

# Note To Parents, Caregivers, and Professionals



If you are a parent, kinship parent, or foster parent caring for a child who has been neglected in the past, or a mental health clinician working with a child who has been neglected, you may be finding yourself confused and challenged by his or her behavior, feelings, and attitudes. You may be left wondering why your child is not responding as expected to the positive changes in his or her environment and in your caregiving. Unfortunately most young children who have experienced neglect can't explain why they do what they do, for multiple reasons, perhaps most importantly because they are often unaware of the reasons themselves.

The book *Somebody Cares: A Guide for Kids Who Have Experienced Neglect* was written for children whose basic needs have not been met in the past, and who are now receiving help from a caring adult, like yourself. It is intended to start a conversation so that children can better understand their feelings, learn that they were not to blame for their experiences, and recognize that they were brave to do as much on their own as they did.

*Somebody Cares* reassures children that their feelings and behaviors are a normal reaction to being overwhelmed by their experiences. For neglected children, these experiences may have included parenting themselves and perhaps even others like younger siblings, being alone and unprotected in unsafe and frightening situations, and having to cope without necessities or support. The book also will help children to see that some of their behaviors, while adaptive to their past experiences, may not be helpful to them now. Lastly, the book explains that it sometimes takes a while to get used to the changes in their family and living situation, but that the changes will be helpful and allow them to get the care they need to do well.

Before reading the book with your child, it may be helpful for you to review this note. It explains what is currently known about neglect—the most common form of child maltreatment—and how it affects a child's immediate and long-term development including his or her feelings, behavior, relationships with others, and sense of self and the world. It will also give you ideas on how to support your child as he or she deals with the changes in his or her life.

## What is Neglect?

Raising a child is a major commitment. Children are dependent on their parents or caregivers for a very long period of time. They require food, safe shelter, clothing appropriate for the weather, medical and dental care, supervision, protection from danger, education, attention, nurturance, and affection. When parents cannot provide these necessities, a child's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development is placed at risk. While parents don't have to be perfect, they do have to provide for a child's basic physical and emotional needs, or seek help in doing so.

Definitions of neglect vary by country, state, and regional laws and statutes; by child welfare professionals; and by mental health clinicians, but one definition that is acceptable to many is that neglect occurs when a primary caregiver does not provide for his or her child's basic needs and

as a result the child is harmed or placed at significant risk in terms of safety, health, or well-being. Factors such as the child's age and developmental level, caregiver's intent, and culture are often taken into consideration as well when determining if a child is neglected.

Neglect often occurs in homes with a combination of problems, stresses, or circumstances, such as parental substance use, poverty, chronic unemployment, and mental health issues like depression. Often parents who neglect their children have grown up in unstable homes, having been neglected or abused themselves as children. They may be lacking in maturity, education, problem-solving and child-rearing skills. Children from socially isolated, impoverished, and single-parent families with few supports tend to experience neglect more frequently than children from other types of families, though neglect like other forms of maltreatment can occur across all social classes and family constellations. Unfortunately, many neglected children also suffer from other forms of maltreatment such as physical or sexual abuse.

## Types of Neglect

The child you are caring for or treating may have been neglected for a limited period of time, or for the greater part of his or her life. Generally, the earlier in life neglect begins and the longer it goes on, the more profound the impact it has on the child. Your child may have experienced one or more of the types of neglect below.

**Physical neglect:** Depending on the age of the child, physical neglect might include the infant or child being left in dirty diapers or clothing for long periods of time; not being bathed so that he or she is often dirty; not being fed adequately so that hunger is often present; not having a safe place to sleep; living in a home or shelter that is unsafe, unsanitary, or pest-infected; being refused entry into the house and being left exposed to the elements; not having adequate clothing or shoes for the weather; being left in an unattended car or being allowed to be driven by an intoxicated driver; or being abandoned.

**Neglect of Supervision:** Leaving an infant or toddler at home alone, leaving a child alone at home for a period of time too long for his or her age and emotional maturity, or leaving a child in a hazardous place or to wander the streets at night are all generally considered neglect. This type of neglect can also include leaving a child with someone who is a substance abuser; or who is physically, sexually, or emotionally abusive; or with an underage or irresponsible babysitter. Factors that need to be considered in defining this type of neglect include the age and maturity of the child, the environment and its possible hazards, and whether adults are nearby and accessible to the child if needed in an emergency.

**Medical Neglect:** Children are considered medically neglected when parents delay seeking medical or dental attention for them or don't follow through on health providers' orders for preventive care (e.g. required immunizations, well-baby checks), treatment, and medication. Similarly, children are considered medically neglected if they have been referred for a mental health evaluation or treatment due to behavioral or emotional problems, and their caregivers have not followed up.

**Educational Neglect:** When parents do not comply with their local laws about school attendance and allow their children to chronically miss school, keep them from attending school, fail to enroll them in school, or fail to obtain available special education services for a child identified as having special learning needs, it is considered educational neglect. Some of the reasons neglected children may be kept home from school include the need to care for parents or younger siblings, lack of adequate shoes or clothing, and parents' desire to conceal the child's bruises from abuse.

**Emotional Neglect:** Chronically ignoring a child and withholding attention, affection, and emotional support are forms of emotional neglect. In addition, failure to prevent exposure to illicit substances and failure to prevent exposure to extreme, frequent domestic abuse or violence are also considered forms of emotional neglect. Emotional neglect, especially during the first few years of life, is one of the most devastating forms of neglect or maltreatment for a child's development and can affect the child's physical as well as psychological health.

**Chronic Neglect:** A serious pattern of neglect that endures over time, encompassing several of the types of neglect listed above. A child who has experienced chronic neglect has been deprived of many of his or her basic needs on a recurring or persistent basis. Like emotional neglect, chronic neglect has a very serious impact on the child's overall development.

## Impact of Neglect

Neglect can have a strong and lasting impact on many aspects of a child's development, including his or her physical health, emotions, behavior, regulation of emotions, impulse control, self-concept, social interactions, language, cognition, and school performance. There can be both immediate and long-term, enduring effects of neglect. While some of the effects are obvious, like hunger and poor hygiene, others, such as difficulty trusting and low self-esteem, are more subtle or become apparent over time.

**Impact on Behaviors:** You may have noticed the presence of some problematic behaviors in the child you are now caring for. To begin with, your child may be hyperactive, restless, and fidgety. Your child may also have poor concentration and a limited attention span as a result of inadequate nutrition and other types of neglect such as emotional or chronic neglect. Your child may have sleeping problems such as difficulty falling asleep, difficulty going to bed at a reasonable time, or waking up with nightmares. He or she might be a picky eater, due to having little exposure to foods in the past, or an overeater because food is finally available.

Your child may be overly friendly and solicitous with unfamiliar adults, or withdrawn or unresponsive to familiar adults. These two very different ways of relating can happen as a result of an insecure or anxious attachment to a parent or caregiver who was not emotionally or physically available during the first two years of life.

The child you are caring for may also have a very strong need to control his or her situation, environment, and other individuals. Despite his or her young age, your child may try to boss you or others around, and insist on doing things his or her way. He may resist or be noncompliant with adult decisions and rules, such as a set bedtime and homework time, when they are put in place. He or she may react intensely when told "no" or when limits are set. A reasonable command such as "it's time to stop playing video games, please," could trigger a serious temper tantrum. Your child may also hoard or steal food or other supplies, even when he or she is provided with all that he or she needs, and more. He or she may lie to avoid getting in trouble. These various behaviors, frequently displayed by neglected children, are thought to be related to a lack of trust that developed over the years as their basic needs were not met by their caregivers. As a consequence, these children believe they must rely only on themselves for their needs and wants. Relying on others makes them feel anxious and vulnerable. Giving up control is difficult, even when the adult-made rule or decision is not, in and of itself, objectionable to the child. An unfamiliarity with structure and limit setting due to a previously neglectful home environment could also contribute to a child's resistance to rules and adult decisions.

**Impact on Social Interactions:** Your child may have difficulty making friends or playing nicely with other children or siblings. Neglected children, more so than other maltreated children, are

found to withdraw or watch on the sidelines. Maltreated children, including neglected children, are more apt than non-maltreated children to argue, fight with, and threaten others. Many neglected children are lacking in social skills due to isolation from other children and adults, and an absence of good role modeling by their caregivers. In addition, neglected children, like abused children, are often in a state of “hyperarousal,” meaning that they’re exceptionally alert to things in their environment that might be of danger and consequently tend to misinterpret normal events and interactions as threatening. Thus, another child’s eye contact might be interpreted as a “stare,” or an innocent comment might be interpreted as an insult. In their past they may actually have been teased, bullied, and ostracized by other children due to their poor hygiene and clothing, and therefore they may have negative expectations of others. As neglected children may not have the opportunity or the ability to make friends, it is thus not uncommon for them to create imaginary friends as companions to reduce loneliness.

**Impact on Emotions:** The various types of neglect—especially emotional and chronic neglect—result in a host of negative feelings. Low self-esteem, where the child feels he is not valued, is not lovable, and does not matter, is very common. This is quite understandable when the child grows up believing he is not worthy of his caregiver’s attention, care, and affection. Ironically, sometimes children who are neglected appear to be, at least on the surface, unusually confident in themselves. However, this may not be how they really feel. All too often these children quickly fall apart when they are frustrated by something that is difficult for them, like a school assignment or a change in daily routine.

Sadness and depression are common as well, though these feelings are sometimes expressed as angry, self-injurious, or acting-out behaviors, or as a lack of energy and motivation. Neglected children also tend to develop a sense of pessimism about their future—or, because they are in survival mode, fail to think about their future at all. They tend to have a pessimistic view of the world in general. This makes it difficult for them to postpone immediate gratification and work towards long-term goals.

**Impact on Emotion Regulation:** Children who were neglected during their early years tend to have difficulty regulating and tolerating their emotions at least in part because their caregivers were not attentive to their distress signals and did not provide relief or comfort when needed. As a result, they never internalized, or incorporated, their caregiver’s soothing voice or actions. Consequently, they never developed appropriate ways to de-escalate strong feelings in a safe manner. Instead, neglected children tend to throw tantrums, engage in self-injurious or aggressive behaviors, and threaten to hurt themselves and others when they feel overwhelmed. As they get older they may seek out illicit substances to help them cope with negative feelings.

**Impact on School Performance:** Your child may be below age or grade expectations in his academic skills and knowledge due to educational neglect and a lack of informal educational experiences. In addition, children who have been neglected often have difficulty focusing and paying attention, organizing their school materials, planning ahead for completion of assignments, coping with frustration, following school rules, and remembering to bring in homework assignments. Feeling academically behind, your child may refuse to try classroom assignments or homework, claim school is boring, refuse to attend school, or act up in class.

**Impact on Health:** In addition to behavioral problems, neglect can affect both short-term and long-term health. Your child may be below average in height and weight. Asthma, infections, burns, lead poisoning, dehydration, fractures, concussions, and tooth decay are more common in neglected children than non-neglected children, and serious diseases, such as diabetes, heart problems, and dental and gum disease become more prevalent as they reach adulthood.

## Neglect as a Form of Trauma

While it remains unclear whether neglected children are always conscious of their neglect, it is fairly clear that children who are neglected experience many of the same feelings and behaviors as children who have been abused. In fact, most researchers have found that neglect has a more detrimental effect than physical or sexual abuse on a child's overall development. Without adults to protect them and provide the necessary supplies for survival and well-being, many neglected children find themselves terribly frightened in situations that are threatening, or are perceived as threatening, to their lives and bodily integrity. Consequently, neglect is viewed as a form of trauma.

## The Fight, Flight, or Freeze Response to Trauma

When animals and humans are confronted with danger, their bodies react automatically with a *fight, flight, or freeze* response. This involves the sense organs, such as eyes and ears, sending messages to the brain. The brain then sends messages via hormones to the muscles, heart, skin, digestive system, and other parts of the body, to be prepared to fight, to escape, or to freeze in place while numbing emotions, for the best chance of surviving.

Like other trauma victims, children who are neglected and are not protected by caregivers are thought to be primed for the fight, flight, or freeze response because they have been repeatedly exposed to situations that are perceived as threatening to their survival or bodily integrity. Their stress hormones remain high, affecting many parts of their body including their heart rate, respiration, digestive system, and muscles. Their bodies are ready to fight, run away, or shut down at the slightest perception of threat. For this reason some children who are neglected have a tendency to be more aggressive. Alternatively, some children who are neglected tend to be more avoidant and passive. Others are quick to freeze up and shut down their thoughts and feelings. While helpful for survival in dangerous situations, these behaviors are usually maladaptive for children in everyday situations.

## Interventions with Parents to Prevent Recurrence of Neglect

Child welfare experts know that to be effective in preventing a recurrence of neglect, they must build on parents' resilience and strengths as well as resolve problems and reduce risk factors. Protective services caseworkers assess the needs, resources, and strengths of the parent or parents who in the past did not provide adequate care, as well as the future risk to the child's safety and well-being if the child remains in the home. Caseworkers engage the child and parents and other family members in interviews and the decision-making process, if possible. At times, formal evaluations of the child and the parents are completed by psychologists or other mental health professionals.

The nature, severity, and chronicity of the neglect, as well as the behavioral symptoms of the child are all considered when deciding whether or not it is safe to allow the child to remain in the home while the parent works on identified goals, such as drug or alcohol rehabilitation, daily living skills, meeting medical needs, parenting skills training, repairing the house to make it safe or obtaining stable housing. Recently, increasing efforts are made to maintain children in their homes with safety plans, with provision of services for the children and their families, and with regular monitoring for safety and home improvements. However, if it is determined to be in the child's best interest not to be maintained at home with his or her parent or parents, the child is



then placed outside the home with relatives, foster parents, or—in some cases when the child's behavior is too unsafe to be in a foster home—in group care, until sufficient change occurs with the parent or caregiver who previously neglected the child.

## Recovery From the Effects of Trauma

Children differ in their resilience or ability to recover from neglect and other forms of trauma. Resilience is influenced by a child's inborn temperament, such as how adaptable and flexible they are. Resilience and recovery are also influenced by other factors, such as the type of supports the child has had in the extended family or in the community over the course of his or her life. Recovery from neglect can also be helped with therapy. The type of therapy is usually dependent on the age and needs of the child, and the availability of parents or primary caregivers to participate.

For children, therapy usually consists of a combination of talk, play, and therapeutic activities such as completing worksheets about feelings and reading books relevant to the child's issues. The therapy room or office typically has toys and expressive materials like crayons, markers, clay, and puppets, all of which encourage communication of feelings, thoughts, and past experiences. With neglect and other forms of trauma that have an effect on the body, therapy frequently involves teaching the child stress reduction and relaxation techniques.

In many cases, family therapy can be helpful for children who have been neglected and their parents or caregivers who are invested in their well-being. Like individual therapy, family therapy provides a safe environment to talk about feelings, both positive and negative. Family therapy can help build more positive relationships between family members, and help children and other family members adjust to changes, whether they be new expectations, rules, parenting or discipline techniques, schedules, or new homes and schools.

There are currently several specific types of therapy that have been shown to be effective with kids who have experienced trauma, including neglect.

### Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

This type of therapy includes teaching the child about trauma and its effects (psycho-education), teaching self-soothing and relaxation techniques to calm the body, and teaching effective coping skills to deal with strong feelings like anger. The therapist may also have the child relate his or her own story or "narrative" of the traumatic experience, correcting any misperceptions the child might have about the traumatic experience—such as that he or she was to blame for its occurrence—and sharing the child's narrative with his or her parent or caregiver. As concerned parents or caregivers, you probably will be expected to participate in aspects of your child's therapy. Most likely your child's therapist will meet individually with you to keep you informed of the broader issues being worked on in therapy, and to discuss how to deal with any behavioral problems that arise and how you can be supportive of your child.

### Parent-Child Interaction Therapy

This is another type of therapy that has been shown to be helpful with young children, including those who have been neglected. Parent-child interaction therapy is geared toward strengthening the parent-child bond as well as helping the parent learn to interact in a more positive and effective way with the child. While the parent is building new skills, and practicing these at home, the child's behavior improves as well. In this type of treatment, the therapist gives the parent guidance and suggestions, through an earpiece or from somewhere in the therapy room, as to what to say and what to do while the parent is playing and interacting with his or her child.

## Child and Parent Psychotherapy

Another promising relationship-based form of therapy for working with very young children who have experienced trauma, including neglect, is child and parent psychotherapy. As the name suggests, in this form of therapy the therapist works with both the child and the parent. The therapist provides psycho-education about parenting, specifically for a child who is struggling behaviorally. It focuses on the relationship between the parent and child, and helps the parent see how her own past, including how she was raised and the experiences she has had, influences how she views and interacts with her child. Sessions focus on developing secure attachment and trusting relationships, articulating and coping with emotions, and developing behavioral expectations for the child that take into consideration his or her developmental age and cultural background.

## Social Skills Groups

Social skills groups are another way of helping children who have experienced neglect. These therapeutic groups are usually held in school settings with small groups of children about the same age who are having difficulties making friends and getting along with their peers. Sometimes there are other children participating in the group that are specifically chosen as good role models. While there may be specific groups that focus on a narrow problem, in general social skills groups tend to have children participate in activities that involve teamwork, sharing, and helping others, and talk about and practice positive ways of interacting. Bullying and how to deal with bullying by others are also topics that are frequently discussed in social skills groups.

## Parent Support Groups

For parents, there are peer support groups in the community, such as Parents Anonymous and Circle of Parents, that may be helpful. These groups consist of other parents who are going through similar experiences with child welfare agencies, as well as some parents who have successfully resolved their parenting issues and are continuing to participate in order to give others non-judgmental support and hope. These groups may be facilitated by professionals, but are generally free of charge to the public.

## Going Forward

All children, but especially children who have been neglected, need adults to let them know through words and actions that they are valued, respected, and loved—in other words, that they matter. Simply spending time attentively listening, talking with, and playing with your child will go a long way in meeting his or her emotional needs.

A child also needs to develop the sense that his primary caregiver can be trusted to meet his basic needs and to respond when he is in distress. Making sure your child is safe, supervised, fed, clothed, housed, and receiving timely medical care and consistent schooling can be a challenge, especially when finances are tight, family support is limited, and personal problems are present. Caregivers need to take care of themselves so that they can be physically and emotionally available to their children. As a parent or caregiver, don't hesitate to contact and talk to social workers, psychologists, therapists, health care providers, and teachers about your needs. They are experienced in locating helpful resources in the community where you live, and are eager to assist you as well as your children.

Following through on recommended changes may also be difficult for your child, and for you as a parent, kinship parent, foster parent, or adoptive parent. Your child will need your patience and support as he adjusts to new rules, authority figures, adult decisions, and more adaptive coping skills. As parents, our own experiences in childhood and adulthood influence how we view

our children and how we care for them. Often a child reminds us of another person we know and triggers certain reactions. It is helpful to see each child as the unique individual he or she is. Your child's therapist may be able to help you see your child from this new perspective. And although you may have learned one way of parenting from your own parents, your child may need something different. A change in parenting skills or style may make a big difference to your child's health and well-being, and to the happiness of your family. Know that everyone struggles with change, but in the long run, the right changes allow us to grow, improve, and thrive.

With all the best,  
Susan Farber Straus

## Helpful Resources

### Books for Children



- Blomquist, G. and Blomquist, P. (1990). *Zachary's new home: A story for foster and adopted children*. Washington, DC: Magination Press.  
A sensitively written story for children who have experienced neglect and physical abuse and who are struggling with a mix of feelings in foster care or adoptive homes. In this story about a kitten who attempts to run away to find his real mother, there is a gradual acceptance of a new and caring adoptive family.
- Levinson Gilman, J. (2008). *Murphy's three homes: A story for children in foster care*. Washington, DC: Magination Press.  
A book for young children living in foster care. This story about an endearing puppy who was removed from his family of origin is particularly relevant for children who have had one or more unsuccessful foster home or pre-adoptive placements and are reacting with a mix of feelings and behaviors.
- Levy, J. (2004). *Finding the right spot: When kids can't live with their parents*. Washington, DC: Magination Press.  
A book for children who are living in foster care or an adoptive home because a parent cannot provide consistent or adequate care. In this particular story a girl is conflicted by her loyalty to her unpredictable, alcohol-abusing mother and her growing attachment to her wise, sensitive, and nurturing foster mother.
- McAndrew, L. (1999). *Little flower: A journey of caring*. Arlington, VA: CWLA Press.  
A sensitively written story about a flower that was forgotten by the people in the house, who experiences many of the feelings that are common to children who have been neglected. Appropriate for children who have been neglected and are placed outside the home.
- Nelson, J. (2006). *Kids need to be safe: A book for children in foster care*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.



A simply told story for very young children entering the foster care system. It emphasizes, using repetitive phrases, the need for children to be safe and taken care of, as well as the mixed feelings children may have being separated from parents of origin and living in foster families.

- Wilgocki, J. and Kahn Wright, M. (2002). *Maybe days: A book for children in foster care*. Washington, DC: Magination Press.  
A book helpful to children in the foster care system that addresses the difficulty many children encounter dealing with changes and waiting for answers. In addition to discussing the different reasons children are in foster care and the possible feelings they might have while living in a new family, it is also extremely helpful in explaining the roles of the different adults and professionals who are involved with the foster child and the foster care system, and the role of the child in moving ahead in the midst of all the unknowns.

## Books for Parents, Caregivers and Professionals

- Heineman, T., & Ehrensaft, D. (2006). *Building a home within: Meeting the emotional needs of children and youth in foster care*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.  
A book for caregivers and professionals addressing the needs of children in the foster care system and of adopted children who have experienced complex trauma. Caregivers and staff working in group care and residential care will find this accessible and helpful.
- Lanius, R., Vermitten, E., & Pain, C. (Eds.). (2010). *The impact of early life trauma on health and disease: The hidden epidemic*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.  
An excellent reference for professionals and others interested in the neurological and medical consequences of early neglect and other forms of adversity.
- Myers, J., Berliner, L., Briere, J., Hendrix, C., Jenny, C., & Reid, T. (Eds.). (2002). *APSAC Handbook on Child Maltreatment* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.  
A collection of articles focusing on various aspects of child maltreatment with a first chapter by Martha Farrell Erickson and Byron Egeland that provides a comprehensive overview of neglect. Other relevant chapters include those on psychological maltreatment, substance abusing caregivers, domestic violence, medical neglect, and child protection.
- Osofsky, J. (Ed.). (2004). *Young children and trauma*. New York, NY: Guilford.  
A collection of helpful articles for professionals and caregivers on the impact, evaluation, and treatment of trauma in infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Relevant topics include substance abusing parents, vicarious traumatization, and self-care for individuals working with traumatized children.
- Siegel, D. (2003). *Parenting from the inside out*. New York, NY: Tarcher.  
A helpful book for parents and caregivers that explains how our own histories influence the way we parent children and react to their emotional distress. This book is also useful for therapists working with parents and caregivers.
- Silberg, J. (2013). *The child survivor: Healing developmental trauma and dissociation*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Professionals will find the theoretical and practical approaches presented in this book useful in treating children who have suffered from severe early trauma, and in particular, those children experiencing dissociation.

- Smith, M.G. and Fong, R. (2004). *The children of neglect: When no one cares*. New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge.  
A comprehensive book for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers in the field of child neglect and child welfare. Discusses risk factors for neglect, impact of neglect, and intervention strategies that positively impact children and families.
- Webb, N. (Ed.). (2006). *Working with traumatized youth in child welfare*. New York, NY: Guilford.  
Useful for professionals working with children who have experienced developmental trauma and are in the foster care system. Includes helpful chapters on understanding how early and prolonged adversity affects the developing brain, and on the range of trauma treatment approaches.

## Websites for Caregivers and Professionals

- Child Welfare Information Gateway: <http://childwelfare.gov>  
A comprehensive website for caregivers and professionals that includes many useful articles on child neglect and other forms of maltreatment. Good discussions on trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy and on family-centered approaches that strengthen the family unit to avoid out-of-home placements and facilitate reunification efforts.
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children:  
<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe>  
A useful and comprehensive website for any parent, particularly the sections which give advice about building strong relationships with your baby, toddler or older child, coping with crying and tantrums, keeping your child safe, dealing with parenting stress, and where to find support in the United Kingdom and Channel Islands.
- Child Trauma Academy: <http://childtrauma.org>  
A useful website for caregivers and professionals with articles by Bruce Perry, MD, on child development and maltreatment; bonding and attachment in maltreated children; the effect of neglect and abuse on children's neurological, cognitive, and social/emotional development; and more.
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <http://nctsn.org>  
A website with a wealth of information for professionals and caregivers about the various types of childhood trauma, including neglect. Includes reading lists of books and articles related to child traumatic stress compiled by experts in the field.
- American Psychological Association: Protecting Our Children from Abuse and Neglect:  
<http://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/abuse.aspx>  
A helpful website with information on neglect, preventing neglect, and where to go for help, as well as links to articles on the effects of poverty, hunger, and homelessness on children; parenting challenges in infancy and adolescence; and raising resilient children.

- Positive Parenting Connection: <http://www.positiveparentingconnection.net/positive-parenting>  
Tools to make the parenting experience a more positive one including practical advice for connecting with a child, positive discipline for attention seeking behavior, setting limits, and dealing with tantrums. Also provides parenting tips for issues at different developmental stages.
- Parents Anonymous: <http://www.parentsanonymous.org>  
Information about parent support groups throughout the United States and a national hotline to call. Programs and services that help educate individuals, families, and communities. Articles for parents about relationships, dealing with difficult behavior, safety tips, tips on bonding with babies, tips for dads on how to be a good listener to your child, and tips for foster parents.