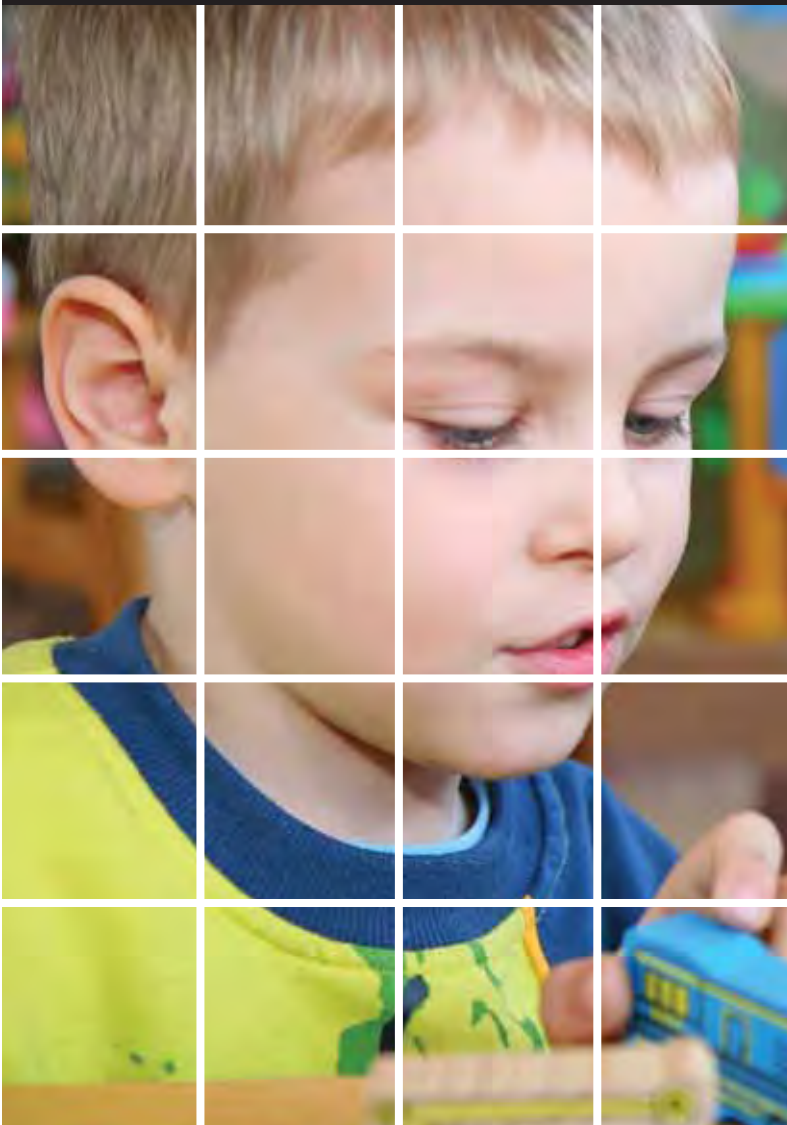
PREVENTION

Make sure your child knows who they can share worries with if and when they need to. Listen carefully to children and be alert to any changes in them.



CONTACTS

- Blackpool Children's Social Care (see page 47 Useful contacts)
- www.nspcc.org.uk 0808 800 5000
- www.familylives.org.uk 0808 800 2222
- www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111
- www.nhs.uk



Health Visiting Service

Health visitors are qualified nurses with a specialist degree qualification. Health visitors work with individuals, families and communities to promote a healthy lifestyle. This can be with groups or individuals.

Within the health visiting team are health visitors, community nursery nurses, community nurses and clerical support.

These are some of the things you could talk to your health visitor about:

Health concerns	Your child's behaviour
The growth and development of your child	Parenting
Immunisations and vaccinations	Healthy lifestyle for you including weight management, exercise and giving up smoking
Healthy eating for your child	Sleep management
Post natal depression	Emotional health
Family support	Relationships

Health visitors can also provide information on local services.

School nursing service

School nurses

School nurses are qualified nurses who have a specialist qualification in school nursing. Each school nurse is responsible for a secondary school and a number of primary schools. You can obtain your school nurse's contact details from your school office. The school nurse is available to advise and support children and their families with all aspects of health, and along with their team, supports the school in the delivery of classroom-based health education. The school nurse plans, develops and delivers health input to the schools along with her team of staff as follows:

- School staff nurses are qualified nurses who work with the school nurse to deliver health education lessons, record height and weight measurements, give advice in "drop-ins" and give immunisations.
- Health mentors are qualified nurses who are based in secondary schools during the school day. They offer confidential advice to pupils through a 'drop in' service. They are involved in health education both one-to-one and in the classroom. They offer immunisations and referral to appropriate agencies if help is required.

Blackpool Council Parenting Team

The Parenting Team provide support for parents with children aged five and above. Dependent upon need this support could be offered on a one-to-one basis within the family home or through evidence-based parenting courses which are delivered within schools and children's centres across the town.

Contact 01253 501631 for further details.

Useful national **Contacts****British Association for Adoption & Fostering (BAAF)**

020 7421 2600
www.baaf.org.uk

Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT)

020 7608 3828
www.capt.org.uk

Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

0870 000 3344
www.ceop.police.uk

ChildLine

0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care

0844 477 9400
 0808 808 1677 (Young Persons Helpline)
www.cruse.org.uk

Domestic Abuse Men's Advice Line

0808 801 0327
www.mensadvice.org.uk

Emergency

Police, Ambulance, Fire & Rescue,
 Coast Guard, Mountain Rescue
 999

Immunisations

www.nhs.uk/planners/vaccinations

Kidscape

08451 205 204
 (Parents Bullying Helpline)
www.kidscape.org.uk

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk

NHS Direct

0845 4647
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

National Childminding Association (NCMA)

0800 169 4486
www.ncma.org.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline

0808 2000 247
www.womensaid.org.uk
www.refuge.org.uk

NHS Smoking Helpline

0800 022 4 332
www.smokefree.nhs.uk

NSPCC

0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

Respect

Helpline for Perpetrators of
 Domestic Abuse
 0845 122 8609
www.respect.uk.net

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

0121 248 2000
www.rospa.com

Stop it Now!

Internet safety
 0808 1000 900
www.stopitnow.org.uk

Young Minds

0808 802 5544 (Parents Helpline)
www.youngminds.org.uk

Other useful websites:

www.chatdanger.com
www.bullying.co.uk

Useful local **Contacts****Barnardo's**

Blackpool Family Support
 01253 626480
www.barnardos.org.uk

Blackpool Advocacy & Blackpool Advocacy Young Carers Project

01253 405959
www.blackpooladvocacy.co.uk

Blackpool Alcohol & Drug Service

18 and over only
 01253 752100
www.alcoholanddrugservices.org.uk

Blackpool Carers Team

01253 393748
www.blackpoolcarers.org

Blackpool Council Services:

www.blackpool.gov.uk

Blackpool Family Information Service

0800 092 2332

Blackpool Healthy Schools Programme

01253 476714

Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB)

01253 477296
www.blackpoolscb.org.uk

Blackpool Stop Smoking Service

0845 6012186
 01253 651570

Children & Young People Department**Children Social Care Teams:**

North 01253 477668
 South 01253 477664
 Central North 01253 477955
 Central South 01253 476811
 Emergency (after 5pm & weekends)
 01253 477600

Cruse Bereavement Care

Preston Branch
 01772 686668

GP Led Walk-In Centre

Blackpool
 01253 953953

Healthy Start

www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Linden Centre

01253 595552
www.trinityhospice.co.uk/lindencentre.html

NSPCC

Blackpool
 01253 345001
www.nspcc.org.uk

Police

Blackpool - Non Emergency
 0845 125 35 45
www.lancashire.police.uk
 Blackpool Family Protection Unit
 01253 604080

Private Fostering

01253 477910

Snowdrop Centre

Supporting bereaved families
 01253 401911

Social Services Direct/ Signposting Service

Helps to put you in touch with
 services & organisations throughout
 Blackpool
 01253 477592
social.services@blackpool.gov.uk



Health... at the heart of life in Blackpool

Every effort has been made to keep the information in this booklet up-to-date and accurate. However, we cannot guarantee that inaccuracies won't occur. NHS Blackpool, its employees and partner agencies won't be held responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused as a result of reliance on such information.

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