

# Your Child Needs Love and Attention in Order to Grow and Succeed

Not all children have their needs met. Some suffer from neglect. While physical and sexual abuse receive most of the headlines, neglect is the most common form of child abuse. In fact, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare receives more reports of neglect than any other type of child protection complaint.



#### What is Neglect?

Neglect is the failure or refusal of a parent or caregiver to provide the basic, age-appropriate needs for a child. Child Protection referrals regarding neglect most frequently involve physical and medical neglect.

- 1. Physical Neglect- The most common type of neglect is physical neglect. It happens in families whose parents or caregivers are not providing for a child's basic needs such as food, safety, clothing, shelter, etc. Physical neglect includes lack of supervision and not adequately providing for the child's safety and emotional needs. Physical neglect can harm a child's physical and mental development by causing malnutrition, serious illnesses, or a lifetime of low self-esteem.
- 2. Medical Neglect- This form of neglect occurs when appropriate health care is not provided for a child although the caregiver is financially able to do so. Poor overall health can result from medical neglect.

## Signs of a Neglected Child:

- Lack of supervision
- The child or their clothing is extremely dirty
- · Child falls asleep in class
- Frequent school absences or tardiness

- Unmet medical needs
- Not dressed for the weather
- Complaints of hunger and child has lost weight
- Reports that no caregiver is at home



#### Neglect Risk Factors

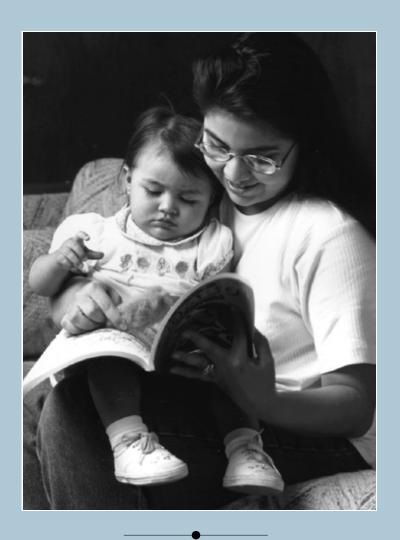
There is a difference between a caregiver's inability to provide the needed care due to illness, cultural beliefs, or lack of money, and their failure or refusal to provide care. In some cases, poverty may limit a caregiver's ability to provide necessities for the child, but help is available. The following are caregiver risk factors for neglect:

- · Drug & alcohol abuse
- Bad relationships
- Immaturity
- Unrealistic expectations about child's behaviors and abilities

- Depression
- · Too busy to pay attention
- Lack of parenting skills
- Own negative childhood experiences
- Lack of support from friends and family

### The Link Between Substance Abuse and Neglect

Substance abuse by parents plays a major part in child protection referrals. In fact, studies show that substance abuse negatively affects the ability of parents to love and care for their child. It may cause a parent to be less responsible to their child's needs. Substance abuse may shorten the parent's patience or cause the parent to use poor judgement. Often times, parents use money for alcohol or drugs instead of food, clothing, and other basic needs. A child of substance abusing parents can be at risk of harm because his/her parents are manufacturing, selling, or using drugs.



# Steps to Keep Your Child Safe

- To avoid choking, keep all small objects out of reach of young children.
- Wash dishes and properly store food to avoid food poisoning and illness.
- Make sure electrical and curtain cords are out of a young child's reach.
- Dispose of dirty diapers properly and in a timely manner.
- Put garbage in containers, away from young children.
- If pets are kept in the house, clean after them.
- · Never leave young children alone at home, or in the car.
- · Always know where your children are and who they are with.
- · Never leave young children alone in a tub, not even for a second.
- Test water temperature before bathing child.
- Keep matches, medications, and cleaning supplies out of reach of young children.
- · Cover all electrical outlets at home.
- Keep guns and knives in a safe place, away from children.
- Turn the handles of pots on a stove in toward the stove so that they are not sticking out where a young child can grab them.



# Common Sense Tips for Raising a Happy Child

- Express love and affection for your child.
- Express personal concern for your child's health.
- Supply necessary food, clothing, and medical care.
- Provide an adequate home.
- Encourage and support your child in school.
- Give social and religious guidance.

## Reporting Child Neglect

Idaho law says that any person who has reason to believe that a child is being neglected must report this to their local law enforcement agency or the Department of Health and Welfare within 24 hours. Failure to report suspected neglect is against the law.

For more information, please call your local office of the Idaho

Department of Health and Welfare, or Idaho CareLine at 1-800-926-2588.