



The four main types of harm – neglect

Everyone who works with babies and young children should be able to recognise the signs that something may be wrong.

What is neglect?

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs. This is the most common form of child abuse and can have serious, long-lasting impacts on a child's life

Types of neglect

Neglect can be a lot of different things, which can make it hard to spot. But broadly speaking, there are 4 types of neglect.

Physical neglect - A child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe.

Emotional neglect - A child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.

Educational neglect - A parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education.

Medical neglect - A child isn't given proper health care. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

Signs of neglect

Neglect can be really difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected, but if you notice multiple signs that for a while, they might show there is a serious problem.

Children who are neglected might have poor appearance and hygiene:

- having unwashed clothes
- having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter
- having frequent and untreated nappy rash

Children who are neglected might have health and development problems:

- medical or dental issues that aren't treated
- missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations
- skin issues, such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies, or ringworm

Children who are neglected might have housing and family issues:

- living in an unsuitable home environment, such as no heating
- being left alone

Children who are neglected might have a change in behaviour:

- becoming clingy
- becoming aggressive
- missing nursery