

A child is anyone under 18.

For the purposes of this guidance, a separated child is any child who has lost their usual caregivers – e.g. their parents or whoever used to care for them. This includes children who are presumed to be orphans.

If you see or hear of a separated child:

Step one: Determine the location of the child

Step two: Go to the identified location as soon as possible to see the child (if you can, take a government official or UNICEF staff member with you). If you have access to a registration form or tracing list take this with you otherwise take a blank piece of paper.

Step three: clarify whether the child is actually separated or whether they know where their parents or usual care-givers are.

Step four: Take down the following information if you can get it: name, age, sex and location of the child now and place of origin when they were separated, add the identified caregiver (see step 5), and identify any priority/emergency need. If possible it is recommended to take a photograph of the child. In case of very young children/infant take a photograph of items (clothes, jewellery etc.) found with the child. In case of very young children or children with disabilities you can also ask the people who found the child as they may have key information.

Step five: (for children who do not have anyone currently looking after them) Identify an adult preferably in the community who can supervise the child until the case is followed up. This person should ideally be female, have children of their own, speak the same language, and take on the responsibility willingly. Take this person's contact details. Place siblings together and never separate them.

Step six: Tell the adult not to move the child or relocate unless absolutely necessary. And if so to alert the identified focal point (Community leader, DSWD, Barangay officials, UNICEF, NGOs, RedCross volunteer, else...)

Step seven: Report the case to the Barangay officials, the local Women and Child Protection Desk Officer (WCPD), DSWF or UNICEF Child Protection staff as soon as possible.

If a child is reported missing

Step One: Clarify whether the child actually is missing or whether his or her absence is known about and temporary.

Step Two: Listen to the explanation of how the child became missing, and show kindness and concern (this in itself is a support to distraught parents).

Step Three: Advise the person to report all the details of the case to Barangay officials, the local Women and Child Protection Desk Officer (WCPD), DSWD, or UNICEF Child Protection staff. If this is not possible for any reason, advise the person to write down the details of the case now, including the physical description of the children and the clothes they were wearing and find a photo if possible, so that they can report in full when they are able to.