

Guiding principles- adapted from Birmingham Neglect Toolkit (Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership)



<p>DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF THE CHILD</p> <p>Caregivers likely have many challenges and vulnerabilities of their own which have an impact on the child's lived experience. It is important to offer support and services to overcome these barriers. This must not compromise keeping a clear focus on the needs of the child. Where family circumstances are chaotic it is important to ensure the child is seen and that their needs are prioritised.</p>	<p>BE OPEN AND HONEST WITH CAREGIVERS</p> <p>Addressing issues which are personal and difficult to hear can be challenging. For example, smells, dirt, or hazards in the home. It is important to ensure caregivers understand concerns and these are explained clearly, honestly and with sensitivity. Intervention is far more likely to be successful if caregivers understand why professionals are worried and what the expectations are in terms of care of their child/ren.</p>	<p>PAUSE AND OBSERVE</p> <p>Observations in different environments inform assessments of caregiver- child interaction, behaviours and the relationships between the whole family unit. It can also help you to assess the child's development, their behaviour and social interactions, and the environment in which they are living. Observations can be in the home as well as other settings such as school or nursery.</p>	<p>CONSIDER ALL CHILDREN INDIVIDUALLY</p> <p>All children in a family unit will have different experiences needs and interactions. Consider age, position within the family, step/ half siblings. If they were an unplanned child or if there has been a change in the family's circumstances. Negative feelings may be projected onto one child or one child may be expected to take on more of a caregiver role but not others in the family and it is important to capture this and address each child's needs separately.</p>
<p>DON'T BECOME DESENSITISED BY NEGLECT</p> <p>When you work regularly with families where there is neglect you can become desensitised and may minimise or 'normalise' situations which in other contexts would be viewed as unacceptable. It is important to be aware of this, to reflect, and to remain alert to neglect. Regular supervision is key to reflect, share concerns and gain another perspective.</p>	<p>AVOID DRIFT AND DELAY</p> <p>Case drift is a common feature of neglect. This can be due to poor engagement from parents, a lack of understanding about the seriousness of neglect and a failure to prioritise neglect over more 'visible' issues. This can lead to children being left in a neglectful situation for too long. To avoid this, it is important to plan the assessment and have clear time-scales in plans.</p>	<p>CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA</p> <p>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) in childhood can impact the adult and parent that you become. Neglect is one such experience and children who have been neglected may exhibit trauma and stress-related behaviour and can struggle to manage their emotions. It is important that this and impact of any trauma the parents may have experienced in their lives is considered when responding to neglect</p>	<p>ASSESS NEGLECT HOLISTICALLY</p> <p>Assessing holistically using the assessment triangle and tools such as the screening tool and the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) should be used to understand and evidence concerns, and support in planning any intervention. They can highlight where more in-depth work is needed as well as what the family's strengths are. Tools should be used alongside multi professional judgements, understanding of the individual child's needs, and knowledge of the family's history and current circumstances.</p>

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