

PRACTICE TOOL

Intra-familial child sexual abuse: Risk factors, indicators and protective factors

Section Three: Protective factors associated with intra-familial child sexual abuse

A protective factor is a characteristic associated with a lower likelihood of experiencing IFCSA or which reduces the level of risk a particular risk factor presents on IFCSA. The existence of a protective factor does not rule out that abuse has taken place. Protective factors can be targeted and strengthened in direct work with children and families.

The template in **Appendix A** can be used alongside a child/young person's case file to cross-reference with the information provided in Table 4 below to help 'build a picture' of evidence.

Table 4:

	Protective factors ⁴³
Child protective factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Good health, history of adequate development.> Above-average intelligence.> Hobbies and interests.> Good peer relationships.> Positive school experiences: academic, sporting or friendship-related.> Good and mutually trusting relationships with teachers.> Development of skills, opportunities for development and mastery of tasks.> Positive disposition.> Active coping style.> Positive self-esteem.> Good social skills.> Internal locus of control (a belief that one can control their own life).> Balance between help-seeking and autonomy.
Parental/family protective factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Secure attachment; positive and warm parent-child relationship.> Supportive family environment.> Household rules/structure; parental monitoring of child.> Extended family support and involvement, including caregiving help.> Stable relationship with parents.> Parents have good coping skills.> Family expectations of pro-social behaviour.> Higher levels of parental education.

⁴³These protective factors are based on a number of extensive reviews of protection and resilience, including Butchart and Kahane (2009); Krug et al (2002); Marriott et al (2014); Newman (2004)