Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect of children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional maltreatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Key facts:

- Nearly one in four adults reports having been physically abused as a child; 36% say they were emotionally abused as a child.
- 20% of women and 5–10% of men report having been sexually abused as children.
- Maltreatment can cause changes in the brain that increase the risk of behavioural, physical and mental health problems in adulthood.
- Being a victim of child maltreatment can increase the risk that a person will become a victim and/or perpetrator of other forms of violence in adolescence and adulthood.

Findings from the survey

The majority of countries report having adopted national action plans to address child maltreatment. Many countries report that prevention programmes for child maltreatment are being implemented. However, only a minority of countries report implementing these measures at scale.

Prevention approaches

There are a number of evidence-based programmes designed to help strengthen early relationships and interactions between children and their caregivers, promote healthy development and prevent child maltreatment.

Proportion of countries with national action plans and surveys

- National action plans: 29% Yes, 71% No
- National surveys: 59% Yes, 41% No
Proportion of countries that reported implementing a particular strategy

**Home visiting**

Home visiting programmes involve visits by nurses to parents and infants in their homes to provide support, education, and information. Some home visiting programmes can substantially reduce child maltreatment and associated outcomes such as injuries.

- **None** (not implemented at all)
- **Limited** (implemented once or a few times)
- **Larger scale** (e.g. across many schools or communities or has reached 30% or more of the target population)

![Home visiting Proportion Chart](chart)

**Parenting education**

Parenting education programmes aim to improve child-rearing skills, increase knowledge of child development and encourage positive child management strategies. Parenting education programmes show great promise in preventing child maltreatment and promoting positive parenting and child behaviour.

- **None** (not implemented at all)
- **Limited** (implemented once or a few times)
- **Larger scale** (e.g. across many schools or communities or has reached 30% or more of the target population)

![Parenting education Proportion Chart](chart)

**Child sexual abuse avoidance training**

Child sexual abuse prevention programmes teach children about body ownership, the difference between good and bad touch, how to say “no” and how to disclose abuse to a trusted adult. They can increase children’s knowledge of what to do if they encounter a potentially abusive situation.

- **None** (not implemented at all)
- **Limited** (implemented once or a few times)
- **Larger scale** (e.g. across many schools or communities or has reached 30% or more of the target population)

![Child sexual abuse Proportion Chart](chart)