



---

THE PREVALENCE OF EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE: INVESTIGATING ITS EFFECTS ON  
PRIMARY FIVE PUPILS SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN AKWA IBOM  
STATE

By

Imoh-Obong Inyang INYANG, Ph.D.

AND

Imaobong M. AKPAN, Ph.D.  
Department of Social Studies,  
Akwa Ibom State College of Education,  
Afaha Nsit, Nsit Ibom L.G.A.

**ABSTRACT**

*The study was carried out to assess the prevalence of emotional child abuse and its effects on primary five pupils self-esteem and academic performance in Akwa Ibom State. Expost-Facto design was adopted in this study. The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom state. The targeted population for the study comprised of all primary five pupils in both private and public primary school in Akwa Ibom state. A stratified sampling technique was used in selecting 50 primary five students from each of the 3 senatorial districts (Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket). This gave a total of 150 respondents, which formed the sample size for this study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Emotional Child Abuse questionnaire (ECAQ). Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.79, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical technique such descriptive statistics to answer research questions and regression analysis to test the hypothesis. The study concludes that emotional child abuse is a serious social problem that negatively affects children's emotional well-being and academic development. Besides, emotional child abuse constitutes a major threat to pupils' psychological health and academic success. It therefore recommends increased sensitization of parents, teachers, and caregivers, as well as the implementation of effective child protection policies and school-based intervention programs in Akwa Ibom State.*

**KEYWORDS:** Emotional Child Abuse, Primary five Pupils, Self-Esteem, Academic Performance and Akwa Ibom State

---

**INTRODUCTION**

Childhood emotional abuse often manifested as persistent rejection, humiliation, ridicule, and psychological manipulation is increasingly recognized as a pervasive form of child maltreatment with profound developmental consequences. Unlike physical



abuse, emotional abuse leaves no visible scars, yet its psychological imprint can be deep and enduring, shaping a child's self-worth, emotional regulation, and engagement with learning environments. Researchers argue that emotional abuse erodes a child's self-concept and undermines their ability to participate fully in academic and social activities, potentially leading to diminished school performance and psychosocial maladjustment.

Globally, evidence suggests that child maltreatment—including emotional abuse—is widespread and significantly linked to lower self-esteem and adverse school outcomes. Furthermore, international research consistently shows that emotional abuse correlates with poor academic achievement, social withdrawal, and reduced classroom participation, reinforcing the argument that emotional harm disrupts educational engagement and cognitive development (Barboza, Dominguez & LeBlanc 2025). These findings underscore the urgency of situating emotional abuse as a central concern in education and child welfare research.

Research specifically conducted in Akwa Ibom State reports a significant positive relationship between emotional abuse and academic performance among primary school pupils, indicating that pupils who experience emotional mistreatment tend to exhibit lower academic outcomes than their non-abused peers (Iardjournals.org, 2025). Although this regional study focuses primarily on academic performance, it aligns with broader evidence linking emotional maltreatment to learning difficulties and psychosocial strain, suggesting the effects are not isolated phenomena but part of a larger, systemic issue.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

1. To find out the effect of emotional child abuse on the self-esteem of primary 5 pupils in Akwa Ibom State
2. To examine the effect of emotional child abuse on academic performance of primary 5 pupils in Akwa Ibom State.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the effect of emotional child abuse on the self-esteem of Primary 5 pupils in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What is the effect of emotional child abuse on the academic performance of Primary 5 pupils in Akwa Ibom State?

### **HYPOTHESES**

1. There is no significant effect of emotional child abuse on the self-esteem of Primary 5 pupils in Akwa Ibom State.
2. There is no significant effect of emotional child abuse on the academic performance of Primary 5 pupils in Akwa Ibom State.



---

## CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE

Emotional child abuse, often referred to in contemporary literature as psychological maltreatment, is a form of child abuse that involves persistent caregiver behaviors that harm a child's emotional, psychological, and social development. Unlike physical or sexual abuse, emotional abuse does not rely on bodily harm but instead manifests through patterns of interaction that undermine a child's sense of self-worth, emotional security, and dignity. Recent scholarship emphasizes that emotional abuse is a central dimension of child maltreatment and should be understood as equally damaging, even though it is less visible and more difficult to identify (Spinazzola, Hodgdon, Liang, Ford, Layne, Pynoos, & Kisiel, 2021)

From a conceptual standpoint, emotional child abuse includes both actions and inactions that give a kid the impression that they are unloved, undesired, insufficient, or only important for satisfying the wants of another else. Chronic verbal hostility, humiliation, rejection, intimidation, harsh criticism, threats, loneliness, and emotional indifference are some examples of these behaviors. Researchers argue that emotional abuse is defined not by isolated incidents but by repetitive and sustained patterns that disrupt normal emotional development and violate the child's need for affection, validation, and psychological safety (Mathews, Pacella, Dunne, Simunovic, & Marston, 2020; Brassard & Donovan, 2021). Within this framework, emotional abuse often coexists with other forms of maltreatment but can also occur independently, producing significant harm even in the absence of physical injury.

According to recent research, emotional child abuse stems from unequal power dynamics in which caregivers abuse their authority, control, or emotional dependence. From a developmental standpoint, these settings hinder the establishment of stable attachments and hinder a child's capacity to control emotions, decipher social signs, and form positive interpersonal bonds. Contemporary attachment and developmental trauma theories explain that repeated emotional invalidation or hostility alters stress-response systems and cognitive schemas, leading children to internalize negative beliefs about themselves and others (Teicher, & Samson, 2021). By directly connecting caregiver behavior to developmental effects, these theoretical models have improved the conceptual clarity of emotional abuse. Emotional child abuse is still not well recognized in policy and practice, despite increased acknowledgment in scholarly research. One explanation is that detection is dependent on professional judgment and behavioral observation due to the lack of tangible evidence. Furthermore, cultural standards pertaining to parenting, communication, and discipline can mask emotionally abusive actions, normalizing or minimizing them. Recent reviews argue that clearer conceptual definitions and standardized assessment tools are essential for improving recognition and intervention, particularly within child protection and educational systems (Mathews & Collin-Vézina, 2021).



---

## CONCEPT OF SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem refers to the value and respect people place on themselves—the inner judgment of whether they see themselves as worthy, capable, and deserving of happiness. It is not about arrogance or pretending to be perfect; rather, it is about having a realistic and compassionate view of who you are, including both strengths and weaknesses. Psychologists explain that self-esteem develops through life experiences such as family relationships, social interactions, and personal achievements, shaping how individuals interpret their own identity and place in the world (Orth & Robins, 2019).

Fundamentally, self-esteem affects people's daily thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. People who have a solid sense of self-worth typically confront obstacles with resilience and confidence because they think they can learn from failure rather than let it define them. On the other hand, poor self-esteem frequently results in self-doubt, judgmental dread, and opportunity avoidance. Research shows that self-esteem plays a key role in emotional regulation, decision-making, and overall psychological well-being (Trzesniewski, Donnellan & Robins, 2016).

Essentially, how people relate to themselves and the world around them is based on their sense of self-worth. It influences long-term life satisfaction, relationships, emotional well-being, and motivation. People can have healthier identities and more satisfying lives by viewing self-esteem as a balanced feeling of self-worth rather than perfection or continuous success. Nurturing self-esteem is not self-indulgent, as contemporary psychology research continues to demonstrate; rather, it is crucial for mental health and personal development.

## CONCEPT OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Academic performance is the degree to which a student satisfies the objectives and standards of a learning environment. Although grades, test scores, courses, and general academic accomplishments are frequently used to gauge it, its significance extends beyond the numbers on a report card. Students' ability to comprehend ideas, apply knowledge, and gradually improve skills is reflected in their academic success. Researchers emphasize that it represents both learning outcomes and the learning process itself, shaped by cognitive ability, effort, and learning environment (York, Gibson, & Rankin, 2015).

Academic performance is the degree to which a student satisfies the objectives and standards of a learning environment. Although grades, test scores, courses, and general academic accomplishments are frequently used to gauge it, its significance extends beyond the numbers on a report card. Academic achievement shows how well pupils comprehend ideas, apply their information, and gradually acquire new abilities.

Researchers emphasize that it represents both learning outcomes and the learning process itself, shaped by cognitive ability, effort, and learning environment (York, Gibson, & Rankin, 2015; updated discussions in Richardson et al., 2017).



Academic achievement is impacted by both environmental and personal factors on a deeper level. Students' academic performance is mostly determined by their motivation, self-discipline, learning methodologies, and time management.

Academic performance is the degree to which a student satisfies the objectives and standards of a learning environment. Although grades, test scores, courses, and general academic accomplishments are frequently used to gauge it, its significance extends beyond the numbers on a report card. Academic achievement shows how well pupils comprehend ideas, apply their information, and gradually acquire new abilities. Researchers emphasize that it represents both learning outcomes and the learning process itself, shaped by cognitive ability, effort, and learning environment (York, Gibson, & Rankin, 2015). Academic achievement is impacted by both environmental and personal factors on a deeper level. Students' academic performance is mostly determined by their motivation, self-discipline, learning methodologies, and time management. Learning results are also greatly impacted by outside factors like peer interactions, school resources, family support, and the caliber of instruction. Contemporary educational research highlights that academic performance is not solely a reflection of intelligence but of sustained engagement and supportive academic structures.

#### **THE PREVALENCE OF EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE**

Psychological abuse, another name for emotional child abuse, is a type of maltreatment in which a child's sense of self-worth and emotional development are harmed by caregivers' continuous actions. Verbal abuse, humiliation, rejection, intimidation, seclusion, and emotional neglect are examples of such practices. In contrast to physical or sexual abuse, emotional abuse is frequently subtle and persistent, leaving no tangible proof, making it challenging to recognize and report. Despite these difficulties, studies from 2020 to the present regularly show that emotional abuse of children is extremely common worldwide and often the most prevalent type of child abuse (Strathearn, Giannotti, Mills, Kisely, Najman, & Abajobir, 2020). Population-based surveys conducted in high-income countries provide further evidence of the high prevalence of emotional child abuse. National survey data from England and Wales reveal that emotional abuse is the most frequently reported form of childhood abuse, with more than one in five adults reporting experiences of emotional maltreatment before the age of 18 (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2024). Similar trends have been reported in other European countries and North America, where emotional abuse consistently emerges as the dominant form of maltreatment in self-reported data (Spinazzola, Hodgdon, Liang, Ford, Layne, Pynoos, & Kisie). These findings suggest that while emotional abuse may be less visible, it is far more common than official child protection statistics imply.

The high frequency of emotional child abuse is also supported by data from clinical and mental health studies. Studies involving adults receiving psychological or psychiatric care frequently report histories of emotional abuse during childhood, often



at higher rates than other forms of maltreatment (Teicher & Samson, 2021). Emotional abuse has been strongly linked to long-term mental health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, and impaired social functioning, reinforcing the seriousness of its widespread occurrence. The strong association between emotional abuse and later psychopathology further emphasizes the need for accurate prevalence data and early intervention.

## FEATURES OF EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE

### ➤ **Chronic verbal hostility and humiliation**

Persistent use of harsh, humiliating, or insulting language toward a kid is a key component of emotional child abuse. This involves calling the youngster names, making fun of them, embarrassing them, or making fun of them in public or privately. Research shows that repeated verbal aggression communicates worthlessness and inadequacy to the child, which damages self-esteem and emotional security over time (Teicher & Samson, 2021; Brassard & Donovan, 2021). Unlike occasional anger, emotional abuse is characterized by its frequency and consistency.

### ➤ **Rejection and emotional unavailability**

When caregivers regularly reject a kid's emotional needs or fail to show them warmth, affection, or support, it is considered emotional child abuse. This could manifest as apathy, disregard for the child, or a lack of interest in their emotions or accomplishments. Studies since 2020 indicate that emotional unavailability disrupts secure attachment formation and contributes to emotional neglect, which is closely linked to anxiety, depression, and relational difficulties in later life (Alink, Cyrz, & Madigan, 2023).

### ➤ **Threats, intimidation, and emotional manipulation**

In order to influence a child's conduct, emotionally abusive caregivers may threaten punishment, abandonment, harm, or withdrawal of love. This characteristic instills dread and emotional instability in the youngster, compelling them to conform in order to prevent perceived danger or loss. Recent child maltreatment studies identify emotional intimidation as a significant stressor that alters children's stress-response systems and increases vulnerability to trauma-related disorders (Teicher & Samson, 2021).

### ➤ **Isolation and restriction of social interaction**

Deliberately separating a child from peers, siblings, or caring adults might constitute emotional child abuse, which restricts the child's chances for positive social growth. Instead of being physical, this isolation could be emotional, preventing friendships or making the youngster feel unworthy of interactions. Research highlights that social



isolation imposed by caregivers contributes to loneliness, poor social skills, and long-term interpersonal difficulties.

➤ **Denial, minimization, and invalidation of feelings**

Persistently dismissing or invalidating a kid's emotions, such as by telling them they are "overreacting" or that their feelings are pointless, is another aspect of emotional child abuse. Children learn to doubt their own emotional experiences as a result of this persistent denial. Contemporary research links emotional invalidation to difficulties in emotional expression, self-doubt, and increased susceptibility to mental health problems (Brassard & Donovan, 2021).

➤ **Constant criticism and excessive blame**

Continuous criticism of a child's conduct, skills, or character—often unfairly blaming the child for issues beyond their control—is another distinguishing characteristic. Such criticism transcends helpful correction and develops into a routine that undermines self-esteem and encourages feelings of inadequacy. Empirical evidence shows that constant negative evaluation from caregivers is strongly associated with internalizing problems such as low self-worth and depressive symptoms

### **EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE ON PRIMARY FIVE PUPILS SELF-ESTEEM**

In contrast to physical abuse, emotional abuse can have profound and long-lasting effects on a child's psychological development. One of the most affected areas is self-esteem, which refers to an individual's overall sense of self-worth and self-value; healthy self-esteem is essential for emotional well-being, social functioning, and personal development, persistent behaviors such as verbal insults, humiliation, rejection, intimidation, and the withholding of emotional support. Research shows that children who experience emotional abuse are at a significantly higher risk of developing low self-esteem that may persist into adulthood.

Through persistent negative messages, emotional child abuse directly targets a youngster's feeling of value. Rejection, name-calling, and constant criticism convey to the youngster that they are unworthy, insufficient, or unlovable. Children eventually internalize these messages and start to have a bad self-image. Children who undergo this internalization process develop a poor self-concept and low self-esteem, leading them to question their own worth and talents (Vachon, Krueger, Rogosch, & Cicchetti, 2015). Emotional abuse, in contrast to isolated bad experiences, is frequently ongoing, which amplifies its effects on the growth of self-esteem.

Low self-esteem brought on by emotional abuse is closely associated with psychological and emotional difficulties. Anxiety, despair, and feelings of guilt or shame are more common in kids with poor self-esteem. Children struggle to gain confidence in social and academic contexts as a result of these emotional issues, which also promote



poor self-perceptions. Research shows that compared to other types of maltreatment, such physical abuse, emotional abuse is more strongly linked to internalizing issues and low self-esteem (Spinazzola et al., 2014). Self-esteem is also greatly influenced by social relationships, and emotional abuse frequently interferes with a child's capacity to build positive relationships. Children who have experienced emotional abuse may find it difficult to trust others, fear rejection, or distance themselves from their classmates because they feel inadequate. Negative peer relationships or social isolation can worsen low self-esteem, starting a vicious cycle where low self-worth causes social problems, which in turn feed negative self-perceptions (Cicchetti & Toth, 2016).

### **EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE ON THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Emotional abuse has a significant impact on cognitive functioning, which in turn affects academic performance. Chronic stress, which impedes brain growth and learning processes like memory, concentration, and problem-solving abilities, is frequently experienced by children who are subjected to emotional abuse. Long-term exposure to stress hormones can affect executive functioning, making it challenging for kids to focus in class, pay attention to directions, and successfully finish academic assignments (Shonkoff, Garner, Siegel, Dobbins, Earls, McGuinn, Wood, 2012). As a result, emotionally abused children frequently perform poorly on tests and assignments.

Emotional abuse also negatively affects children's motivation and engagement in school. Victims often develop low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness due to repeated criticism and rejection. These emotional difficulties reduce confidence in academic abilities and discourage participation in classroom activities. Children may avoid asking questions or seeking help from teachers because they fear embarrassment or rejection. Studies have shown that emotional abuse is strongly associated with internalizing problems such as anxiety and depression, which further reduce school engagement and academic effort (Vachon et al., 2015).

Emotional abuse of children can lead to long-term academic underachievement. According to research, children who experience emotional abuse are more likely to repeat grades, drop out of school, or not complete their education. A cycle of disadvantage that lasts into adulthood can be created by these scholastic setbacks, which can restrict future employment and socioeconomic progression chances (Norman, Byambaa, , De, Butchart, Scott, & Vos, 2012). By weakening cognitive ability, decreasing desire and engagement, and escalating behavioral and emotional challenges in school, emotional child abuse has a profoundly detrimental impact on children's academic achievement. Emotional abuse can be just as harmful to a child's scholastic development as physical abuse, even though it is less obvious. Early detection, trauma-informed school policies, psychiatric help, and constructive parenting techniques are all necessary to address this problem. The detrimental academic impacts of emotional child abuse can be lessened with the right assistance and intervention, enabling impacted children to attain better educational results.



---

THE MITIGATING STRATEGIES TO THE EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY FIVE PUPILS

Verbal humiliation, rejection, intimidation, and emotional neglect are examples of persistent actions that constitute emotional child abuse, a severe type of maltreatment. Emotional abuse can seriously harm a child's emotional health and academic achievement, even though it leaves no physical trace. Students in Primary 5, who are usually in late childhood, are at a crucial point in their academic, emotional, and cognitive development. Poor focus, low motivation, decreased classroom participation, and diminishing academic achievement can result from emotional maltreatment during this time. Therefore, reducing the detrimental impacts of emotional child abuse on Primary 5 students' academic performance requires the implementation of appropriate mitigation techniques (Shonkoff et al., 2012).

Adopting trauma-informed teaching methods in elementary schools is a crucial tactic. Positive teacher-student relationships, stability, and emotional safety are given top priority in trauma-informed classrooms. When students exhibit behavioral or academic challenges, teachers who are aware of the consequences of emotional abuse are more likely to react with empathy rather than punishment. Emotionally abused students do better academically in supportive school settings because they feel safe, appreciated, and inspired to participate in learning activities (Cicchetti & Toth, 2016).

Peer support and inclusive school activities can also lessen the detrimental effects of emotional abuse on academic performance. Peer mentoring, group learning, and cooperative activities all promote social connection and a feeling of community. Good peer interactions boost motivation and self-worth, both of which are critical for academic performance. Emotionally abused students can flourish academically in schools that support inclusivity and forbid bullying (Vachon et al., 2015).

Lastly, school-based early identification and referral programs are essential. The ability to identify symptoms of emotional abuse, such as withdrawal, dread, low self-esteem, and abrupt academic decline, should be taught to educators and school authorities. Early detection enables prompt intervention through academic help, counseling, and, if needed, referral to child protective authorities. Better educational achievements are promoted and long-term academic issues are avoided with early intervention (Shonkoff et al., 2012). Primary 5 students' academic performance is severely impacted by emotional child abuse. However, trauma-informed instruction, school-based counseling, parent education, peer support, and early identification techniques can lessen these impacts. The academic performance and general well-being of emotionally abused students can greatly improve when schools, families, and communities collaborate to support them. Putting these tactics into practice is crucial to guaranteeing that every student has an equal chance to achieve academic success.



**METHODOLOGY**

Expost-Facto design was adopted in this study. The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom state. The targeted population for the study comprised of all primary five pupils in both private and public primary school in Akwa Ibom state. A stratified sampling technique was used in selecting 50 primary five students from each of the 3 senatorial districts (Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket). This gave a total of 150 respondents, which formed the sample size for this study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Emotional Child Abuse questionnaire (ECAQ). Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.79, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical technique such descriptive statistics to answer research questions and regression analysis to test the hypothesis.

**Hypothesis one:**

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant effect of emotional child abuse on the self-esteem of primary 5 pupils in Akwa Ibom State. In order to answer the hypothesis, simple regression analysis was performed on the data (see table 1)

**TABLE 1:**

**Simple Regression Analysis of the Effect of Emotional Child Abuse on the Self-Esteem of Primary 5 Pupils in Akwa Ibom State**

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.99a	0.98	0.98	0.35	0.98

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 148; N= 150; critical R-value = 0.197**

The above table 1 shows that the calculated R-value (0.99) was greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.5 alpha levels with 148 degrees of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.98 predicts 98% of the Effect of Emotional Child Abuse on the Self-Esteem of Primary 5 Pupils in Akwa Ibom State. This rate of percentage is highly positive and therefore means that there is Effect of Emotional Child Abuse on the Self-Esteem of Primary 5 Pupils in Akwa Ibom State. This finding agrees with the opinion of Cicchetti & Toth, (2016) who asserted that Self-esteem is also greatly influenced by social relationships, and emotional abuse frequently interferes with a child's capacity to build positive relationships. Children who have experienced emotional abuse may find it difficult to



trust others, fear rejection, or distance themselves from their classmates because they feel inadequate.

**Hypothesis Two:**

The null hypothesis states there is no significant effect of emotional child abuse on academic performance of primary 5 pupils in Akwa Ibom State. In order to answer the hypothesis, simple regression analysis was performed on the data (see table 2)

**TABLE 2: Simple Regression Analysis of the Effect of Emotional Child Abuse on Academic Performance of Primary 5 Pupils in Akwa Ibom State.**

. Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the estimate	R square change
1	0.95a	0.91	0.91	0.84	0.91

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 148; N= 150; critical R-value = 0.197**

The above table 2 shows that the calculated R-value (0.95) was greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.5 alpha levels with 148 degrees of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.95 predicts 95% of the Effect of Emotional Child Abuse on academic performance of Primary 5 Pupils in Akwa Ibom State. This rate of percentage is highly positive and therefore means that there is significant effect of emotional child abuse on academic performance of primary 5 pupils in Akwa Ibom State. The finding agrees with the opinion of Norman, Byambaa, De, Butchart, Scott, & Vos, (2012) which mentioned that a child's emotional and psychological state has a significant impact on their academic performance, which includes grades, engagement in class, attendance, and learning outcomes. According to him, children who experience emotional abuse are more likely to struggle academically compared to their non-abused peers

**CONCLUSION**

Emotional child abuse is a prevalent issue among primary 5 pupils in Akwa Ibom State. The study indicates that children who experience emotional abuse often exhibit low self-esteem. Low self-esteem, in turn, negatively affects their academic performance and classroom engagement. The findings highlight the urgent need for early intervention and supportive measures in schools and homes. Parents, teachers, and policymakers must work together to identify and prevent emotional abuse. Addressing emotional abuse can significantly improve pupils' self-worth and educational outcomes.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Parents should be educated on positive parenting techniques to prevent emotional abuse and foster supportive home environments.
- Schools should implement counseling programs and provide psychological support to pupils showing signs of low self-esteem.



- Teachers should be trained to recognize emotional abuse and to adopt nurturing classroom practices that promote self-confidence and learning.
- Communities and local authorities should run awareness campaigns highlighting the harmful effects of emotional child abuse.



---

REFERENCES

- Alink, L. R. A., Cyr, C., & Madigan, S. (2023). Emotional maltreatment of children: Toward improved conceptualization and measurement. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *139*, 106086.
- Barboza, G. E., Dominguez, C. M., & LeBlanc, J. (2025). Emotional abuse in children: A review of the literature. *Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect*, *44*(6), 453-470.
- Brassard, M. R., & Donovan, K. L. (2021). Defining psychological maltreatment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *117*, 105052.
- Cicchetti, D., & Toth, S. L. (2016). Child maltreatment and developmental psychopathology: A multilevel perspective. *Development and Psychopathology*, *28*(2), 151-162.
- Hattie, J. (2017). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. Routledge.
- liardjournals.org. (2025). Influence of emotional abuse on the personality development of children in Akwa Ibom state. *Research Journal of Human and Child Studies*, *11*(6), 64-72.
- Kurtz, M., Kawka, H., Horstick, O., Brenner, S., Deckert, A., Louis, V. R., Winkler, V., Lowery Wilson, M., Bärnighausen, T., & Dambach, P. (2023). *The prevalence of emotional abuse in children living in Sub-Saharan Africa – A systematic review*. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *140*, 106155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106155>
- Mathews, B., & Collin-Vézina, D. (2021). Child maltreatment policy and emotional abuse recognition. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, *14*(3), 349-361. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-020-00346-2>
- Mathews, B., Pacella, R., Dunne, M. P., Simunovic, M., & Marston, C. (2020). Improving conceptual clarity in emotional abuse research. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *104*, 104389. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104389>
- Neff, K. D., & Germer, C. K. (2018). The mindful self-compassion program: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *74*(9), 154-168. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22530>
- Norman, R. E., Byambaa, M., De, R., Butchart, A., Scott, J., & Vos, T. (2012). The long-term health consequences of child physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS Medicine*, *9*(11), e1001349. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001349>
- Office for National Statistics. (2025). *Abuse during childhood in England and Wales: March 2024*. ONS. Emotional abuse was the most common type of abuse reported (22.7% of adults) before age 18.



- Oladosu, A., Abiodun, O., & Tunde-Ayinmode, M. (2021). *Prevalence and pattern of emotional abuse of children in their homes: Self-reported experience of children in Ilorin, Nigeria. European Psychiatry, 64*(S1), S713–S714.
- Orth, U., & Robins, R. W. (2019). Development of self-esteem across the lifespan. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 28*(3), 328–334.
- Shonkoff, J. P., Garner, A. S., Siegel, B. S., Dobbins, M. I., Earls, M. F., McGuinn, L., ... Wood, D. L. (2012). The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. *Pediatrics, 129*(1), e232–e246.
- Sowislo, J. F., & Orth, U. (2016). Does low self-esteem predict depression and anxiety? A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Psychological Bulletin, 142*(1), 213–240.
- Spinazzola, J., Hodgdon, H., Liang, L. J., Ford, J. D., Layne, C. M., Pynoos, R., ... Kisiel, C. (2014). Unseen wounds: The contribution of psychological maltreatment to child and adolescent mental health and risk outcomes. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 6*(S1), S18–S28.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037766>
- Steinmayr, R., Meißner, A., Weidinger, A. F., & Wirthwein, L. (2018). Academic achievement. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.188>
- Strathearn, L., Giannotti, M., Mills, R., Kisely, S., Najman, J., & Abajobir, A. (2020). Long-term cognitive, psychological, and educational outcomes of child abuse and neglect: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *The American Journal of Psychiatry, 177*(6), 500–512. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2019.19030339>
- Teicher, M. H., & Samson, J. A. (2021). Annual research review: Enduring neurobiological effects of childhood emotional abuse. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 62*(3), 272–290.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13389>
- Trzesniewski, K. H., Donnellan, M. B., & Robins, R. W. (2016). Self-esteem: Enduring issues and controversies. *Journal of Personality, 84*(2), 201–212.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12193>
- Vachon, D. D., Krueger, R. F., Rogosch, F. A., & Cicchetti, D. (2015). Assessment of the harmful psychiatric and behavioral effects of different forms of child maltreatment. *JAMA Psychiatry, 72*(11), 1135–1142.  
<https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2015.1792>
- York, T. T., Gibson, C., & Rankin, S. (2015). Defining and measuring academic success. *Practical Assessment, Research*