

Introduction to Child Protection

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Key concepts, legal framework, roles, and practical steps

1. What Is Child Protection?

Aspect	Description
Definition	Actions and policies that safeguard children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.
Goal	Ensure every child's right to safety, health, development, and participation in society.
Scope	Physical, emotional, sexual, and neglectful harm; also includes online safety and trafficking.

2. Core Principles

- Best Interest of the Child** – All decisions must prioritize the child's welfare.
 - Zero Tolerance for Abuse** – No form of maltreatment is acceptable.
 - Child Participation** – Children should be heard and involved, appropriate to their age.
 - Non-Discrimination** – Protection must be universal, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, disability, etc.
 - Holistic Approach** – Combine health, education, social services, and justice sectors.
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3. Legal & Policy Framework (International & National)

Level	Key Instruments
International	• UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – Articles 19 & 34 • Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography • Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 (end violence against children)
Regional	• European Convention on the Protection of Children's Rights • African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

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Level	Key Instruments
National	• Child Protection Acts / Child Welfare Laws
	• Mandatory reporting statutes
	• Family law provisions for custody and protection orders
Sector? Specific	• Education: Safe Schools Policies
	• Health: Pediatric safeguarding guidelines
	• Justice: Juvenile justice codes

(Check your country's statutes for specific citations.)

4. Types of Child Abuse & Indicators

Type	Common Signs	Example Behaviors
Physical	Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures; fear of adults	Aggressive discipline, hitting
Emotional	Withdrawal, low self-esteem, extreme anxiety	Verbal humiliation, rejection
Sexual	Knowledge of sexual acts beyond age, STIs, pregnancy	Inappropriate touching, exploitation
Neglect	Poor hygiene, malnutrition, unattended medical needs	Failure to provide food, shelter, supervision
Online/Digital	Excessive screen time, secretive behavior, inappropriate content	Grooming, cyberbullying, sexting

5. Roles & Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Primary Duties
Parents / Caregivers	Provide safe environment, monitor well-being, report concerns.
Teachers & School Staff	Observe changes, implement safeguarding policies, refer suspected cases.
Health Professionals	Conduct routine screenings, document injuries, report mandated cases.
Social Workers	Assess risk, coordinate services, develop safety plans.

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Stakeholder

Primary Duties

Law Enforcement	Investigate allegations, protect victims, prosecute offenders.
Judiciary	Ensure child-friendly proceedings, enforce protection orders.
Community & NGOs	Offer outreach, counseling, legal aid, awareness campaigns.

6. Reporting & Intervention Process

1. **Recognize** – Identify signs or receive disclosure.
2. **Document** – Record date, time, description, and any physical evidence (photos, notes).
3. **Report** – Contact the designated child protection