

# VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN



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According to the United Nations, violence against children includes “All forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”. Violence takes place when somebody uses their strength or position of power to hurt somebody else on purpose, not by accident.

Violence against children occurs on a large scale and in a range of settings: homes, schools, care and justice systems, workplaces and communities.

#### Violence against children is often under-reported:

- Very young children lack capacity to report violence.
- Children fear reprisals from perpetrators.
- Much violence is committed within the family and by people known to the family, who may block child’s access to justice.
- Social acceptance of violence: corporal and other forms of cruel and degrading punishment, bullying, sexual harassment, and some traditional practices that may be seen as an inevitable part of growing up.

#### Violence has many effects on children, which can be felt many years later:

- Being more prone to use violence themselves.
- Physical health problems: brain development, injuries, bruises and fractures.
- Difficulties in dealing with other people.
- Learning difficulties and finding it hard to express feelings.
- Emotional health problems, including anxiety, depression, aggression, or wanting to kill himself or herself.
- Being more likely to do dangerous things like using drugs or having sex at a young age.

**No violence against children is acceptable.  
All violence against children is preventable.**