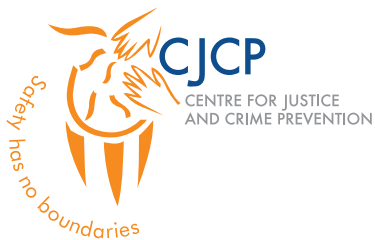


# Child Protection Quick Reference Guide



## **The Purpose of these Indicator Lists**

These indicator lists have been developed to assist with the identification of children potentially in need of interventions. It is often the case that children who have problems do not get the help they require because adults are not aware of the need to refer the child. It is hoped that these indicator lists will assist in improving the access of children to services.

## **The Dangers of Indicator Lists**

These indicator lists are not diagnostic tools, and they should not be used to categorise or label children. The indicator lists are very simple guides to the common indicators associated with certain problems affecting children. Even if a child has several of the indicators listed in the indicator lists, it is not for certain that the child is a victim of sexual abuse or bullying. If a child has some of the indicators of the indicator lists below, the child must be referred for a proper assessment of his/her circumstances.

This document is available for download from the resource section of the Centre for Justice & Crime Prevention's website - [www.cjcp.org.za](http://www.cjcp.org.za).

## Bullying

Does the child....

1. Come home from school with damaged or missing items of clothing or belongings
2. Have bruises, cuts and other injuries they cannot explain
3. Seem socially isolated
4. Not want to go to school
5. Appear moody, depressed or sad
6. Complain about headaches or stomach aches
7. Have trouble sleeping
8. Have nightmares
9. No longer have interest in his/her hobbies and school work
10. Appear anxious or stressed

If the child has two or more of the above indicators, he/she must be referred for a full assessment. Make contact with a suitable local organisation.

## Sexual abuse

Does the child....

1. Have sexualised behaviours inappropriate for his/her age
2. Have a knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate for his/her age
3. Have pain, bleeding or swelling around the anal or genital area
4. Have secrets that he/she is not allowed to talk about
5. Have a sexually transmitted disease or infection
6. Have sudden changes in behaviour and mood
7. Appear to be socially isolated from his/her peers
8. Suddenly fear a certain person or place for no clear reason
9. Wet the bed or soil his/her underpants when this is not appropriate for his/her age
10. Engage in inappropriate sexualised play with other children, toys or himself/herself
11. Suddenly engage in babyish behaviour, such as baby talk or sucking their thumb
12. Engage in sexually suggestive behaviour towards adults or older children
13. Hurt or injure animals
14. Damage or destroy property
15. Refuse to undress in front of others
16. Prefer to wear layers of clothing

If the child has two or more of the above indicators, he/she must be referred for a full assessment. Make contact with a suitable local organisation.

## Substance abuse

### **By Child**

Does the child....

1. Appear agitated or paranoid
2. Have drug-related equipment and materials, such as rolling papers, pipes and needles
3. Have hidden supplies of drugs
4. Have an increased need for privacy and secrecy
5. Appear to have lost interest in former friends, hobbies and sports
6. Absent themselves from school a lot
7. Often seems tired and sleepy
8. Lie about where he/she has been and who he/she has been with
9. Have poor coordination and balance
10. Have red eyes
11. Have slurred speech
12. Have sores on the face and mouth
13. Smell of chemicals or smoke
14. Spend time with known drug users
15. Have a sudden change in weight
16. Have sudden changes in behaviour
17. Have sudden changes in mood
18. Show a sudden decline in school performance
19. Have tremors and shakes
20. Have unusually small or large pupils
21. Have unexplained nausea or vomiting
22. Have difficulty concentrating or remembering things

If the child has two or more of the above indicators, he/she must be referred for a full assessment. Make contact with a suitable local organisation.

### **By Caregiver**

Does the child ....

1. Appear to be socially isolated from his/her peers
2. Appear hungry or ill fed
3. Appear dirty or unkempt
4. Want to sleep a lot
5. Often arrive late or is absent from school
6. Have unexplained injuries
7. Not want to return home after school
8. Display an unusual knowledge of drugs or alcohol
9. Frequently complain of illness, such as headaches or upset stomach
10. Appear to be withdrawn and reserved
11. Have behavioural problems
12. Adopt the role of the parent or caregiver for the household
13. Have parents who are difficult to reach and do not engage in school activities
14. Have parents who do not socialise or mix much with others

If the child has two or more of the above indicators, he/she must be referred for a full assessment. Make contact with a suitable local organisation.

## Learning Disabilities

Does the child....

1. Have difficulty reading and / or writing
2. Have difficulty solving maths sums
3. Have difficulty remembering details
4. Struggle to pay attention or to concentrate
5. Struggle to follow instructions / directions
6. Have impulsive behaviour
7. Have problems with concepts or words
8. Respond inappropriately to social situations
9. Struggle to put thoughts and ideas into words
10. Struggle with tasks that require coordination, such as cutting out shapes or colouring in within lines when other children in their age group can do these things
11. Not keep up with his/her peers in class
12. Have difficulty ordering or organising things
13. Struggle to see patterns or logic in games and school tasks

If the child has two or more of the above indicators, he/she must be referred for a full assessment. Make contact with a suitable local organisation.

## Risky sexual behaviour

Does the child....

1. Engage in sexual behaviour that is not appropriate for his/her developmental level and age
2. Engage in sexual activity that involves force, coercion or intimidation
3. Engage in unprotected sex
4. Have (or has had) a sexually transmitted disease or infection
5. Have multiple sexual partners
6. Videotape or photograph himself/herself in a sexual manner, or allow others to do so
7. Videotape or photograph himself/herself engaging in sexual activities, or allow others to do so
8. Engage in sexual activities while under the influence of drugs or alcohol

If the child has two or more of the above indicators, he/she must be referred for a full assessment. Make contact with a suitable local organisation.



## Self-harming

Does the child....

1. Have scars, bruises and marks that he/she cannot explain
2. Wear bandages and plasters frequently
3. Consistently wear long sleeves or pants in summer when it is too hot
4. Refuse to wear a swimming costume or sportswear
5. Appear to be physically or emotionally distant and preoccupied

If the child has two or more of the above indicators, he/she must be referred for a full assessment. Make contact with a suitable local organisation.

## References

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- Whitlock, J. 2009. *The Cutting Edge: Non-Suicidal Self-Injury in Adolescence*. Cornell University, University of Rochester, and New York State Center for School Safety.

## Emergency Contacts

- SAPS: 10 111
- Report cases of child abuse for police investigation:  
[childprotect@saps.org.za](mailto:childprotect@saps.org.za)
- SAPS Crime Stop: 08600 10 111
- SMS Crime Line: 32211
- Department of Social Development 24-hour Command Centre:  
0800 428 428 (toll-free).
- Child Welfare South Africa: 0861 424453
- Childline : 08 000 55 555

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[www.cjcp.org.za](http://www.cjcp.org.za)

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