



# PROTECTING CHILDREN AGAINST VIOLENCE

Child Friendly Booklet





REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**Ministry of Labour and Social Protection**  
**State Department for Social Protection**  
**Department of Children's Services**

# PROTECTING CHILDREN AGAINST VIOLENCE

*Child Friendly Booklet*

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**Nelson Marwa Sospeter, CBS**

Principal Secretary,  
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# Preface

**The Government of Kenya is working to protect all children.** This booklet is based on the 2019 Kenya Violence Against Children Survey Report and the National Prevention and Response Plan on Violence against Children 2019 - 2023. The results of the survey, helped the Government develop the Plan on Violence Against Children.

This is your personal guide to understanding the different forms of violence and how you can help prevent them in your home, school, and community. We all must do our part to help “Spot it and Stop it.”

We asked thousands of children and young people between the ages of 13 and 24 years across Kenya to share their stories in a survey called the 2019 Kenya Violence Against Children Survey. Thanks to the Kenya Violence Against Children Survey and these brave talks with children, we’ve developed the National Prevention and Response Plan for Violence Against Children 2019-2023. You’ll learn more about the results of the Survey and what steps you can take if you experience violence.

**Simon K. Chelugui, E.G.H**  
Cabinet Secretary,  
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection



# What's Inside this Booklet?

This booklet will give you the tools you need to help **SPOT** and **STOP** violence in your home, school and community! You'll learn the different ways that kids experience violence, and what they, their families, communities, and **YOU** can do. This booklet will help you answer questions like:

## WHAT KINDS OF VIOLENCE

do children and young people face?

## HOW MANY CHILDREN

have experienced violence?

## WHY DO CHILDREN

and young people experience violence?

## HOW DOES VIOLENCE AFFECT

children and young people?

## WHERE DO CHILDREN

who have experienced violence go for help?



We asked thousands of children and young people between the ages of 13 and 24 years across Kenya to share their stories in a survey called the 2019 Kenya Violence Against Children Survey. Thanks to the Kenya Violence Against Children Survey and these brave talks with children, we’ve developed the National Prevention and Response Plan for Violence Against Children 2019-2023. You’ll learn more about the results of the Survey and what steps you can take if you experience violence.

# WHAT IS VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN?

Violence against children is any action or words that cause harm, injury or sadness to children. It can be physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect. It happens in homes, schools and communities across Kenya, no matter the tribe, religion, or upbringing. Adults, young people, or even other children can cause violence. Below is a list of the different kinds of violence, and a picture of what children and young people in Kenya have experienced.



## PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Beating, slapping, pushing, shaking, pinching, punching, kicking, beating with an object, threatening someone with a knife, gun or other weapon, among others.



## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Hitting, slapping, smacking, and physically hurting a child as punishment at home or in school.



## EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE

When someone makes a child feel bad or hurts their feelings. For example, a loved one telling a child that they are not loved, wishing they were never born or dead, making fun of you, insulting, or embarrassing you when alone or around other people, threatening to leave you, or using harsh language and shouting.



## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Any sexual activities done by an adult or an older child on a child. It may involve touching in a sexual way without permission, making a child touch or look at the private parts of others, attempting or physically forcing sex.

## RADICALISATION

This a process which a person or group has extreme social or religious ideas that can result in violent extremism or terrorism.



## CHILD MARRIAGE

This is a union of two people in which one or both are younger than 18 years of age. Close to 1 in 10 females reported they were married before their 18th birthday.



## WITNESSING VIOLENCE AT HOME OR IN THE COMMUNITY

Seeing violence between parents or other family members can negatively effect how children grow, feel, and how they deal with other people throughout their lives. Where there is violence against women in a family, children also face violence.



## FOOD INSECURITY

About 1 in 4 females and 1 in 5 males had experienced food insecurity, which means their family did not have enough food to eat.



## ONLINE CHILD ABUSE

Publicly bullying, threatening or shaming a child online on social media accounts like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube and Twitter. This includes sing children's images for the wrong purpose e.g. pornography, putting children's pictures on the Internet without their parent's or child's permission.



## CHILD LABOUR

About 3 in 5 of males and 1 in 3 females worked for money or other payment in the past twelve months.

About **1 in every 2 children** in Kenya experience violence

Physical violence is the most common form of violence for both boys and girls. **4 in 10 female** and **5 in 10 males** experience physical violence in childhood.

**3 in 40 females** and **2 in 40 males** experienced emotional violence in childhood.

Sexual violence is common, and girls are especially exposed. **3 in 20 females** and **1 in 20 males** experienced sexual violence in childhood.

**2 in 10 females** and **1 in 10 males** said someone did something hurtful or nasty to them through mobile phones or online in the past 12 months.

About half of children in Kenya have witnessed violence in the home or community. **1 in 2 females** and **1 in 2 males** witnessed violence in the home in childhood.

The 2014 prevalence rate of child marriage in Kenya is approximately **1 in 4 children**.

In a 2014 Kenya Demographic Health Survey, **over 1 in 5 females** (ages 15-49 years old) reported having undergone female genital mutilation.

<sup>2</sup> The respondents were between the age of 18-24 years old sharing their experience in childhood.



## Key Messages

It is important to know that:

- Violence against children is never right! No child should experience any form of violence.
- Violence against children can be prevented.
- Children have a right to basic needs and care from their parents and caregivers. Examples are food, shelter, clothing, education, and love.
- Children should have access to safe, violence-free environments where they live, learn, and play. This includes places like at home, schools, churches, mosques, and playgrounds.
- Children have the right to express their views, and to have those views matter when decisions are being made about what should be done to stop violence against children.
- Young or small children are more at risk of being abused at home, in the community or at school because they are not able to defend themselves.
- Other children at risk are those who live on the street and those with a disability, who have mental issues or unstable families.
- The government has to make sure that anyone who commits violence against children is punished.
- The government has a responsibility to uphold the rights of children to protection, access to health, education and other services. It must also help families to provide their children with care in a safe environment.

## What are the effects of violence?

- Injury, bruises, death, brain injury
- HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted or complicated pregnancy, using alcohol or drugs
- Anxiety, depression, suicide, aggression
- Learning problems and missing school.
- Thinking that violence is normal

## Who abuses children?

According to the 2019 VACS, violence is usually caused by the people children know and trust. These people are:

- Boyfriend or girlfriend
- Classmate or schoolmate
- Other children (siblings and friends)
- Parents or adult relatives
- Neighbours
- Strangers
- Teachers or religious leaders
- House help
- Boda boda and matatu operators
- Shopkeepers
- Police, Chief
- Employers (child labour)

For **sexual violence**, most children and young people in the 2019 survey reported the most common abuser was a boyfriend or girlfriend; for **physical violence** they reported parents and caregivers were the most common, and for **emotional violence** they reported classmates or schoolmates to be the most common.

## Where does sexual violence occur?

The 2019 VACS found that children experience sexual violence in different settings or places:

- For girls, sexual violence happened most often at their own home, at the abuser's home, or at an outdoor place like on a road, at school, or on a field.
- For boys, the abuse took place in someone else's home (not the victim's or abuser's home).

The children and young people reported the following locations to be where they experienced violence:

- At their home
- Abuser's home
- Someone else's home (other than the abuser)
- On a road/street
- Market/Shop
- School
- Lake, river or other body of water
- Field or other natural area

## Where do children seek help?

Even though the government has systems in place that can prevent violence, it is not always reported. Can you think of a reason a child wouldn't report violence?

Some children told their parent/caregiver, neighbour or friend. Others sought help from the police, doctor or health care worker.

**Children need to feel safe to speak up!** Children should feel comfortable telling a loved one about violence. Never blame a child for violence, and let them know that by coming forward, they will receive help and support. Anyone who experiences any form of violence should get the services they need.

**!**  
Violence against children is never right. No child should experience any form of violence.



Only 11 out of 100 females received help after experiencing sexual violence, compared to just 3 out of 100 boys.

# TAKE ACTION!

## PROTECT CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE IN KENYA

Everyone has a part to play in ending violence against children at home, in schools, and in the community! The Government of Kenya has the duty to protect all children, including provision of health, education and justice for all children. They also help families keep children safe inside and outside their homes. The community, parents, caregivers, young people and children all have an important role to play. Below is a list of recommendations from the National Prevention and Response Plan on Violence Against Children 2019-2023 of what everyone can do to end violence against children in Kenya.

### 1 THE GOVERNMENT

The Government of Kenya has created laws that protect children against violence. For example, there are laws that:

- Ban physical violence (e.g. corporal punishment),
- Jail sexual abusers for life,
- Prevent alcohol and drug abuse among children and adults, and
- Ban harmful practices that lead to violence (e.g. female genital mutilation and child marriage).

The Government also has to make sure all citizens know and understand the laws. Those who break the law need to be punished through the Government's legal justice system, the police, and the courts.

#### Child Protection Service Providers' role:

- Educate children about their right to protection from violence, as well as their responsibility not to harm other children or their peers.
- Educate the citizens of Kenya on the laws that protect children from violence.
- Punish lawbreakers and abusers using the legal justice system.
- Provide services for children in line with Child Protection and Child Safeguarding Policies.
- Report any violence against children and connect children with the right services.

#### Children's role:

- Help your peers learn about their rights and responsibilities. Talk about the consequences of breaking the law. These conversations can happen in schools, the community, and religious gatherings (Sunday school, madrassa).
- Participate in spreading information about laws that protect children in Youth Councils, from the local level to the national level.

### 2 IN THE FAMILY

Parents and caregivers must create a safe home for children free from violence. The Government gives families support to create violence-free homes, access to education on positive ways of raising children, supporting their development and ensuring equal opportunities for boys and girls. Parents must provide for childrens' basic needs.

#### Parents', Caregivers', or guardians' role:

- Practice positive parenting to raise healthy children. Learn how children develop and how to support, nurture and respect them.
- Do not use violence at home; encourage positive communication.
- Offer support to children with special circumstances, such as those living with disabilities, children with HIV and those without biological parents.
- Seek government support, when needed, to provide for basic needs.
- Remember it is important to actively listen and respect children's views.

#### Children's role:

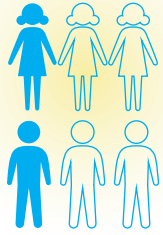
- Violence is NEVER a child's fault.
- Talk to a trusted adult and/or report any violence happening at home.
- Report cases of domestic violence to a trusted adult at home or in the community.
- Report cases of neglect. For example, cases where basic needs are not provided (food, clothing).
- Express your opinions respectfully to parents.



Only 8 out of 20 females and 5 out of 20 males told someone about sexual violence they experienced. They told either a parent, neighbour or a friend.



Everyone has a part to play in ending violence against children at home, in schools, and in the community!



**Among 13–17 year olds, about one third of females and males experienced emotional violence by a peer in the past 12 months.**

### 3 IN THE SCHOOL

Schools should be a safe place, free from any violence toward children. Government policies make schools safer by banning physical punishment, preventing radicalisation, and discrimination based on disabilities or gender. Schools should welcome back drop-outs who want to return and teach life skills that prevent violence. Teachers can also prevent violence, and help children affected by violence. All schools should have rules banning violence and showing how to behave in non-violent ways.

#### Teachers and other school staff's role:

- Prevent, identify and respond to violence in schools. The school must be free from all forms of violence including bullying, sexual abuse, physical punishment, radicalisation among others.
- Teachers should promote positive discipline and mentor children.
- Raise awareness about how to report abuse. Make sure that children know where to report violence and how to get help within the school.
- Empower children to give suggestions, opinions and report abuse in suggestion boxes.
- Offer guidance and counselling support to children who are affected by violence.
- Make peer to peer counselling available.
- Encourage children to complete their homework in school libraries and avoid walking long distances to look for books, therefore becoming easy to abuse.

#### Child's role:

- Talk to a trusted adult about any violence.
- Report any form of violence to a trusted staff member in school.
- Know the school rules and guidelines that prohibit any form of violence towards other classmates and schoolmates.

### 4 IN THE COMMUNITY

The whole community has a role in preventing all forms of violence, including violent discipline, child marriage, female genital mutilation, wife beating, and any other practices that hurt people.

#### Community's role:

- Raise awareness about all forms of violence against children and harmful practices (e.g. female genital mutilation and child marriage) and the need to report to authorities.
- Spread knowledge about child rights to all members of the community.
- Hold community meetings with members of all ages (child, youth, adult, elders) to discuss ways to stop harmful practices and all forms of violence against children and women in the community.

- Provide a safe place to build peace between children and youth, and create discussions and understanding among different age groups (children, youth, adult and elder) within the community.
- Identify and report cases of child abuse, neglect, and any other form of violence toward children happening in the community.
- Offer safe spaces for children and women survivors where they can get services.
- Make counselling and other emotional support accessible to abused children.
- Stop stigmatisation of children who have been abused.

#### Child's role:

- Take part in community forums where your rights and responsibilities are discussed.
- Contribute to school and community forums and learn where risks of abuse are highest in the community.
- Share your thoughts on violence prevention without fear and with respect.
- Report any violence in the community to a trusted adult or authorities.

### 5 CHILD PROTECTION, HEALTH, POLICE AND COURT SERVICES

The Government provides health services, social welfare and justice for anyone at risk or who has experienced violence. It's important for all citizens to have access to support services.

#### Health Centre's role:

- Offer child-friendly and non-judgemental services.
- Offer medical help, medication and other health services for survivors of violence.
- Provide counselling and therapy for child survivors of violence.
- Link to other services as appropriate (e.g. legal services).

#### Police's role:

- Offer protection to witnesses of violence when they report.
- Encourage diversion of child offenders.
- Expand the facilities available for the rehabilitation of children and avoid mixing imprisoned children with adults. Separate children by age to prevent abuse of younger children by older children.
- Offer child-friendly services, like private counselling for children in police stations.
- Make police accessible to children for faster reporting of violence cases.
- Help children and adults with any documents required to report cases of violence.



**Only 1 out of 10 girls got help from the police, a doctor, or health care workers. Even worse, only 3 out of 100 boys got help after experiencing sexual violence.**



Many children don't know where to go for help. Only 1 out of 3 girls and boys knew of a place to get help after they experienced sexual violence.

#### Children's Officer's role:

- Establish child protection centres nationwide.
- Provide safe alternative family care for child survivors of violence.
- Map service providers and link children to support services nearest to the family.
- Document cases of child abuse and follow up to ensure action is taken.

#### Child's role

- Raise awareness of other children about the toll free 116 and its WhatsApp number where children can report cases of abuse.
- Report any form of violence to a trusted adult or identified authorities in the community.
- Get help at the nearest health facility for cases of sexual abuse.
- Where possible, document the situation and time when abuse happened.

## 6 WORKING TOGETHER

All of society needs to work together to stop violence against children. The Government takes the lead in areas such as health, education, justice and child protection, but it also needs to work together with the private sector, development partners and civil organisations.

#### Working together needs to happen at all levels:

- National
- Sub-County
- County
- Wards

Human and financial resources are needed to put the National Prevention and Response Plan on Violence Against Children into practice. We can ensure its success by monitoring, reporting and evaluating.

#### Government's role:

- Provide money and people to implement the plan.
- Follow-up the implementation of the Plan.
- Monitor the plan annually.
- Form a multi-agency system to coordinate all services to stop violence against children.
- Ensure children's voices are linked to the formation of laws.
- Create awareness of prevention and response to violence against children.

# VAC CASE STUDIES



## 1 SEXUAL ABUSE

Joy is a 13 year old girl. She lives at home with her father, step mother, paternal uncle and younger brother. Her mother died when she was 10 years old.

Often when her father was not home, Joy's uncle would take care of her and her younger brother. Joy and her brother were fond of their uncle and trusted him. The uncle took advantage of Joy's trust and began to sexually abuse her. Joy **did NOT tell anyone about the abuse**, but instead suffered in silence because her uncle threatened to kill Joy and her brother if she dare tell anyone.

Joy's teacher, Mrs Okol, began to notice that she was not her normal happy self, and was walking with difficulty. Mrs Okol spoke to her nicely until Joy disclosed that her uncle had been sexually abusing her. The teacher told her all will be well and she would do everything possible to help her and get the abuser arrested ensuring the abuse would never happen again. Mrs Okol called the Sub-County Children's officer and, together, they took Joy to the hospital, where she was examined for signs of abuse. The doctor confirmed Joy had been sexually abused and gave her medication to prevent pregnancy and HIV infection. The Sub-County Children's officer reported the case to the police station. The police officers proceeded to arrest the uncle and in court the magistrate sentenced him to several years in prison. Joy is now attending counseling sessions with her guidance and counseling teacher working through what happened to her. She is happy once more.

## 2 EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Paul is fifteen years old and in high school. He is often scolded by his mathematics teacher, who calls him useless in front of his peers during class. The insults by this teacher make Paul feel sad and scared to go to mathematics class.

Paul was unsure what to do. He continuously failed all mathematics test and his father kept asking why he was performing so poorly in school. Paul decided to tell his father how his teacher speaks to him and how upset this makes him. His father told him that the teacher is wrong and that Paul is smart and capable of performing well in school. His father informs him that if he is not there to help, Paul can always **call the 116 hotline for immediate support** in cases of emotional abuse.

Paul's father went to the school and reported the matter to the headmaster. The teacher was called in by the headmaster and told to stop unfairly scolding students, specifically Paul.



## WHERE TO GET HELP

Talking about violence can be hard. Many children don't think it is a problem, or feel like violence is their fault. Remember, when violence happens to me, I need help from someone I can trust. Together, we must help stop violence against children.

**To report any act of violence against children, please reach out to the following:**

- County Children Coordinators or Sub-County Children Officers
- Guidance and Counselling School Teacher
- Youth Friendly Services in all government hospitals
- Your local Chief
- Child Protection Volunteers

**Call the Toll-Free Numbers – there is no charge.**

- 999, 112 or 0800730999 National Police Service
- 116 Child Help Line, WhatsApp with +254 722 116116, or send an email to 116@childlinekenya.co.ke
- 1190 ONE2ONE Hotline
- 1195 National Gender Based Violence Hotline
- 1192 National Authority for Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) help line for alcohol and drug abuse

For more information on preventing violence against children, here are the links to important documents mentioned in this guide:

- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection website: [www.socialprotection@go.ke](mailto:www.socialprotection@go.ke)
- Twitter: SP\_Kenya; Facebook: State Department for Social Protection; Email: [watotoidara@gmail.com](mailto:watotoidara@gmail.com)

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