

Providing care and protecting children

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is when someone endangers a child's physical or emotional health. In the Northern Territory a child is a person under the age of 18 years. Child abuse can include:

- Physical assaults – punching, kicking, pushing, slapping
- Sexual assaults – sexual activity, exposure to pornography
- Emotional abuse – threatening, name calling, put downs, continual coldness from the parent or caregiver
- Neglect – not providing child with basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision
- A child witnessing an act of violence against their mother, father, other family members or pets.

People from a wide range of groups can abuse a child. These people often have the child's trust and can include:

- Parents
- Grandparents
- De facto or step parents
- Older siblings
- Uncles or aunts
- Neighbours
- Teachers, childcare workers
- Babysitters
- Legal guardians.

Who must report child abuse?

The protection of children and young people from abuse is important. It is mandatory for every person in the Northern Territory to report any suspected child abuse.

Territory Families, Housing and Communities or the Northern Territory Police must be contacted if a person believes:

- A person aged less than 18 years has suffered or is likely to suffer child abuse.
- A person aged less than 14 years has been or is likely to be sexually abused including a sexually active child.
- A person aged less than 18 years who is in a special relationship (such as a teacher with their student) has been or is likely to be sexually abused.

Reports can be made to Territory Families 24 hour toll free number 1800 700 250.

For police assistance call 131 444 or in an emergency call 000.

What will the Department do about child abuse?

The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities has a responsibility to promote the wellbeing of children and protect them from harm and abuse.

Suspected child abuse will immediately be reported to Territory Families or the NT Police.

The Department can provide details of other services that may be able to help.

You can contact your local Housing office if you require support where the welfare of a child is involved.

Greater Darwin	(08) 8999 8814
Arnhem	(08) 8987 0533
Central Australia	(08) 8951 5344
Big Rivers	(08) 8973 8513
Barkly	(08) 8962 4497
Top End	(08) 8995 5122