



## anf position statement

# australian nursing federation

## child abuse

Child abuse is the maltreatment or endangerment of a child or young person under the age of 18 years and includes: physical, emotional, psychological, and/or sexual harm and neglect.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. It is essential for anyone working with children or young people to recognise their vulnerable status and the special protection they may require if they appear to be at risk.
2. Child abuse can adversely affect a child or young person's emotional and physical development, learning and self esteem. These affects may be detrimental to their future wellbeing.
3. Nurses and midwives play an important role in the detection and prevention of child abuse and in the ongoing care, education and support of the children and their families.
4. Nurses and midwives working with children and young people should have the necessary skill to assess, identify, report and manage any case of suspected child abuse.
5. Nurses and midwives have a duty of care to children and young people and, in some States, a statutory obligation under relevant State law, to notify any case of suspected child abuse within employer policies and protocols.
6. Workplaces must have policies, protocols and reporting guidelines in place for reporting children at risk of abuse.
7. Employers should provide nurses and midwives with the necessary education in relation to their legislative obligations in reporting child abuse.
8. Nurses and midwives who report child abuse should be given support and feedback on the process and the outcome for the child. Counselling should be readily available if it is required.
9. Established screening practices for child abuse in hospitals and health facilities where children or young people attend for care may assist nurses and midwives to identify children at risk.
10. Education, training and support should be available to parents of 'at risk' families.

11. Community education should be provided to raise awareness of the impact of child abuse and to promote and enhance the safety and welfare of children and young people.
12. Some state/territory legislation requires criminal history checks for those working with children. The cost of such checks should be the responsibility of the organisation or employer.

*endorsed august 2007*

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