

Neglect

Wood End Park Academy

Definition

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 care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The Numbers

Children 'in need' 389,260

The most common reasons for being a child in need were: abuse and neglect (55.9%), family dysfunction (14.1%), child's disability/illness (8.2%) and family in acute stress (8.4%)

Child Protection Plans

- Neglect 48%
- Emotional Abuse 35.7%
- Physical 7.4%
- Sexual 3.8%
- Dual category 2.6%

Source: Statistical First Release, November 2020

What is Neglect?

- May be physical and/or psychological
- Usually chronic, not acute
- Often no 'precipitating incident'
- Children are very unlikely to be 'dirty, smelly but happy'
- Under 3's are very vulnerable to under stimulation
- Most common reason for Child Protection Plans in UK

We should think about:

- Financial vs. emotional poverty
- Check out information with other sources

Dimensions of Neglect

- Educational
- Emotional
- Medical
- Nutritional
- Physical
- Supervisory

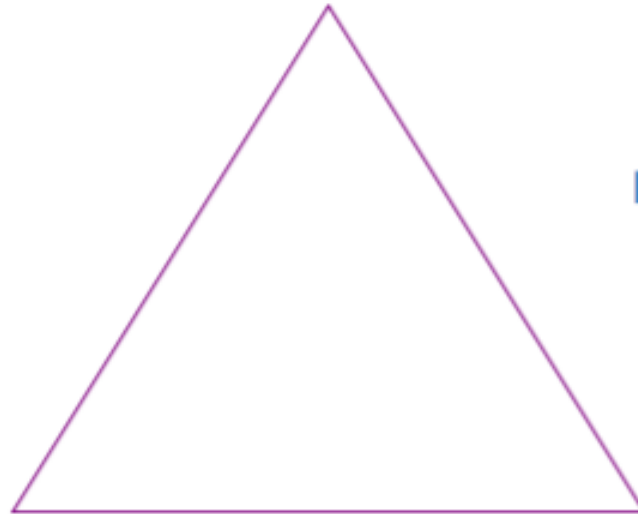
Identifying Neglect

‘The distinction must be made between neglect caused by financial poverty, which can be alleviated by financial help, and that caused by emotional poverty. These may co-exist, but the relief of the former condition does not relieve the latter’

Causes of Neglect

Individual / parental factors

Young parenthood – especially under 19
Large N of children
Lack of knowledge of children's needs
Mental ill health
Substance misuse
Learning disability



Inter personal / familial factors

Isolated or unsupported in parenting role
Domestic abuse
Multiple sequential partners
Parental history of ACEs
History of (violent) crime

Social / economic factors

Poverty
Inappropriate housing
Transient lifestyle
Social isolation
Impoverished networks
Cumulative effect of stressors

How might we recognise Neglect?

Throughout Infancy and early years:



Attachment to caregivers



Gross and fine motor skills



Communication and early language



Increasingly complex expressions of emotion



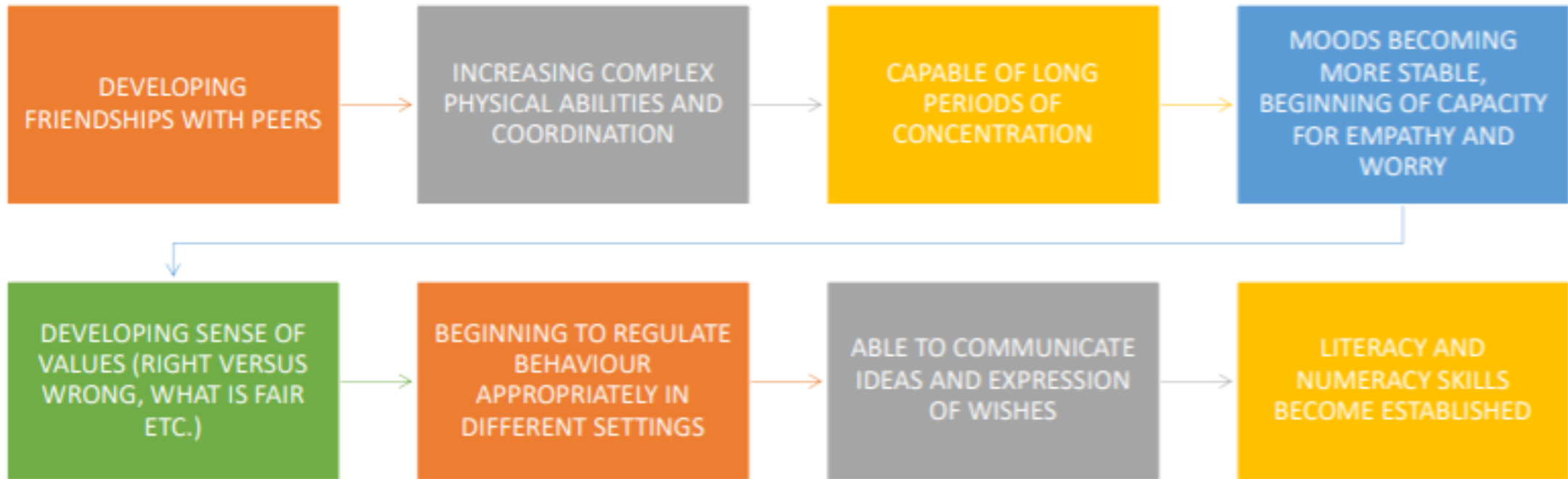
Differentiation of self from others



Self control and compliance

How might we recognise Neglect?

During primary ages:



How might we recognise Neglect?

Adolescence (10-25):

Forming a cohesive sense of self-identity – ‘inventing themselves’

Increasing ability to reason about hypothetical events

Forming close friendships within and across gender

Academic achievement (learning skills required for further education and work)

Frequently questioning the belief system within which brought up

Period of examination

Some key questions to ask yourself

Be clear in your mind about:

What, precisely, is missing in the care of the children?

What is the current / predicted impact of this missing element?

How likely is sufficient chance, and can this happen soon enough?

Disguised compliance - Signs

We are very lucky to have Sue who supports our vulnerable families well and you may know children are on this monitoring list and feel this is enough. However, do watch out for some signs where parents are seeming to be engaging with outside agencies however:

- Appears superficially to be responding to professional interventions but is not actually engaged in making changes
- Changes result from external efforts, not the parents
- Conflicting accounts of family life from different family member and professionals
- Allying with some professionals while excluding others
- Changes are superficial e.g. school attendance improves just before a CP Conference

Disguised compliance - Practice

From seeing these signs what can we do about it?

- ‘Tragically it required nothing more than basic good practice being put into operation. This never happened’

Victoria Climbié Inquiry, 2003

- Take time to build rapport with the parents, and LISTEN
- Be clear with parents about what the concerns are
- Triangulate information
- Beware of splitting
- READ THE FILE - ALL OF IT!
- Record promptly
- Insist on and use supervision