

# Summary on child abuse

[Society](#), [Child Abuse](#)



Child abuse is an act whereby parents or guardians would jeopardize or impair the well-being of the child, which includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse. According to our research, the trends on child abuse is increasing. In the previous year, 3, 035 reports were looked into on the topic of child abuse, which was about 1. 5 times that of the 2, 022 inquiries in 2015. Most of the cases involved physical abuse in children. An example stated was a mother and her boyfriend physically abusing a two years old boy in 2015, in which they kicked and slapped him almost every day for over a month (The Straits Time, 2017).

The factors that contribute to child abuse include aspects of the family and child. Family structure, domestic violence and stressful life events can contribute to the possibilities of maltreatment. Research have shown that children who live with single parent are more likely to experience physical and sexual abuse. Due to the family's low income, heavy responsibilities and insufficient support, single parents choose to mistreat children to relieve stress (Child Abuse Watch, n, d.).

Due to the increasing trend on child abuse, the government has invested in reinforcing the abilities of professionals such as educators, healthcare and social workers to discern abuse and intervene professionally. To ensure that the professionals are well educated, they are required to undergo training to better equip themselves for such situations (Ministry of Social and Family development, 2016).

Children's age, physical, mental and emotional disabilities cause them to be vulnerable to certain types of child abuse such as shaken baby syndrome

and physical neglect due to their petite physical size. Children with disabilities tend to be ill-treated 1. 7 times more than children without disabilities. Parents may feel overwhelmed with the extra responsibility that they have to provide for their children. Children with special needs are also seen as an outcast and are easy targets for abuse (Child AbuseWatch, n, d.).

A pressing and prevailing issue that children in Singapore face is abuse. One of the reasons why children in Singapore face abuse is due to the fact that children are not given a voice to speak up against their abusers. Often, the perpetrator is their own family member. Thus, due to the fear of speaking against their family members and tearing apart their family, victims of child abuse often choose to stay quiet on the issue. For example, in March, a foodstall assistant, who sexually abused his biological daughter for more than two years, was sentenced to 23½ years' jail and the maximum 24 strokes of the cane. The girl was aged between 11 and 13 when her father violated her. At first, she did not tell anyone about the abuse, fearing that it would break her family up. (The Straits Times, 2017).

Some victims of child abuse may not even be aware that they were being used by their own family members for their own pleasure. A case of sexual abuse of a boy came to light during a sexual education class when he insisted that a “ bad” touch was a “ good” touch as his father, as well as his father’s friend, had done it to him previously. He had not realised that he was sexually abused. (CNA, 2019).

Differentiating child abuse is also a problem in Singapore as parents use violence as a form of punishment to discipline their children. We have all

heard of the saying “ spare the rod, spoil the child”. However, where should the line be drawn? Many parents lack child development knowledge and thus may cross the line while having good intentions in mind. Numerous child abuse cases are interconnected to child discipline issues - parents who want to discipline their child ends up abusing him (Teo, 2017).

Another reason why child abuse cases are kept under the wraps is because children educators are not trained well enough to discern and spot signs of child abuse. A survey conducted by the Singapore Children's Society indicate that pre-school teachers are not well-trained in handling child abuse cases or are not aware of the resources available. It polled 336 pre-school staff, of whom 60 per cent had more than 10 years of experience and 62 per cent were in leadership or management positions. (The Straits Times, 2017)