**10 key principles for managing**   
**disclosures of abuse and neglect**

The following 10 key principles should inform your approach to managing disclosures of abuse or neglect from a child:

1. If a child tells, plays, draws or shows abuse, listen and attend carefully, with 100% of your attention, even if you look like you are doing something else. This demonstrates that you are taking what they are saying seriously. Many children find it easier if eye contact isn’t demanded of them.
2. Let the child tell you what they want to tell you, or show you, without interruption, what they want to show you, as long as they and others are safe. If the time or place is tricky, you might be able to adjust the environment rather than interrupt or stop them (e.g. move others, reduce sound in the room, and always try and have a pen and notebook nearby).
3. If you aren’t sure what the child said or did, or if you aren’t sure what they meant, offer an open invitation, e.g. reflect back what they have just said, or ‘tell me more about that’ or ‘show me that again’. Avoid leading questions that could impact on further investigations by police.
4. Say things like ‘uhuh’ or ‘mmhmm’ or ‘go on’ to show you are listening. These are safe things to say because they encourage the child to continue, without directing their account in anyway. Saying ‘OK’ or ‘right’ or ‘yes’ is riskier because these can suggest approval of what is being said, and some things that they need to tell are really not OK.
5. Make clear through your behaviour and body language that you are calm, alright and not shocked and that you have time. Give the child as much physical space as they need.
6. Adapt your language and communication style in line with the child’s needs. Be clear about what you need to know. Let the child use his or her own words.
7. Try to get just enough information to work out what action is required. Make a careful record of what they said and did, and any questions you asked as soon as you can.
8. If a child tries to demonstrate violent or sexual acts using your body, say calmly ‘I can’t let you do that’ and if necessary, move away.
9. If appropriate, reflect back using the child’s own words. Say exactly what they said, without expanding or amending or asking questions. If appropriate, comment to show that you have noticed what they are doing (e.g. ‘you’re showing me’).
10. Let the person know what you will do next including who you will have to tell. This can be very simple: ‘I am going to have a think and then I will come back’ then perhaps ‘Someone from the police is going to come. They need your help. I will stay with you when they are here’.

*From:*   
Pointers for Practice: 10 Key Principles for Managing Disclosures of Abuse and Neglect