



PROTECTING CHILD RIGHTS  
IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

# TRAINING NOTES FOR HOTEL RECEPTION PERSONNEL





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## Child-Friendly Tourism

Child-friendly tourism is an approach to tourism that aims at the formation of tourism environments in which children are protected from all forms of violence, where they are healthy and safe and where they can play and learn, in keeping with the aim of maintaining child rights in the tourism sector. In this context tourism businesses should:

- Take measures to ensure the health, hygiene and safety of children on their premises,
- Offer services aimed at promoting the healthy development of children,
- Protect child rights in employment for tourism,
- Protect children from all forms of violence and sexual exploitation in tourism,
- Inform personnel and clients of child-friendly tourism,
- Develop child-focused social and environmental awareness.



*These Training Notes are intended to inform hotel reception personnel about what they should do, should they come across or suspect the sexual abuse or exploitation of children.*

# Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children

One of the greatest risks for child-friendly tourism is the sexual abuse or exploitation of children on premises of accommodation companies. Sexual abuse is defined as any form of sexual activity that takes place between a child and an adult, or two children who are in a relationship of impropportionate responsibility, trust and power due to age or developmental differences. Sexual exploitation is the sexual use of children for any kind of gain including cash, goods, other material or other forms of gain (such as forcing children into prostitution, their use in pornography, sale for sexual purposes).

## Those Carrying Out Abuse/ Exploitation

- They are not only men and may be women. There is no typical age range or marital status for these people.
- They may come from any social, economic or cultural segment of the society.
- While they may not normally be sexually oriented towards children at the travel beginning, they may carry out abuse or exploitation if they find amenable
- Or they may be travelling for purposes of sexual exploitation or abuse.

## Children Under Risk

- Lost or living in the street,
- Has been discriminated against due to race, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability,
- Refugee, alone (unaccompanied) children
- Has faced violence within his/her family or has been neglected by his/ her family,
- Children who live in poverty in tourism regions and who do not have access to education are at greater risk. compared to other children.

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*By Turkish law, the sexual abuse and exploitation of children are crimes. It is a legal responsibility to report to authorities (the police, the gendarmerie, the prosecutor's office) in case of having reasonable suspicion of such crimes or witnessing them. Hotel reception personnel may encounter many situations that rise suspicions of sexual abuse or exploitation while doing their jobs.*

*On the following page, causes for suspicion regarding these crimes and what should be done in this case have been listed. Although some of the causes of suspicion may not amount to much on their own, they should be taken up together with other factors that lead to suspicions, should they come to the attention of staff members.*

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## **Suspicious Circumstances**

## **What Should be Done**

An adult checking into the hotel with a child whom they claim to be a relative, without providing an ID

The child not appearing to be an adult, entry to the hotel late at night or a quiet time, the adult rushing the check-in process, the child dressed or with make-up to make his/her age appear older strengthen suspicions as to abuse or exploitation.

- The child's ID is asked for check-in, politely but firmly.
- It is stated that by law (Law 1174 on the Provision of IDs) everyone, including children need to provide an ID.
- Whether the child has ID or not, if it is obvious that the child is younger than 18 or this is highly possible and if the hair, clothing and make-up of the child indicate that he/she has been forced into prostitution, action should be taken immediately.
  - The adult's ID is taken.
  - On the pretext of a temporary disruption to the check-in system, the receptionist goes to the back office and alerts the manager or the highest authorised member of staff. The manager or the highest authorised member of staff alerts the authorities.<sup>1</sup>
  - The adult and the child are not admitted to a room but are occupied at the lobby and are offered refreshments.

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## **Avoiding providing ID/providing false ID**

The adult avoiding providing his/her own ID, or providing his/her own ID but not that of the child constitutes a suspicious circumstance.

-The child's ID not appearing to be valid/original is grounds for strong suspicion.

It should not be forgotten that the Temporary Protection ID issued for refugee children may be especially open to forgery.

It is clearly stated that if an ID for the child is not provided, check-in cannot go through due to hotel procedures and legal obligations. If the customer demands to have a reservation made for another hotel upon hearing this, this demand is politely refused.

If the child's ID is provided but there are suspicions, the ID is examined carefully and if doubts persist, the situation is noted for alerting the manager or the highest authorised staff member.<sup>2</sup>

For foreign children (other than migrants) a passport must be asked for and no other form of identification should be accepted.

The child not being in possession of their own passport could indicate a victim of human trafficking.

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<sup>1</sup> For information on what needs to be done once the authorities have been alerted, see the section "What should be done in case of witnessing a crime or when immediate intervention is necessary" below.

<sup>2</sup> IDs issued to foreigners may be checked through the link .

## **Suspicious Circumstances**

## **What Should be Done**

The behaviour of the child is observed

A child coming into the hotel with an adult that does not appear to be related acts timidly/is scared, avoids eye contact with hotel personnel and third parties, avoids talking, stays behind or at a distance while the check-in is carried out.

Children forced into prostitution could sometimes approach hotel staff flirtatiously under such circumstances. It should not be forgotten that this does not legitimise the use of the child in prostitution, that it does not indicate consent of the child and that the child is a victim nonetheless.

If the child is afraid/anxious/timid, in order to better observe his/her behaviour, the check-in procedure is slowed down as much as possible, refreshments are offered and the child is politely asked whether he/she is feeling well and which grade he/she attends (to learn about his/her age). The child is told that he/she can phone reception anytime if he/she needs anything.

Whatever their preference, the adult and the child are given one of the most easily observed rooms.

Adult without luggage or who resides in the same city

Customers without luggage are politely asked whether their luggage will be arriving afterwards and their reactions are observed.

Not having luggage or residing in the same city as the hotel are not in themselves causes for suspicion but may lead to increased suspicion in the presence of other suspicious circumstances.

Children waiting or aimlessly spending time in the lobby, without registration at the hotel

The child is observed for a while. If he/she continues to wait alone he/she is approached politely and asked whether he/she is a customer of the hotel. The child is told that they can contact anyone they want at reception if they need help.

Arrival of adult guests to a room at unusual hours, only to depart soon afterwards.

An ID is required for every guest.

If there is a child present in the room to which guests are accepted and if other signs of sexual abuse/exploitation are present, action should be taken immediately and the manager or the highest authorised member of staff should be notified.

Except for situations outlined above which require an immediate intervention, the check-in of the adult and child is carried out according to procedures, however, receptionists must still take notes on the suspicious situation to pass it on to management. The notes should contain the information below:

- ID information for the adult and the child,
- The numberplate of the vehicle used to travel to the hotel, if any,
- Date and hour of check-in, room number
- Situation leading to doubt, where and when (date, hour) it took place,
- Name of the personnel who encountered the suspicious situation





## What should be done in case of witnessing a crime or when immediate intervention is necessary

From the moment when sexual abuse/exploitation is confirmed or there is strong evidence that it will take place barring an intervention:

**1- The child and the abuser should not be left alone under any circumstances and the child should be taken to a secure location.**

- If sexual contact has taken place, the child should not change or wash until the police arrive.
- The child should be approached tenderly and his/her immediate needs (food, toilet) should be met.
- Physical contact of any kind with the child, such as hugging, kissing, taking by the arm, even if for purposes of expressing tenderness and support or calming the child down, should be avoided under such circumstances.

**2- The manager or the highest authorised member of staff should call the police as soon as possible<sup>3</sup>, especially noting that the victim is a child and having the police speak to the child over the phone if possible and information should be sought on what is to be done until the officers arrive.**

**3- Until the police arrive, private security personnel, or a few members of hotel staff could take measures to prevent the alleged abuser from running away.**

- Article 90 of the Penal Procedure Law gives everyone the power of "temporary arrest" should they witness a crime and the alleged perpetrator may run away or it may be impossible to identify him/her later on.
- Both the victim and the alleged abuser should be kept away from other hotel customers to the extent possible.

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<sup>3</sup> If the area is under the jurisdiction of the gendarmerie, call 157 for the gendarmerie.

4- To prevent evidence from being lost or destroyed, the location of the incident should be kept as is until the police arrive. If the incident took place in a room, the room should not be cleaned and equipment in the room, such as telephones, should not be used.

5- A record of events should be prepared to be handed over to the police and the record should include:

- ID or passport information of the alleged abuser,
- Information about the victim,
- Where and when (date, time) the incident took place,
- The way in which the incident took place,
- Detailed information on the grounds for suspicion if a report has been filed on reasonable suspicion,
- Which decisions the hotel took and how before intervening in the incident and information about the manager responsible,
- Information regarding the hotel personnel who intervened in the incident.

6- Once the police arrive at the scene of the incident: The records kept should be handed over and full cooperation with the police should be maintained.



*The aim of any intervention by the hotel is to ensure the protection of children in emergency situations and to prevent evidence from being destroyed to the extent possible. Hotel personnel should not try to gather evidence or punish the alleged abuser by themselves, however vicious the crime may be, and should avoid inappropriate interventions. Such behaviour could not only endanger their own security, but also violates the presumption of innocence.*

## Communicating with Children in Cases of Abuse/Exploitation

- In cases involving children being subjected to violence or those that may require an emergency intervention, the staff member communicating directly with the child should introduce himself/herself and explain how they may help the child to instil trust. At this point, other personnel who may have heard about the incident should not come into contact with the child, whether they act out of good will or curiosity. The staff member communicating with the child should take care not to give too much information about himself/herself and try to focus on the immediate needs of the child.
- Children who have been subjected to sexual exploitation (forced into prostitution, sold for sexual purposes) may not be comfortable around security forces. Nevertheless, promises that cannot be kept (such as "We will never allow something like this to happen again", "Your family will not know", "We will not call the police", "We will not tell of what happened) should not be made.
- Given the trauma the child has been through, he/she should not be made to recount the incident and not many questions should be asked about the incident. The testimony of the child will be received by the authorities.
- During the entire process, clear language that is appropriate to the age of the child and that he/she will understand should be used.
- During and after such incidents, children may experience mental confusion, intense anxiety, anger and surprise. These emotional states may cause children to react in a variety of ways (such as providing false information, an exaggerated account of what happened, avoiding communicating, acting aggressively etc.). It should not be forgotten that such reactions by the child are normal under the circumstances and the child should by no means be approached by dismissing what he/she has to say, judgementally, accusatorily or angrily.



*For more information on subjects covered by these Training Notes, please visit the website [www.cocukdostuturizm.org](http://www.cocukdostuturizm.org)*









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