

## Exercise

Discuss the ways in which children, who are receiving appropriate care might 'signal' their needs when:

- **newborn;**
- **a toddler;**
- **a child of school age; or**
- **a teenager.**

Then discuss the ways that neglect of basic needs may be signalled by children at different ages, either overtly or more subtly. For example, a neglected teenager may become involved in anti-social behaviour; a neglected young child may be very quick to seek affection from strangers; a hungry child may steal food from other children at school and so on.

Explore some of the ways in which concerns may be overlooked or minimised and consider some of the phrases we may use to justify not 'seeing' signals, for example, phrases such as 'this child is dirty but happy'; 'people who misuse substances can be perfectly good parents'; 'I am imposing middle class values on this family'; 'most of the children round here are like this'; 'this child is messing about in class because they are naughty'; 'this child is naturally very friendly.'

Distill key points to feedback about how recognition of signals can be supported and facilitated.