



**Fact Sheet 5**

**February 2007**

**Risk factors and indicators for neglect\***

This fact sheet contains information that may assist in the formation of a reasonable suspicion of harm and neglect of children/young people.

**Indicators in children of neglect may include:**

- Non-organic failure to thrive
- Delay in developmental milestones
- Loss of skin bloom
- Poor hair texture
- Untreated physical symptoms
- Poor standards of hygiene leading to social isolation
- Scavenging for or stealing food
- Extended stays at school, public places, other homes
- Self-comforting behaviour eg. rocking, sucking
- Being focused on basic survival
- Extreme seeking of adult affection
- A flat and superficial way of relating
- Anxiety about being abandoned

- Depriving or withholding physical contact or stimulation for prolonged periods
- Failure to provide psychological nurturing
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- Different treatment of individual children

(Source: NSW Health Child Protection and Procedures Manual, 1997)

(\*This framework is a guide for practice and is not considered to be comprehensive of all harm, behaviours or presentations that may give rise to concern or suspicion of abuse/harm or neglect. Each indicator needs to be considered in the context of the child/young person's circumstances. Further harm/abuse and neglect can occur in the absence of a demonstrable 'risk factor'.)

**Risk factors and indicators of neglect of children in parents/carers may include:**

- Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, hygienic home conditions
- Leaving the child inappropriately without supervision
- Inability to respond emotionally to a child
- Abandoning child or young person

**Further information:**

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