

# CHILD VULNERABILITIES AND FUNCTIONING

## PHYSICAL

- Child is young (birth to five years of age).
- Child cannot verbalize that maltreatment is occurring.
- Child is obese.
- Child's soft spot (on the head) has not yet closed.
- Child has a chronic physical illness/diagnosis.
- Child requires intensive physical care (medically fragile, hearing impaired, blind, etc.).
- Child has a physical disability (temporary or permanent) that requires special care and attention (physical therapy, diabetic, developmentally disabled, hearing impaired, etc.).
- Child is small in height or weight.
- Child is physically unable to remove themselves from a situation.
- Child is immobile.
- Child has a disfigurement/deformity.
- Child has an acute physical illness that requires special care and attention.
- Child is not visible to others outside of the family system (does not attend daycare, school, extracurricular activities, etc.).
- Child's appearance provokes parental hostility (resembles an individual the caretaker does not like).

## EMOTIONAL

- Child has a mental health diagnosis (depression, anxiety, PTSD, OCD, etc.).
- Child has difficulty adapting to disruptions, transitions, or changes without distress.
- Child is overly distractible and cannot tolerate external events or stimulation as it interferes or diverts the child from an ongoing activity.
- Child overreacts to audible noises.
- Child is passive and easily influenced.
- Child is overly sensitive to physical touch.
- Child does not demonstrate an attachment to caretaker and/or significant others (siblings, friends, relatives, etc.).
- Child is withdrawn, disengaged, or antisocial.
- Child cannot tolerate frustration – (how easily the child can withstand the disorganizing effects of limits, obstacles, and rules).
- Child lacks the ability to deescalate themselves.
- Child requires intense emotional support from their caretaker.
- Child blames self for abuse/neglect occurring.

## COGNITIVE

- Child cannot recognize actions that are neglectful.
- Child has a cognitive disability (Autism, Down Syndrome, ADD, etc.).
- Child has a mental health diagnosis that impacts understanding/reasoning.
- Child has cognitive developmental delays.
- Child does not have the ability to problem solve.
- Child cannot recognize actions that are abusive.
- Child has a learning disability or learning difficulty (reading, writing, math, etc.).
- Child is unable to communicate.
- Child is unable to understand actions of "cause and effect".
- Child believes they are powerless.

## BEHAVIORAL

- Child is exhibiting signs of withdrawal (trembling, irritability, excessive crying, poor feeding, etc.).
- Infant is colicky or cannot be consoled.
- Child has difficulty sleeping.
- Child is in a stage of development that creates parental frustration (e.g., the child is not potty trained, has temper tantrums, bites).
- Child is argumentative.
- Child seeks negative attention by agitating others.
- Child is unable to soothe self or self-regulate.
- Child engaged in criminal activity.
- The child has a diagnosis that impacts their behaviors (Autism, attention deficit/hyperactivity).

- Child demonstrates provocative behaviors.
- Child demonstrates sexually provocative behaviors.
- Child is defiant towards others.
- Child is physically aggressive towards others.
- Child is sexually aggressive towards others.
- Child is oppositional to authority figures (parents, caregivers, teachers, law enforcement, etc.).
- Child has engaged in self-harm or is actively suicidal.
- Child runs away or is a flight risk.

- Child's energy level is high.
- Child has the inability to maintain peer relationships.
- Child is in constant motion.
- Child is involved with juvenile court (unruly/delinquent).
- Child is verbally aggressive towards others.
- Child is parentified.
- Child reacts intensely to events in their environment.
- Child uses substances.
- The child demonstrates fear of a member of the family system.

### HISTORICAL

- Child has a history of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional).
- Child has experienced chronic neglect in their life.
- Child is non-communicative regarding their history of abuse/neglect.
- Child has experienced repeated victimization.
- Child has feared a member of the family system.
- Power and control were used to intimidate the child within the family system.

- Child is passive as a result of prior maltreatment.
- Child reported feeling powerless in the past.
- Child has a history of juvenile justice system involvement (delinquency/unruly, abuse/neglect/dependency).
- Child is aggressive as a result of prior victimization.
- Child has a history of trauma.