

## About The Child Abuse Prevention Service

The Child Abuse Prevention Service (CAPS) was founded in 1973 and aims to alleviate child abuse in all its forms through community education, family preservation and early intervention services.

In addition to our national telephone line, CAPS offers services for parents, carers, children, victims of abuse and offenders.

CAPS runs awareness campaigns and educational activities within the community, and additionally works to support the vital efforts of other organisations that provide services to children and families in communities around Australia.

CAPS is a registered charity, and is not affiliated with any political or religious group.

**Prevention  
is better  
than a cure**

## How can the Child Abuse Prevention Service help?

It's free to call CAPS from anywhere in Australia. You can call:

- If you have concerns about the safety and welfare of a child you know.
- If you are finding it hard to cope with your kids.
- If you have been abused yourself.
- If you think you might harm a child.
- If you need clarification about what child abuse actually is.
- If you want to report abuse but don't know how.
- If you have any questions or need any information about child abuse.
- If you need help but don't know where to get it.
- Or if you just need someone to talk to! You don't need a reason to call.

When you call, a CAPS support worker will listen to you for as long as you need to talk, and help you decide what to do next. Follow-up support is available to every caller.

**Child Abuse Prevention Service  
National Free Call 1800 688 009**

**[mail@childabuseprevention.com.au](mailto:mail@childabuseprevention.com.au)  
[www.childabuseprevention.com.au](http://www.childabuseprevention.com.au)**



**child abuse  
prevention service**

**Help is just  
a phone  
call away**

**For free, non-judgemental,  
and confidential support call  
1800 688 009**

## What is child abuse?

**Child abuse is a crime. It can take many forms...**

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when someone involves a child in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust.

**Physical Abuse** is any non-accidental injury to a child, including shaking and excessive discipline.

**Emotional Abuse** is behaviour that destroys the confidence of a child resulting in emotional deprivation and trauma, including exposure to domestic violence, intimidation and withholding affection.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide a child with the basic necessities for their proper growth and development (for example – food, clothing, shelter, medical care and appropriate supervision).

## What can I do about child abuse?

**If you know that a child is in immediate danger call 000**

- Don't try and solve the problem yourself. It is vital that you make a report to the relevant Government Department in your state. CAPS can provide you with the contact details for your area.
- Report each incident of child abuse that you witness or know about.
- Encourage other people who know about or have witnessed the abuse to report it too.
- Even if you know that a child is being abused, never pressure the child into disclosing this information to you. Provide unconditional support and do not be judgemental.
- Talk to your children about staying safe.
- Call CAPS for information and support.

## What's the difference between discipline and abuse?

Every phase of childhood, from infancy through to teenage years, brings its own set of issues for parents and children alike. Discipline is a common challenge across all age groups. When you discipline your children:

- Aim to show them why their behaviour is wrong and what they should do instead.
- Frightening them is not discipline, and can make the problem worse.
- Ensure that you emphasise that the behaviour is bad, and not the child.
- Physical punishment is not discipline and does not improve a child's behaviour.
- Encouragement and guidance are needed as a balance to any reprimand.

## What can I do when things get really difficult?

Every parent and carer struggles to cope with parenting some of the time. Even if you have ongoing problems with your children, it doesn't mean that you have failed as a parent or that your children are bad.

When things become particularly stressful it's normal to feel anger and frustration but it is never ok to harm your child physically or emotionally. You are responsible for your own actions and for the wellbeing of your children, but you don't have to do it alone. No matter how overwhelming the situation seems, help is always available and there is always a way out.

During difficult times you can call CAPS to talk confidentially about how you are feeling. CAPS support workers care about you and your family, and they have the time to listen to you for as long as you need to talk. They can help to share the problem and can assist you with thinking through the issues and connecting you to useful services and helpful organisations in your area.

**For free, confidential, non-judgemental parent and carer support call 1800 688 009**

## How can I keep my children safe?

- Talk to your children about staying safe.
- Teach your children about their bodies, and the proper names for their different body parts.
- Talk to your children about 'good' touching and 'bad' touching.
- Explain to your children that they never have to keep a secret that makes them feel scared.
- Create a safety circle for your children by helping them identify a few trusted adults (like a parent, teacher, or neighbour) that they can always talk to if they need help.
- Teach your children that if they are ever in trouble, or if someone ever hurts them in any way, they should always tell the adults in their safety circle and keep telling until something is done about it.
- Let your children know that it's ok to say NO – even to an adult.
- Teach your children about staying safe online and using technology safely.
- Tell your children not to give out their personal information without your permission.
- Ensure that your children are always adequately supervised and accompany them in public areas.
- Make sure you know where your children are at all times.
- Make sure your children know where you are at all times and how they can contact you if they need you.
- Ensure that your children know that they can call 000 in emergencies.