

Successful Intervention in Cases of Neglect

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1. What is the legal definition of neglect?

2. Is on-going neglect as damaging as on-going physical, emotional or sexual abuse?

3. Does our professional response to neglect differ to that of our response to physical, sexual or emotional abuse?



NEGLECT

“Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)

Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger

Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)

Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs” .

(Working Together to Safeguard Children).



- Neglect is the most prevalent form of child maltreatment in the UK
- Neglect has short and long-term medical, mental health and social consequences
- Neglect is on the increase
- We would not leave young child in a home where there was evidence of persistent physical or sexual abuse
- Consider the significance of the cumulative effect of each incident of neglect
- The overwhelming effect of poverty is strongly associated with neglect, as is the corrosive power of an accumulation of adverse factors
- Neglect affects children's development to an extent that signs should be apparent to professionals
- 80% of the brain develops before a child is three.

JENNY'S STORY

**NEGLECT IS THE
HARDEST
CATEGORY TO
EVIDENCE IN THE
COURT**

APPEARING IN COURT

- Be prepared
- Look the part
- Remember YOU are the expert



COMMON ERRORS

“They are all late walkers in that family”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JmA2CIUvUY

Parental capacity to change

Lack of evidence presented

Language

EVIDENCE FOR THE COURT

Persistent neglect is very often evidenced through health issues including:-

- Non-adherence to treatment
- Delay or failure in obtaining health care - medical, mental, developmental or dental
- Non-organic failure to thrive or non-medical obesity
- Recurring injuries or ingestions suggesting inadequate supervision
- Poor hygiene or sanitation



EVIDENCE FOR THE COURT

You will need to include:-

1. A detailed multi-agency chronology, with a particular emphasis on health
2. The historical context - the parents / carers detailed history, including any history of abuse / neglect, including being subject to or witnessing domestic abuse. Previous agency involvement
3. Use of relevant research (Minnesota Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children. Bruce Perry, Child Trauma Academy)



SEVEN ELEMENTS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Health
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Emotional and behavioural development
- ▶ Identity
- ▶ Family and social relationships
- ▶ Social presentation
- ▶ Self-care skills

(Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families)



AND FINALLY.....

Jenny's video

