



## Definition of child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse refers to acts in which a person with power or authority over a child (female or male) uses the child for sexual gratification. Acts of sexual abuse may be perpetrated by an adult, an adolescent or an older child.

Sexual abuse spans a range of contact and non-contact behaviours.

Non-contact behaviours include:

- making sexual comments directly in person, in letters, or by telephone, text messages or email
- voyeurism
- exposing a child to pornography
- exposing parts of the perpetrator's body or the child's body
- exploiting a child through prostitution or pornography.

Contact behaviours include a wide range of sexual activities including:

- fondling a child's genitals, or getting a child to fondle the perpetrator's genitals
- masturbation
- oral sex
- vaginal and/or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object
- rubbing the perpetrator's genitals against the child's body
- intimate kissing
- fondling of breasts.

### References

'Responding to child abuse' 2003, Child Protection and Juvenile Justice Branch, Department of Human Services, Victoria.

'Keeping children and young people safe' 2005, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, ACT.