

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

CHILD ABUSE: A child or youth who: has physical injuries inflicted upon them other than by accident, or; injuries at variance with the history provided, or; in a condition due to maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, deprivation of needs, sexual molestation or exploitation, emotional maltreatment, or cruel punishment.

CHILD NEGLECT: A child or youth who: has been abandoned or; being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally or; being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances, or associations injurious to their well-being.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POVERTY AND NEGLECT?

Poverty is a risk factor for child neglect, but *poverty does not equal neglect*. Poverty can make it more difficult for parents to meet their child's needs; however, poverty alone does not mean a child is unsafe, unloved, or that a parent lacks the capacity to care for their child. *It may simply indicate; a parent needs access to additional resources.*

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAFETY AND RISK?

SAFETY refers to an imminent threat of harm, maltreatment, or danger to which immediate action is needed to protect the child(ren); whereas **RISK** refers to the likelihood of harm, maltreatment, or danger occurring in the future based on historic/current factors.

RACIAL JUSTICE

The Department is committed to becoming an *anti-racist* agency. Disparate outcomes result from overt and unconscious decisions. In child protection cases, people of color are over-represented relative to the general population. These disparities and inequities by race and culture are seen at every decision point within the child welfare system.

WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. *Individuals are the most susceptible to implicit bias during:*

- High pressure situations.
Certain emotional states.
- Ambiguity in judgment.
- Low-effort cognitive processing.
- Lack of opportunities for feedback.

The first decision making point comes from assessing reasonable suspicion.

Simply ask yourself:

“Is my suspicion (or lack of) based on the family's race?”

QUESTIONS FOR ASSESSING

REASONABLE SUSPICION:

PHYSICAL NEGLECT:

- Can the family afford to provide basic needs, such as housing, food, and clothing?
- Is transportation or neighborhood violence a barrier to accessing basic needs?

MEDICAL NEGLECT:

- Can the family afford medical insurance or is there a free or low-cost clinic nearby?
- Are unpaid medical bills limiting care?
- Is transportation a barrier to timely care?
- Does the caregiver earn paid time off for medical appointments?

SUPERVISORY NEGLECT:

- Is quality safe and affordable childcare available in the family's community?

EMOTIONAL NEGLECT:

- Are the demands and stressors of living in poverty and/or distressed communities depleting the caregiver's ability to offer affection and emotional support they would otherwise provide?

EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT:

- Does caregivers' employment prevent them from monitoring school attendance?
- Are older children staying home to care for younger siblings due to lack of affordable childcare options?

CHILD SAFETY PRACTICE MODEL

The ABCD Paradigm creates framework to help assess child safety and unites DCF's work internally, across specializations, and systems when working with children, parents, families, and community providers.

Adult Protective Capacities: Ability to understand their protective role and take action ensuring safety.

- Attachment, attunement, and expectations.
- Network of family and social supports.
- Self-regulation and problem-solving.

Behaviors of Concern: Harmful behaviors impacting child safety and well-being.

- Extent to which parent's acknowledge the problem, engage in interventions, and demonstrate progress.

Child Vulnerability: Ability to recognize and understand to take protective action.

- The chronological/developmental age.
- Visibility in the community.
- Level of supervision or care required.
- Parental discipline techniques.
- History of trauma or adversity.

Dangerous Conditions: Environmental conditions which present immediate harm.

- Is the home child-proofed/free of hazards.
- Weapons, medications, or substances.
- Exposure to dangerous people/situations.

**STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?
WE CHALLENGE YOU
TO LEARN MORE!**

ENGAGING FATHER'S IN THE LIVES OF THEIR CHILDREN

The Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative (CFI) is a broad-based, statewide collaborative effort led by the Department of Social Services, focused on changing the systems that can improve fathers' ability to be fully and positively involved in the lives of their children.

DID YOU KNOW?!

You can register for **FREE** in-person and/or virtual trainings via the **Academy for Community Partners!** Topics include but are not limited to: **Advancing Anti Racism; Implicit Bias; Poverty Is Not Neglect; ABCD Child Safety Practice Model;** and more *offerings update seasonally.*

WEBLINKS TO TRAINING CATALOG & RESOURCES:

<https://portal.ct.gov/dcf/for-providers/home>

<https://portal.ct.gov/dcf/mandated-reporter-training/home>

<https://portal.ct.gov/dcf/1-dcf/child-abuse-and-neglect-definitions>

<https://connectingtocarect.org>

<https://portal.ct.gov/fatherhood>

EMPOWERING MANDATED REPORTERS

**THANK YOU FOR
CONTRIBUTING TO CHILD
PROTECTION BY HELPING TO
BUILD A STRONGER SAFETY NET
FOR CHILDREN ACROSS
CONNECTICUT COMMUNITIES**



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