

Recognising signs of Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is any attitude, behaviour or failure to act that interferes with a child's social development.

It can range from a simple verbal insult to an extreme form of punishment. Emotional abuse can have more long-lasting negative psychiatric effects than either physical or sexual abuse.

If you have any concerns, you **MUST** speak to your Manager or Child Protection Lead Officer and follow the Setting Safeguarding/Whistle Blowing Procedure.

Possible signs of Emotional abuse

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another (including pets)

Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate

Calling a child names and making negative comparisons with other children

Ignoring a child and giving them the 'silent treatment'

Domestic abuse within the home environment

Conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or a 'mistake'
A fearful, distant or unaffectionate relationship (no hugs or kisses)

A parent's constant negative and harsh behaviour towards their child

Extremes in child's behaviour:
Overly compliant or extremely aggressive.

Emotional abuse is often not witnessed, you may only notice the effects.

Very obedient or very demanding.

This may include a loss of self-confidence, withdrawing from others, and possible eating disorders or self-harming

Emotional abuse occurs in ALL KINDS OF FAMILIES!

Behaving very adult-like or much younger than their years.

Children are more at risk when there are additional strains on the family

Emotional abuse can delay a child's physical, mental, emotional and social development



Further reading:

- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused ([Child abuse concerns - guide for practitioners](#))
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2
- SSCP: Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership www.nspcc.org.uk
- [Safeguarding and welfare \(southampton.gov.uk\)](http://Safeguarding and welfare (southampton.gov.uk))