

ESA EDUCATIONAL BY SHIRLEY SPANFLER – SEPTEMBER 1991 CHILD ABUSE

Child Neglect and/or Child Abuse go hand in hand

In the USA, 1 million children are neglected or abused each year.

1 in 10 injuries under the age of 3 years results from neglect or abuse.

Neglect and Abuse are the leading causes of death in this age group.

Recent statistics show that more infants die from neglect rather than abuse.

Definition of Neglect: A failure of parents or guardians to meet the

1. Physical
2. Emotional
3. Medical
4. Supervisory needs of the children.

Let's break these groups down.

1. Physical
 - a. Food— you may see a child who is terribly malnourished or underdeveloped for his age.

Young teenage mother— ignorant of parenting skills.

- b. Clothing— children may not be dressed appropriately for the weather or may see a case of severe diaper rash in an infant or children are dirty and their clothes are more than dirty— there is a difference.

2. Emotional
 - a. Parent may meet the child's physical needs but does not talk or play with the child.

You will see children that are affected either be developmentally delayed— and dull and uninvolved or you may see a child that will do anything for attention.

b. Verbal Abuse—cussing--swearing at children

3. Medical neglect

This type of neglect usually happens with children with chronic illnesses or disabilities.

- Parents will ignore care plans set up for their child by a health agency or doctor or nurse.
- Parents fail or ignore the importance of doctor's appointments
- Parents fail to get their children's basic childhood immunizations.
- Dental care— fails to take their child for regular dental checkups.

4. Supervisory— definition of this is leaving a child unattended in a potentially dangerous situation.

- a. Parents go out at night and leave their children in the house alone.
- b. Leaving children in parked cars—
 - Child puts car in gear and runs over someone.
 - Child could be kidnapped.
 - Child could die of heat with windows up.
- c. Not watching children in grocery stores or in shopping mall. So many of our missing children have been kidnapped and used and exploited for pornographic purposes, sexual purposes, etc— Many of these children are never seen or heard of again. It causes parents life—long guilt and grieving.

Example- child abducted in a large shopping mall— took Her to bathroom, changed her clothes and put a wig on her before they were caught.

What are characteristics or personality traits of parents who abuse?

1. These parents may have been neglected or abused as children.
2. Low self esteem--a need for love and acceptance themselves.

3. Unable to cope with child's serious medical problems.

- a. Sometimes parents end up divorcing
- b. Financial crisis
- c. Other children suffer in the family due to lack of attention from the parents.
- d. Time and emotional drain on the whole family system.

4. Socially Isolated

There may be no family or community support—(perhaps people who move around—transient type families—the father takes jobs wherever he can find work--child misses school - Inadequate housing - Unemployment

5. Drug addicts

Parents may be drug addicts or alcoholics or have dysfunctional behavior (incest) is an example.

If you see a family in crisis--and they are without a roof over their head, food on the table and perhaps one or both parents are unemployed either by choice or not by choice. Any one or all of these factors cause a great deal of STRESS—and STRESS is what brings out the tendencies to ABUSE.

Why do Parents abuse their children?

- The Bible quote: Spare the rod and spoil the child— some persons who follow a certain religious order follow the Bible word for word.
- Some people base their child-rearing skills on how they were treated as a child.

What do we do if we suspect Child Abuse?

1. Call the SRS and make out a formal complaint.
2. Call the police and they will notify SRS.
3. Intervene if out in public and you witness child abuse—say something like, I know how frustrating children can be— May I help in some way?
4. If someone has a chronically-ill or disabled child at home, offer to go and sit with the child and give the mother or parents time to get out and be together or have time for themselves--even something as simple as

going to the grocery store can be enough time to renew their strength and energy.

5. Do something-it will forever be your conscience that haunts you. Should you have suspected abuse and kept quiet—and perhaps the child is found dead.

Remember, Abuse is rendered in obvious ways and not so obvious ways
obvious signs-

- Bruises or marks on the child (cigarette burns), etc.
- Burns
- Frequent broken arms, wrist, legs etc.
- A child who is extremely quiet or attention-getting in a obnoxious way.

Incest: If a child tells you that Uncle Bob or Grandpa is fondling them in a way the child knows is wrong———TELL SOMEONE

In closing, just remember, keep your eyes and ears open and notice Children —— NO child deserves to be abused in any way— a child deserves a happy childhood free from the degrading forms people have of abusing these little ones.