

Child Maltreatment and Neglect

Neglect: Neglect happens when the child's basic needs do not get met and it causes them harm. It is the most common form of child maltreatment. It is often chronic, but it can be acute. Societal factors contribute to neglect and preventing neglect is a societal problem. However, when adults decide they are concerned about neglect, it is because the child's needs aren't getting met and they are suffering. Types of neglect include:

- **Physical Neglect:** The child's physical needs are not met, or the environmental conditions are dangerous. Examples include inadequate nutrition, abandonment, inadequate hygiene or clothing, and exposure to hazards or other environmental dangers (weather).
- **Emotional Neglect:** Not providing for the child's mental and behavioral needs. Inadequate affection or nurturance, delay or refusal of recommended psychological or psychiatric care, permitted maladaptive behavior (head banging, cutting, alcohol/drug use).
- **Medical Neglect:** Not providing adequate medical care. This can be chronic or acute (heart condition, fracture/burn treatment). Medical providers usually report a concern of neglect when there is a pattern of not providing adequately care or not following medical recommendations and the child's health is suffering or in danger. When we see medical neglect, it is usually in the form of delaying or denying treatment after physical abuse, denying treatment for religious reasons, and severe physical neglect can lead to medical neglect.
- **Educational Neglect:** The child's education needs are not met. This can include permitted or chronic truancy, failure to enroll in school, and inattention to special education needs.

Physical Abuse: Any assault of a child and any physical injury to a child that has been caused by other than accidental means.

- **Karly's Law:** Oregon law that says, authorities need to consult with a medical specialist in child abuse if they see "suspicious" injuries. **Authorities look for:** Type and extent of injury, Location, does the explanation make sense? How severe? Multiple injuries. The specialist needs to see the child within 48 hours of the report to authorities. The specialist needs to provide their opinion within 72 hours of the report to authorities.

Emotional Abuse: Intentional behaviors (by an adult, usually a caregiver) that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. The adult behaviors convey a sense that the child is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or valued only for meeting another's needs. The behaviors can be chronic (name-calling, blaming, belittling, degrading, intimidating, isolating, spurning, confining), or acute (threatening and terrorizing).

Sexual Abuse: Anyone under 18 is engaged in sexual activities they cannot comprehend, they are not developmentally prepared for, cannot give consent, and violates the law, or social taboo. The activity is for the stimulation of the person engaging the youth, or for an observer.

- Contact: All forms of genital contact by the adult's hand, mouth, or genitals.
- Non-Contact forms of Child Sexual Abuse (Child Sexual Exploitation): Taking explicit sexual images or videos of anyone under 18. Viewing, sharing, or producing child pornography. Directing youth to be sexual with each for the offender's stimulation.

Exposure to Domestic Violence: Youth witnessing (or hearing) adults in the home severe verbal fighting or physical fighting. Stalking is also included.

“Threat of Harm/High-Risk Environment”: CARES Northwest assess youth who are living in a high-risk environment such as such as living with a convicted sex offender, living with a person who has a “founded” DHS referral for child sex abuse, drug manufacturing in the home, and living with a caretaker who previously seriously hurt or killed a child. DHS uses the term “Threat of Harm” to mean the youth is in danger of harm from any of the other forms of child maltreatment and neglect.