

have been trained. But not all children or young people, who have been abused, want or need special therapy. They can be well supported by what you offer within the ordinary day or session with a child.

Practical monitoring and physical care

Usual good practice for observation and physical care may be sufficient for some children who have experienced abuse. However, when children have been injured or seriously neglected, you may be asked to monitor or support children in a more specific way. You may be asked:

- ▶ To ensure that the child has been brought into your setting for the agreed days or sessions. Unless there is a specific agreement, school age children will be expected to attend every day. You need to know whom you should contact, if the child is absent beyond a particular time.
- ▶ To check a child for bruises or new injuries. Make sure that any checking is done with respect for the child and an awareness of the sense of bodily dignity of even young children. Have an honest and simple answer ready for when a child asks you why you are doing regular checks.
- ▶ To weigh children or keep a record of what they eat in your setting or family home.
- ▶ To keep a record of children's clothing, whether this is appropriate for the weather or check that a young child is in a clean nappy or underwear that is not soiled.

Usual patterns of care for younger children can be extended within the age range, if children have physical or learning disabilities that limit their ability or understanding to take on much of their own personal care.

Supporting the children

The key guideline is to treat children as normally as possible, without pretending that nothing has happened.

You will not be able to treat children who have been abused in exactly the same way as children whose life experience has been less disruptive and distressing. However, it would not be good practice, in any case, to attempt to treat all children in exactly the same way. Sensitive practitioners should respond to children as individuals, tuning in to what they say and being sensitive to how their abusive experience may be reflected in their play, conversation and behaviour. You should be able to draw on your general skills with children in how you work with and support a child who has been abused.