



Foundational Understanding of Child Protection

Extract: from "Child Protection and Safe Spaces in Children's Ministry Paul Muoki 2022



'The eye that offends a child plucks itself out in the night'

In this Somali proverb the "eye" metaphorically represents someone who has wronged or harmed a child. The act of "plucking itself out in the night" symbolises the internal guilt, remorse, and eventual self-punishment that the wrongdoer will experience.



Churches serve as places of worship, fellowship, and support for numerous individuals and families. They are places where people seek comfort, guidance and spiritual nourishment. However, it is important to recognise that churches, like any other organisation, must prioritise the safety and well-being of their members, especially the most vulnerable among them - children. Child protection in churches is not only a moral imperative but a practical necessity for all Bible-believing Christians.

Foundational Understanding: Child Protection

1.0. Understanding Child Protection Principles

Definition of Child Protection

Child protection refers to a set of measures and actions designed to ensure children's safety, well-being, and rights. It involves creating an environment that prevents any form of harm, abuse, exploitation, or neglect, and it includes responding effectively to concerns.

Peer on Peer abuse and Child Maltreatment

Distinguishing between peer-on-peer abuse and child maltreatment is important. A clear grasp of the unique characteristics of each type is essential for effective prevention and intervention.

- Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations. ¹ while
- Child maltreatment encompasses all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or negligent treatment that result in actual or potential harm to a child's health, survival, development, or dignity. These actions occur within the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. ²

Principles of Child Protection.

Child protection principles are the basic norms that underpin efforts to protect children. The principles of child protection find their roots in international treaties, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) adopted in 1989 and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) adopted in 1990, which specifically focuses on the rights and welfare of African children. National laws and policies, as well as ongoing research and best practices, further contribute to developing and refining child protection principles.

These principles are:

1. *Principle of Non-Discrimination:* Article 2 of the UNCRC and Article 3 of the ACRWC. This principle emphasises that every child, regardless of their race, gender, religion, or other status, should have equal rights and opportunities. It ensures fairness and equality in all aspects of a child's life.
2. *Principle of the Best Interest of the Child:* Article 3 of the UNCRC and Article 4 of the ACRWC. These principles place the child's well-being, safety, and overall best interests at the forefront of all decisions and actions concerning them. It guides authorities in making choices that prioritise the child's welfare.

¹Firmin 2017

² Child Maltreatment, 2024

3. *Principles of Survival and Development:* Article 6 of the UNCRC and Article 5 of the ACRWC. These principles underline the child's right to life, survival, and optimal development. They encompass access to healthcare, nutrition, education, and other essential resources necessary for a child's growth and well-being.
4. *Principles of Inclusion and Participation:* Article 12 of the UNCRC and Article 7 of the ACRWC. These principles affirm a child's right to express their views freely and participate in matters that affect them. They encourage active involvement, ensuring children have a voice in decisions impacting their lives.

Legal and Policy Frameworks for Child Protection

The following categories classify the instruments that protect children: international conventions, regional conventions, national laws, and local policies. The instruments work together to provide a comprehensive framework for the protection of children's rights at the international, regional, national, and local levels.

(a) Understanding International Conventions

International conventions, also known as treaties or international agreements, are formal and legally binding agreements between two or more sovereign states or international organisations. These agreements are negotiated and ratified by the involved parties to regulate specific matters of international concern, such as trade, human rights, environmental protection, or diplomatic relations.

Key characteristics of international conventions

Once ratified, an international convention becomes a legally binding document for the parties involved. This means that the parties are obligated to comply with the terms and provisions outlined in the convention.

States or international organisations voluntarily enter into these agreements by signing and ratifying the convention. States or international organizations voluntarily enter into these agreements by signing and ratifying the convention based on mutual consent, and no state is compelled to join.

'Responsibility' in the Context of Child Protection

Responsibility, within the context of child protection, underscores the duty of caregivers, parents, and authority figures to ensure the well-being of children. Failure in this responsibility, leading to abuse, is a serious violation that necessitates a robust child protection framework to prevent and address such incidents

1. **Duty of Caregivers and Parents:** Child protection emphasizes the fundamental duty of caregivers and parents to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children. This duty includes ensuring the child's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.
2. **Role of Authority Figures:** Authority figures, such as teachers or community leaders, also bear a responsibility for child protection. Their roles often involve overseeing and safeguarding children in various settings, and their failure to fulfil this responsibility can lead to significant harm.
3. **Ensuring Well-being:** The responsibility mentioned in child protection underscores the commitment to ensuring the overall well-being of the child. This involves not only meeting basic needs such as food, shelter, and medical care but also creating an environment free from abuse, neglect, or any form of harm.

Typically, international conventions focus on specific areas or subjects, which can range from human rights and environmental protection to trade and disarmament.

Conventions often set international standards, rules, and norms to govern the behaviour of the parties regarding the subject in question.: Many international conventions establish mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing compliance with their provisions. This can include dispute resolution processes and international bodies responsible for overseeing implementation.

States or international organisations may sign a convention to indicate their intention to be bound by it. Ratification is the formal process through which a state or organisation fully accepts the convention's terms and becomes a party to it.

Conventions may have provisions for amending their terms and conditions, as well as procedures for withdrawal from the agreement.

International conventions play a crucial role in shaping the conduct of states and international entities on a wide range of global issues and promote cooperation and consistency in addressing common challenges. They are essential tools for international diplomacy and law-making.

(b) Understanding Optional Protocol

Some international conventions have optional protocols. An optional protocol is a supplementary agreement or treaty that is adopted alongside an existing international treaty or convention. It allows states or parties to the original treaty to add specific provisions, procedures, or mechanisms to address issues or concerns related to the main treaty. Optional Protocols are "optional" in the sense that states are not automatically bound by them when they become parties to the primary treaty; they must explicitly choose to become parties to the Optional Protocol.

Key characteristics of optional protocols include:

Optional Protocols enhance the main treaty by addressing specific issues or concerns that may not have been adequately covered in the original treaty.

States that are parties to the main treaty can choose to become parties to the Optional Protocol but are not obligated to do so. Becoming a party to the Optional Protocol is a voluntary decision.

Optional protocols can vary widely in terms of their content and objectives. They can address a broad range of issues, from specific procedures for treaty implementation to additional rights or obligations.

Optional protocols can be used to modify or explain certain provisions of the main treaty without reopening the entire treaty for negotiation.

Perpetrator

- "Perpetrator" refers to an individual who commits a harmful or criminal act, particularly in the context of causing harm to others. In the context of child maltreatment or abuse, a perpetrator is someone who engages in actions that cause harm, neglect, or exploitation to a child. Perpetrators can take various forms, including parents, caregivers, family members, acquaintances, or individuals in positions of authority. Identifying and addressing perpetrators is crucial in efforts to protect and ensure the well-being of children.

Some Optional Protocols may establish mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing specific provisions, similar to the main treaty.

Although the main treaty is closely linked to Optional Protocols, international law treats them as separate legal instruments and distinct agreements.

Optional protocols offer flexibility in international law and diplomacy, allowing states to modify and expand upon existing treaties to address emerging issues or specific concerns. This avoids the need to renegotiate the entire treaty while allowing states to customise their obligations under international law while preserving the core principles and provisions of the original treaty.

(c) Overview of selected international conventions and optional protocols

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child

The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) is a comprehensive treaty that outlines the basic rights of children, including the right to life, health, education, protection from **abuse** and exploitation, and the right to participate in decisions that affect them. CRC is also supported by the following 'Optional Protocol.

- **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict:** This protocol prohibits the use of children under the age of 18 in armed conflict and requires state parties to take measures to prevent the recruitment of children into armed forces.
- **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography:** This protocol aims to prevent and combat the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography.

2. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):

While not specifically focused on children, this treaty recognises the rights of girls and women, who are often the most vulnerable members of society.

3. Declaration of the Rights of the Child:

In 1959, the United Nations General Assembly adopted this declaration, which is considered the first international instrument to recognize the rights of children.

4. International Labour Organisation (ILO)

- **International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 138:** This convention sets a minimum age for employment and prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15 (or 14 in developing countries). It also sets rules for the types of work considered hazardous or harmful to children.
- **ILO Convention No. 182:** This convention prohibits the worst forms of child labour, including forced labour, trafficking, and the use of children in armed conflict. Children in Armed Conflict refers to the exploitation, recruitment, or use of individuals under the age of 18 in situations of armed conflict, including as child soldiers, which is considered a violation of international law and a significant humanitarian concern.

- **ILO Convention No. 155:** This convention focuses on the safety and health of workers, including children, and sets guidelines for preventing accidents and injuries in the workplace.

5. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*

Article 25 of the UDHR recognises the right of every child to the highest attainable standard of health, as well as the right to education.

6. *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*

Article 24 of the ICCPR recognises the right of every child to such measures of protection as are required by their status as a minor, by their family, society, and the state.

7. *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*

Article 10 of the ICESCR recognises the right of every child to protection and assistance, including social insurance.

8. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*

The CEDAW recognises the need to eliminate discrimination against women and girls and ensure their equal rights, including the right to education and protection from all forms of violence.

9. *Convention against Torture and Other Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)*

The CAT recognises the vulnerability of children to torture and other forms of **abuse** and prohibits such treatment.

10. *Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD)*

Article 7 of the CRPD recognises the right of children with disabilities to enjoy a full and decent life, including the right to education and health care.

(d) Overview of selected Regional Conventions

These conventions are limited to specific regions of the world. For example: The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child sets out the rights of children in Africa and the responsibilities of governments and other actors in protecting those rights and The European Convention on Human Rights, which includes provisions on the rights of children and the protection of their best interests,

There are several regional conventions and agreements that protect children's rights in different parts of the world. These regional conventions and agreements complement the international legal framework for the protection of children's rights. Some of the most notable ones are:

1. *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)*



This convention was adopted in 1990 and is the most comprehensive treaty on the rights of children in Africa. It covers a wide range of issues, including child protection, education, health, and participation.

2. Arab Charter on Human Rights:

This is a regional human rights treaty adopted by the Arab League in 2004, which includes provisions for the protection of children's rights in Arab countries.

3. ASEAN Declaration on the Protection of Children in the ASEAN Region

This is a declaration adopted by the Association of Southeast Asia Nations in 2017, which sets out the commitment of member states to protect and promote the rights of children in the region.

4. European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights

This is a convention adopted by the Council of Europe in 1996 that sets out the rights of children in Europe to participate in decisions that affect them.

5. Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED)

The CED recognises the right of every child to know the truth about the circumstances of any disappearance of their parents or legal guardians and to receive protection and assistance as necessary.

6. Inter-American Convention on the Rights of the Child

This is a treaty adopted by the Organisation of American States in 1990 that sets out the rights and protections for children in the Americas.

7. Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

Although not specific to children, this protocol, adopted in 2003, recognises the rights of girls and women in Africa and seeks to address issues such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, and gender-based violence.

8. The Addis Ababa Declaration on the Abolition of Harmful Traditional Practices

This declaration, adopted in 2003, recognises that harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, child marriage, and other harmful practices violate the rights of children and seek to eradicate them.

9. The Kampala Declaration and Agenda for Action on Children in Armed Conflict



"one hand cannot nurse a child"

A Sierra Leonean proverb, underscoring the communal responsibility in raising a child. It emphasizes that the nurturing and upbringing of a child necessitate the collective effort and support of multiple individuals or the community as a whole.

The African Union adopted this in 2011 and seeks to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers in armed conflicts in Africa and to provide support and assistance to children who have been affected by conflict.

10. The Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Accelerating the Reduction of Maternal, Newborn, and Child Mortality in Africa

This declaration was adopted in 2010 and displays a plan to reduce maternal, newborn, and child mortality rates in Africa. It emphasises the importance of access to quality health care, education, and social protection for children and their families.

Child Protection and SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ³are a set of 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to be achieved by 2030. The SDGs aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. One of the key areas of focus of the SDGs is child protection, which is addressed through several of the goals.

- **Goal 1: No Poverty:** Child poverty is a significant issue, and the SDGs aim to eliminate poverty in all its forms. Poverty is a major contributor to child **abuse** and neglect, so addressing poverty is critical to protecting children.
- **Goal 2: Zero Hunger:** Hunger and malnutrition can severely impact children's physical and mental health, leading to developmental delays and other problems. The SDGs aim to eliminate hunger and improve access to nutritious food for all, including children.
- **Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being:** Children's health and well-being are essential for their growth and development. The SDGs aim to ensure that all children have access to quality healthcare and education on healthy living.
- **Goal 4: Quality Education:** Education is critical to children's development and protection. The SDGs aim to provide access to quality education for all children, including those in vulnerable or marginalised communities.
- **Goal 5: Gender Equality:** Girls and boys face different forms of violence, discrimination, and exploitation, and gender inequality is a significant barrier to child protection. The SDGs aim to eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence and promote gender equality.
- **Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth** Poverty and economic instability are major contributors to child **abuse** and neglect. The SDGs aim to promote inclusive economic growth and decent work for all, which can help protect children from **abuse** and exploitation.
- **Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities:** Inequalities in access to resources and opportunities can contribute to child **abuse** and neglect. The SDGs aim to reduce inequalities and promote inclusion, which can help protect children from harm.
- **Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions** Child protection is a fundamental human right, and the SDGs aim to promote peace, justice, and strong institutions that can protect children from violence, abuse, and exploitation. This includes promoting legal frameworks, policies, and practices that promote child protection.

The SDGs and child protection are interconnected, and achieving the SDGs is critical to ensuring the protection and well-being of children.

³United Nations, 2015.

Child Maltreatment/Child abuse and Neglect

As earlier stated, 'Child maltreatment encompasses all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or negligent treatment that result in actual or potential harm to a child's health, survival, development, or dignity. These actions occur within the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. ⁴

Factors That Influence The Impact Of Child Maltreatment/Child Abuse And Neglect On Children

The impact of child maltreatment is a multifaceted and complex issue, influenced by various factors. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems. Here, we elaborate on the key factors that shape the consequences of child maltreatment:

- 1. Frequency and Severity:** The frequency and severity of maltreatment play a pivotal role in determining its impact. Repeated instances or severe forms of abuse can exacerbate the negative consequences, affecting a child's physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Persistent maltreatment over time can lead to cumulative effects, intensifying the overall impact on the child.
- 2. Age of the Child:** The age at which a child experiences maltreatment is a critical factor. Younger children, especially those in the early stages of development, are more vulnerable. During these formative years, children are establishing crucial cognitive structures and emotional attachments. Maltreatment during this period can disrupt healthy development, making early intervention paramount to mitigate potential harm.
- 3. Duration of Maltreatment:** The duration of maltreatment, including the length of time a child is exposed to abusive or neglectful conditions, contributes significantly to its impact. Prolonged exposure can deepen the negative consequences, affecting a child's sense of safety, trust, and overall well-being. Early identification and intervention become essential to halt the continuation of maltreatment.
- 4. Supportive Caregivers:** The presence of supportive caregivers is a crucial protective factor. Whether they are family members, professionals, or community members, caregivers who provide a nurturing and safe environment play a pivotal role in mitigating the negative effects of maltreatment. A stable and supportive caregiving environment contributes positively to a child's recovery and overall development.
- 5. Coping Strategies of the Child:** Children develop coping strategies to navigate the effects of maltreatment. Some children may develop adaptive coping mechanisms that enhance resilience and contribute to positive emotional well-being. On the other hand, others may adopt maladaptive strategies that worsen the impact of trauma. Effective support and intervention are vital in assisting children in cultivating healthier coping mechanisms, promoting emotional well-being, and facilitating recovery.
 - *Adaptive Coping Strategies:* These encompass psychologically and behaviorally constructive responses that individuals use to effectively manage stress, challenges, or traumatic experiences. Considered healthy and constructive, these strategies positively contribute to emotional healing and recovery.
 - *Maladaptive Coping Strategies:* In contrast, maladaptive coping strategies involve unhealthy or counterproductive responses to stress or trauma, hindering

⁴ Child Maltreatment, 2024

emotional healing and potentially leading to additional challenges in various aspects of life.

Understanding and addressing these influencing factors is integral to the design of comprehensive interventions aimed at supporting children affected by maltreatment on their journey towards resilience and recovery. It involves a comprehensive approach that considers the unique circumstances and needs of each child, emphasizing prevention, early intervention, and the creation of supportive environments.

Differentiating Between Indicators and Symptoms of Maltreatment/Abuse

The terms 'Child **maltreatment/abuse** indicators' and the term 'Child maltreatment/abuse symptoms' are often used interchangeably, but there are slight differences in their meanings, as explained below.

- **Indicators:** Indicators refer to signs or behaviours that indicate that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse. These signs may be physical, emotional, behavioural or related to neglect. They are observable signs that raise concern and suspicion about a child's welfare. Indicators are typically used by professionals such as teachers, healthcare providers and social workers to recognise possible cases of child abuse and take appropriate action.
- **Symptoms:** Symptoms refer to the physical, emotional or behavioural signs that a child shows because they have been abused. These symptoms can range from physical injuries to emotional and behavioural problems. It is important to recognise and treat these symptoms immediately to protect the child's welfare.

Understanding the indicators and symptoms of child **abuse** enables professionals, carers, and communities to be proactive in preventing abuse. By being knowledgeable about these signs, individuals can be more vigilant and take preventive measures, such as creating safe environments for children, promoting awareness campaigns, and providing education and training on child protection.

(a) Short-term consequences

1. Physical health problems:

In the short term, child maltreatment often leads to immediate injuries or health problems. These can range from visible signs, such as bruises and cuts, to more serious injuries, including fractures or internal injuries. The severity of physical damage can vary, but it is a clear and immediate result of **abuse** or neglect.

Example: Immediate injuries like bruises, cuts, fractures, or internal injuries resulting from abuse or neglect.

2. Mental health problems:

The short-term effects of child **abuse and neglect** include acute emotional problems and trauma. Children may struggle with intense emotions such as fear, anxiety, deep sadness, confusion and even symptoms that resemble acute stress reactions. These immediate psychological reactions can be violent and distressing.

Example: Acute emotional issues, such as fear, anxiety, deep sadness, confusion, and symptoms resembling acute stress reactions, may stem from child abuse or neglect.

3. Behavioural problems:

Child **abuse** can trigger rapid changes in behaviour and functioning. These immediate changes can be very pronounced and lead to observable changes in the way the child interacts with the environment. This can lead to the child becoming withdrawn, showing increased aggression or engaging in self-destructive behaviours.

Example: Rapid changes in behaviour, leading to observable alterations like withdrawal, increased aggression, or engagement in self-destructive behaviours, triggered by child abuse.

4. Social problems:

In the short term, child maltreatment impairs a child's ability to build trusting relationships and navigate social interactions. This often leads to an increased sense of social isolation as the child has difficulty connecting with peers and adults.

Example: Impaired ability to build trusting relationships and navigate social interactions, resulting in increased social isolation. The child may have difficulty connecting with peers and adults because of the short-term impact of child maltreatment on social skills and interactions.

(b) Long-term consequences

1. Physical health problems:

In the long run, child abuse and neglect can lead to chronic physical health problems. Children who have been abused or neglected are at increased risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and other physical ailments⁵. The stress and trauma associated with abuse can lead to physiological changes that have lasting effects on the body.

Example: An adult survivor of child abuse and neglect may develop heart disease or diabetes because of the long-lasting physiological effects of early trauma. These health problems can last a lifetime and affect their overall well-being.

2. Mental health problems:

Child abuse and maltreatment can have lasting effects on mental health. People who have experienced abuse or neglect may be more vulnerable to conditions such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse⁶. The emotional trauma caused by abuse can have a significant impact on a child's mental wellbeing and these effects can extend into adulthood.

Example: A person who was abused in childhood may struggle with chronic depression. As a coping mechanism, she may turn to substance abuse and self-neglect in adulthood to deal with the long-lasting emotional scars of her early experiences.

3. Behavioural problems:

Over time, children who have been abused or neglected are at higher risk of becoming involved in behavioural problems, including juvenile delinquency and conflict with the law⁷. The negative experiences they have had can contribute to

⁵ Widom et al., 2012

___ Monnat & Chandler, 2015

___ Afifi et al., 2016

⁶ LeTendre & Reed, 2017

___ Choi et al., 2017

⁷ Herrenkohl et al., 2017

difficulties in regulating emotions, impulse control, and decision-making, which can lead to problematic behaviours in adolescence and adulthood.

Example: A person who was abused in childhood may find it difficult to control their emotions.

4. *Social problems:*

Child maltreatment can severely affect a child's ability to form healthy relationships and navigate social interactions. Trust issues, difficulties with emotional attachments and problems forming intimate relationships are common consequences of abuse. These social difficulties can persist into adulthood and affect personal and professional relationships.

Example: An adult survivor of child abuse and neglect may have difficulty trusting others and forming intimate relationships.

5. *Cognitive and educational problems:*

Child abuse can damage a child's cognitive development and academic performance, which can have lasting effects on their future. The stress and trauma experienced by abused children can affect their cognitive abilities, leading to learning difficulties, poor academic performance, and lower educational attainment.

Take, for instance, a person who endured childhood abuse. They may face challenges with learning, ultimately leading to lower levels of educational attainment.

Examining Selected African Sayings through a Child Protection Lenses

African sayings emphasize the importance of community support and collective responsibility in ensuring the well-being and protection of children.

- *"It takes a village to raise a child."* Emphasizes the collective responsibility of the community in ensuring the well-being and protection of children.
- *"A child does not grow up only in a single home."* Stresses the significance of a collective effort beyond the immediate family in raising and protecting a child.
- *"The child of a rat is a rat."*⁹ Suggests that children often inherit traits from their parents, underscoring the influence of family environments on a child's development.
- *"The eye that offends a child gets poked."*¹⁰ Warns against harming or mistreating a child, emphasizing the consequences for those who offend or neglect them.
- *"When the village fails to embrace a child, the child will burn it down to feel its warmth."* Stresses the importance of community support in ensuring a child's well-being, as the absence of support may lead to negative consequences.
- *"A child may play with its mother's breasts, but not with her character."*¹¹ Highlights the importance of respecting fundamental values and character in the parent-child relationship.

8 Akan, Ghana proverb

9 Igbo, Nigeria proverb.

10 Yoruba, Nigeria proverb.

11 Swahili, East Africa proverb.

- *"When you carry the light for your child, you also brighten your path."*¹² Emphasizes the mutual benefits of protecting and nurturing children, as it positively impacts both the child and the caregiver.
- *"A child with a strong foundation can weather the strongest storm."*¹³ Underscores the significance of providing a solid base for a child's development to help them overcome challenges.
- *"A child who listens well grows up well."*¹⁴: Promotes the value of attentiveness and communication in child rearing for positive growth.
- "The strength of the buffalo lies in the unity of the herd."¹⁵ Illustrates the protective power of collective efforts in safeguarding children within the community.
- *"A child's dignity is the crown of the family."*¹⁶ Highlights the importance of upholding a child's dignity within the family structure for their well-being.
- *"A child who asks questions does not lose their way."*¹⁷ Protection: Emphasises the role of curiosity and learning in a child's protection and overall development.
- *"The heart of a child is a treasure; treat it as such."*¹⁸ Urges careful and considerate treatment of a child's emotional well-being, recognising it as a precious treasure.
- *"A child's laughter is the melody of a well-tuned community."*¹⁹ Celebrates the joy and positive impact a child brings to the community, emphasising the collective responsibility for their well-being.
- *"Teach the child the way, and they will find their path in the world."*²⁰ Relevance to Child Protection: Emphasises the guidance and education needed for a child's journey in life, ensuring they navigate the world successfully.



12 Hausa, West Africa proverb.

13 Xhosa, South Africa proverb.

14 Origin: Shona, Zimbabwe proverb.

15 Maasai, Kenya, Tanzania proverb.

16 Yoruba, Nigeria proverb.

17 Igbo, Nigeria proverb.

18 Akan, Ghana proverb.

19 African proverb.

20 Swahili, East Africa proverb.

- *"The wisdom of the elders guides the protection of the young."* Underlines the role of intergenerational knowledge in ensuring the well-being of children, emphasising the importance of learning from elders to protect the younger generation.

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