



Neglect & Deprivation & Young Children

Child Abuse in today's society is a very complicated issue. For those people working with children (parents, Early Childhood Educators, babysitters, etc...), recognition of possible abuse is a necessary skill.

It is not the role of the person suspecting abuse to prove (or disprove) that abuse has occurred. That responsibility belongs to the workers of a Child Protection Agency and the police. Any professional who fails to report a suspected case of abuse may face criminal charges for not reporting their suspicion.

Definition of neglect or deprivation of young Children...

Neglect and/or deprivation occurs when the child's parents consistently provide a level of care that is below community expectations.

An adequate level of care includes the provision of adequate shelter, clothing, food, supervision, safety, and sufficient social, health/physical, and emotional care to allow the child to achieve his or her potential in growth and development.

Characteristics of Neglect:

There may be factors working against an entire family that make it difficult for parents to provide adequate and consistent care for their children.

These factors include:

- ☞ physical or mental disability in parents
- ☞ ethnic minority
- ☞ low income
- ☞ limited education
- ☞ recent immigration
- ☞ single parent

Behavioral Indicators in a Neglected Child...

Neglect occurs when a parent does not have the knowledge, ability, or desire to provide for a child's needs. Indicators are often noted by relatives or people outside the family.

Here are behavioral characteristics that may be observed in a neglected child:

- apathy
- attention seeking
- delay in social development (delayed speech)
- stealing food
- fatigue
- sadness and/or depression
- school absence
- assumes adult responsibilities
- poor relationships with adults and peers

oppositional behavior
(defiance, making demands)

delinquency

alcohol and drug abuse

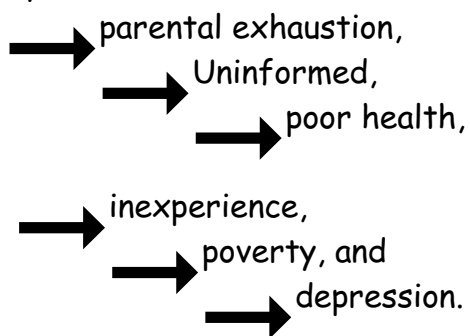
Physical Indicators of Neglected Children:

Here are physical characteristics that may be observed in a neglected child:

- abandonment
- poor physical growth
- poor hygiene
- inappropriate clothing
- lack of supervision
- persistent hunger
- repeated injuries
- poisonings
- unattended medical needs.

Indicators of Neglectful Parents...

Parents who neglect their children share many of the same features as those who emotionally abuse their children. The abuse is commonly caused by:



Many of the behavioral indicators above can be found in any situation that produces severe stress in the child, not just neglected or deprived children.

If problems are observed, a careful assessment of the family and other sources of stress must be considered by appropriate, skilled professionals.

It is the caregiver's responsibility to report, not investigate, any suspicions of neglect and/or deprivation. The investigation will be done by the child protection agency.

What to do if Neglect is Suspected...

The suspicion of neglect and/or deprivation may arise from observing behavioral indicators in the child or parent.

If there is any unwillingness on the part of the parents to provide the child with the necessities of life, including essential treatment, caregivers should seek directions from their supervisor.

Each center should have a written protocol and on site training for dealing with suspected child abuse at their center.

Together with the director you can decide the best procedure for dealing with the situation and for contacting your local child protection agency.

The diagnosis of neglect is based on carefully documented information

that has been gathered from all agencies and professionals involved with the family.

To make the diagnosis, the child protection worker will obtain information from...

The physician,

The public health nurse,

Caregivers,

Neighbors, and

Any social agencies involved with the family.

A consultation with a psychiatrist or psychologist may be warranted to establish the diagnosis.

Child Care Action Page:

"<http://www.freenet.hamilton.on.ca/~>.

This page has been adapted from the above web page created and maintained by Neil Fowler, E.C.E.

For more information contact:



The Center for Parent Involvement (FCPI) was funded by the U.S. Department of Education; Goals 2000, Educate America Act from 1994-1999. Guided by an advisory board of parents and professionals, the FCPI's goal was to tap the power of parents.

The FCPI gathered information on parent needs, coordinated the information, and created a series of resources organized by theme, including fact sheets for parents and professionals, "Beyond the Basics" resources, and resource identification lists. Many of the resources have been translated into Spanish language versions, and every effort has been made to preserve the meaning and flavor of the original English documents. This series of materials provides a wealth of current information for both parents and providers; the complete set of resources can be obtained in PDF format on the Department of Child and Family Studies Website at www.fmhi.usf.edu/cfs/dares/fcpi. The staff of the FCPI are hopeful that their work will continue to help children get ready to learn for many years to come.

The series' themes include:

- Family Empowerment
- Parent Involvement
- Parenting Support
- School Readiness
- Violence in the Lives of Children
- Transition to Kindergarten

The Center was one component of a project led by Hillsborough County Center of Excellence in collaboration with the Department of Child & Family Studies at USF's de la Parte Institute and the Florida Children's Forum. Other project partners include HIPPIY (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters), Hillsborough County Head Start and Hillsborough County Even Start. For more information about these projects, call 813.974.4612.

Violence & Young Children, Beyond The Basics: Neglect & Deprivation & Young Children

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