

Serious Physical Neglect or General Neglect

- Children who are **abandoned** by their parents. This includes children who have been left by their parents with relatives for extended periods of time without parental contact or support.
- Children who are **malnourished and dehydrated**. Such children are either not fed or are fed improperly. In infants, severe malnutrition results in failure to thrive. In older children, the symptoms may not be as pronounced, but the effects of long-term malnutrition can be as serious. These children are recognizable by their poor weight gain for height and age, thin extremities, a shallow or pale, pasty appearance, and, in young children, protruding abdomen. The failure to provide adequate nutrition puts children at risk of brain damage and death.
- Children who **are ill and injured, and who do not receive medical care**. The failure to provide medical care can result in chronic illness and disabling conditions. In addition, the failure to provide medical care exacerbates the process of normal diseases. For example, untreated colds and flu can result in pneumonia, which can be fatal.
- Children who live in a **dangerous physical environment**. While a "dirty house" by itself does not create risk for children, when the living environment is unsanitary or dangerous, children can be seriously harmed. Excessive filth, including exposed garbage, rotting food, animal and human excrement, and other unsanitary conditions can expose a child to disease and illness. Dangerous conditions in the home and immediate environment, including broken glass, sharp exposed edges, exposed electrical wires, flaking lead-based paint, the presence of rats or other vermin in the living environment, and unprotected areas from which children could fall, create risk of serious injury.
- Children who are left **unsupervised**. Children who are not old enough to care for themselves and are left unattended or supervised by caretakers who are not competent to meet their needs, are at risk of injury and death. Many children have died in fires they have started by playing with matches while unattended.
- Children who lack basic **physical care and hygiene**. Again, a dirty child is not necessarily a child at risk. However, the chronic lack of physical care can create risk of disease or illness. Examples are ulcerative diaper rash from unchanged diapers, and localized or systemic bacterial infections from skin abrasions or other injuries.
- Children who are **inadequately clothed**. The child who is not provided proper clothing for the weather is at risk of illness from exposure.
- Failure to send the child to school and to assure that the child acquires a **basic education** is considered neglect.
- **Emotional neglect** includes chronic emotional deprivation in which the child is denied attention and affection, is ignored, made to feel unwanted and unloved, is isolated and denied interactions with other people, or is exposed to the conflict, and discord.