

Working with individual children and families

Children's experiences of abuse and neglect are very varied and so there is no single pattern of how best to help them. There are, however, some practical guidelines that enable early years, school and out-of-school practitioners to take a positive approach. Many of the suggestions in this section are grounded in good practice with all children, whether or not they have had distressing experiences.

Working with the children

Consult other professionals

Good contacts between your service and the local child protection team should include practical discussions about the contribution of your setting and your own skills as an individual practitioner. If you are still building an effective working relationship, perhaps the setting will have to make some active moves. If you are the manager, or senior, then do not just wait for the social worker to call you.

You might want to discuss any of the following:

- ▶ Is there anything specific you would like us to do within the setting? Are there any particular checks that could be carried on with the child, or anything within our records that could be helpful?
- ▶ What suggestions would you make about how best to help within your setting, or home, from your knowledge of the child and the family?
- ▶ It will be helpful to know whether other specialist input is being offered to the child or family, in order to support your relationship with the child. You are not, of course, asking for confidential details of counselling or therapy. With some shared information, you will perhaps know the identity of 'Lisa' who apparently talks with this child every week or the 'clinic' that 'Mummy has gone to this weekend'.
- ▶ Therapy for children, including play therapy is a specialised task and no practitioners should attempt to undertake any form of therapy unless they