



**Fact Sheet 10**

**May, 2007**

**Risk factors and indicators for harm in children 6-12 years\***

This fact sheet contains information that may assist in the formation of a reasonable suspicion of child abuse/harm and neglect

**Developmental issues:**

- With increasing age- more likely to intervene in family violence; may be threat to self, siblings, property
- Provocation of child may lead to exhibition of violence
- Significant relationship issues between parent and child/family/peers

**Risk factors in children 6-12 years may include:**

- Exposure to multiple forms of child abuse and neglect
- Exposure to non-familial and familial child abuse and neglect
- Exposure to community violence
- Repeat accidents and injuries
- Learning difficulties
- Low self-esteem
- Insecure family attachment
- Impulsivity
- Hyperactivity/disruptive behaviour
- Difficult temperament
- Poor peer relationship building
- Exposure to family violence
- Chronic disruptive behaviours/inadequate behaviour management
- Low social skills and problem solving

**Risk factors in the family may include:**

- Maternal/paternal mental health disorder
- Marital conflict associated with instability
- Exposure to family violence
- Deprivation (social and environmental)
- Criminality
- Parental substance abuse

**Physical harm/abuse:**

- Increased fractures – compared to more isolated pattern in accidental injury
- Bruising – hand/object patterns

**Sexual abuse:**

- Sexualised behaviours may be observable
- Genital abnormality (minority of cases)

**Emotional abuse:**

- Behaviour problems/school alienation
- Developmental delay – percentage of developmental delay linked to neglect and failure to thrive
- Early onset child anxiety

**Neglect-emotional, physical, medical:**

- Presents with poor hygiene (including oral hygiene), lack of appropriate clothing/equipment, (NB: differentiate from economic disadvantage)
- May present as failure to thrive – inadequate nutrition
- Health needs not being met eg not being taken to health facility for appropriate treatment, immunisations not up to date
- Factitious illness disorder/ chronic somatic complaints by child/Munchhausen syndrome by proxy (repeated symptomatology)

(\*This framework is a guide for practice and is not considered to be comprehensive of all harm, behaviours or presentations that may give rise to concern or suspicion of abuse/harm or neglect. Each indicator needs to be considered in the context of the child/young person's circumstances. Further harm/abuse and neglect can occur in the absence of a demonstrable 'risk factor'.)

**Further information:**

CEO Student Protection Officers 4637 1400