

TYPES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

1. Physical Abuse and Neglect

- **Physical Abuse:** Any form of physical aggression that causes damage to the child's body. [UNICEF \(2023\). *The State of the World's Children 2023*.](#)

Examples of physical abuse: hitting, beating, pushing, pinching, kicking, punching, slapping, pulling the ear, shaking, slapping, piercing, scratching, poisoning, drowning, suffocating, using any instrument to injure, burning, covering the mouth or nose, deliberately making people ill, starving as punishment, imprisoning, chastising, etc.

The main difference between abuse and unintentional injury (running over, drowning, burns, etc.) is purpose and intent.

According to the Menino Bernardo Law, no. [13.010/2014](#), physical punishment is disciplinary or punitive action applied with physical force on a child, resulting in physical suffering or injury.

- **Neglect:** Lack of essential care, such as food, clothing, education and medical assistance. Neglect can be physical, emotional, medical or educational. [Save the Children \(2023\). *Child Protection in Emergencies*.](#)
- **Exposure to Domestic Violence:** When the child is exposed to an environment of violence between parents or carers, which can cause significant trauma. [UNICEF. \(2023\). *Violence Against Children*.](#)

2. Emotional and Psychological Abuse

- **Emotional Abuse:** Actions that cause emotional or psychological harm, such as humiliation, intimidation or forced isolation. This kind of abuse affects a child's self-esteem and emotional well-being. It encompasses inappropriate, insufficient or inconsistent interactions regarding the child's development. [Save the Children \(2023\). *Emotional Abuse*.](#)

Examples of emotional abuse: degrading, using the child as a scapegoat, indifference, rejection, belittling patterns, restricting movement, exposure to traumatic events, failure to promote social adaptation, corrupting inappropriate behaviour, using the child to satisfy the carer's psychological needs, bullying, threats, name-calling, scaring, discrimination, ridicule, and other non-physical forms of hostile treatment or rejection. These acts include:

- **Psychological abuse:** Subtle forms of abuse, such as manipulation or destruction of the child's self-esteem and exposure to toxic or stressful environments. [Save the Children \(2023\). *Child Protection*.](#)

- **Bullying:** Repeated verbal, physical or psychological aggression by peers, which causes damage to the child's mental health and development.
[Save the Children \(2023\). *Bullying Prevention*.](#)
- **Substance Abuse:** Exposure or involvement of the child in alcohol or drug abuse, either through direct use or living with users at home.
[Save the Children \(2023\). *Substance Abuse*.](#)
- **Parental Alienation:** When one of the parents manipulates the child into rejecting the other parent, affecting their relationship in a damaging way.
[Save the Children \(2023\). *Child Protection*.](#)

3. Sexual abuse

- **Sexual Abuse:** Includes any form of sexual activity with a child, such as inappropriate touching, exposure to pornography and rape.
[UNICEF. \(2023\). *Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse*.](#)

Examples of sexual abuse include speaking obscene words, exposing sexual organs (exhibitionism), looking at the child in their intimacy (voyeurism), showing pornographic images or videos, constraining them to libidinous acts under violence or serious threat, making or demanding caresses of the genitals, carnal conjunction, incest, photographing children naked or in seductive positions, etc.

- **Commercial Sexual Exploitation:** Use of children for sexual purposes in exchange for money, goods or services, including sex trafficking and the production of child pornography.

[UNICEF. \(2023\). *Child Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*.](#)

Important observations:

It is 'rape of a vulnerable person' to have sexual intercourse or perform another libidinous act with a minor under the age of 14, with a penalty of eight to fifteen years in prison. ([art. 217-A of law no. 12.015/2009](#))

The Civil Code prohibits the marriage of minors under the age of 16 and between the ages of 16 and 18 only with the consent of parents or guardians or judicial authorisation. ([art. 1520 of the law 13.811/2019](#))

Sexual harassment is characterised by the embarrassment of someone to obtain a sexual advantage or favour, practised by a hierarchical superior. When committed against a minor eighteen years of age, their sentence will be increased by up to 1/3. ([art. 216 of law 10.224/2001](#))

4. Spiritual Abuse

- **Spiritual Abuse:** Misuse of religious or spiritual beliefs to control or harm a child, such as punishments in the name of faith. [UNICEF. \(2023\). *Child Protection*.](#)

Spiritual abuse refers to abuses (such as control, deception, oppression and manipulation) that involve a child or adolescent's religious beliefs and faith to perpetrate harm and negatively impact a person's spirituality. ([National Association for Christian Recovery n.d.](#))

5. Exploitation and Harmful Traditional Practices

- **Child Labour:** The use of children in labour activities that are harmful to their health, education and well-being, often involving long working hours and dangerous conditions. [Save the Children \(2023\). *Child Labour*.](#)
- **Harmful Traditional Practices:** Cultural and traditional practices that are harmful to the proper development of children and adolescents, placing them in a situation of social risk. Examples include female genital mutilation and child marriages. [UNICEF. \(2023\). *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*.](#)

6. Technological and Financial Abuse

- **Technological Abuse:** Use of technology to harass or exploit children, including cyberbullying and online sexual exploitation. It can include control over access to electronic devices, hidden cameras, or abusive tracking via apps. [UNICEF. \(2023\). *Children and Digital Technology*.](#)
- **Financial Abuse:** Economic exploitation of a child, such as misusing their financial resources or forcing them to work without fair compensation. This includes situations where funds intended to care for the child are diverted to other purposes without their consent. [Save the Children \(2023\). *Economic Exploitation of Children*.](#)