

Factors in Abuse and Neglect

Personal Characteristics of the Parent or Primary Caregiver, Including Attitudes and Behaviors

These might include:

- Limited and ineffective coping skills.
- Difficulty in forming interpersonal attachments/relationships.
- Lacks empathy; does not recognize or address children's needs.
- Impulsive, unable to take responsibility or delay gratification.
- Personal history of victimization, abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect.
- Lacks knowledge of child development, parenting skills, or child care.
- Poor anger management, prone to violence.
- Untreated condition, such as mental illness, drug or alcohol abuse, depression.
- Parent may be developmentally delayed, mentally retarded.
- Parent may have emotional or character disorders.

Lack of Resources and Support Systems, Including Relationships

These might include:

- Poverty; non-basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, medical care.
- Chronic unemployment.
- Lacks supportive interpersonal and extended family relationships.
- Does not know how to use community supports.
- Parent may not trust others; views world as hostile; may isolate self.
- Limited choices to solve problems.

Unusual Needs or Characteristics of the Child

These might include:

- Child is sickly, premature, developmentally delayed, medically fragile, or has developmental disability, requiring high level of parent care and involvement.
- Child's condition places excessive burden on family members' time and resources.
- Parent perceives the child to be "different" and having "undesirable qualities" in some manner.
- Child is difficult to care for; edgy, temperamental, easily upset, whiny, stubborn, hyperactive, displays oppositional behavior, demanding, hard to please and placate.

Excessive Stress in the Family and Surrounding Environment

These might include:

- Family frequently in crisis.
- Illness of family members.
- Violent and threatening physical environment, neighborhood.
- Racism and discrimination limit choices, increase stress.
- Recent losses of significant relationships and supports; divorce, death.
- Frequent relocation; new to a community.
- Isolated, lacks transportation.

© Institute for Human Services, Columbus, Ohio. All rights reserved.

