

## PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

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Violence is a wide-ranging term that includes different type of maltreatment against children. Based on the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice course of United Nations on Drugs and Crime, violence against children occurs in a variety of settings, including the home, school, public places, armed warfare, and even across boundaries. Abuse and neglect in the home, incest, sexual abuse, infanticide, and bullying and other types of violence in schools; corporal punishment; psychological aggression; child trafficking, sale of children, child sexual exploitation and other commercial sexual exploitation of children; child labor; recruitment as child soldiers, minors recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups, and many other forms of cyber and online violence.

According to World Health Organization, it is estimated that 1 billion children in the last year, aged 2 to 17 years have been victims of physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect around the world. Data from UNICEF also shows that around 15 million adolescent girls aged 15–19 have experienced forced sex in their lifetime; nearly 10% of the world's children are not legally protected from corporal punishment; over one-third of students aged 13–15 experience bullying; approximately one-fourth of children under the age of five – 176 million – live with a mother who is a victim of intimate partner abuse; and around 300 million youngsters between the ages of 2 and 4 are subjected to violent discipline on a regular basis by their caretakers.

Based on the National Baseline Study on Violence against Children in the Philippines by Council for the Welfare of Children and UNICEF Philippines in 2016, the prevalence survey shows a high overall prevalence of violence against Filipino children

with three out of five children being physically and psychologically abused, and bullied, and almost one in five children being sexually violated.

Studies found that the majority of the violence children encounter is perpetrated by family and friends they trust in areas where they should feel protected. Almost all of this violence occurs at home, with the most common form being corporal punishment by parents or caregivers since it is still widely accepted as a form of discipline. Early exposure to violence is frequently viewed as a suitable (or even appropriate) method of teaching children to behave, but it is linked to a variety of negative physical, cognitive, developmental, and mental health outcomes throughout a child's life, as well as an increased risk of a child perpetrating or experiencing violence later in life.

In 1992, Republic Act 7610: Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act was passed in order to offer a stronger deterrent and specific protection against child abuse, exploitation, and discrimination, as well as to impose penalties for violations, among other things. Aside from this, there were also more than 15 laws protecting children have been passed.

The Department of Education (DepEd) then implemented the DepEd Order no. 40, s. 2012, the Policy and Guidelines on Protecting Children in School from Abuse, Violence, Exploitation, Discrimination, Bullying and other Forms of Abuse which is pursuant to the 1987 Constitution.

However, despite the numerous laws protecting children and the adaptation of the Child Protection Policy in DepEd, the violence against children is still rampant.

Thus, the school plays a vital role in violence against children prevention and early identification. The presence of a Child Protection Committee, a Child Protection Center, strong coordination between the school and the Local Government Unit in promoting Child Protection, and proper documentation of incidents will all aid in the efficient

process of addressing violence, enforcing positive discipline, and promoting the "best interests of the child."

Previous researches from selected schools in the Philippines revealed that despite the personnel from the school being aware of the Child Protection Policy, the implementation in the school of the said policy was not very rigid and the school's responsiveness was not very high. With these findings, it was suggested that frequent monitoring of its implementation in schools be conducted to ensure its realization, as well as trainings on positive and nonviolent classroom discipline, anger and stress management, and gender sensitivity.

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