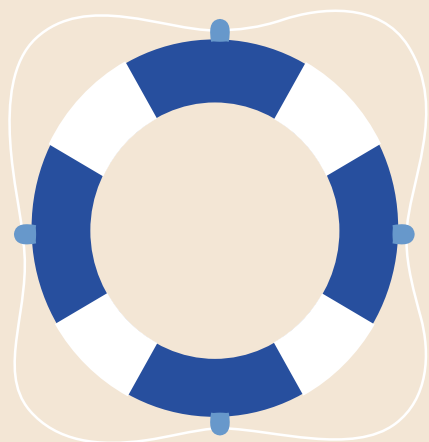
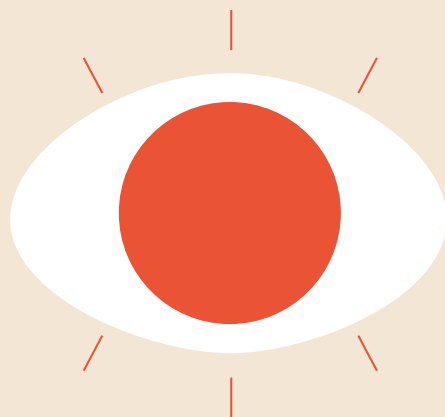
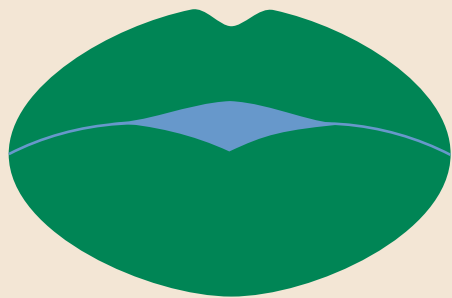
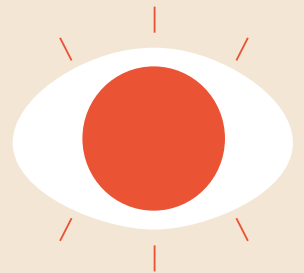
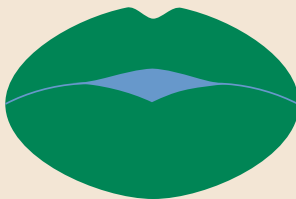
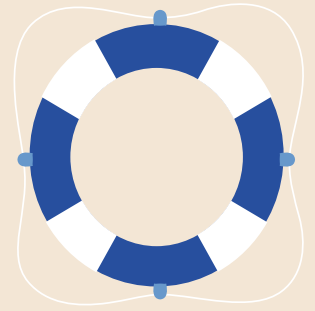
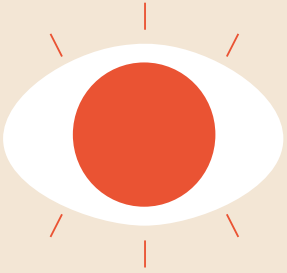
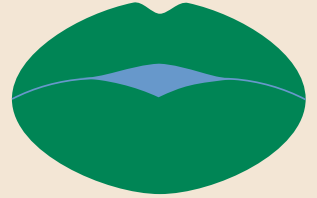
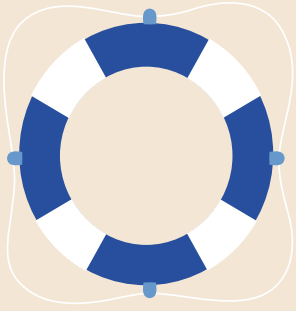
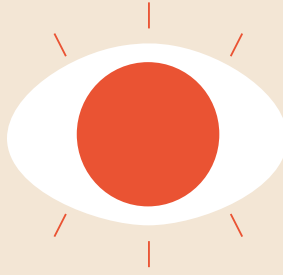
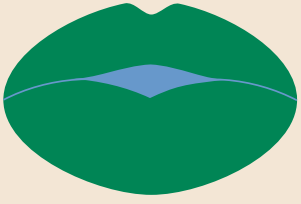


EDUCAP Guide

Guide of prevention, detection, action and support for Infant and Primary in cases of sexual abuse against children.





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Guide of prevention, detection, action and support for Infant and Primary educational centres in cases of sexual abuse against children.

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Presentation of EDUCAP European project

*A training proposal with a
multiplying effect*

The **aim** of this guide is to provide education professionals —and especially Infant Education and Primary Education teachers— with theoretical and practical tools and resources to prevent, detect, act and support victims in cases of child sexual abuse.

This guide is one of the products from the **European project** known as **Multiplying Educational Capacities to Combat Sexual Violence Against Children (known by its acronym EDUCAP)**, launched in 2021 with participation from the **University of Valencia, the University of Barcelona, the Save the Children organisation and the Carlos III University of Madrid**, with the support of various public entities in the Valencia Regional Government (*Generalitat Valenciana*), especially the General Directorate of Educational Inclusion of the Regional Dept. (*Conselleria*) of Education, Culture and Sports and the Office for Victims of Crime of the Regional Dept. of Justice, Interior and Public Administration.

It has been designed to provide material as a basis for a teacher training programme following **teacher training** methodology. The training given to the teachers should enable them to prevent child sexual abuse in the classroom with their students, and to train other teachers.

Hence, by the end of the course, the teachers who receive the training should feel able to:

- ① **Prevent child sexual abuse among their pupils**, being aware of the resources they can use and the activities they can carry out in the classroom to achieve this goal.
- ② **Detect possible cases of child sexual abuse**, distinguishing between the various sources for identifying it [disclosure or indicators].
- ③ **Act assertively when confronted with possible cases of child sexual abuse**, knowing who and how to notify of a suspicion and, ultimately, what path to follow once a possible case of child sexual abuse has been detected in the classroom.
- ④ **Support and advise the child** after the disclosure or discovery of sexual abuse.
- ⑤ **Train other educational professionals**, teachers and other school staff in prevention, detection, reporting and advocacy for cases of child sexual abuse.

Before we begin, a few caveats should be noted:

- This programme should be considered to be a minimal guide, in the sense that many of the points addressed

summarise extensive literature on the matter, in order to clarify and emphasise essential content and concepts that are useful for teachers in particular. As a result, there are many matters that have been left out, but regarding which anybody who is willing and committed can always find out. Indeed, it is always possible to go one step further in the work of preventing violence against children. All initiatives geared towards ensuring children's rights in general have an impact in some way on preventing child sexual abuse and many other forms of violence.

- This material has been drawn up based on the particular needs of teachers in the Valencia Community region, but it can be used with its relevant adaptations in other contexts.

Introduction

Among the different forms of violence against children, sexual abuse is one of the most serious kinds, and at the same time one of the most concealed. Child sexual abuse is a serious **social problem** and a **violation of various rights** that should be guaranteed for all of us. It is also a serious breach of specific children's rights that have been recognised internationally for boys and girls as a way of bolstering assurances for their particular needs to protect them, given their situation as people who are still physically and mentally developing.

Based on the acknowledgement of sexual abuse as a social problem and a problem in terms of rights, the international community has created a series of guidelines in an attempt to lay down standards on how states should focus their work on this phenomenon. Obligations have been established to prevent, investigate and punish child sexual abuse, as well as duties to protect and redress victims. The **main regulations** imposing **international obligations** as regards child sexual abuse on states, including Spain, are:

- The **International Convention on the Rights of the Child**, from 1989, whose Article 19 lays down the right of children to be protected against all forms of violence, including sexual abuse. To do so, states are required to take steps to prevent sexual abuse, as well as steps so that, if the state and society act too late and child sexual abuse occurs, then there is adequate identification, reporting, investigation, treatment and prosecution of such cases.

- The **Convention of the Council of Europe** for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, of 2007, also known as the **Lanzarote Convention**, whose Article 1 establishes one of its purposes as preventing and combating child sexual abuse. This convention includes specific obligations regarding the prevention, reporting, investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse cases.
- **Directive 2011/93/EU** of the European Parliament and of the European Council, on combatting sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography. In its considerations, this Directive states that the sexual abuse of minors «constitute serious violations of fundamental rights, in particular of the rights of children to the protection and care necessary for their well-being» and imposes on states the duty to adopt measures aimed at preventing or prohibiting acts related to the promotion of the sexual abuse of minors.
- The 1993 **Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women**, whose Articles 1 and 4 establish that states must condemn all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual abuse, requiring them to take adequate steps to prevent, investigate and punish it.
- The 2006 **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, whose Article 16 obliges states to take adequate steps to prevent violence against people with disabilities, as well as measures designed to protect people with disabilities, including children with disabilities, from all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse.

This latter convention is especially relevant if we take into account studies indicating that children with disabilities are in a situation of greater vulnerability to sexual abuse.

The Valencia Community region, as part of the Spanish state, has agreed to comply with the obligations that these agreements impose on it. By doing so, **it has made a commitment to ensuring that its regulations comply with those set out by the conventions**. In this sense, Spain has adapted many, though not all, of its regulations to these commitments. Today we can see that on both the national and regional levels, there are laws that set out obligations for the state and for society in general as regards preventing, reporting and prosecuting child sexual abuse, as well as protecting the victims. The following are particularly noteworthy:

- **Organic Law 1/1996, of 15 January, on the legal protection of minors**. This is the state regulation that lays down the foundations for the protection of children throughout Spanish territory. Its Article 11 establishes the protection of minors against all forms of violence, including sexual abuse, as a governing principle for the action taken by public authorities.
- **Organic Law 8/2021, of 4 June, on comprehensive protection for children and adolescents against violence**, known as LOPIVI. This is a nationwide regulation whose recent approval has been achieved thanks to the drive behind the tireless struggle by civil society, which has been demanding that the state once and for all cease acting passively in the face of the brutal reality of violence against children in this country. The law is intended to establish guarantees for the fundamental rights of children and adolescents as regards their physical, mental, psychological and moral integrity against any form of violence. These assurances include measures to raise awareness, prevention, early detection, protection, and redress of damages for victims.

This law sets out specific measures for the educational sphere, including duties to foster violence prevention plans, obligations to draw up protocols for action in the event of suspicions of child sexual abuse in schools, and the legal duty for professionals in contact with minors to report it, as is the case with teachers and other school staff, who, due to their function or position, are required to notify the competent authorities when they notice signs of a situation of violence against children, as is the case with child sexual abuse [Article 16].

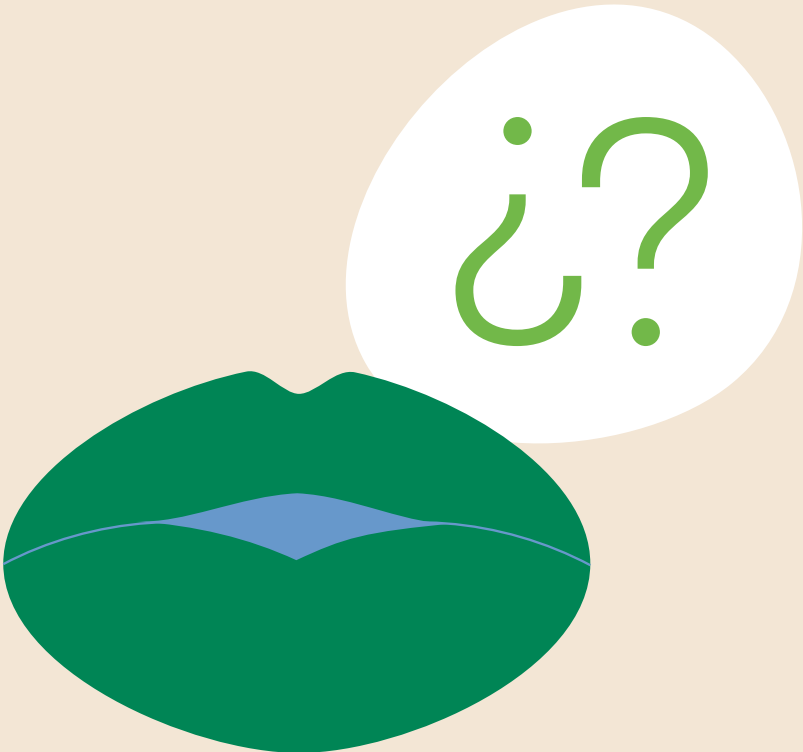
- **Organic Law 10/2022, of September 6, on the comprehensive guarantee of sexual freedom.** This recently approved law which aims to comply with international obligations regarding the protection of human rights of women, girls and boys against sexual violence. Among other things, it shares with LOPIVI that it is a comprehensive law that seeks to address institutionally a structural problem, namely sexual violence against women and children. This creates resources for prevention, detection, support and reintegration, and modifies some concepts and offenses provided for in the Penal Code. In the area of prevention, one of the articles that we can highlight is article 7, which establishes that the curriculum of all educational stages non-university stages will include formative content aimed at raising awareness and preventing of sexual violence.
- **Law 26/2018, of 21 December, on the rights and guarantees of children and adolescents.** This is the main regional law on children. Its Article 9 recognises the right of children and adolescents to be treated well and to be protected against any form of violence, including sexual abuse. It also lays down measures in terms of raising awareness, prevention and the protection of victims.

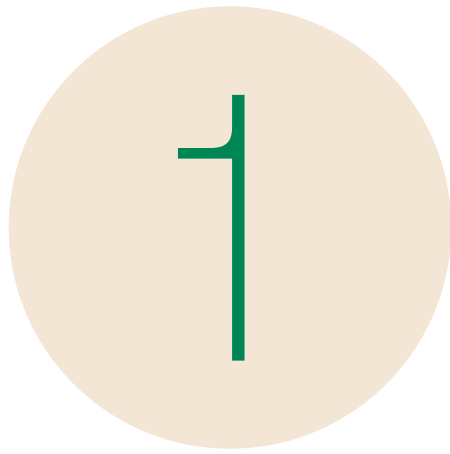
- **Order 62/2014, of 28 July, from the Regional Dept. (Conselleria) of Education, Culture and Sports.** This regional order sets out the bases for drawing up plans for coexistence and tolerance in schools, but also the basic protocols that must be applied when various situations that may affect children's rights are detected, as is the case of violence in general, and sexual abuse in particular.
- **Royal Decree 95/2022, of 1 February, which establishes the organisation and minimum education for Infant Education in the Valencia Community region,** Its Article 4 stipulates that the purpose of Infant Education is «to contribute to the comprehensive development and harmony of pupils in all of its facets: physical, emotional, sexual, affective, social, cognitive and artistic, fostering personal autonomy.»
- **Royal Decree 157/2022, of 1 March, which sets out the organisation and minimum education for Primary Education in the Valencia Community region,** stipulating that in all areas of education, equality between men and women should be fostered, as well as health education, which includes affective-sexual education. This decree explicitly stipulates that the content addressed in schools must include «knowing and becoming aware of one's own body, as well as one's own and others' emotions and feelings, applying scientific knowledge, in order to develop healthy habits and achieve physical, emotional and social well-being.»

Throughout this regulatory framework, we can find obligations and **measures aimed particularly at educational institutions and professionals**, such as prevention measures and obligations for reporting, which it is important to know clearly. Knowing them enables us to comply with them, but also allows us to be clear about the limits of our responsibility, while at the same time

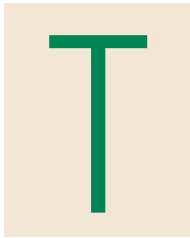
providing support while we comply with our legal obligations, in the fight to eradicate child sexual abuse.

The **privileged position of schools** as an observatory of child behaviour, and individual teachers as privileged observers, is precisely what makes their involvement in the prevention, detection, and reporting of child sexual abuse so essential.





Talking,
understanding



he topic of child sexual abuse has been, and continues to be, a **taboo** in society. The seriousness of sexual abuse in terms of the numbers, the consequences and the distressing violation of children's rights urgently demands our attention, our commitment and action.

Furthermore, the complex procedure that has to be followed after a complaint is reported means that raising awareness about sexual abuse and the subsequent institutional response requires a cross-cutting perspective that includes all of the professionals involved, not only those in education, but also the security forces, legal parties, the healthcare sector and many more.

In this module, we are TALKING about sexual violence against children because by talking about it we raise awareness of the importance of using all possible means to stop it. **Talking about the problem is the first step** in order to take action towards eradicating it. That said, it is also true that, since it is such a difficult problem to deal with, we must get thoroughly informed and base our action upon expert knowledge.

Children create very strong bonds of attachment to education professionals, who often end up becoming points of reference for them, as well as confidants. That is why it is essential to talk with and among education professionals about preventing and detecting child sexual abuse so as **to defend and guarantee children's right to protection.**

Once we have begun talking about this problem, it is important to UNDERSTAND what we are talking about. To do so, in the following sections we shall deal with the matter of defining child sexual abuse, along with some of its aspects as a social, health and human rights problem. We are also going to tear down some of the myths surrounding child sexual abuse that hinder us from approaching the matter suitably.

Definition



Sexual victimisation is any form of sexual contact (physical or not) between a child or adolescent and another person (adult or not) who is in a position of power or authority with respect to the younger minor, making it impossible for the latter to give any kind of consent that may be considered valid.

Sexual abuse or assault is a form of sexual victimisation in which there is verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour with sexual connotations towards a minor based on violence and/or an abuse of power and trust.

Although it is complicated to define, and the definition may vary depending on each victim's personal experience, there are seven considerations given below to better understand what we mean when we talk of child sexual abuse:¹

Contact. In child sexual victimisation, there may be physical contact, but that is not always the case. There are many forms of sexual abuse without physical contact that you may not have even heard of, such as exhibitionism, sexting, involuntary exposure to sexual material, online grooming, sending photos with sexual content without consent, and more.

Violence. Sometimes there is violence in child sexual victimisation, and in that case it is sexual assault. However, in most cases the abuser does not use physical violence, but rather manipulation and the trust they maintain with the child or adolescent.

Progression. The abuse is called *acute* when the minor suffers from it on a single occasion, or *chronic* when it happens on more than one occasion. When it is chronic, it is usually progressive, with the intensity of the abuse increasing over time.

Consequences. Child sexual victimisation can lead to very serious, lasting consequences that affect the victim's development. It is therefore crucial for teachers who work in contact with children to be able to prevent, detect and intervene early on in order to attempt to reduce the risk of such consequences.

1 For more information, see: Pereda, N. [2010]. «El espectro del abuso sexual en la infancia: definición y tipología» [«The spectre of child sexual abuse: definition and types»]. *Revista de Psicopatología y Salud Mental del Niño y del Adolescente*, 16, 69–78.

Age. The abuser is usually somebody significantly older than the victim. Nevertheless, they can also be of a similar age and use violence or threats to abuse the person. The age of sexual consent in Spain is 16 years old, but forms of sexual victimisation may occur with people over this age if the person has not given their consent.

Gender - Sex. Sexual victimisation affects children of any gender, though the percentage of victims is higher among girls.

Power. The abuser is always in a position of power, authority or control over the victim.

This **imbalance of power or authority** may be due to the relationship of trust linking the child with the abuser (for example, a family member or an educator), to greater physical strength (for example, a peer of the same age or an adult threatening the child) or an asymmetry in age (which is usually 5 years between the child and the perpetrator if the minor is up to 13 years old, and 10 if they are between 13 and 16, to avoid sexual games of discovery among peers being punished) or in maturity and development.

It must be taken into account that the abuse may be repeated over time. The aforementioned imbalance of power leads to **abusive dynamics** arising between the abuser and the victim, where silence is imposed on the victim, and the abuse is perpetuated by means of threats or blackmail.

A few notes:

- The term «**sexual violence against children**» could be considered adequate and less restrictive so as to refer to all forms of violence related to the area of sexuality that a minor may suffer from.
- Until recently, the Spanish Criminal Code distinguished between sexual assault and abuse, depending on the presence or absence of physical force, using the term *violence* for the former. As of 2022, that distinction has been eliminated. Today, **sexual assaults** are considered to be all behaviour that violates sexual freedom without the other person's consent, regardless of whether physical force is used or not.
- In this guide we shall talk generally about **child sexual abuse**, since it is the term most used within the doctrine and among most professionals. However, we should point out that when we talk about sexual maltreatment, we are talking about violence.

Children and adolescents can suffer from **other forms of non-maltreatment**, such as physical and emotional maltreatment, either by action or omission in behaviour, or else victimisation by peers.

Physical maltreatment is defined as action by a caregiver that causes actual physical harm or has the potential to harm the child or adolescent.

This may take the form of beatings, kicking, shaking, pulling one's ear or hair, burning, suffocating, drowning, poisoning, etc. Corporal punishment (e.g., hitting, belting, smacking, etc.) is a specific form of physical maltreatment, often used with no intention of doing harm. The caregiver aims to control or correct the behaviour of the child or adolescent, and uses physical violence to do so. Unlike other forms of physical abuse, the milder forms of corporal punishment are not yet banned in all European countries or in all spheres, but the number of countries with complete bans is growing. Nonetheless, it is still a form of physical abuse that entails significant adverse consequences, such as learning to use violence as a way to settle conflicts.

Physical neglect, on the other hand, refers to contexts in which the basic physical needs of the child or adolescent (such as food, hygiene, sleep, safety, medical assistance, clothing, education or monitoring) are not met by their parents, guardians or caregivers.

This is abuse by omission, which makes it less visible than physical abuse, though it is usually accompanied by indicators that can be detected at school.

Emotional abuse occurs in the context of a caregiver's inability to provide an appropriate supportive environment for the child or adolescent.

Such behaviour has an adverse effect on the minor's emotional health and development. It can take the form of shouting, belittling, ridiculing, using unpleasant nicknames, threatening, rejecting, insulting, being hostile, blaming, restricting the child's or adolescent's contact with their peers, etc. A minor's exposure to violence in the family environment or to an intense, manifest conflict between adults is a specific form of emotional abuse.

Emotional neglect is what occurs when the child's or adolescent's parents or main caregivers do not meet their emotional needs, ignoring them with a lack of attention or an inability to give an adequate response to the minor's feelings.

It is a form of abuse that is very difficult to detect since its effects, though very serious, are usually seen in later stages of development, when the person does not show empathy or has significant difficulties in social relationships, low self-esteem, or an inability to handle their emotions.

Emotional and physical abuse often coexist. Physical abuse fosters fear and a feeling of humiliation in the victims, whereas emotional abuse affects their self-esteem and the way they regulate their own emotions. Emotional abuse can turn into physical abuse over time. It is also possible for physical and emotional abuse to occur together with other forms of abuse such as sexual abuse or school bullying. This interconnection

or coexistence of various forms of victimisation is called polyvictimization and is a more common phenomenon than we might imagine.

Victimisation by peers refers to aggressive types of behaviour against children and adolescents of school age by their peers.

Bullying behaviour can take different forms, including the following:

Physical aggression: This refers to the use of force and physical violence (for example, hitting, kicking, shoving).

Verbal aggression: This includes using words to attack the victim, verbally threatening them, using put-downs, insults, and/or giving them unpleasant nicknames.

Relational aggression: This can be committed via social exclusion and isolation (for example, the victim is systematically excluded from group activities, remains alone during free time at school, is not invited to parties or other group events, etc.), as well as spreading malicious rumours with the intention of isolating the victim and ruining their social reputation.

It is worth noting, at present, the importance of **cybervictimization** or **online victimization**. This type of aggressive behaviour is carried out through information and communication technologies and include the use of instant messaging and social networks, websites,

etc., to threaten, defame, offend, exclude or ridicule publicly the victim through texts, images or videos uploaded and shared on the web. In this case we speak of cybervictimization or online victimization (to distinguish it from offline victimization). A particular type of cybervictimization is the so-called «happy slapping», which refers to the physical assaults that are physical assaults that are carried out against a boy or girl while others film the attack and then the images are distributed online to taunt the victim.

Essential reading



Sexual victimisation is any form of sexual contact between a child or adolescent and another person in a position of power or authority. It may include the use of physical force or else manipulation and deception.



Child sexual abuse is the **most common** form of sexual victimisation and the one for which there have been most studies.



An **imbalance of power** between victim and perpetrator is essential in sexual abuse, facilitating the secrecy and silence that accompany such situations.



Child sexual abuse may be accompanied by **other forms of victimisation** such as physical abuse, emotional abuse or school bullying, which may also be online.

Raising awareness: *stories*

This section gives different accounts of child sexual abuse to illustrate the range of situations involving this problem.



Marta's case

Marta is 11 years old and lives with her mother, her little brother and her stepfather in a small town near Valencia. She takes care of her little brother almost all the time because her mother works long hours and is not usually home when they come home from school. Sometimes she even works night shifts, so it is her stepfather who puts them to bed. Marta's mother and stepfather have been living together for six years. Marta doesn't remember her father, who left when she was very little.

She loves her family very much, but lately her behaviour has changed. She finds it very hard to get to sleep, she isn't eating and complains of stomach pains. She looks poorly, with haggard eyes and a very tired appearance. Her classmates have begun to make fun of her for her baggy clothes and her isolation. She remains alone in the playground and doesn't talk to anyone. The one who had been her friend throughout the year has also shifted away from her, fed up with her not saying anything to her.

Once, after a talk about affectivity and sexuality, Marta left the class and her teacher found her crying in the bathroom. The teacher asked her if she was alright, but she told her that the lesson had confused her a lot and she didn't want to talk about it. Her teacher suggested that she discuss it further, but Marta went home and never talked about it again. The teacher didn't insist

and put Marta's behaviour down to her age and the doubts that the topic might have aroused in her. Over the next few weeks, Marta's behaviour worsened. She was aggressive and continually fought with the classmates who were picking on her. She also argued with the teachers and her school performance worsened.

Her teacher sensed that something was wrong and decided to call Marta's mother, but was told by her that she hadn't noticed anything and that everything was fine at home. The following week, Marta did not come to school. When she returned to class, the teacher found her even more sad and haggard, and asked her what was wrong. Confronted with her silence, she told Marta that she could trust her, that she had a lot of experience dealing with children her age, and that she would know what to do. Marta was wearing long sleeves, but her teacher could see that she had several cuts on her wrists.





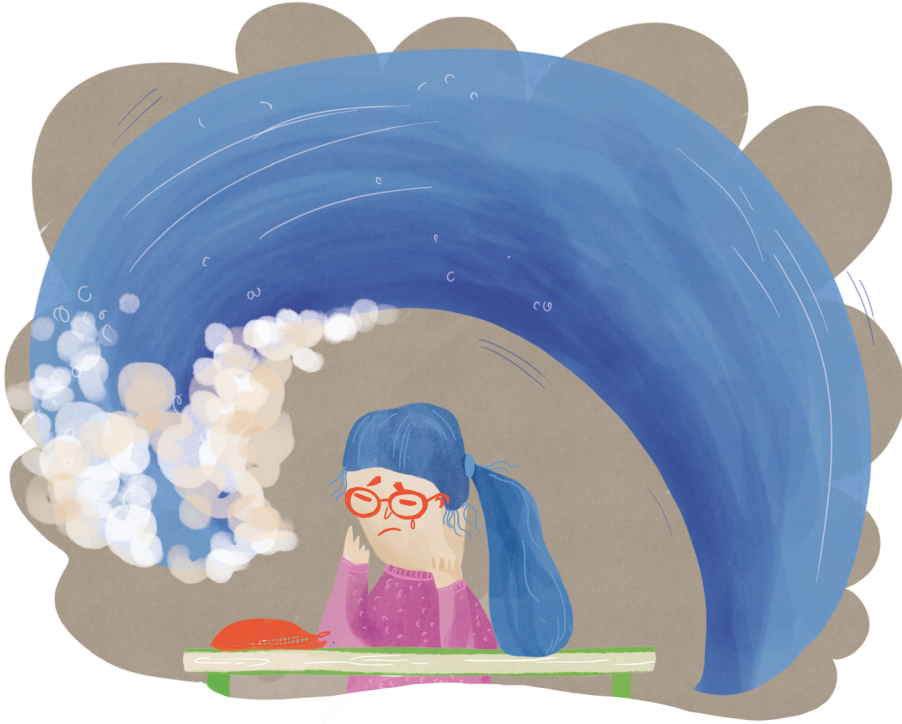
Hugo's story

Hugo is a 5-year-old boy who lives with his parents and his two older brothers in Alicante. He is an active boy who loves to play football and is on his neighbourhood team, just like one of his older brothers. He gets on well with his teammates, since he is a cheerful child who likes to take part in any game or physical activity, be it in class, on the playground or in the park.

Until now, he had not shown behavioural problems at school, but lately he has been rebellious and sometimes defiant with the teachers. He doesn't do what he is told, and when they ask him what's wrong, he simply replies that he doesn't want to do it. He also doesn't pay attention in class and his involvement in school is gradually decreasing.

For a few days, during play time, Hugo has been playing a lot with Ana, a girl from a lower year. In these games, Hugo always tries to control her and takes her to play in areas of the playground where there are no other children, shouting at her and demanding that she do things. On one of these occasions, Ana ran crying to the teacher supervising the playtime, who asked her what had happened. Ana confessed to the teacher that Hugo had pushed her. When the teacher asked her how it had happened, she told her that the boy had demanded several times «that she suck his penis», and when she refused, Hugo called her stupid and that «if she didn't suck his penis, he was going to hit her.»

Following the incident, the teacher spoke with Hugo for him to tell her what had happened with Ana. The boy said that «Ana didn't want to play with me» and «she didn't want to do what I told her,» without specifying what the game involved.



Lucía's case

Lucía is an 8-year-old girl who has been diagnosed with an intellectual disability for the past five years. She lives with her parents and her maternal grandmother in a town near Castellón. Lucía spends a lot of time with her grandmother. She loves to watch TV in the afternoons, on the days that she has no extracurricular activities. Her mother always tries to ensure that Lucía has a stimulating environment, so the girl attends several activities a week. Some evenings, Lucía goes to the pool to go swimming; others, she goes to a day centre where she does all kinds of activities with other children. Lucía especially likes the weekends, because she can spend time with her father, whom she rarely sees during the week because he works very late.

Lucía goes to an ordinary school, where she gets on well with her schoolmates, as well as with the teachers. She likes going to class very much, and has always been enthusiastic about going to school. However, in recent months, Lucía has become more apathetic. It is difficult for her to get up in the morning and she mopes about until it's time to go to class, arriving late some days because she doesn't want to get dressed or takes a long time to eat breakfast. When asked what she wants to do for the weekend, she says «nothing», agreeing to whatever plan her parents or grandmother come up with, even though she doesn't seem to enjoy any of them. She also talks less with her classmates, going so far as to hide in order to be alone. She participates less in class and the teachers have noticed that she has seemed overwhelmed for a few months, having a hard time doing her homework.

Lucía's tutor has noticed these changes and spoke with the girl's parents at the last meeting. Her parents told her that when it's time to go to extracurricular activities, Lucía flatly refuses, even crying for a few days. Since her parents force her to go, she ends up getting angry with them. Neither the teacher nor the parents know what's happening, because Lucía hasn't told them anything, but they suspect that something has happened in one of the activities that she goes to after school, which is having a negative effect on the girl.

Extracurricular activities at school in Valencia

In Primary schools in the city of Valencia, extracurricular activities are organised every day for the pupils. Sports such as football, basketball and handball are particularly noteworthy among these activities, since they are the most popular ones with the pupils. These sports activities have teams in all educational years, and mixed teams or female- and male-only teams, encouraging physical activities among all the pupils.

Basketball is one of the most sought-after activities, both among boys and girls. The coach is a 32-year-old who has played on a basketball team his entire life. Training sessions with him are typically fun, showing a close bond with boys and girls. The coach also gets on very well with the parents, so they feel very assured when the children go to extracurricular classes or matches with other schools. He has been a coach at the school for five years, and the pupils, teachers and families alike have decided to repeat several times with the good work he does.

At the beginning of the school year, a girl from the basketball team in the second year of Primary school asked her parents not to sign her up for that activity again, since she didn't want to go any longer. When the parents asked her why, the girl confessed that she didn't want to be alone with the coach, because he made her feel uncomfortable. This situation was repeated with other girls of different ages, who, encouraged by their schoolmate, refused to attend the after-school basketball activity, claiming that they no longer liked that sport or that they wanted to try new things. Some of the parents became alarmed and tried to find out from their daughters why they were leaving the activity, and some of them mentioned that the coach stayed

in the changing room while they changed, or that sometimes he asked them to stay with him longer. The parents of these girls have spoken with AMPA (the parents' association) and want to discuss this situation at the next parent's meeting.

Approach

Child sexual abuse can be approached in different ways. In this section, we delve into three dimensions that we consider to be fundamental.

A social problem

The wide extent of child sexual abuse has been confirmed, both across Spain and internationally, with figures ranging from **10 to 20% of the child population** in the western world.² In 2010, the Council of Europe estimated that at least one in five children in Europe were victims of some form of sexual violence. In any case, we must take into account that this data is only the tip of the iceberg, since it is estimated that **only 15% of child sexual abuse cases are reported**.³

There are two groups in particular with a greater vulnerability to sexual abuse: girls and minors with disabilities. The fact that the official figures indicate that most of the victims are girls must be taken with caution. Very probably, the reasons behind this difference are not due to one single factor. Some scientific studies have pointed out that there is more reluctance among boys than among girls to disclose the abuse they are experiencing.⁴

2 Pereda, N. [2016]. «¿Uno de cada cinco? Victimización sexual infantil en España» [«One in five? Child sexual victimisation in Spain»], *Papeles del psicólogo*, 37[2], 126-133.

3 Ubrich, T., Ardila, C., y Bartolomé, A. [2017]. *Ojos que no quieren ver, Los abusos sexuales a niños y niñas en España y los fallos del sistema* [Eyes that do not wish to see. *Child sexual abuse in Spain and the system's failings*]. Save the Children.

4 Pereda, N., Guilera, G., Forn, M., & Gómez-Benito, J. [2009]. «The international epidemiology of child sexual abuse: A continuation of Finkelhor» [1994], *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 33[6], 331-342.

As for children with disabilities, there are several factors that may explain the higher figures, such as their greater dependence, which sometimes means greater access for caregivers to their bodies, and minors with cognitive disabilities especially may have serious difficulties in identifying and reporting abuse. Furthermore, there is more prejudice towards their credibility. In any case, there is a scarcity of reliable data on sexual abuse of minors with a disability.⁵

A health problem

The experience of sexual abuse in childhood is associated with **multiple psychosocial and physical health** consequences that can vary. Indeed, it is impossible to list them all exhaustively. Post-traumatic stress or dissociative disorder, cognitive difficulties, sexual dysfunction or increased risk of cardiovascular disease are just some of the consequences documented.^{6,7}

The variation and extent of the consequences depend on **several factors**, such as the duration of the abuse and the relationship with the aggressor. What can be said with complete certainty, however, is that the experience of sexual abuse in

5 The CERMI Women's Foundation for the State Observatory on Disability (2020). *Estudio integral sobre la violencia contra los niños y las niñas con discapacidad en España. Situación jurídica y Social 2019* [Comprehensive study on violence against children with disabilities in Spain. Legal and Social Situation 2019]. Observatorio Estatal de la Discapacidad.

6 Pereda, N. (2009). «Consecuencias psicológicas iniciales del abuso sexual infantil» [«Initial psychological consequences of child sexual abuse»], *Papeles del psicólogo*, 30(2), 135-144.

7 Pereda, N. (2010). «Actualización de las consecuencias físicas del abuso sexual» [«Update on the physical consequences of sexual abuse»], *Revista Pediatra de Atención Primaria*, 12(46), 273–285.

childhood has the potential to affect all aspects of the victim's **health in the long term**. Moreover, there are studies that suggest that the experience increases the risk for the victims of experiencing other forms of violence in future, while at the same time posing a risk factor for victimising others.⁸

In the sphere of education, different studies suggest that violence against children has consequences on their academic development, leading them to achieve worse learning results, high rates of absenteeism, repeating school years and early drop-outs, with lower probabilities of finishing secondary school or going to university. This educational failure influences their ability to obtain an income in the long term, with greater probabilities of getting precarious or semi-skilled jobs.⁹

A human rights problem

Traditionally, children have not been considered subjects with rights, but rather the «property» of their parents. However, for some time now, and particularly on adopting of the **International Convention on the Rights of the Child** [1989] this approach has been questioned. Today it is acknowledged that children hold

8 Sethi, D., Bellis, M., Hughes, K., Gilbert, R., Mitis, F., & Galea, G. [2013]. «European report on preventing child maltreatment». World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe.

9 Sethi, D., Yon, Y., Parekh, N., Anderson, T., Huber, J., Rakovac, I., & Meinich, F. [2013]. «European report on preventing child maltreatment». World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe.

dignity to the same extent as any other person for the simple fact of existing, and they should therefore be subjects with rights.¹⁰

This recognition entails that **all human rights must be recognised, respected and guaranteed for children**, with no conditions dependent on the person's age. However, the fact that such people are still developing means that their ability to exercise their rights evolves progressively as they grow. This fact demands respect for their current degree of autonomy, as well as **the right to stronger protection** to avoid situations that may affect their development, such as child sexual abuse, which implies the violation of multiple rights.

Child sexual abuse entails, first and foremost, a direct serious attack on the child's **right to free development of their personal** affecting their emotional, affective and psychological capacities and their evolution. Secondly, it is a profound violation of their **rights to physical and mental integrity, to safety, to intimacy and privacy, and also to health**, given its serious long-term consequences. Thirdly, it means a violation of the child's right to live a life free from violence. Finally, when these situations are reported, the children may see their **right to access justice** violated, with judicial procedures unsuited to their situation, which can prevent them from participating and usually leads to re-victimisation and a new traumatic experience.

10 For more information, see: Campoy, I. [2017]. «La construcción de un modelo de derechos humanos para los niños, con o sin discapacidad» [«The construction of a human rights model for children, with or without disabilities»], *Derechos y Libertades*, 37, 131–165.

Myths

Disclosing sexual abuse is not easy or comfortable.

The traditional response has been **social rejection and stigmatisation**, so it is more difficult to tell of the abuse. During the process of raising awareness, it is important for us to break down the traditional myths, since this will help us to empathise, understand and implement the procedure in a way that is much safer for the children. .

If we wish to understand child sexual abuse, then we need to be willing to challenge some of the false beliefs inherent in much of society. It is necessary to break with these myths in order to properly detect abuse and act. Some such myths are:

Myth 1:

*Sexual abuse is not common;
there are only isolated cases.*

International and Spanish studies indicate that between 10 and 20% of the population have been victims of sexual abuse in their childhood. Given these alarming figures, child sexual abuse is considered by the World Health Organization to be **a global public health problem**. In the case of children with disabilities, these figures can rise much higher.

Myth 2:

Children invent abuse to get attention.

Children cannot invent something that they do not know exists. They fantasise about things related to their experiences in life. Therefore, if their behaviour or comments carry a sexual connotation that does not correspond to their level of development, we should pay attention to try to understand how they have been able to get such knowledge.

Myth 3:

Abuse only occurs at low social levels.

Studies show that child sexual abuse **does not distinguish between social strata or groups**. Some studies have found that in lower socioeconomic contexts, the cases tend to be detected more than in wealthy sectors. There is an explanation for this: on the one hand, such contexts tend to be given greater attention by social services, who have experience in detection; and on the other, families from higher socioeconomic circles tend to be more reluctant to report cases of abuse.

Myth 4:

The victim does not know the aggressors.

In a 2021 report, it was estimated that in Spain more than **80%** of abusers are known to the victims. They are usually members of the same family.¹¹

Myth 5:

The offenders have a mental health disorder or problem.

There is no psychological profile for the aggressor, but statistics indicate that they are mostly adult men, with a normal appearance, of average intelligence and with no mental pathology. Often, the aggressors may even have been considered socially to be «good family parents».

¹¹ Save the Children (2021). *Los abusos sexuales hacia la infancia en España. Principales características, incidencia, análisis de los fallos del sistema y propuestas para la especialización de los Juzgados y la Fiscalía* [Sexual abuse of children in Spain. Main characteristics, incidence, analysis of the system's failures and proposals for specialisation of the Courts and the Public Prosecution], see: <https://www.savethechildren.es/actualidad/analisis-abusos-sexuales-infancia-espana>. Save the Children.



Myth 6:

Sexual abuse is only committed against girls.

Although there is a higher percentage of girls, statistics show that sexual abuse **is also perpetrated against boys**. Current research suggests that boys are more likely to hide abuse due to gender stereotyping (reluctance to identify as a victim) and anti-homosexuality bias (fear that disclosing sexual abuse by another man would call into question their masculinity).

Myth 7:

Abused children hate their abusers and want to get away from them.

It is very common for abused children to maintain a **strong bond with their aggressors**, who are usually within their circle of trust. A child who is sexually abused by a trusted adult often has trouble identifying as a victim, either because they do not understand what is happening or because they do not know how they should behave. Sexual abuse is usually experienced by the child as a situation of great ambivalence and confusion, in which it is very complicated to break the bond with their loved one.





Preventing



There is ever more research showing that running prevention programmes improves children's resources to cope with possible abuse, or if the case arises, to tell about it and ask for help. There are even studies indicating that prevention programmes can reduce the risk of sexual abuse by up to half.

Avoiding sexual abuse perpetrated by adults is never the responsibility of children, but it *is* possible to provide them with tools and concepts to detect risk situations, act assertively in situations of abuse and understand that sexual abuse is never their fault, which helps **avoid further re-victimisation**.

School is one of the most important spheres in the work of prevention. All schools must provide a safe environment free of violence, but also a space where work is done to prevent violence against children outside or within the school environment.

The prevention of child sexual abuse in the classroom involves pupils acquiring knowledge to know **how to identify and respond assertively to a situation of abuse**, and for them to develop skills **to strengthen their self-esteem**, thereby reducing their vulnerability to manipulation. At the same time, prevention makes it possible to create the conditions for pupils to feel calm about **asking for help** from teachers, who are often their main point of reference.

Preliminary considerations¹²

Commitment and action by the school as regards prevention

In order for a prevention plan to be effective, it is necessary for the activities aimed at preventing sexual abuse not to be restricted only to classes; it should be a task that the whole school takes on. This makes it possible to ensure that when a case is detected in the school environment, all parties act appropriately, each one assuming their responsibility. It also enables a school environment to be fostered that is conducive to pupils disclosing situations of violence or expressing their concerns. Finally, this overall commitment by the school to prevention leads teachers to feel supported and accompanied, and helps to include the content within the curricula themselves, without the need for prevention to entail the need for extracurricular work or an excessive burden on the teaching staff.

If a school does not follow a global prevention plan, teachers can encourage it to take up this commitment and thus comply

¹² This section is mainly based on the work «La escuela y la prevención del abuso sexual infantil: manual para el profesorado» («The school and the prevention of child sexual abuse: manual for teachers»), drawn up in the context of the European project *BREAKING THE SILENCE TOGETHER. Academic success for all by tackling child sexual abuse in primary schools of Europe*. 2016–2018 [nº 2016-1-ES01-KA201-025370].

with its responsibility. The new **Law on the Protection of Children from Violence** [LOPVI, 2021] makes the prevention of violence an **obligation for schools**. In Spain, all schools must carry out prevention activities and must have clear action protocols known to the entire educational community.

A respectful prevention plan

The fundamental goal of a prevention plan is to raise awareness and provide pupils with useful tools to detect risk situations and know how and who to ask for help, with the assuredness that a situation of violence is never their fault. As mentioned above, a prevention plan should not be seen as an attempt to transfer the responsibility of avoiding abuse onto the children; **adults are the only ones responsible for ensuring children's lives are free of violence**, for protecting them when they suffer from it, and for repairing the associated harm done.

The pupils' participation in the activities that are proposed regarding the matter must stem from their free will. They should not be forced to participate. If a child refuses to participate or says that they do not want to participate, the school and teachers must respect this. In such cases, it is necessary to be attentive to warning signs that may explain the rejection.

The topics must follow a logical order and be suited to the pupils' stage of development and particular needs, which may explain their rejection if they have difficulty following the contents. Even so, there may also be a possible situation of abuse behind the rejection.

Integration into curricula

Introducing prevention content into the classroom should not involve an effort that is difficult for teachers to take on, as this can lead to putting it aside. Instead, it must be **included strategically and creatively** so as not to generate an excessive workload. Furthermore, this integration within the curricula enables the prevention content to be made systematic and mainstreamed, thus ensuring that pupils can progressively consolidate the content over the school year.

Currently, most school curricula already include content with **sexual-affective education** topics. For example: among the content in the basic curricula of Infant Education in the Valencia Community region, we can find *acceptance and respect for one's own body and for the body of others*, which is part of sexual-affective education.

There is other prevention content that is not found explicitly but which we can introduce without much difficulty, or else with a little creativity. For example: among the content in the basic curriculum of Infant Education in the Valencia Community region we can also find *socio-affective and coexistence skills and communicating feelings and emotions*, where the importance of differentiating between pleasant and unpleasant sensations and the need to express that feeling in our interpersonal interactions can be addressed, as well as the importance of saying «no» in situations that arouse rejection.

Legitimising somatosensory intelligence as a step prior to prevention¹³

We must be aware of the importance of validating and recognising children's somatosensory and emotional knowledge, and appreciate its protective importance. This is an attitude that must be constant in the upbringing and education of a child and which, though families and teachers may not be aware of it, gives children tools to protect themselves from possible sexual abuse. It exists even when families and teachers do not end up talking explicitly about sexual abuse with them.

The important thing is not to reject their sensations and emotions, and for the children to learn to validate what they experience and feel. Tackling the issue of child sexual abuse with an appropriate attitude, legitimising and validating the child's bodily and emotional knowledge, are two essential factors in effectively preventing any form of maltreatment, and they also come prior to the key prevention messages that families and educators must work on with children.

Teachers should work on this aspect with practical examples such as: if a child says «This scares me» or appears to be afraid, we should not blurt out phrases like «Don't be silly, it's nothing!»; instead, we can reply with something like «We are all afraid sometimes, but I'll be here with you», etc.

13 This section is based on the work of Pepa Horno [2013]. *Escuchando mis tripas: programa de prevención del abuso sexual en educación infantil*, [Listening to my guts: programme for the prevention of sexual abuse in infant education], published by Boira.

Minimum content

(thematic blocks)

One of the first queries that may arise when we take on our task of preventing child sexual abuse in the classroom is what content we should be conveying. At this point, we therefore propose some fundamental topics. The European project *Breaking the silence together* 2016–2018 itself puts forward essential content, and in this section we are using that proposal as a basis, but adapting it to include the information gathered by the research carried out at the beginning of the project (the compilation of existing material on prevention, as well as discussion groups held directly with teachers) and the recommendations made by experts in the field who have taken part in this project.

- ① Children's rights
- ② Gender equality
- ③ Affective-sexual education
- ④ Understanding child sexual abuse
- ⑤ Personal safety tools and support network

These topics can appear in minimal content to work on with pupils in the classroom.



Basic table of content for work on preventing child sexual abuse

Topic

Content

①

Children's rights

- Children have rights. What does it mean to «have rights»?
- Children have the right to be protected from violence [Art. 19 CRC], the right to be protected from sexual abuse and exploitation [Art. 34], the right to have their best interests as a primary consideration [Art. 3], and the right to be heard [Art. 12].
- The responsibility of society in general and of adults in particular is to give help to a child who is in a situation of violence.

②

Education about gender equality

- Gender equality: boys and girls have the same rights.
- What is gender discrimination?
- Gender roles and stereotypes.
- Boys can also cry and express their emotions and worries.
- Girls can also protest and resist when something upsets them.

Attitudes

- Awareness of one's own rights and related values.
- Defence of human rights, particularly the rights of children.
- The certainty that other people must respect their rights.
- Respect for other people's rights.
- Awareness of the sense of injustice when confronted with the violation of one's own rights or those of others.
- Trust in the help one can get from the network of trusted adults.

Skills

- Identifying when they are facing a violation of their rights, or those of other children.
- Knowing the resources or support available when their rights or those of other children are violated.
- Going to the right people or places to report the violation of their rights.

- Defending gender equality.
- Questioning gender roles and stereotypes.
- Confidence in expressing one's own gender identity, whatever it may be.
- Respect for diversity, in particular gender diversity.
- The certainty that other people should respect their gender identity, whatever it may be.

- Building and expressing one's own identity without impositions (stereotypes, roles) based on gender.
- Building relationships through respect for diversity, without gender bias.
- Identifying situations of gender discrimination.
- Responding assertively to a situation of gender-based discrimination against themselves or against other children.
- Going to the right people or places to report a situation of gender discrimination or to answer questions about gender matters.

Topic

Content

③

Affective- sexual education

- Knowledge about one's own body.
- Information on psychosexual development in a way suited to the pupils' stage of development.
- The emotional and affective side of sexuality and intimacy.
- Respect for sexual diversity in its different manifestations (gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, sexual orientation).
- The right to say no (consent).
- Trust in the context of interpersonal relationships

④

Understanding child sexual abuse

- One's own body: public parts and private parts.
- Guidelines for interpersonal relationships: trust, mutual respect, consent, care.
- Feeling «yes», feeling «no».
- Appropriate contact or inappropriate contact.
- Differences between gifts and bribes.
- Learning to say no.
- Violence against children: different forms of violence.
- Child sexual abuse.
- Risk situations.
- The aggressor.
- Factors that can turn child sexual abuse chronic:
 - Secrets (good and bad).
 - Shame.
 - Guilt.

Attitudes

- Development of self-esteem and confidence.
- Willingness to freely express feelings and affection.
- Respect and care towards one's own body and those of others.
- Positive feelings and attitudes towards one's own sexuality and intimacy.
- Respect for one's own privacy and that of others.

- Understanding violence as something done by others; that it is wrong (against their rights); that it causes harm and that we should not allow it.
- Development of empathy, solidarity and attitudes of support towards those who suffer from violence.
- Certainty that the adult who carries out the violent act is the guilty one, never the child subjected to it.
- Trust in one's own intuition when they feel that something is wrong; that a secret is bad.
- Conviction that if a secret causes discomfort, it is best not to keep it, but to tell a trusted person.

Skills

- Learning to take care of one's own physical and emotional well-being.
- Learning to identify and express feelings and emotions.
- Identifying situations that create discomfort.
- Learning to set limits and respect limits in interpersonal interactions.
- Learning to ask for help.
- Building relationships through mutual respect and consent.
- Learning to establish a healthy relationship with sexuality and intimacy, through affection and care.

- Recognising the different forms of violence that children may suffer from.
- Identifying and attempting to reject any form of violence against children, particularly child sexual abuse.
- Identifying the bad secrets and the harmless ones.
- Recognising the feeling of guilt.
- Detecting risk situations or situations of abuse and knowing how to react assertively and ask for help.
- Learning the rule of the four Rs:
 - *Remember*: knowledge about the matter.
 - *Recognise*: risk situations.
 - *Resist*: develop self-protection coping skills.
 - *Report*: tell a trusted person what has happened and ask for help.

Topic

Contents

5

Personal safety and support network

- The importance of asking for help for oneself or for another child (the right to be protected).
- The trust or support network.
- Peer support.
- Map of nearest resources.

↙ This table is an adaptation of the «Map of key content» in the manual for teachers, created within the context of the European project *Breaking the silence together (2016–2018)* and of the educational content from the programme *¡Eh! ¡No te despidistes! (Hey! Don't get tricked!)* [1999] created by Alonso Varea, J. M., Font Cabrè, P., y Val Liso, A.

Attitudes

- Awareness of how they should be treated by adults and their peers, and how they should relate to them.
- Trust in the help they can get from adults within their support network.
- Conception of the school as a safe environment in which to talk about what worries them.
- Trust in the teacher as an adult who can help them.
- Awareness of their role in building relationships based on respect and mutual care among all the members of the educational community.

Skills

- Developing social skills to build healthy relationships based on mutual respect and care in the school environment, in peer relationships, and in the family and community context.
- Identifying situations of violence or discomfort and knowing how to deal with them assertively.
- Identifying and being clear about who is in their network of trusted people.
- Knowing how to ask for help to resolve situations of violence or which cause discomfort.
- Knowing how they can help someone who is having a rough time, particularly another minor.



Prevention plan adapted to the classroom

In order to start preparing our prevention plan, in addition to knowing the fundamental content, we must also have information to adapt that content specifically to the classroom. It is necessary to know: what prior knowledge there is regarding prevention, if any, and what the children's educational needs are, particularly if there are children with special support needs.

Firstly, it is important to assess the pupils' knowledge about the prevention of child sexual abuse, knowing what topics they have seen before, and how, but also assessing the extent to which the content has been effectively internalised, whether there are any gaps, and planning the appropriate way to continue working on the content based on this information. There are different activities that can be carried out to assess this level of knowledge about prevention, depending on the pupils' profiles. For example: reviewing the syllabuses used with pupils in previous school years in order to identify if any of the topics in the table above were addressed; carrying out group dynamics or very simple questionnaires for the pupils in order to find out their knowledge and aptitudes regarding such topics, so as to understand the extent to which it has been effectively consolidated.

These activities are aimed at finding out the status of the pupils' situation, particularly in terms of their level of effective internalisation, which then provides information to design the prevention programme for that specific classroom. Topics

may be detected that have been addressed, but without the necessary depth, or which have not yet been addressed, or which have been addressed but without a preventive approach.

Secondly, it is essential to know the pupils and identify if there are any with particular needs, for example, those who require some curricular adjustment or support to follow the curricula. This information will enable us to choose, adapt and/or develop appropriate prevention activities, and to identify whether it is necessary to plan any specific reinforcement activity at a specific point.

Among our pupils we may find, for example, a child with autism, which requires pictograms to be introduced to explain the parts of the body. This is a resource we can use with the whole group that can lead to a greater positive impact, since there may be children without autism who, even so, are more visual than auditory, etc.

In developing the prevention plan, we must also keep in mind the resources we have. We should have a bank of materials and activities, and know who we can count on to draw up the plan. The school counselling staff are a fundamental ally, especially when we want to create an inclusive prevention plan.

Planning

Once we are clear about our pupils' level of knowledge and needs, the next step is to do the relevant planning. To do so, we can answer these **questions** as a **guide**.

It is important to underline the need to create instruments to enable us to assess the true extent of understanding or internalisation of the content in order to know whether adjustments are needed in the subsequent prevention activities or in the following school years.

↙ This table is an adaptation of the «Map of key content» in the manual for teachers, created within the context of the European project *Breaking the silence together (2016–2018)* and of the educational content from the programme *¡Eh! ¡No te despistes! (Hey! Don't get tricked!)* (1999) created by Alonso Varea, J. M., Font Cabrè, P., y Val Liso, A.

Guiding Questions for Planning

Action

What are the contents, skills and abilities in the basic plan that our pupils need to learn?

This question enables us to set out:

- Learning goals.
- Specific content (selection, limits).

Taking into account their needs and level of development, how could they acquire the knowledge?

This question enables us to:

- Order the sequence of contents.
- Link the contents to the topics in the curricula (integration).
- Select, adapt or develop specific educational activities.

When will we carry out the prevention activities?

This question enables us to draw up the timetable of activities during the school year.

How can we assess whether the pupils are truly understanding the content?

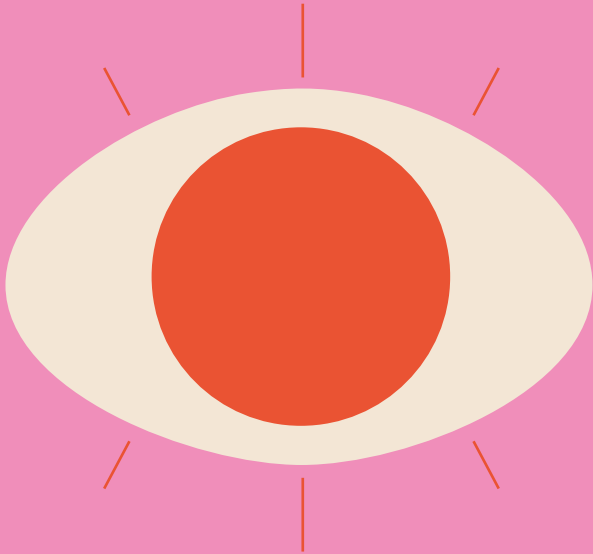
This question will enable us to create our monitoring system. It allows us to:

- Prepare activities throughout the school year to find out to what extent the content covered has been internalised, and determine the need to take action on some of it.
- Carry out activities throughout the school year to find out how pupils feel regarding the content covered and determine the need to provide more intense emotional support.

How can we assess the children's level of effective internalisation when the prevention plan is over?

This question enables us to:

- Prepare one or more activities at the end of the school year to enable us to assess the extent of knowledge about prevention.
- Compare the level of knowledge before and after the prevention plan.
- Detect aspects or content that need further work.
- Determine the starting point for the next school year.





Detecting:
*knowing how
to see, knowing
how to listen*



As we saw in the first Module, child sexual abuse is a worrying reality. It is a social problem which, as we noted in the second module, is preventable. To do so, as a society we must focus our utmost effort on prevention. However, when we are too late, and sexual abuse occurs, it is essential for those of us living with children to be able to detect possible situations of abuse.

Detection is necessary for appropriate intervention. It can occur due to:

- ① **Direct disclosure by the child.**
- ② **Observing their behaviour and identifying the indicators.**
- ③ **Information from third parties.**

Hence, it is essential to know the indicators or suspicious signs to be able to adequately detect cases. In this module, we will look at some indicators of child sexual abuse and possible processes leading to disclosure of this type of violence.

Knowing how to see

The indicators

Knowing that it is a more frequent problem than we thought in the past, it is essential to be able to identify the signs that indicate that a child is suffering from sexual abuse.

The indicators can also appear alongside other abuses, negligence or violence, and even with changes suffered by people of children's age. That is why the most reliable indicator is disclosure by the children themselves. .

There is no single pattern of symptoms and it is possible to find various emotional, social, cognitive, behavioural and functional indicators, or even a total lack of them. Detection involves discovering the existence of something that was not patently obvious, and that is why it is so complicated.

The differences in patterns of symptoms are related to factors such as the severity, frequency, and duration of the abuse, the relationship with the abuser, the victim's individual characteristics, the family's reaction, and the resources in their social network.

In some cases, the child does not give indications that are apparently visible, since they hold back the emotions caused by the experience they are undergoing in their mind, until they can confront them in later stages of their development. This phenomenon is called «**dissociation**» and it makes it difficult

for the abuse to be detected until the child discloses what has happened.

Nevertheless, one of the most common indicators in children suffering from sexual abuse is a **sudden change in behaviour** that doesn't respond to anything we can identify (such as problems between parents, the birth of a sibling or the death of a loved one). For example, there might be an excellent pupil who suddenly begins to fail in all of their work or a girl who, as in the example of Marta, begins to withdraw and isolate herself from the people she considered close.

However, because sexual abuse is considered such a remote possibility for many people, this change in behaviour often goes unnoticed. In other cases, usually when the abuse is long-term, one cannot see sudden changes in behaviour, but there are various problems that tell us of traumatic experiences in the person's life that can be observed. Some of the indicators that it is possible to SEE in child and adolescent victims of sexual abuse are:

Emotional and social indicators

- **Symptoms of depression** (sadness, discouragement, irritability, aggressiveness, loss of interest and energy).
- **Anxiety** (nervousness, excessive worry, fears and phobias).
- **Post-traumatic symptoms** (recurring games or drawings about abuse, dissociation, hypersensitivity to smells, sounds or colours that may evoke the abusive situation).

- **Low self-esteem** , feeling of guilt, shame and stigmatisation (being or feeling different).
- **Suicidal ideation and behaviour.**
- **Avoidance of social relationships** with peers and/or adults, **isolation.**

Cognitive indicators

- Adverse effects on the ability to pay **attention**, concentration and memory.
- Sudden **decline in academic performance** (though in some cases the victims focus on their studies, which become a form of escape).
- Difficulties in general **cognitive functioning.**

Functional indicators

- **Sleeping problems** (difficulties getting to sleep, fears, nightmares).
- **Sphincter control problems** (urinating or defecating in bed).
- **Dietary problems** (not eating, binge eating, vomiting).
- **Psychosomatic problems** (headaches, stomach aches).
- In younger children, we may find **regressions in maturity** (for example, going back to sucking their thumbs when they no longer did so).



Behavioural indicators

- **Sexualised behaviours** (compulsive masturbation, imitation of sexual acts, use of inappropriate sexual vocabulary for their age, excessive sexual curiosity, exhibitionist behaviour, but also the use of sexual violence with peers, especially in adolescence).
- **Compulsive conformity** (permanently seeking to do what others expect of them, avoiding any type of confrontation).
- **Hyperactivity, disruptive and aggressive behaviour.**
- Younger children may show **fear or resistance to enter toilets** or other places intended for urination or defecation without an organic cause to justify doing so.
- **Self-injurious behaviours in adolescents**, running away from home, substance abuse, antisocial behaviour (such as breaking things or facilities), possessing gifts, money or new clothes which they cannot credibly explain where they came from.

Just as important as knowing *what we should be looking at*, is knowing *how we should do so*. In this sense, it is important to bear in mind that none of these symptoms is an indicator by itself, nor should we wait until we see all of them to act. They must be carefully assessed from an **overall perspective**.¹⁴

On the other hand, it is important to point out that the lack of exhaustive studies on the matter and the diversity among children with disabilities prevents us from pointing to specific indicators for such children. Nevertheless, we must be aware of the need to be especially vigilant in everyday work with this population, since they are in a situation of great vulnerability to violence. In a 2019 study by the CERMI Women's

14 For further information, see: Pereda, N. (2009). «Consecuencias psicológicas iniciales del abuso sexual infantil» [«Initial psychological consequences of child sexual abuse»] *Papeles del psicólogo*, 30(2), 135-144.

Foundations,¹⁵ some of the risk factors directly related to the presence of a disability were noted, including individual, family, social and cultural factors.

For example, on an individual level, a child with a disability may have particular difficulties in identifying who is a stranger and who is not, or else difficulty in establishing the border between their own body and another person's body. On the family level, a lack of information, skills training, financial means or insufficient social support networks to cope with the situation and the consequent increase in stress levels are all risk factors that raise the possibility of abuse occurring. On a social or cultural level, social exclusion stemming from negative social attitudes, prejudices and a lack of knowledge or understanding of disability also increases the risk of violence.

To sum up, it is essential for teachers, who are in a privileged position to see the warning signs, to carefully observe any change in pupils' day-to-day behaviour and emotions..

15 Alonso Parreño, M. (2020). *La violencia contra las niñas y los niños con discapacidad en España. Situación jurídica y social. Estudio integral [Violence against children with disability in Spain. Legal and Social Situation. Comprehensive Study]*, 2019, The CERMI Women's Foundation for the State Observatory on Disability.

In our examples:

In all of the examples given at the beginning of the guide, there are different indicators of child sexual abuse.

- **In the case of Marta**, there is loss of appetite and stomach pains, sleep problems, social isolation, a drop in school performance and self-harm.
- **In the case of Hugo**, a clear behavioural change can be seen in the classroom, with defiant behaviour and refusing to do class tasks.
- **In the case of Lucía**, apathy, social isolation and problems of concentration can be seen.

In all three cases, these indicators must be analysed as a whole. Some of them appear in the classroom, or affect the minor's daily life in school, so the teachers can observe their changes in mood and behaviour, and obtain more information from the family if necessary.

Essential reading



There are multiple indicators of child sexual abuse and they are not very specific, covering different areas (emotional, social, cognitive, behavioural and functional).



Sometimes, the indicators cannot be seen in the child suffering from sexual abuse, so we must wait for them to disclose what they have experienced.



One of the most common indicators is a sudden change in behaviour that does not correspond to anything we can identify.



It is essential to analyse the indicators from a comprehensive perspective, never in isolation.

Knowing how to listen

*Disclosure*¹⁶

Having seen the indicators of child sexual abuse, we can now address some particulars about DISCLOSURE. First of all, it should be noted that the **most reliable indicator is disclosure itself**del of child sexual abuse.

Disclosure of child sexual abuse: a gradual process

Children and adolescents disclose sexual abuse they have suffered in a generally complex and personal way. Sometimes it happens accidentally (types of behaviour observed by third persons), and other times they make deliberate comments because they want to tell what is happening to them.

¹⁶ The information in this section has been taken from the training manual in Spanish for professionals in the educational sphere on detection and reporting of sexual violence against children, published by Save the Children (2020), where you may delve further into the topic, if it is of interest. See: <https://www.savethechildren.es/manual-para-prevenir-violencia-sexual-infancia>.



When it comes to child sexual abuse, the term «**disclosure**» is defined as «any verbal and/or gestural manifestation made by a minor referring to sexual behaviour in which they are involved and where there are asymmetric conditions of age, power and experience with respect to the person(s) getting them involved, which may lead to processes of physical violence, threats, seduction or manipulation towards the minor».¹⁷

17 This definition is used by Save the Children in its training manual for professionals in the education sector in detecting and reporting sexual violence against children (2020) in Spanish, specifically in its Module 3, Disclosure of violence against children, p. 3. See: <https://www.savethechildren.es/manual-para-prevenir-violencia-sexual-infancia>.

It is important to remember that:

- People of children's age, especially the smallest, are not usually the ones who arouse suspicions or report sexual abuse. Usually, there are other prompts: medical reports, third-party notifications, etc.
- They do not usually report the details of the abuse suffered in a single interview or all at once. They may hold back or minimise the information they give.
- They often do not report immediately after the violence occurs; on the contrary, it can take months or even years to do so.
- Some of the people deny the abuse or retract the disclosure afterwards, even when there is evidence –unrelated to their accounts and descriptions– that it has actually occurred.
- The existence of a prior informal disclosure does not guarantee that a formal disclosure will be made in a subsequent statement. A wide variety of factors can influence the ability and/or desire of children or adolescents to disclose abuse.

A victim of sexual abuse is the main source of information about the violence they are suffering. As indicated by the **Organic Law for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents from Violence** (LOPVI, 2021), schools must create safe environments where pupils are well-treated. Firstly, this is so that violence does not occur in the school itself, and secondly, to help the school to be a safe environment where violence occurring in any other environment can be disclosed and followed up.

Disclosure by the child

Unlike suspicion arising from seeing possible behavioural changes in the child (indicators), another way of noticing a possible case of sexual abuse in childhood is for them to tell of it themselves (disclosure).

Sometimes due to their age or their particular circumstances, the disclosure is made by the child **indirectly**, via drawings beyond their stage of development, notes in exercise books and diaries with stories and phrases that describe their emotional state, negative verbal expressions, questions related to behaviours of a sexual nature that they dislike, exaggerated reactions to other people's behaviours, etc.

The child can also initially disclose the situation of sexual violence suffered by using language in the **third person**, for example by using rumours, with statements related to another person being the object of sexual conduct, or that someone did something bad to someone; circumstances placing the sexual abuse on another person and not on themselves (due to fears and doubts that they arouse, and also as a way of seeing the response they get).

In some cases, the child explains what is happening to them in a **context of secrecy**, either to an adult or to a friend, asking them not to tell details to anyone about what is happening to them. It must be borne in mind that often the disclosure made by a child is accompanied by a great feeling of guilt.

As mentioned above, there are many different strategies used by sexual offenders. These include manipulation, bribery and even psychological pressure, as well as many others, instilling an intense feeling in the victim. As we already know, a child who experiences sexual abuse is never guilty, either of suffering from it or of not telling about it, the secret being an imposition by the aggressor and not out of free will.

In order to encourage disclosure in a case of suspected child sexual abuse, a safe, universally accessible environment must be created with the necessary supports (accessibility is a prerequisite ensuring safety and fluidity in communication), establishing an atmosphere of confidence, safety and affection with the child, transmitting support and protection at all times. Later, we will point out some of the essential guidelines that teachers can follow when listening to a disclosure.

Disclosure by another person

It is common for another child within the close environment of the child suffering from the abuse to be the one who hears the disclosure from their friend and chooses to tell a trusted adult such as their teacher. On other occasions, one of the classmates of the child who is suffering or who has suffered from abuse may observe some circumstances that arouse concern (notes, written phrases, exaggerated behaviour), and they may choose to tell the teachers about their observations.

On the other hand, the school is often the place to which parents express concerns they have regarding their children's personal, social and sexual development, going to the school when a situation of sexual violence has been disclosed to them.

In any case, the teachers at the school who receive the information from the parents must be tactful as regards family difficulties in coping with the situation, offering help, understanding and being cautious. The information must be conveyed only to the professional team involved in taking steps, preserving confidentiality among the rest of the educational community.

Generally, the guidelines to convey to the parents are to protect the child, report the situation to the authorities, ensure the child's physical and emotional state of health, and separate them from the person who has attacked them, all in order to avoid new episodes.

It is especially important that once a disclosure has been received, the child victim is not questioned or attempts made for them to narrate the events again. Revictimisation must be avoided at all times, and the account already communicated must be preserved.

Pupils dealing with disclosure: factors that impede it or encourage it

Most adults who suffered from sexual abuse in their childhood admit, in retrospective studies, that they did not tell anyone what they were experiencing. They explain that the fear of being blamed for what happened and not getting sufficient protection from their family were the most common reasons for not disclosing the abuses. This circumstance is aggravated in cases of intra-family sexual abuse, especially in early childhood.

There are variables that could explain the lack of disclosure from children suffering from sexual violence. We shall concentrate below on the implications related to the child's age and personal characteristics:

- **Among children between 0 and 6 years of age**, it is more common for them to accidentally disclose sexual abuse. This group has difficulties in making disclosures in general; they are reluctant to disclose any secret related to negative behaviour by an adult person, especially if they are not asked directly.



- **Between 6 and 12 years of age**, it is more likely for the disclosure to be reasoned and intentional, more conscious. In principle, the older the age, the greater the awareness and the greater the probability of intentional disclosures.
- **As for adolescents**, reality tells us that many delay their disclosure as they may be more aware of the costs and benefits of disclosing the abuse they are suffering, fear of being blamed for not disclosing sooner, for consenting to it or for not being able to stop it.

The most frequent prompts for disclosures in children who have suffered sexual abuse are:

- In young children, the disclosure may arise from inappropriate expressions by them or due to sexualised behaviour observed by other people.
- Often, the child makes the disclosure after attending a sexual education programme at the school, since they have been shown the concepts and channels for help in the event of sexual abuse.
- Sometimes the child victims can make the disclosure after having contact with the offending person again after a time with no contact, showing fear of a repeat of the sexual abuse.
- Often the child makes the disclosure on their own thanks to the support they get from their significant peers.
- Children can come to make the disclosure out of fear that the offender will repeat the behaviour with people close to them.

Example:

Returning to the initial examples:

- **In the case of Marta**, viewing the video on affectivity and sexuality in the classroom opens the door to disclosure, since the teacher sees how it affects the minor and puts her on the alert. This leads the teacher to approach Marta to talk about the matter, taking into account the delicacy of the situation, telling her that she has experience dealing with children her age, that she can trust her, that she is there for whatever she needs, and that she will try to clear up her doubts and help her.

How to pay attention and listen during the disclosure?

As we have seen, dealing with the disclosure implies acting against the crime of child sexual abuse. Although our role as teachers in the school when confronted with the disclosure mainly involves active listening, it is important to keep some guidelines in mind to receive a disclosure positively:

- **Believe the child**, who needs to know that there is an adult person who listens to them, believes them and will help them. It is not the job of the adult who receives a disclosure to assess or judge the child's story (rather, «I'm sorry this happened to you» or «Thank you for being honest and telling me what happened to you»).
- **Keep calm.**
If the child who is making the disclosure perceives anger, disgust or stress in the reaction or in the gestures of the adult person who is listening, it is possible that they may not finish reporting the situation of abuse or that they may withdraw it..
- **Provide a private, safe space to talk.**
This should be a space in which to feel comfortable and calm.
- **Show satisfaction for their trust in you.**
You can let them know that you really liked the fact that they trusted you: «Thank you for explaining it to me; you've been very brave».

- **Don't make promises we can't keep.**

If we fail the child, they may feel disappointed again and no longer trust the teachers.

- **Show understanding and closeness, validating their emotions, and relieve them of guilt.**

Mostrar comprensión y cercanía, validar sus emociones y desculpabilizar. Manifestarle que estamos aquí para escucharle y apoyarle. Es común que el niño o la niña sientan culpa y muchas emociones por lo que han vivido o por la propia revelación. Cuando manifiestan su sentir, es importante validar su sentimiento o emoción y siempre aclarar que lo ocurrido no ha sido su culpa («Entiendo que te sientas así, pero nada de esto es tu culpa»; «Tú no has hecho nada malo, él o ella es quien ha hecho algo inadecuado»; o «Es normal que te sientas así, no pasa nada porque llores»). Si necesita un abrazo, espera a que lo verbalice o dé permiso para dárselo. Si crees que necesita solo buenas palabras, hazlo así.

- **Don't judge the abuse or the aggressor.**

The adult person receiving the disclosure has the task of listening and emotional support; not judging. We must remember that normally the abuser is someone loved by the child, so if we speak ill of the aggressor it is possible that they choose to defend them and end up retracting the disclosure.

- **Report it immediately.**

It is essential to explain to the child that we must report what they have told us. As citizens in general, but especially as professionals in contact with children, we have a duty to notify the competent authorities of the risk situation we have detected or that has been disclosed to us.

- **Handle the disclosure with discretion.**

It is important to tell the child that we are going to handle what they have told us with discretion, that only the people who can help them effectively will know the situation, and not everyone at the school (not the other teachers or pupils). To do so, we must know how and who to inform in the school about the situation.

- **Inform the child about the next steps.**

The child must be told about the next steps we are going to take in a simple way. When we cannot answer their questions, we must be honest and tell the child, while trying to transmit calmness.

- **Don't investigate the child's allegations.**

The investigation must be left in the hands of specialised professionals. When we have enough information to report, we must do so without the need to question the child. Asking questions may lead to problems in the investigation or in the judicial procedure and can mean re-victimising the child.

- **Seek support for teachers.**

Receiving a disclosure or detecting a possible case of sexual abuse can bring about feelings and emotions that are difficult to deal with. For our own well-being, we must try to cope with them. One option may be to talk to the school psychology staff, if there are any. Otherwise, it may be necessary to turn to an external resource specialising in the matter.

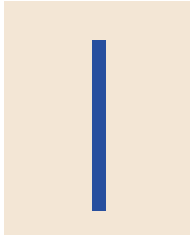
When we have suspicions about possible sexual abuse among our pupils, having identified some indicator of behaviour or because they have said something that catches our attention, but there is no direct disclosure from the victim at school, we should create environments that foster disclosure.

- **Create spaces** where pupils can freely express their feelings, situations or activities and feel comfortable sharing their thoughts or feelings. For example, there could be a free drawing activity.
- **Provide opportunities to speak individually** about their feelings, concerns or worries. For example, tutorials give a chance to talk about the pupils' academic issues as well as their well-being. The idea is not to question or impose a specific conversation, but rather to build an environment for a relationship in which the pupils feel that if something happens to them they can talk about it with the teachers and ask them for help.
- **Remain alert to the child's development.** It is important not to overwhelm them, or invade their space. We should merely observe them and assess whether we can observe more signs of risk.
- **It is advisable to coordinate with the counselling services** to share information and draw up appropriate educational and preventive measures for the classroom.





Taking action



In the event of suspicions or disclosure of child sexual abuse, teachers, like any other citizen, are obliged to report it to the competent authorities so that a suitable, effective response can be launched to ensure the child is protected. This response includes diligently implementing the action protocol with tact as regards the child's needs, avoiding revictimisation of them at all times.

It is necessary to start by clarifying that communicating suspicions of violence against children, including sexual abuse, is not an option, but an OBLIGATION under the law.

- As for international law, Art. 16 of Directive 2011/93/EU compels Member States such as Spain to set up adequate mechanisms for reporting suspicions of sexual abuse.
- Under national Spanish law, the duty of citizens to report signs of a situation of violence, including sexual abuse, is currently covered by Art. 15 of **Organic Law 8/2021, of 4 June, on the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents against violence** [LOPIVI]. Moreover, its Art. 16 sets out a **qualified duty to communicate** «particularly required» of persons entrusted with the assistance, care, education or protection of children.
- At the regional level, Art. 42 of **Law 26/2018, of 21 December, on the rights and guarantees of children and adolescents**, also establishes the duty to notify. In the Valencia Community region, this duty to notify is laid out in the protocol for

action in situations where child maltreatment is detected, drawn up by different Departments of the Valencia Regional Government or GVA (**Order 62/2014 from the Department of Education** in Annex III, and **Order 5/2021 from the Department of Equality and Inclusive Policies**).

This is the law upon which this module is based to determine the steps to follow in the event of suspicions of child sexual abuse. Nevertheless, in addition to knowing what the law requires of us, we must also understand that the importance of reporting suspicions of child sexual abuse lies not only in the fact that it is a legal obligation, though it certainly is. Even so, for somebody who has experienced or is experiencing sexual abuse, having someone they trust communicate their suspicions means much more than just complying with a legal obligation

Among other things, **communicating it can mean** putting an end to the abuse or preventing other possible harm to the minor. Whatever the outcome of the process that is set in motion thanks to the professional's notification, there are studies that show that for victims to feel that someone has tried to do something to help them can have a great impact on repairing its consequences. Those who have experienced abuse very much appreciate that someone has tried to protect them. On the other hand, feeling helpless, knowing that someone they trusted knew what was happening to them and did nothing, means more harm. It is harm that can have an impact on the victims to such an extent that it may be even more difficult to overcome the consequences of such inaction than the abuse itself.

In order to comply with the role of guarantor for children, it is not only necessary to know what our obligations are as professionals, but also to know, albeit briefly, what obligations are borne by the **school when receiving a notification** by a member of the educational community, and what should happen

when suspicions are reported from the school to the competent authorities outside the educational environment.

Having an overall picture of what the **institutional response** should be to a case of child sexual abuse enables us to be able to identify when something is wrong and try to correct it, in addition to meeting our obligations. It is true that, unfairly, the procedure for action is not always followed by all those involved, but it is also true that this is not a reason for inaction; quite the contrary. All of us who are in a position to detect failings are in a position to report them and, in the best interests of the children, to ensure compliance with the procedure. The response to child sexual abuse and any other form of violence against children is the responsibility of society as a whole.



Preliminary clarifications

What is involved in the communication or notification

Many people believe that when they report suspicions of a situation of violence, they are officially reporting a crime. That is not so. Reporting means informing the competent authorities of our suspicions about a risk situation. It is a necessary step to enable intervention, and a legal and professional obligation.

Reporting does not mean judging, either. The responsibility of verifying or confirming the violence does not fall upon the person reporting it, but on the specialist services. Even so, if it is not reported, then it is impossible for these services and support resources to be activated..

In accordance with international, national and regional legislation, upon detecting a possible case of child sexual abuse, the teachers' obligation is to notify the Management Team which, in keeping with the regional action protocol, will be the party that notifies the child protection authorities and, where appropriate, the judicial, public prosecution and/or security authorities.

The duty of confidentiality

Information on suspicions of child sexual abuse, or any form of violence, in relation to a minor is confidential. It involves personal data and events related to their integrity and privacy. Misuse of such information can revictimise the child or adolescent in question, or may hinder the eventual investigation into such criminal acts.

The duty to maintain the confidentiality of such sensitive information is to be maintained throughout the procedure. Even when we have notified the management team, we must be careful about the information we share. We may only share data about the minor and suspected child sexual abuse with authorised people who take part in the procedure. This means, for example, the school's management team, the school's educational counselling team (ECT), specialist counselling units (SCU), governmental authorities for child protection, judicial authorities and the public prosecutor's office. By maintaining this confidentiality, we also **comply with our duty as guarantor.**



Procedure for action in the school environment

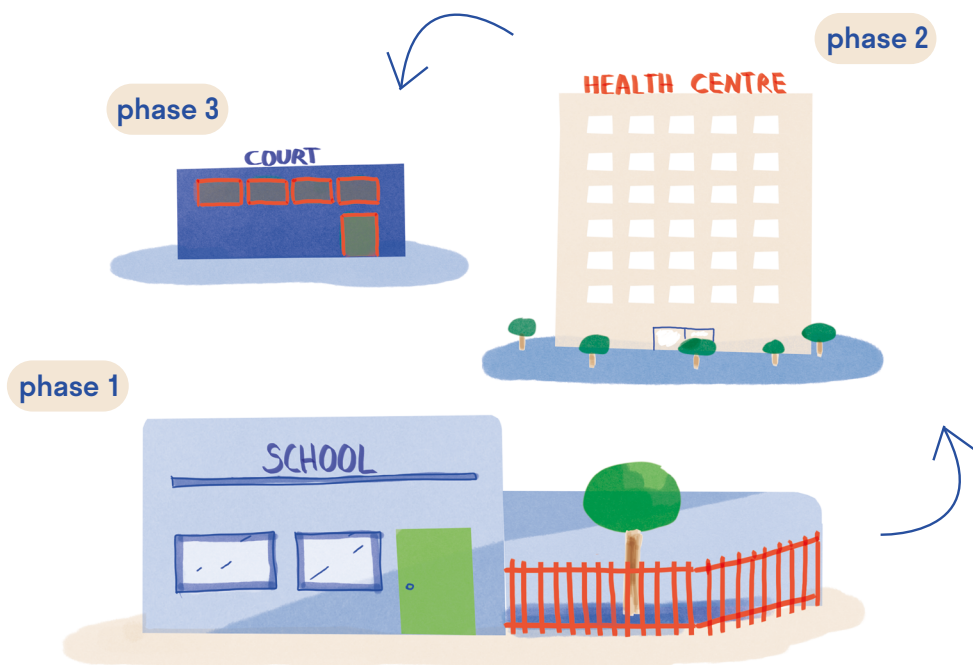
For educational purposes, we can divide the procedure for action into three main stages.

① **The first stage defined by the action carried out in the school environment** begins with the notification from the teaching staff and ends with the management team reporting it to the competent authorities (outside the school).

② **The second stage covers the action carried out by specialist professionals outside the school environment**, which includes professionals from social services and healthcare professionals. Finally, the third stage includes the activity in the context of the judicial procedure that may eventually take place.

③ **Finally, the third stage includes the activity in the context of the judicial procedure** that may eventually take place.

The action of teachers who detect or receive a disclosure falls within the first stage, although eventually if the suspicion or disclosure gives rise to a judicial process, the teaching staff could be called upon to testify, in which case they would be legally obliged to do so.



First stage development:

① Detection

The first stage begins with detection by the teachers, whether by identifying indicators that reasonably justify reporting them, or by receiving a disclosure from the child in question, or else by indirectly receiving the disclosure from a third person.

When there is a disclosure, the teacher receiving it must keep in mind that, in addition to listening actively and appropriately and comforting the child, as we saw in the previous module, it is important to record the information received in a systematic way.

Immediately after receiving the disclosure, the professional receiving it should stop in order to systematically record the information. To the extent possible, the record must be made

in writing as soon as possible in order for it to be as literal and coherent as possible regarding the events stated, noting the phrases used by the child without correcting or changing their words. If all of the mechanisms work properly, this initial record may prevent the child from having to repeat what they reported to more professionals, at least within the educational environment.

Examples:

● Verbal manifestatios

Interpretation:

«Juan, 8 years old, says that his cousin Javier, 12 years old, inserted an object into his anus».

Literal:

«Juan says, “my cousin Javier took the pointy thing and stuck it up my bum and it hurts”».

● Emotional manifestations

Interpretation:

The minor is emotionally affected, showing sadness and hypervigilance on reporting the events.

Literal:

Juan sobs as he tells of the events, and looks around, constantly asking if someone is coming.

La necesidad de hacer constar lo más literal posible el relato del niño o la niña no implica que no se puedan registrar también las impresiones ante la revelación. Lo importante es consignar expresamente esta información como tal (aclarando que se trata de nuestra valoración o impresión).

Examples:

- *Professional assessment:*
My impression during the disclosure is that... I was shocked by the emotional reaction he had... He seemed sincere in what he was telling me.
- *Inserted into the situation:*
Juan told me: «[...]». I didn't expect it, but I reacted trying to keep calm and I told him: «sit down, let's talk quietly [...]».

In order to systematise the information, it is necessary to know what information a child can provide us during their disclosure, so that we know where to focus our attention during it. On systematising the information, we must try to answer the following questions:

A. As regards what the child victim says about the sexual abuse:
What is it that they say has happened to them (sexual behaviours involved), **with whom** it has happened to them (alleged aggressor/witnesses), **where** it has happened (place, context of the occurrence), **how** it has happened (description of the

dynamics/action in which the sexual conduct is contextualised, e.g. use of secrets, threats, gifts, seduction, emotional manipulation, aggressiveness).

Sometimes, the child can provide information such as the frequency, or specific dates. However, the late development of pre-school or disabled children in perceiving space and time means that saying when or how many times is difficult for them.

It must be taken into account that, depending on their development, there will be questions that a child will not be able to answer.

B. Regarding what they tell about themselves:

In addition to information about the abusive experience itself, a child can provide information about their **fears or concerns**, or disclose their perception of the reaction in their family environment.

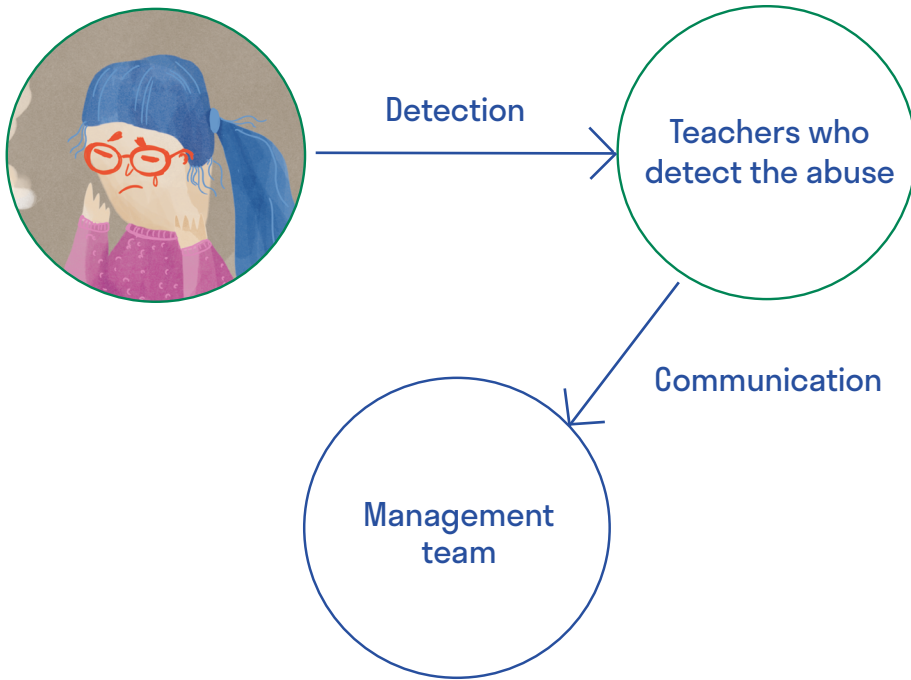
This information will help in assessing the risk and protection factors that we can count on in the subsequent intervention.

C. Non-verbal information:

It is important to record the **gestural and emotional manifestations** accompanying the disclosure. Sometimes, given the lack of vocabulary or linguistic skills to express themselves, children can replace or complete their narratives with gesticulations, which are sometimes highly significant.

The emotional reactions accompanying verbalisations are also an important source of information.

Non-verbal information serves to understand the impact of what is being narrated on their lives and provide suitable support resources.



② Communication

As teachers, once we receive a disclosure or detect a possible situation of child maltreatment by its identifying indicators, we must notify the school's **management team**.

If we have the information about the disclosure in writing, we must submit it when we verbally communicate the matter to the management team.

The communication must be carried out in a single session with the people who take on the decision and responsibility in these situations present. We must prevent this information from reaching the rest of the teaching staff or pupils who have no competences in such matters.

In our examples:

- **In the case of Marta**, the teacher observes risk indicators in her, self-harm being a high-risk behaviour to be reported.
- **In the case of Hugo**, it is necessary to communicate his aggressive behaviour and the adult sexual activities that he demands from a minor classmate.
- **In the case of Lucía**, she shows a significant behavioural change focussing on a very specific context, namely extracurricular activities, which requires an analysis of the situation.
- **In the case of the extracurricular activities at school in Valencia**, regarding the basketball coach, it is mentioned that several parents tell the teachers of their daughters' refusal to attend the extracurricular activity. When this happens, the school has to put things in motion, get a detailed document with the changes in behaviour and indicators detected, the dates and the action carried out, and notify the welfare coordinator, who in turn must notify the management team, so that the investigation and reporting process can begin.

18 The second transitory provision of Decree 195/2022 of November 11 of the Consell de Igualdad y Convivencia del Sistema Educativo Valenciano states that in the Valencian Community, the functions of the Welfare and Protection Coordinator, as provided for in art. 35 of the LOVIPI, shall be assumed by the Coordinator of Equality and Coexistence.

③ Setting up the intervention team and assessment of the seriousness of the situation

When the management team receives the communication from the teacher, it must set up the intervention team. This team is made up of:



The intervention team's first task is to assess the seriousness of the situation and, depending on the level of seriousness, assess what procedure to follow: the ordinary action procedure, or the emergency one.

④ Analysis of the information and preparation of the action plan

The intervention team must collect and analyse all of the information conveyed that it has been possible to gather about the disclosure or suspicions of child maltreatment, and about the child's context.

In order to suitably analyse and gather the information, the intervention team may coordinate with the social services' primary care team.

Once the information has been analysed, the intervention team must draw up a specific action plan for the particular case, which includes the following action:

- Establish protection, observation and surveillance measures at the school.
- Fill in the Notification Form [Annex I of Order 5/2021].
- Plan the necessary educational measures in each situation.

⑤ Notification and communication

Ordinary Procedure:

A. The school's management centre or whoever represents it shall send the Notification Form, duly filled in and signed, as soon as possible, to:

- **The Primary Care Team** in the town where the child lives, to begin the intervention, and to the
- **General Directorate responsible** for the protection of children and adolescents, belonging to the Regional Department of Equality and Inclusive Policies, for statistical and monitoring purposes.

B. The school's management shall inform the Central Registry of the **PREVI plan** through the ITACA platform.¹⁹ Via this incident, the Department (Conselleria) of Education and the Education Inspectorate will also be notified.

C. The **education inspectorate**, informed through the ITACA platform, will assess the situation and may request advice or intervention from the Specialist Counselling Unit (SCU) of the corresponding Territorial Directorate. The education inspectorate is the body that will decide on the need and type of intervention or advice.

¹⁹ <https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/registre-central-i-entorn-escolar>.

D. The **Primary Care Team** of the town where the child lives must:

- Open the appropriate **administrative case**, if applicable, and assess the possible risk situation.
- Return the information and action taken to the school.

E. In principle, after having informed the competent authorities, the school's management shall **inform the family** about the situation. In all cases, in the event of doubts about the content of this communication and how to make it, the management team can consult the corresponding specialist counselling unit (**SCU**).

F. Once the suspicions have been communicated and the family has been informed, the school's management will **monitor and verify the status** of the action procedure.

G. Finally, once the action procedure has been completed, PREVI's case will be closed.

Emergency procedure:

This procedure will be applied **when there are indications of imminent, serious danger to the physical and mental integrity** of the child or adolescent:

A. The school's management team will notify immediately to the corresponding **Territorial Directorate of Equality and Inclusive Policies**. If their collaboration is required, to the **Security Forces**. In addition, it will take the immediate protection measures deemed necessary.

B. The child shall be informed of the situation and the action that is going to be taken, in language that is suitable and understandable, as well as adapted to their circumstances depending on their development and maturity, and in accessible formats.

C. If the child requires medical assistance, a member of the management team, or of the teaching staff in whom they delegate, will accompany them to the health centre or emergency services of the nearest hospital.

D. The school's management centre or whoever represents it shall send the **Notification Form**, duly filled in and signed, as soon as possible, to:

- The territorial services of the Regional Department of Equality and Inclusive Policies, for statistical purposes, and when they are not open, to the reception centres of the corresponding province.
- Primary Care Team of the town where the minor lives.

E. The school's management team shall inform the Central Registry of the **PREVI plan** through the **ITACA platform**.

F. The Education Inspectorate, which will have been informed through PREVI, may request advice or intervention from the Specialist Counselling Units (SCU) of the corresponding Territorial Directorate.

G. In principle, after having informed the competent authorities, the school's management shall **inform the family** about the situation. In all cases, in the event of queries about the content of this communication and how to make it, the management team can consult the corresponding specialist counselling unit (SCU).

H. Once the suspicions have been communicated and the family has been informed, the school's management will **monitor and verify** the status of the action procedure.

I. Finally, once the action procedure has been completed, the case opened via PREVI will be closed.



The Department (Conselleria) of Equality and Inclusive Policies' Chart of Contacts

Territorial Directorate of Equality and Inclusive Policies' and Reception Centres*

*Outside office hours, the corresponding province's Reception Centre must be contacted.

Alicante

Territorial Directorate

☎ 966 478 321

✉ proteccionalicante@gva.es

«Alicante» reception centre

☎ 965 919 000 / 965 919 002 / 965 919 003

Fax: 965 919 001 / 965 241 812

✉ centrorecp_alicantea@gva.es

Castellón

Territorial Directorate

☎ 964 726 261 / 964 726 265

Fax: 964 726 201

✉ direccioterritorialcs@gva.es

«Virgen de Lledó I» reception centre

☎ 964 715 730 / 619 839 930

Fax: 964 237 600

✉ rraia_vlledol@gva.es

«Virgen de Lledó II» reception centre

☎ 964 715 737 / 964 715 731

Fax: 964 237 600

✉ recep_menlledo@gva.es

Valencia

Territorial Directorate

☎ 681 193 883

Fax: 961 27 1912 / 961 27 19 13

✉ infancia_dtv@gva.es

«La Torre» [Alborache] reception centre

☎ 961 922 610 / 674 342 947

✉ info.latorre@fundacionantoniomoreno.org

✉ subdirección.latorre@
fundacionantoniomoreno.org

✉ larena_jul@gva.es

«Les Palmeres» [Alboraya] reception centre

☎ 961 856 385

✉ Palmeres_rci@gva.es





Emotional support



he way a child who has experienced sexual abuse emotionally processes what they have experienced depends to a large extent on the intervention carried out. It is essential to differentiate between therapeutic and other types of intervention. Only professionals

specialising in this matter should carry out assessments and therapeutic interventions with children. Other people, who do not carry out specific therapeutic treatment but who may come across cases of child sexual abuse, for example teachers, must **know how to lend emotional support** to the children who disclose a case, and how to continue advising with them during their everyday life in the classroom and the school environment.

On the other hand, we must also bear in mind that after a case is detected or disclosed, it is possible that the other pupils may also require some intervention and emotional support. Such measures are particularly required when information about the abuse has spread to the classroom or school (which must be actively avoided) and when it has been decided, in accordance with the procedure and taking into account the specific needs of the case, that the child who has disclosed the abuse should be temporarily or permanently absent from the classroom or school.

Finally, it is necessary to take into account that a person who receives the disclosure or detects a case of child sexual abuse can also go through a difficult emotional process. When the person receiving or detecting the facts is also someone who usually lives with the child, this process is even more complex. For one's own well-being, it is important for whoever receives or detects a case to find **spaces and strategies** to cope with the emotions and feelings that the disclosure or detection has brought about.

Emotional support involves a mutual personal understanding that takes place from the moment the minor discloses the sexual abuse or it is detected. This has also been shown to be beneficial both during the judicial process and in the long term.

Allowing emotional support is not an easy process, and we will surely make mistakes many times throughout it. However, making mistakes does not mean failing, but rather something inevitable from which we can learn a lot. It is important to be ready to feel some discomfort, and give others and ourselves permission to make mistakes and learn. Such violence touches us and stirs up very powerful emotions in each of us.

We cannot go back in time and prevent the violence that the child has suffered, but we **can avoid experiencing more violence**, by not revictimising them. As an educational community, we have a lot of power: empathetic emotional support taking a broad perspective has **great potential for repairing the damage**.

We shall now give some **guidelines** on three aspects of the emotional support:

- ① Supporting the child who has experienced abuse.
- ② Supporting the teachers.
- ③ Other support-related needs in the classroom.

① Giving the child emotional support

After a disclosure or detection of a situation of sexual abuse, and after making the pertinent referral, the same principles of action should be followed to support the victim that have been seen in the disclosure section, such as: **listening to the victim** and **comforting** them or giving emotional support.

Teachers have a responsibility beyond detecting and reporting child sexual abuse, since they are able to act as a point of reference for the victim's **emotional support** if necessary. On some occasions, whether due to the link established between the teacher and the victim, or because they were the person to whom the abuse was disclosed, the child may see the teacher as a referential person to talk to about the situation, share their fears and doubts, their thoughts or emotions about their experience of sexual victimisation. In such situations, the teacher should listen and comfort the victim, without judging or asking about the sexual abuse. Some of the recommendations for this emotional support involve bolstering their courage for telling about it, helping remove possible guilt, and remembering that they can count on you, the teacher.²⁰

20 Forner Puntonet, M., and Fàbregas Martori, A. [2022]. *Estamos a tu lado. Guía de atención a la violencia sexual en la infancia y la adolescencia para las familias cuidadoras* [We're by your side. Guide for assistance in child sexual violence for caregiving families]. Unidad de Atención a las Violencias hacia la Infancia y la Adolescencia, [Unit for Assistance with Violence towards Children and Adolescents], Hospital Vall d'Hebrón.

Knowing how to support the child upon disclosure

The main aim during this emotional support is to **avoid revictimisation**. Hence, we should not try to gather information about the abuse. The victim's privacy must be respected, and they should not be treated differently from the other pupils in the classroom. In the same vein, it is important for the child or adolescent to keep up their routines and the greatest possible stability in order to provide security, confidence and calm,²¹ normalising their everyday life.

Furthermore, during this process of supporting the child, it is important to empower them. To do so, there are **good practices** related to the disclosure or detection of cases, such as:²²

- Letting the child know that they are not to blame for what has happened.
- Listening actively if they want to bring it up again after the disclosure.
- Always conveying realistic expectations about the situation: «no one deserves to suffer any type of violence», «there's no reason to justify violence of any kind», «they are complex situations but there is a way

21 Bravo Correa, M., and Juárez López, J. R. [2021]. *Y ahora, ¿cómo te ayudo? Recomendaciones para familiares cuando se produce una revelación de violencia sexual en personas en edad infantil y adolescentes. (And now, how do I help you? Recommendations for families when there is a disclosure of sexual violence among children and adolescents)*. Departament of Justice, Generalitat de Catalunya [Government of Catalonia].

22 Departament d'Educació i Departament d'Igualtat i Feminismes [Department of Education and Department of Equality and Feminism] [2022]. *Guia d'acompanyament i bon tracte a l'alumnat que verbalitza situacions de violències sexuals (Guide for support and tact with pupils who tell of situations of sexual violence)*. Generalitat de Catalunya [Government of Catalonia].



out», «there are options» or «everything possible will be done to help you».

- If they ask questions about the process that is underway after detection, they must be answered honestly, so if there is something we do not know, this must be expressed naturally, indicating that an answer will be sought as soon as possible.
- Ask how they feel, and if they need anything.
- Without judging, bolster their courage for having told about it.
- Thank them for their trust, for relying on the teachers.

It is important to understand these emotional reinforcement factors and keep them in mind, for several reasons:

1° Because all of us in contact with the Infant and Primary school community must be able to support them suitably, taking into account what they need and whatever may be beneficial.

2° It is important to understand that part of the traumatic violence comes about after reporting the abuse. There is violence from the community, based on attitudes of stigmatisation, invalidation or delegitimation. These can be traumatic in themselves and **exponentially increase the impact of the initial violence.**

3° Because negative or inappropriate responses lead to greater secrecy or silence, and thus fewer disclosures..

Knowing how to give support during the process of taking action

Within the **effects** of general uneasiness involved in cases of violence, **depression and anxiety** stand out as the most common problems. In addition, child sexual abuse has been confirmed as a risk factor that can be accompanied by **self-harm and suicidal behaviour**.²³ For children and adolescents who have experienced complex trauma, it can seem like their problems are too big to cope with, that they are alone, that no one cares about them, or that nothing will help them. That is why it is acceptable and necessary to get help from professionals.²⁴ Along with therapy, there are other ways that adults can help young people make things better, improving **support and the perception of such support**. Some of these tools are:

A. Accepting what has happened (avoiding the social reaction of distraction):

When we talk about distraction, we mean doing nothing, or else avoiding talking about the abuse, taking an indifferent attitude towards the child. Normally, such avoidance reactions are intended to give the child security, helping them forget and understand that from now on «everything is fine». However, in reality they have the opposite effect: they are interpreted by the child as a feeling of indifference to what has happened, leading to a feeling of loneliness to cope with it.

23 Manigilio, R. (2011). The role of child sexual abuse in the etiology of suicide and non-suicidal self-injury. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 124, 30–41.

24 Spinazzola, J., Habib, M., Blaustein, M., Knoverek, A., Kisiel, C., Stolbach, B., Abramovitz, R., Kagan, R., Lanktree, C., and Maze, J. (2017). *What is complex trauma? A resource guide for youth and those who care about them*. National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.

What can we do?

Here are some ideas that can help to talk about and support the child in the process:²⁵

- **Inform** the child, via their person of reference, about the action that is being taken and the kinds of support that exist in the school, as well as other people who can help them if they are feeling discomfort: monitors in the dining room, playground, at the school gates or on the bus.
- It is important **not to fall** into giving **different treatment** as regards the relationship with the other pupils, since such responses usually stigmatise the child. This reinforces the feeling that they cannot overcome the trauma, diminishing their self-confidence and the possibility or motivation to recover.
- It is important for the child or adolescent to keep up their routines and the greatest possible stability, in order to provide security, confidence and calmness, normalising their everyday life.

25 Fill A l'Agulla education area (2019). *Idees i consells per acompanyar els nostres fills i filles en cas de bullying. Prevenció y atención del bullying y las violencias de género [Ideas and advice for our sons and daughters in the event of bullying. Prevention and assistance faced with bullying and gender violence]*. Fill a l'Agulla.



B. Fostering a safe environment:

This point is very relevant, especially when the abuse has occurred between people who go to the same school or have a close relationship, such as when the abuse occurs in an intra-family context. Being «secure» means having enough protection so that there is no immediate physical danger around them, as well as emotional security: with the people around them respecting their pace and not saying bad things to them, not judging them, and not doing things that make them feel bad about themselves.²⁶

26 Spinazzola, J., Habib, M., Blaustein, M., Knoverek, A., Kisiel, C., Stolbach, B., Abramovitz, R., Kagan, R., Lanktree, C., and Maze, J. (2017). *What is complex trauma? A resource guide for youth and those who care about them*. National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.

What can we do?

We can teach strategies that help us feel more **physically and emotionally secure**. When the person who has committed the abuse is a person who attends the same classroom or school, it is especially important to give emotional support to the child who has suffered the abuse, ask them how they feel about the situation, and find a system to restore their sense of security. The feeling of insecurity experienced by the child can remain even when they have already been separated from the person who has committed the abuse. It is thus important to take some measures, for example:

- Allow the child not to do certain activities that involve physical contact.²⁷
- Ask how they feel when we see them sad or upset. Accompany them to the playground or dining hall. At this point, communication [preserving privacy about the abuse] with the school's staff is very important.

- Teach them to know **who they can trust**, who will give them the best guidance if they find themselves in an unsafe situation (at home, with friends, in their neighbourhood or at school) and if they need to ask for help.

- Without falling into stigmatisation, it is very important to try to **anticipate** certain situations that may have an impact on the person's psychological state, triggering them or leading them to relive the abuse or have flashbacks about it. Some suggestions are:
 - Learn to recognise unsafe situations and identify and practise calming strategies for if anxiety arises.
 - Plan for the most difficult times such as the judicial procedure.^{28,29}

28 Castaño, C. [2021]. *Navegant les crisis. Una guia per a l'autogestió col·lectiva de les experiències de patiment [Navigating crises. A guide for collective self-coping with experiences of suffering]*. Associació Abilis.

29 El cuento *Alguien me ha hecho daño... y ahora ¿qué pasará? Guía de apoyo para niños y niñas ante el proceso penal [Someone has hurt me...now what's going to happen? Guide to support children in the criminal justice procedure]* [2022], created by The University of Barcelona's Group for Research into Children's and Adolescents' Victimization [GReVIA], is a resource recommended for working with child victims of sexual abuse who have to go through a criminal justice procedure. This story explains in suitable, simple language what the child can expect from each professional and from their participation in notifying of the case, investigating it and the trial. See: : https://www.observatoriodelainfancia.es/oia/esp/documentos_ficha.aspx?id=8135.

B. Understanding the possible effects on school work:

In supporting victims of child sexual abuse, we must be aware of the consequences they may experience, particularly the ones that most clearly appear in the educational environment. There are studies that indicate that violence against children can have an impact on the academic performance of those from who suffer from it. The impact of such violence may imply **greater difficulties in learning**, or it may have the side-effect of higher rates of absenteeism, a greater probability of repeating a school year and more likelihood of dropping out of school early.³⁰

The **loss of class hours** over the school year due to the need to be absent to take part in the judicial proceedings, or else due to the consequences experienced or the intervention due to them, may require extra support in the child's school work in some cases.

Moreover, the **dissociation** to which victims of child sexual abuse often resort as a form of protection from abuse, and subsequently from the reporting process, can result in amnesia, disorientation and confusion. The child may experience flashbacks and difficulties connecting with their emotions. This can affect the progress of their work in the classroom.

30 Thunberg, S. (2022). Victimization and school: Young people's experiences of receiving support to keep up with their schoolwork. *International Review of Victimology*.

What can we do?

Children immersed in the process set in motion by reporting the abuse are required to go through a long, very intense procedure, so those providing them with emotional support must be more aware of the consequences it may have. It is important to know the reality of the child suffering from a traumatic experience in order to try to make the necessary adaptations that enable them to follow the syllabus adequately.

- **Organised, ongoing support:** It has been shown that an affective bond and secure attachment to an adult for a sufficient period of time is positive for the psychological recovery of a child who has suffered from abuse..
- It is important **not to lower the demands, but to give support in their school work.** The need to avoid signalling them or treating them differently does not prevent us from making adaptations taking into account the child's real needs.
- It is important **not to separate the child from the classroom group** entirely, but to give our support through the school so as not to foster their stress or anxiety.
- We can **build a strategy** with the support of the counselling staff and the child himself or herself, so that they feel comfortable on being given adapted tasks or more support.
- **Be ready** to repeat lessons they may have missed and to clear up doubts and correct mistakes with ongoing positive reinforcement.

In our examples:

- **In the case of Lucía**, where it is the tutor who talks to the parents about the behavioural changes she has noticed in the girl after the disclosure, she will be able to continue supporting Lucía when necessary. To do so, the tutor tells Lucía in private that she will be there to listen to her when she needs it, that she will try to help her with whatever she can, and that she should not hesitate to turn to her if she feels any difficulty or has any problem. From that moment on, she remains attentive to the possible behavioural or emotional changes Lucía displays in the classroom, or that the parents comment on. She will also foster Lucía's reintegration into classroom activities, since she had distanced herself from her classmates in recent months, so as to avoid the girl's social isolation and foster normalisation for her daily life, especially in the school.

② Giving emotional support. Teachers' self-care

What happens directly to a person in our environment also affects the community. Furthermore, if we are involved in the process of prevention or disclosure and emotional support for a person who has suffered abuse, it is normal that this process may affect us as the people supporting them and as an educational community.

In this regard, it is important to detect the main needs that we may face as teachers and to work on strategies to help teamwork.

Teachers' possible needs:

A. Greater training:

The first need, and the most important one of all, is the lack of training in violence against children, and specifically in child sexual abuse. For many professionals, child sexual abuse is something they consider to be separate from their daily lives. We might hear a story in the media concerning sexual abuse, but we do not consider it to be anything more an isolated event, whether possible or real, that might happen in our environment, but which if it did happen, could be detected easily.

Often, behind a child or adolescent with difficulties such as behavioural problems, social inhibition, loss of sphincter control, initiation of substance abuse and multiple diverse symptoms, there may be a situation of child sexual abuse.

What can we do?

- If there is not yet an overall prevention plan in our school, we can propose training sessions in the prevention and detection of child sexual abuse.
- We can also put forward inter-community awareness and training activities against child sexual abuse within our town and in collaboration with other bodies such as the municipal library, sports centres, etc.

B. Sharing the fear:

Another hinderance when it comes to detection is fear. Fear restricts us and affects us throughout the entire process, after disclosure or detection of a situation of child sexual abuse. Many fears can appear, which can be different depending on each person or situation: fear of making a mistake, fear of being reported, fear of not having the institution's support, fear of having to change destination or job, fear of not being able to protect the child, etc.

When we experience an emotion of intense fear, our body can respond mainly in three ways:³¹

31 Save the Children [2020]. Training manual in Spanish for professionals in the education sector in detecting and reporting sexual violence against children. Module 4: Professionals' limitations or fears concerning disclosures and reporting: <https://bit.ly/3BYkUZu>.

- **1° Blockage:** Not knowing what to do. In some cases, one can disassociate from certain types of behaviour and verbalisations from the victim as a defence mechanism, without taking into account a global perspective of the pupil and their behaviour.
- **2° Flight:** Another possible response is to flee or escape. In a possible situation of child sexual abuse, one example would be to look the other way, not wanting to know so as to not get involved with problems and the subsequent demands they may make of me, or thinking that this is none of my business or not part of my job. There are even situations where the victim is blamed, placing the responsibility on them.
- **3° Fight:** Finally, another type of response may be to fight or attack, in other words, to confront the situation and activate the existing protection mechanisms, carrying out the appropriate referrals and notifications.

Together with these three typical responses to fear and threat, such as fight, flight and blockage, we can take up a fourth response of **coping**. This fourth way of responding involves seeking guidance and support, faced with not knowing how to act or proceed on feeling overwhelmed or unaware of the procedures to follow.

What can we do?

- **Actively boost the training** for people who are points of reference to be consulted in schools.
- Consult these **referential people** and trust in the work of the management team.
- If we feel emotionally overwhelmed, we must **seek support**. In some cases, when the school has psychology staff, it may be enough to talk to them. However, in other cases, it may be necessary to seek out a specialist external resource.

C. Confidence in carrying out the process:

We may have had a bad experience in previous cases of reporting, where a satisfactory or adequate response was not provided by the competent and/or specialist resources, which can lead to some expectations of uselessness.

Often, specialist resources have been able to carry out interventions after abuse has been reported, in which the people who have reported it are unaware of said interventions due to their very confidentiality and the duty to secrecy to which the staff intervening with the abused children are bound. Other times, it may be that it was not possible to give a suitable solution or response, but we cannot let this influence future action that may help other child victims.

Having no hope can affect the detection of cases of child sexual victimisation, due to the feeling and thoughts that whatever we do is not going to be of any use, distrusting and doubting that everything we have to set in motion and carry out will finally be of any use.

What can we do?

- Propose inter-community training activities against child sexual abuse in our town and in collaboration with bodies such as the social services, municipal paediatricians, etc. By doing so, we will be able to know who the people are who receive the information once we have reported it from our school, and we will be able to foster trust.

D. Administrative burden of the functions carried out by the teaching staff:

The particular burden of administration in the teachers' functions on top of having to include prevention tools in the classroom as well as supporting the victim emotionally can all mean a big workload. For this reason, the **cohesion of the teaching staff and the management team** is essential in helping carry out the activities that must be done in this matter.

The task of **supporting the person who is in turn emotionally supporting the victim**, in prevention, disclosure and subsequent action is a very important one, albeit sometimes complicated, especially when required in a workplace. Nevertheless, for the procedure to reap rewards, it is important to be supported and know how to set limits so as not to harm ourselves.

What can we do?

- The **group's cohesion** is essential in working together. Complicity, trust and understanding are worked on over time. To do this work, it is essential to encourage shared mutual knowledge through active, interested listening, working on the ability to hold different opinions and knowing the different forms of expression in the team. This work has to be done with time.
- Work can be done on cohesion with a debate on fictitious cases, for example. When the team is cohesive and looks after itself, the emotional support will be much more effective.
- Be clear and repeat to ourselves that the ultimate goal is the **minor's well-being**.
- Make the tensions and diversity within the team visible; don't deny them. Keep in mind that constructive yet critical or dissident views encourage reflection on different sensitivities, which can improve the process.
- Give **emotional support** through the training work to tackle sexual violence against children through the school.
- Always include **affective-sexual education** in the Infant and Primary Education syllabus.

- Inform the entire educational community of the current protocols for action against violence.
- Include the prevention of child sexual victimisation in the initial training for teachers and in the syllabuses for entrance to the civil service. See the process as a way to foster a change in the school's culture and as a commitment to creating safe spaces free of impunity.
- Look at the abuse from a systemic perspective. This enables us to work to make significant changes in the behaviour of education professionals, among themselves and with the pupils and the community, thus fostering and boosting respect between people of different ages and hierarchies.
- Look inwards, at the organisational structure, working to improve a kind of leadership aware of all the people who work in the school, fostering community and social **responsibility**.
- Avoid denial of the existence of child sexual abuse. In order to work on prevention, we need to recognise that it can also happen in our school. **To do so, role play activities can be used.**

③ Other needs in the classroom

Once the procedure for action is in place, intervention may be required within the school or classroom of the child who has disclosed the abuse. The harm done to a child who has suffered from violence must be tackled by society as a whole, and particularly by their immediate environment.

In the case of the school environment, **the best emotional support for pupils is training about affective-sexual education and the prevention of child sexual abuse.** When the school or classroom where a case has been detected does not have a prevention plan in place, it must be created and put into practice.

For example, sometimes the child must be absent from the classroom temporarily or permanently. On rare occasions, some of the information about the case may circulate among the pupils, whether due to negligence or because the child himself or herself shared information about their experience with a classmate. When in doubt about managing these situations, it is advisable to consult with the school's welfare and protection coordinator.

In any case, as has already been mentioned, it is necessary to avoid revictimising the child or communicating information about the case between teachers and pupils. Create an **emotionally secure environment**, encouraging empathy, sensitivity, the development of social skills, respect for the privacy of classmates and colleagues, etc., which is crucial to achieve this aim. Fostering such environments of safety and trust will not only help to intervene in cases of sexual abuse, but also to avoid other problems such as violence between peers.

Essential reading

Through the school, support and emotional advice will be given to the school's professionals tasked with supporting victims if the case arises, as well as to the community.



Some of the child's possible needs:

- On receiving the disclosure: listening, familiarity, recognition and help.
- During the procedure for action: acceptance, proceeding in a secure environment and being able to follow the syllabus, with the necessary adaptations.



Some of the teachers' possible needs:

- More extensive training on child sexual abuse and prevention.
- Sharing the fear about reporting the abuse.
- Trust in how the procedure will go.
- Delegating some administrative burdens specific to the functions of the teaching staff when necessary for the well-being of the child, or else prioritising prevention as a subject to work on in the classroom.



Some of the possible needs of the rest of the classroom:

- The best way to emotionally support the community is comprehensive affective-sexual education,
- In addition, aspects of empathy, privacy and sensitivity can be included.

It is very important to preserve the victim's privacy and the case's confidentiality!



A2

Annex

*Activities to prevent
child sexual abuse
with pupils*

Thematic block 1

Children's rights

Resources:



Guide to resources and activities to work on with children and adolescents about their rights, General Directorate for Childhood and Adolescence of the Regional Dept. of Equality and Inclusive Policies, Valencia Regional Government [Generalitat Valenciana], 2021.

<https://inclusio.gva.es/es/web/menor/promocion-derechos-de-infancia-y-adolescencia/guia-de-recursos-i-activitats>



UNICEF Education Programme website, Educa on rights («EDUCA»), has a library of resources and activities with material to be used in Infant and Primary education.

<https://www.unicef.es/educa/biblioteca>






Our rights in pictograms, Observatory for Children and Adolescents of Andalusia, 2015.

https://www.observatoriodelainfancia.es/oia/esp/documentos_ficha.aspx?id=4817&vengoDe=busqueda_resultado

Thematic block 2

Education about gender equality

Resources:

-  **«Patis Coeducatius» (Co-educational Playgrounds) guide,** en Recursos web para la Igualdad y la Convivencia [REICO], in Web Resources for Equality and Coexistence [REICO in Spanish], Directorate of Educational Inclusion of the Regional Dept. [Conselleria] of Education, Sports and Culture, Valencia Regional Government, [Generalitat Valenciana], s/f.
<https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/guia-de-patis-coeducatius>
-  **Educational guide for gender equality in childhood,** Andalusia Regional Government [Junta de Andalucla], Córdoba, 2006.
<https://es.slideshare.net/mlolita/gua-didctica-gnero-iguales-iii-10-11-06>
-  **Web resources for educational inclusion. Tools for teachers,** [Valencia Teacher Training] for Educational Inclusion, Regional Dept. [Conselleria] of Education, Culture and Sport, Valencia Regional Government [Generalitat Valenciana], s/f.
<https://portal.edu.gva.es/cefireinclusiva/wp-content/uploads/sites/193/2020/04/RECURSOS-COMPARTITS.pdf>

Thematic block 3

Affective-sexual education

Resources:



Guide to Comprehensive Sex Education for Infant Education, in Web Resources for Equality and Coexistence [REICO in Spanish], Directorate of Educational Inclusion of the Regional Dept. [Conselleria] of Education, Sports and Culture, Generalitat Valenciana, 2021.

<https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/guia-educacio-sexual>



Comprehensive Sex Education Guide for Primary Education, in Web Resources for Equality and Coexistence [REICO in Spanish], Directorate of Educational Inclusion of the Regional Dept. of Education, Sports and Culture, Generalitat Valenciana, 2021.

<https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/guia-educacio-sexual>



Comprehensive Sex Education Guide for Special Education, Resources for Equality and Coexistence [REICO in Spanish], Directorate of Educational Inclusion of the Regional Dept. of Education, Sports and Culture, Generalitat Valenciana, 2022.

<https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/guia-educacio-sexual#infantil>



«Our bodies, our rights» («Els nostres cossos, els nostres drets») Sex Education Guide, in Web Resources for Equality and Coexistence [REICO in Spanish], Directorate of Educational Inclusion of the Regional Dept. of Education, Sports and Culture, Generalitat Valenciana, 2nd ed. 2021.

<https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/guia-educacio-sexual>



ARASAAC pictogram search engine. Project funded by the Government of Aragon's Department of Education, Culture and Sport and coordinated by said department's General Directorate of Innovation and Vocational Training.

<https://arasaac.org/pictograms/search/core%20vocabulary>

Activities created as part of the EDUCAP Project:

Activity 1. Bingo Express

Activity 2. Mixed feeling

Activity 3. Carlitos in the mirror

Activity 4. This is my body



Activity 1: Bingo Express

Activity type: I express myself, you express yourself

Aims

- To recognise and foster emotional discrimination and encourage communication and the expression of feelings.
- To observe, recognise and express notions of pleasure and displeasure, identifying with one's own and others' bodily signals.

Recursos

Material resources

Bingo cards (to print out), pictures of the characters' faces: Víctor, Gabi, Baltasar and Cat (to print out), *Vocalá* cumbia song lyrics (to print), Cumbia *Vocalá* song (on audio CD), sound system, pencils or counters to mark the bingo card, pencils and papers to draw.

Spatial resources

Invite the group to discover some «new friends» who will join in the classes over the school year, sharing some activities, lessons and games: Víctor, Gabi, Baltasar the parrot and Cat. These new friends belong to a musical band xxx and the children are told that later they will listen to some of their songs (it is advisable to put up the pictures of the characters' faces somewhere in the room, visible to all the pupils. The images are in the website). Tell the pupils that these new friends are going to help them express themselves. and ask them to exchange opinions about what they know about this concept, in other words, what it means to express themselves, how we do it and why it is important for us to do it.

Teachers can guide them by mentioning that expressing themselves also means communicating to others what we feel inside. For example, with phrases like «If I do this gesture (mimic sadness or anger), I am communicating to you what I feel. What am I expressing?».

Implementation

The teacher invites the children to take part together in a game of bingo, which contains drawings of different expressions showing the characters' emotions and/or feelings. They give each child or group (depending on the number of pupils) a bingo card (found on the website).

Then the teacher reads situations describing the characters' expressions, and the children mark their bingo card if they have the picture for that situation. The child, adolescent or group that fills up their card first wins.

- When Víctor feels sad, he starts playing his guitar.
- Gabi doesn't want to eat because she's upset.
- Gabi clenches his/her teeth and fists when he/she's angry.
- When Víctor is angry, he folds his arms and turns as red as a tomato.
- When Víctor is afraid, he breaks into a cold sweat.
- It seems that Gabi is afraid because she/he's covering her/his ears with his/her hands.
- Víctor is smiling and very happy because he came to this school to make new friends.
- Gabi is jumping for joy because she just made up a new song. Meanwhile, Víctor can't find his parrot.
- Baltasar scratches and scratches himself because he is so nervous.
- Gabi feels his/her stomach tighten. He/She's nervous because he/she didn't study for today's test.
- When Víctor is feeling anxious, he can eat three sandwiches in a row.
- Gabi feels anxious because it is going to be his/her birthday. He/She moves around impatiently.
- Víctor and Gabi like each other very much. They have been friends since they were little and they help and take care of each other.

Observations

It is also recommended to imitate the expressions and/or feelings described, so as to be able to experiment and observe the different possibilities of expressions in similar situations, such as fear, anguish, happiness, sadness, tiredness, etc.



Activity 2: Mixed feelings

Activity type: I express myself, you express yourself

Aims

- To recognise and foster emotional discrimination and encourage communication and the expression of feelings.
- To observe, recognise and express notions of pleasure and displeasure, identifying with one's own and others' bodily signals.

Resources

Material: DIN-A4 sheets, coloured pencils, pictures of the human body.

Spatial: classroom, mattresses or mats to sit on the floor.

Implementation

With the children sitting in a circle, the teacher invites them to comment on the sensations of pleasure and displeasure that feelings give them, identifying the sensation, emotion or feeling experienced in their body. All answers are valid. For example, «Does sadness feel pleasant or unpleasant? Where in your body do you feel sadness? Does anger feel good or bad? Where do you feel it?».

A wide range of feelings can be explored; not just the basic ones such as joy and sorrow. This is important, because different situations give us certain sensations and we react to them depending on our own personal experiences, which makes it interesting to expand the children's vocabulary in this regard so as to be able to differentiate and clarify that sometimes we react in a certain way, but it is difficult for us to identify what's happening to us or how to express it. For example, «If we're nervous, we might slam doors because we don't know what to do, but maybe that doesn't mean we're angry; it just means we don't know what to do when we're nervous».

Using pictures: Reflect together, showing a picture of an apparently angry child with their grandmother: «What has happened to Julián? His grandmother will definitely wonder why Julián is angry with her, but deep down he was feeling sad, but instead of being able to say what was happening to him, he

expressed himself with anger». We can repeat this with more pictures to identify feelings. «That's why it's important to try to clearly communicate our feelings, expressing ourselves clearly; if we do so, it's easier to relate to each other and ask for help if we need it».

Using art: The teacher asks them to draw or narrate situations in which they have had mixed feelings: what they felt, why, how they felt it, where they felt it, what they did and what they could do in future when they feel something similar. In the case of children, a printed picture of the human body can be handed out so they draw paint the colour of the emotion and the place where they felt it.

End: To end the activity, the characters invite the children to sing and dance to a song that the teacher chooses, depending on the pupils' age. In order to assess how well the session's contents have been internalised, the following guiding questions are suggested for the teacher to ask the pupils:

- Why is it important to express what you're feeling?
- How can I recognise when I like or dislike something?
- Name the feelings and/or emotions that they recognise at that very moment; identify where in the body they feel it and if it is pleasant or unpleasant.

Observations

Some suggested feelings to identify them more clearly:

Worry, shame, fear, love, confusion, joy, rage, tenderness, nervousness or others. It is possible that the sensations that some of these feelings cause in people may be ones of pleasure and displeasure at the same time. The teachers will be able to empathise with them, commenting that sometimes it is indeed difficult for us to understand what we are feeling, because we can feel something pleasant and unpleasant at the same time, so that different emotions and feelings are mixed.

The teacher reads some sentences that describe situations in which there are mixed feelings, inviting the children to comment on what has happened, and what feelings they think are being mixed. It is advisable to stress that we all have similar emotions and feelings, but that we express them in different ways. This depends on the way we are and other factors such as culture, age, what we learn at home and at school, etc. The teacher can add that sometimes it is difficult for us to express well what we are feeling or doing, so that others don't understand what's happening to us.



Activity 3: Carlitos on the mirror

Activity type: My body, my sexuality

Aims

- To identify the main parts of the body.
- To recognise one's own characteristics, gendered body identity, and respect differences.
- To foster types of behaviour for self-care.
- To help build of a comprehensive notion of sexuality linked to self-care, which includes biological aspects and gender identity.
- To assess the pupils' motivation and get to know the feelings and knowledge they have on the matter.

Resources

Material resources: *Pamela cares for Pamela*, verses, to print and hand out (one for each person), coloured pencils and papers to draw.

Implementation

The tale is recalled. A question is made and a time of approximately 10-15 seconds is given for the Infant Education pupils to reflect, then each pupil is asked to answer the question referring to the chapter.

Question:

- Who is the main character in the story?
- Who do they meet after school?
- What does the man offer them?
- In exchange for what?
- What does their mother say to them?
- What would you do in the character's situation?



Activity 4: This is our body

Activity type: My body, my sexuality

Aims

- To identify the main parts of the body.
- To recognise one's own characteristics, gendered body identity, and respect differences.
- To foster types of behaviour for self-care.
- To help build up a comprehensive notion of sexuality linked to self-care, which includes biological aspects and gender identity.
- To get to know the image of one's own body.
- To point out the intimate areas where they should not be touched, caressed, kissed etc. without their consent.

Resources

Material resources: «Our body» and red felt-tip pens.

Implementation

Each pupil is given an «Our body» sheet according to their gender. The activity is explained. Each pupil colours the areas where they would not like to be caressed, kissed etc., or marks them with a red felt-tip.

End: In order to assess how well the session's contents have been internalised, the following guiding questions are suggested for the teacher to ask the pupils:

- How are men and women different?
- What are a man's and a woman's intimate areas?
- What is sexuality?
- How can I take care of myself and protect my intimate areas?

Thematic block 4

Understanding child sexual abuse

Resources:



Guide to prevent sexual abuse of children. Materials for Guide for Infant and Primary Education

in Web Resources for Equality and Coexistence (REICO in Spanish), Directorate of Educational Inclusion of the Regional Dept. (Conselleria) of Education, Sports and Culture, Valencia Regional Government (Generalitat Valenciana), no date.

<https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/guia-per-a-la-prevencio-de-l-abus-sexual>



Educational work guide «Feeling yes, feeling no».

Prevention of child sexual abuse, Barcelona City Council, 2018. The guide and the activities put forward in this are based on a series of videos to be used in the classroom with Primary school pupils.

<https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/infancia/es/canal/sentir-que-si-sentir-que-no>



Hey! Don't get tricked! Educational guide to prevent sexual and other kinds of child abuse, José Manuel Alonso Varea *et al.*, 2000.

<http://www.alonsovarea.com/pdfs/Ep%20guia%20pedagogica.pdf>



Materials and resources for the Council of Europe's **one in five campaign** («Kiko's Rule»), and other resources related to this campaign prepared by FAPMI - ECPAT Spain.

<https://ecpat-spain.org/campana-1-de-cada-5/1-de-cada-5-materiales-recursos/#55-75-acciones-formativas>

Activities created as part of the EDUCAP Project:

Activity 1: Stories with music

Activity 2: Educating ourselves and educating other people

Activity 3: Caring families, loving families



Activity 1: We are music professionals

Activity type: Stories with music

Aims

- To recognise situations of child sexual abuse through storytelling.
- To reflect on the implications of the different characters' experiences in each story.

Resources

Story suggestions: *Kiko and the hand* (Council of Europe), *Estela screams very loudly* (Isabel Olid and Martina Vanda).

Implementation

The work on the different stories in the table (Annex 2) can be carried out in different ways:

1. Reading.
2. Using music by the pupils to help understand the emotion conveyed.
3. Creation of montage (soundtrack + choice of pictures) by the teachers.
4. Dramatised reading of the story by the pupils with subsequent discussion.

End: In addition to choosing one of the above proposals, a reflection must always be made with the pupils using the representations of each character coloured-in and cut-out by the pupils: via a game with these cut-out figures, the pupils must move the figures so that they carry out the actions that they have seen each character doing, the idea being that through this re-creation they can better understand what has happened. Everything that is represented through an experience using physical things is understood more quickly by pupils at this educational stage.



Activity 2: Making ourselves and other people aware

Activity type: Awareness-raising artists

Aims

- To make child sexual abuse more visible by means of artistic representation.
- To understand what types of child sexual abuse can occur and how they are different from showing affection.
- Give meaning to situations of abuse that they may be experiencing in the first or third person, by reflecting on their peers' artistic work.

Resources

Material resources: Clay, coloured plasticine, watercolours, felt-tips, tempera paint, continuous paper, litho paper, DIN-A3 paper, crayons.

Implementation

First, with clay and/or plasticine, the pupils are told to make a sculpture of their own body. Then, they must make a figure of the person who loves them the most or who each one of them thinks loves them the most. Finally, they must bring them together in the same composition, showing how they most express their affection. This is about seeing if they distinguish between true displays of affection and others that are considered to be prior to or directly child sexual abuse. The youngest pupils do not know how to distinguish this, so such training in the classroom will prepare them for it. In the event that strange behaviour is detected, the teachers encourage

them to reflect on what kinds of messages are being communicated to them by the people who have given these demonstrations of supposed affection.

Secondly, with paper and felt-tip pens, tempera paints, etc., we go on to make abstract representations of how they feel when their mothers, fathers, grandparents, uncles, etc. show them love. What colours do they use? How do they make the pen and brush strokes? All of this can show signs of mixed, contradictory feelings when it comes to experiencing such displays of affection that can perhaps be construed as abusive behaviour.

End: After each work is finished, there should be time to view each classmate's artistic work, taking turns to exchange words about what they think they are seeing, what their partner has tried to capture. They can even group the works together by similar representations so that if situations of child sexual abuse are discovered, the abused child can be understood by their peers and encouraged to report it.



Activity 3: Caring families, loving families

Activity type: Drawing our family's love

Aims

- To understand what types of child sexual abuse can occur and how they are different from showing affection.
- To lend visibility to the displays of affection necessary to grow emotionally strong and to differentiate affection from abuse.

Resources

Material resources: Crayons, DIN-A4 paper, coloured pencils, felt-tip pens.

Implementation

First, they must draw the ways their family express their affection, each one of them on a different sheet of paper..




Secondly, all of them are arranged on the floor so that the pupils can group together the ones with similar representations of affection (hugs with hugs, etc.). Then, they are put on the wall with different sections titled: «This is love» and «This isn't love». All representations that may have been ambiguous or strange in the eyes of other people should be put in the latter section.

Thirdly, there is a discussion on the expressions of affection that are the same and the ones that may be different, trying to raise awareness among the pupils of the type of reactions they should have when faced with each kind.

Thematic block 5

Personal safety and support network

Resources:

-  **Guide to prevent sexual abuse of children. Materials for Guide for Infant and Primary Education**, in Web Resources for Equality and Coexistence [REICO in Spanish], Directorate of Educational Inclusion of the Regional Dept. [Conselleria] of Education, Sports and Culture, Valencia Regional Government [Generalitat Valenciana], no date. <https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/guia-per-a-la-prevencio-de-l-abus-sexual>
-  **Educational work guide «Feeling yes, feeling no»**. Prevention of child sexual abuse, Barcelona City Council, 2018. The guide and the activities put forward in this are based on a series of videos to be used in the classroom with Primary school pupils. <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/infancia/es/canal/sentir-que-si-sentir-que-no>
-  **Hey! Don't get tricked!** Educational guide to prevent sexual and other kinds of child abuse, José Manuel Alonso Varea *et al.*, 2000. <http://www.alonsovarea.com/pdfs/Ep%20guia%20pedagogica.pdf>

Activities created as part of the EDUCAP Project:

Activity 1. Personal space and limits

Activity 2. How we feel



Activity 1: Personal space and limits

Activity type: Good affection, bad affection

Aims

- To introduce Infant Education pupils to the notion of «personal space» and «personal limits», relating these to self-care.
- To differentiate situations that would mean a transgression of their personal space, and to bolster their confidence in setting limits.
- To strengthen the ability to identify warning signs and discomfort as self-protection mechanisms.

Resources

Context: Introducing Infant Education children to the concept of «personal space» and «personal limits». Our personal space is bordered by an invisible line that shows how close other people can get. This invisible line, which we shall call personal limit, tells us how far other people can get close to us. This personal limit is flexible and shifts depending on:

- The trust we have with the other person. For example, a child feels comfortable with a tight hug from their mother but not from anyone else.
- Situations in which there is bodily contact. For example, travelling on a bus full of passengers forces us to be closer to each other, but not when walking across a park.
- When personal space is respected, a person feels comfortable, accepted, protected and calm.
- When personal space is invaded, a person feels: uncomfortable, confused, forced against their will, uneasy.

Implementation

Invite the pupils to listen to the song *Good affection, bad affection* [it can also be a poem or story] in order to put the activity into context. Reflect together on the good kinds and the bad: «there are affections that make us feel good, which are pleasant and from people we love. They feel good in our body and also in our heart, because they give us love and affection». Ask them to give examples with personal situations.

- Invite the Infant Education children to comment on situations they have experienced or when they have felt comfortable or uncomfortable with affection. Ask them to describe the sensations they had, where and how they felt them, and then draw them.
- The drawings are grouped into two parts of the room; in one, there are those for the good sensations and, in the other, the sensations that bothered them. Thus, the children will be able to identify good and bad affection. This will help them prevent situations of abuse.

End: In order to assess how well the session's contents have been internalised, the following guiding questions are suggested for the teacher to ask the pupils: How do I tell the difference between good affection and bad affection? What should I do when I get a bad feeling and I think it was because of bad affection?

Observations

«But there are also bad kinds of affection; affection from people we don't like, who make us feel uncomfortable or cause us some pain. Sometimes people like that want to touch us for their own pleasure and then they hurt us». To distinguish between a good kind of affection and a bad one, we must listen to our body, because our body talks!

How does our body talk? Through sensations. For example, when the affection is a good kind, our heart feels calm, we feel like laughing, we want to return the affection; when it is bad, we feel uncomfortable; our heart beats faster, our face gets hot, we tremble, or we feel like throwing up. Your hands might sweat, your hair stand on end and you want to cry; you might also feel a smothering sensation or feel trapped. They hurt or make us angry, they make us feel bad, even if they're not doing us physical harm; «something in our body sends us an alert signal that says NO».



Activity 2: How we feel

Activity type: Delving into others' emotions

Aims

- To learn to empathise with peers.
- To understand how my peer might feel as a step prior to giving them our own help and help from an adult.

Resources

Material resources: We remember our recommended tales: *Kiko and the hand* (Consejo de Europa), *Estela screams very loudly* (Isabel Olid and Martina Vanda). Cards with emotions-feelings, traffic light with changing colours.

Implementation

First, they must colour in the traffic light, gluing the front part to the back, so that there is a hole in the middle to slide the paper with its three colours (red, amber and green). They must also colour in the letters of emotions-feelings (sadness, anger, pain, loneliness, violence).

Secondly, they will listen to some stories. The idea is to select the cards that they think best represent each story that is being told. When it is over, they select a card and see the one each classmate chose.

Thirdly, each child chooses a traffic light colour, depending on whether they interpret the behaviour shown in the story to be wrong (red), nothing is wrong (amber) or everything is fine (green). The idea is for them to be able to understand how each one of them interprets the different kinds of behaviour, so that the teachers can show them what

would be correct or incorrect in each story of child sexual abuse told. Teachers will be able to encourage the pupils to reflect on each person's perceptions and the importance of understanding that, in addition to each perception, the law also supports and protects them, pointing out what is correct or not in these cases.

A4

Annex

*Diagrams of procedures
for action*

(Valencian Community)

Information on the procedure:

This is the action Procedure in the **educational environment for the Valencian Community** in situations where **child abuse** is detected [including sexual abuse].

- This model is based on **Law 26/2018**, of December 21 of the Generalitat Valenciana, on the rights and guarantees of children and adolescents, in the **Order 62/2014**, of July 28, of the Conselleria de Educaci3n, Culture and Sports; and in **Order 5/2021**, of July 15, of the Vicepresidency and Regional Ministry of Equality and Inclusive Policies from the Regional Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports.
- The normative modifications made to this model of action can be consulted on the following page of the GVA: <https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/protocols>, o en la p1gina web del proyecto (<https://proyectoeducap.eu/>).
- **Disclosure** is the main indicator of child sexual abuse.
- In order to know how to react to a disclosure of child sexual abuse and to know other indicators, it is recommended to consult module 3 of the EDUCAP Guide.
- During the procedure, the most important is to accompany and actively support the child, **avoiding all time his or her re-victimization**.
- In the Valencian Community, the functions of the Coordinator of Welfare and Protection Coordinator (a figure created by the LOPIV), are assumed by the **Coordinator of Equality and Coexistence** (autonomic figure previous to the LOPIV).



The Department (Conselleria) of Equality and Inclusive Policies' Chart of Contacts

Territorial Directorate of Equality and Inclusive Policies' and Reception Centres*

*Outside office hours, the corresponding province's Reception Centre must be contacted.

Alicante

Territorial Directorate

☎ 966 478 321

✉ proteccionalicante@gva.es

«Alicante» reception centre

☎ 965 919 000 / 965 919 002 / 965 919 003

Fax: 965 919 001 / 965 241 812

✉ centrorecp_alicantea@gva.es

Castellón

Territorial Directorate

☎ 964 726 261 / 964 726 265

Fax: 964 726 201

✉ direccioterritorialcs@gva.es

«Virgen de Lledó I» reception centre

☎ 964 715 730 / 619 839 930

Fax: 964 237 600

✉ rraia_vlledol@gva.es

«Virgen de Lledó II» reception centre

☎ 964 715 737 / 964 715 731

Fax: 964 237 600

✉ recep_menlledo@gva.es

Valencia

Territorial Directorate

☎ 681 193 883

Fax: 961 27 1912 / 961 27 19 13

✉ infancia_dtv@gva.es

«La Torre» [Alborache] reception centre

☎ 961 922 610 / 674 342 947

✉ info.latorre@fundacionantoniomoreno.org

✉ subdirección.latorre@
fundacionantoniomoreno.org

✉ larena_jul@gva.es

«Les Palmeres» [Alboraya] reception centre

☎ 961 856 385

✉ Palmeres_rci@gva.es

Ordinary procedure

PHASE Detection and information

- 1 Any member of the educational community may DETECT suspicions of child abuse.
- 2 Upon detection, the suspicions should be REPORTED to the management team.





When in doubt about whether or not to report, COMMUNICATION is the correct action.

Later in the action process, the situation will be evaluated in greater detail.

Detection outside the school context can be done through the **child helpline**
☎ **116 111**.

PHASE Immediate actions

- 3 Upon receipt of the communication, the management team must CONSTITUTE the intervention team:

- | | |
|---|--|
|  A member of the management team |  The guardian of the child in question |
|  The guidance counsellor who attends to the school |  The coordinator for equality and coexistence |

- 4 The intervention team must COLLECT and ANALYZE all the information available to them.

4.1 The intervention team will prepare a specific ACTION PLAN for the case the case with the analyzed information.

It is up to the intervention team to assess the severity and decide the type of procedure to follow [ordinary or emergency].

As part of the action plan, the intervention team must:

- Establish measures of protection, observation and surveillance in the centre.
- Plan the necessary educational measures for the case.
- Complete the Notification Sheet (**Annex I of Order 5/2021**).

Collect the available information, without interrogating the child.

PHASE Communication

5 The school management must NOTIFY as soon as possible about the situation to the corresponding extracurricular authorities as soon as possible:

5.1. Communicate the incident to PREVI.

Through the same will be communicated to the Conselleria de Educaci3n and the Education Inspectorate, this last one may request advice or intervention from the UEO of the corresponding Directorate of Education.

5.2. It will send the Notification Sheet, duly completed,

- to the Primary Care Team of the locality where the child resides (initiation of the intervention).
- to the General Directorate responsible for child protection of the Regional Ministry of Equality and Inclusion (for statistical and monitoring purposes) (prevencion_infancia@gva.es).
- to the Education Inspectorate. The Inspectorate shall also include a copy in the personal file of the minor.

5.3. It will be send, if appropriate, Annex VII of Order 62/2014 to the Prosecutor's Office, (if the suspicions concern possible criminal conduct).

5.4. It will be communicated to the family, once the competent authorities have been notified.

- To communicate to the family, the management team can seek advice and support from the UEO (Specialized Guidance Unit).
- The communication to the PREVI is done through the ITACA platform.
- Communication to the Primary Care team is done via email and/or fax.
- The communication to the General Directorate for Child Protection is done via email (subdireccio_dgia@gva.es, prevencion_infancia@gva.es).

PHASE Follow-up and closing

6 The school's management will MONITOR the status of the action procedure.

7 Once the action procedure has been completed, PREVI's case will be closed.

The Primary Care team of the Social Services is the entity in charge of opening the appropriate administrative file and assessing the risk situation. It will also return the information on the proceedings to the educational centre.

Urgent procedure

PHASE Emergency measures

- 1** Any member of the educational community may DETECT suspicions of child abuse. When suspicions involve indications of imminent danger and seriousness for the physical or psychological integrity of a minor, this procedure will be followed.
- 2** Upon detection, the situation must be immediately REPORTED to the management team.
- 3** The management team shall immediately notify the following competent extra-curricular authorities:
 - 3.1. To the corresponding Territorial Directorate of the Regional Ministry of Equality and Inclusive Policies.**
 - 3.2. If their collaboration is required, to the Security Forces and Corps (National Police 091/Guardia Civil 062)**
 - 3.3. To the judicial authority or to the Public Prosecutor's Office** (if the suspicions concern possible criminal conduct).
- 4** In addition, the management team must take the immediate protection measures that the circumstances require.

The communication to the Territorial Directorate will be done simultaneously by telephonic via and email and/or fax.

PHASE Immediate actions

- 5** Once the communication has been received, the management team must CONSTITUTE the intervention team (member of the management team + the minor's tutor + the centre's counselor + coordinator of the centre + coordinator of equality and coexistence).
- 6** The intervention team must COLLECT and ANALYZE all the information available to them.
 - 6.1. The intervention team must communicate the situation and coordinate with the Primary Care Team of the social services.**
 - 6.2. Inform the child of the situation and the actions to be taken**, in a language adapted according to their evolutionary development and maturity and in accessible formats.

7

The center's management must duly **COMPLETE** and **SEND** the Notification Sheet:

7.1. To the corresponding territorial Direction of the Ministry of Equality and Inclusive Policies.

7.2. To the Primary Care Team of the locality where the child resides.

7.3. To the Educational Inspectorate.

Likewise, a copy will be included in the personal file of the child.

8

The center's Management shall **COMMUNICATE** the incident to the PREVI. Through the same will be communicated to the Regional Ministry of Education and the Education Inspectorate (which may request the may request advice or intervention of the corresponding UEO).

The notifications of points 7.1 and 7.2 shall be made by e-mail or fax, as well as by telephone.

PHASE of intervention

9

The intervention team, if required, with the collaboration of professionals of the UEO, must develop and implement a specific **ACTION PLAN** for the case.

The action plan must include measures of:

- protection, observation and surveillance in the centre.
- educational measures, which are considered necessary.
- coordination of guardianship and protection.

PHASE Follow-up and closing

10

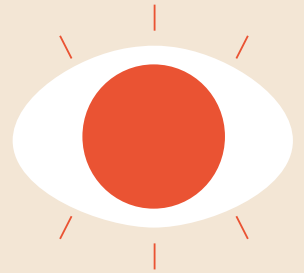
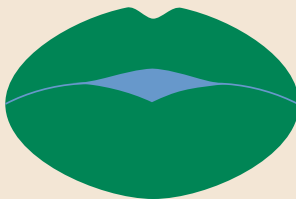
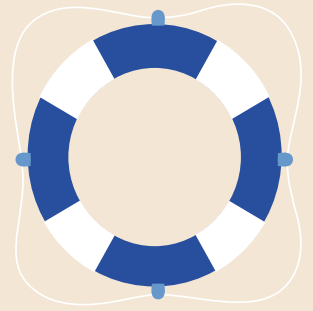
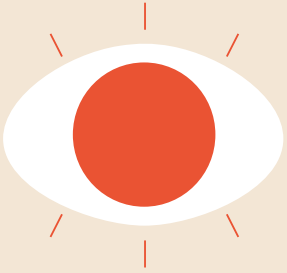
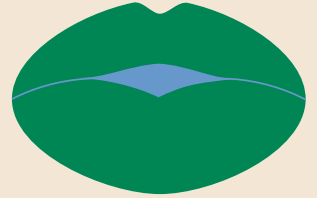
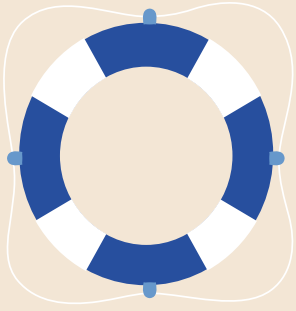
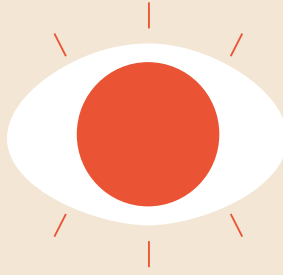
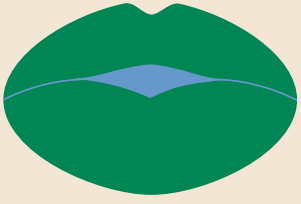
The school management will **FOLLOW UP** on the case.

11

Once the PREVI incident has been resolved, the school will **CLOSE** the file.

The territorial services of the General Council for Children and Adolescents are the ones that will return information to the school management about the actions taken by the school.





This Guide is one of the products of the European project Multiplying Educational Capacities to Combat Sexual Violence Against Children (known by its acronym EDUCAP), granted by the European Union through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program (2014-2020). This project is coordinated by the Institute of Human Rights of the University of Valencia and involves, as partners, the Grevia team from the University of Barcelona, Save the Children, the University Carlos III of Madrid and the COS Group of the Faculty of Education of the University of Valencia. It has also been carried out with the support of various public entities of the Valencia Regional Government (Generalitat Valenciana), especially the General Directorate of Educational Inclusion of the Regional Dept. (Conselleria) of Education, Culture and Sports and the Office for Victims of Crime of the Regional Dept. of Justice, Interior and Public Administration.

The objective of this Guide is to provide education professionals, especially teachers of Early Childhood Education and Primary Education, theoretical and practical tools for the prevention, detection, action and SUPPORT in cases of sexual abuse. The program has been designed to be the basic material for a teacher training program, following the training of trainers methodology.

