• comments from a child that no one is home to provide care
• being constantly tired
• frequent lateness or absence from school
• inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter
• frequent illness, infections or sores
• being left unsupervised for long periods.

Why should you break the silence about child abuse?
• Every child has the right to be protected by caring adults.
• Abuse can affect a child for the rest of their life.
• Think about how you may feel if you do not act to protect the child.
• A child is never to blame if they have been abused.
• If you suspect that a child has been abused, it is better to report it, even if you are not sure, rather than do nothing.
• Trust your gut feeling, rely on intuition and speak out if you think someone is abusing a child.
• If the perpetrator is a child or adolescent, speaking up may enable them to get help to address their behaviour.
• If a child has been abused, it is important for the child and family to reach out for help and not isolate themselves.
• If you do report abuse, the child will always remember that someone had the courage to stand up for them and do something to protect them.

Where to get help
If you suspect a child has experienced harm, or is at risk of experiencing harm, there are a number of agencies that can provide support and advice.

Department of Communities
Contact Child Safety Services on 13 QGOV (13 74 68).
• After business hours, call the Child Safety After-Hours Service Centre on 3235 9999 or freecall 1800 177 135.
• Visit www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety

If your concerns are about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, the local Recognised Entity will be involved. A Recognised Entity is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander individual or organisation recognised in their community to provide cultural and family advice in Indigenous child protection matters.

Queensland Police Service
The Queensland Police Service has a number of dedicated Child Protection and Investigation Units across the state to investigate criminal matters relating to child abuse. If you have concerns about criminal behaviour, contact your local police station.

In an emergency, call 000.
What is child abuse?

There are four different types of child abuse:
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect.

Child abuse can be a single incident, or can be a number of different incidents that take place over time.

Under the Child Protection Act 1999, it does not matter how much a child is harmed, but whether a child:
- has suffered harm, is suffering harm, or is at risk of suffering harm
- does not have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm.

Harm is defined as any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing (section 9 of the Child Protection Act 1999). For harm to be significant, the detrimental effect on a child's wellbeing must be substantial or serious, more than transitory and must be demonstrable in the child's presentation, functioning or behaviour.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, non-accidental physical trauma or injury.

Physical abuse can include:
- hitting
- shaking
- throwing
- burning
- biting
- poisoning.

Physical abuse does not always leave visible marks or injuries. It is not how bad the mark or injury is, but rather the act itself that causes injury or trauma to the child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child's social, emotional, cognitive or intellectual development is impaired or threatened. It can include emotional deprivation due to persistent:
- rejection
- hostility
- teasing/bullying
- yelling
- criticism
- exposure of a child to domestic and family violence.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child's basic necessities of life are not met, and their health and development are affected.

Basic needs include:
- food
- housing
- health care
- adequate clothing
- personal hygiene
- hygienic living conditions
- timely provision of medical treatment
- adequate supervision.

Some general indicators of child abuse include:
- showing wariness and distrust of adults
- rocking, sucking or biting excessively
- bedwetting or soiling
- demanding or aggressive behaviour
- sleeping difficulties, often being tired and falling asleep
- low self-esteem
- difficulty relating to adults and peers
- abusing alcohol or drugs
- being seemingly accident prone
- having broken bones or unexplained bruising, burns or welts in different stages of healing
- being unable to explain an injury, or providing explanations that are inconsistent, vague or unbelievable
- feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- having difficulty concentrating
- being withdrawn or overly obedient
- being reluctant to go home
- creating stories, poems or artwork about abuse.

Some indicators of neglect include:
- malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food
- poor hygiene, matted hair, dirty skin or body odour
- unattended physical or medical problems