

Child Vulnerabilities

Handout #8

Physical

The child has a physical disability/diagnosis that requires special care and attention (physical therapy, diabetic, developmentally disabled, hearing impaired)	The child is not visible to others outside of the family system
The child's physical appearance does not fit cultural norms (disfigured, obese)	The child is young (birth to five years of age)
The child is small in height or weight	The child cannot verbalize that maltreatment is occurring
The child is immobile	The child's appearance provokes parental hostility (resembles an individual the caretaker does not like)
The child is in a stage of development that creates parental frustration (e.g., the child is not potty trained, has temper tantrums, bites)	The child is physically unable to remove him/her self from a situation
The child's soft spot (on the head) has not yet closed	

Emotional (Personality)

The child requires intensive physical care (medically fragile, hearing impaired, blind)	The child overreacts to audible noises
The child does not demonstrate an attachment to his or her caretaker	Distractibility – the child cannot tolerate external events or stimulation interferes with or diverts the child from an ongoing activity
Adaptability – the child cannot adapt to intrusions, transitions, and changes without distress	The child cannot tolerate frustration – (how easily the child can withstand the disorganizing effects of limits, obstacles, and rules)
The child is passive and easily influenced	The child requires intense emotional support from his or her caretaker
The child is overly sensitive to physical touch	The child lacks the ability to deescalate him/her self

Cognitive

The child cannot recognize actions that are neglectful	The child is unable to communicate
The child has a cognitive disability	The child cannot recognize actions that are abusive
The child does not have the ability to problem solve	The child has cognitive delays relative to his/her age
The child has a mental health diagnosis that impacts understanding/reasoning	The child believes he/she is powerless
The child is unable to understand actions of "cause and effect"	

Behavioral

The child demonstrates provocative behaviors	The child seeks negative attention by agitating others
The child is defiant (physically and/or verbally)	The child demonstrates sexually provocative behaviors including dressing scantily and flirting as a pattern of interaction.
The child resists parental authority	The child is in constant motion
The child has a diagnosis that impacts his/her behaviors (Autism, attention deficit/hyperactivity)	The child reacts intensely to events in his/her environment
The child is argumentative	The child is involved with juvenile court (unruly/delinquent)
The child's energy level is high	The child demonstrates fear of a member of the family system
Child engaged in committing crimes with parents (shoplifting, selling drugs, sex trafficking)	The child is oppositional to authority (teachers, neighbors, other adults)
The child is unable to soothe self	Child parentified

Historical

The child has a history of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional)	The child is non-communicative regarding their history of abuse/neglect
The child has experienced chronic neglect in his or her life	The child is passive as a result of prior maltreatment
The child has experienced repeated victimization	The child reported feeling powerless in the past
Historically, the child feared a member of the family system	Power and control was used to intimidate the child within the family system
The child is aggressive as a result of prior victimization	