

Acts of Protection

Definition: Specific actions caregivers take to protect children from the harm of the abuse/neglect.

Examples of Acts of Protection:

When speaking with families and/or children please ask them questions regarding Acts of Protection to help us identify these strengths. Gathering Acts of Protection help lead to faster, better outcomes and permanency for children!

Emotional Abuse:

- ✚ Tell me what it looks like when the parent is not demeaning/saying mean things to the child.
- ✚ Are there times when the parent provides the child positive feedback for something they have done?
- ✚ Are there times when the parent provides emotional support to the child?
- ✚ Is the parent taking the child to any mental health services?
- ✚ Does anyone ever talk to the alleged perpetrator to try to get them to stop the emotional abuse?

Domestic Violence:

- ✚ Has there ever been a time where the mother (or victim of DV) has removed the children from the home when an argument started to happen?
- ✚ Has there ever been a time where the mother (or victim of DV) has set up for the children to go stay somewhere else, such as a relative or friends home, when arguments have been occurring in the home/during a stressful time in the home?
- ✚ Has there ever been a time where the mother (or victim of DV) has been able to calm down the alleged perpetrator and avoided an incident of Domestic Violence?
- ✚ Has the mother (or victim of DV) come up with a safety plan for the children in case an incident of domestic violence begins? Example: whenever boyfriend/dad starts yelling/drinking/getting aggressive the children go to their room and lock the door with the phone; the children leave the home and go to the neighbors to call 911; the children leave the home and go to the neighbors to call Grandma to come get them.

Deprivation of Necessities:

- ✚ Was there ever a time when the parents were able to provide clean clothing for the children?
- ✚ Have the parents taken any steps to help with the children's hygiene?
- ✚ Are there any supports that the parents have utilized to make sure that the children's basic needs are being met?
- ✚ Is there anyone in the children's lives who have taken steps to make sure that their basic needs are being met? If so, who are they and what have they done?

Dirty Home:

- ✚ Has there ever been a time when the home was not dirty? What did it look like? What was different then?
- ✚ Has there ever been a time when the family has cleaned up the home? What did that look like? Who was involved at that time?
- ✚ Has there ever been a time where the parents have had the children stay at a different home (family, friends, etc.) so that the home could be cleaned up? Who were these people the children stayed with?
- ✚ Has the family ever been offered services/help from anyone in cleaning up the home, such as church members or community programs? Did they utilize this service/help?

Lack of Supervision:

- ✦ For supervision issues outside: Are there neighbors that the parent/caregiver has spoken with to help keep an eye on the children?
- ✦ For supervision issues outside: Have the children been taught rules, such as staying out of the street, staying in their own yard, etc.? Does it appear that they were taught these rules because they always follow them?
- ✦ For supervision issues outside: Are the children dressed appropriately for the weather?
- ✦ If left home alone, do the children have access to a working phone?
- ✦ If left home alone, are there neighbors/family members that check on the child periodically?
- ✦ Have the parents discussed what to do in emergency situations with the children?

Medical Neglect:

- ✦ Are the caregivers using any holistic/non-traditional treatments?
- ✦ Have the caregivers taken the children to the doctor for other reasons?
- ✦ Do the children see a dentist?
- ✦ Are the children vaccinated?
- ✦ Are the caregivers providing any of the child's medications/treatment that are recommended?

Substance Abuse:

- ✦ Do the parents use substances in another room, away from the children?
- ✦ Do the parents keep the substances out of reach of the children?
- ✦ Do the parents ever call someone to come over and watch/take care of the children when they are using? Who is that person? How often do they make these arrangements?
- ✦ Do the parents only use the substance when the children are asleep?
- ✦ If they are providing the substance to the child, do they put any limitations on how much the child can use?
- ✦ How do the parents shelter the children from the adverse effects of the drug/alcohol abuse?

Physical Abuse:.

- ✦ Can you think of a time when the parents have used physical discipline but it was not hard enough to leave an injury?
- ✦ Can you think of a time when the parents were angry/frustrated but did not hit the child? What did they do instead?
- ✦ Can you think of a time when the parents were frustrated but did not shake the baby? What did they do instead?

Physical Abuse – Sibling:

- ✦ Have the parents ever made the choice to not leave the siblings alone together?
- ✦ Do the parents try to supervise the siblings to help prevent the abuse?
- ✦ Do the parents ever discipline the perpetrating sibling in an attempt to stop the abuse?
- ✦ Have the parents ever called LE to report the abuse or attempt to get help for the perpetrating sibling?
- ✦ Is there anything else the parents have done to protect the victim?

Sexual Abuse:

- ✦ When the main caregiver found out about the sexual abuse how did they react? Did they separate the victim from the alleged perpetrator?
- ✦ Has the non-offending caregiver attempted to separate the victim from the perpetrator?
- ✦ Has anyone in the child's life done anything to make sure that the victim does not have contact with the alleged perpetrator?

- ✦ Has the victim taken any steps to maintain their own safety? (Separate themselves from the alleged perpetrator? Lock their door whenever the alleged perpetrator is present?)
- ✦ If this is child on child sexual abuse has a safety plan been put into place by caregivers to maintain that the children are being supervised at all times (not being left alone)?

Educational Neglect:

- ✦ Are the children participating in home school?
- ✦ If involved in truancy, are they following any of the truancy plans?
- ✦ Have the parents made any arrangements for someone to help them get the children to school?
- ✦ On average, what is the percentage of time the child IS going to school?
- ✦ Is the parent taking the child to school (but the child is just leaving)?

Incapable Parent (Mental Health/Physical Health):

- ✦ Is the parent seeking any mental health services? Has the parent sought mental health services in the past?
- ✦ Is the parent taking any medication for their mental health diagnosis? Have they taken medications in the past?
- ✦ Are there any relatives/supports checking in on the parent frequently?
- ✦ Is the parent realistic about what he/she can do?
- ✦ Are there any outside agencies in the home on a regular basis?

Failure to Protect:

- ✦ Has the parent ever restricted the children's contact with the alleged perpetrator in the past?
- ✦ Has the parent given the children any advice/education on how to keep themselves safe from the alleged perpetrator?
- ✦ Has the parent ever told anyone else about the abuse/neglect in an effort to protect the children?
- ✦ Does the parent make sure that they are with the child at times when the child is with the alleged perpetrator?
- ✦ Does the parent make sure that someone else is with the child at times when the child is with the alleged perpetrator?

Failure to Thrive:

- ✦ Has the parent taken the child to the doctor?
- ✦ Is there a medical cause for the failure to thrive?
- ✦ Is the parent feeding the child?
- ✦ Are there any other supports feeding the child?
- ✦ Are the parents doing anything to protect the child from environmental stresses, such as drug use, domestic violence, etc.?

Drug Dealing:

- ✦ Does the parent ever have the children go to another place (wait in the car, go to their room, etc.) when the drug deal is occurring?
- ✦ Does the parent ever have an appropriate substitute caregiver watch the children when they are going to sell drugs?
- ✦ Does the parent ever make sure that the substance they are selling is stored in an area that is inaccessible to the children?
- ✦ Does the parent have a plan to keep the children safe if things don't go well during the drug deal?
- ✦ Is there anything else the parent is doing to keep the children safe?

Suicidal Child:

- ✦ Have the parents sought any mental health services for the child (Mind Springs, Crisis, West Springs Hospital, counseling, psychiatrist, ATU, etc.)?
- ✦ Has there ever been a time when the child was suicidal and the parents have taken the necessary steps to lock up sharps, knives, guns, and/or any other weapon the child could use to harm themselves?
- ✦ Has there ever been a time when the child was suicidal and the parents have taken the necessary steps to lock up medications, pills, hazardous liquids/materials (such as cleaning products) or other substances/materials the child could use to harm themselves?

Suicidal Parent:

- ✦ Did the parent find a caregiver for the children before he/she attempted /committed suicide?
- ✦ Did the parent attempt/commit suicide out of sight of the children?
- ✦ Has the parent ever sought or gotten treatment in the past for depression, suicidal tendencies, etc.? Is the parent receiving services now, after their suicide attempt?
- ✦ Did the parent ever tell anyone that they wanted to commit suicide – in an attempt to get help?
- ✦ Did the non-offending parent take the child out of the home and away from the situation?

Gun Concerns:

- ✦ Are there any times when the guns in the home are safely secured and locked up and out of the reach of the children?
- ✦ Have the parents gone over gun safety with the child and informed them that guns are off limits unless an adult is there to help them?

Vicious Dog:

- ✦ Has the caregiver done anything to keep the child away from the dog? If so, what have they done?
- ✦ Do the caregivers ever keep the dog chained up or in a cage?
- ✦ Do the caregivers ever put a muzzle on the dog?
- ✦ Have the caregivers talked at all about putting the dog down?
- ✦ Have the caregivers talked to their vet about options to help control the dog?
- ✦ Have the caregivers reported the dog to animal control?
- ✦ Is the dog up to date on its vaccinations?

Frustrated Parent:

- ✦ Have the parents ever asked anyone for help with the children? If so, how often have they done this? Who have they asked for help?
- ✦ Have the parents ever sought help through any services such as a counselor or a peer group in an attempt to address their frustration and/or the behaviors of the child that is leading to the frustration?
- ✦ Have the parents ever attended parenting classes?
- ✦ Do you think the parents would be willing to try services in order to receive help?

Child Refusing Medical Treatment:

- ✦ Have the parents tried to get a support person to talk to the adolescent about the need for medical treatment?
- ✦ Have the parents ever been successful at getting the adolescent to follow the medical treatment plan, even one time? What did the parents do? How did the child react to this?
- ✦ Are there any other steps/actions the parents are taking to attempt to get the child to receive the medical treatment?

Abandonment:

- ✦ Has the parent made any plans to come get the child?
- ✦ Is the place where the parent left the child a safe place for the child?

Drug Exposed Infant:

- ✦ Did the mother make any attempts to stop using substances while she was pregnant? If so, what attempts did she make?
- ✦ Did the mother cut back on using substances while pregnant?
- ✦ Did the mother attend any substance abuse counseling sessions and/or rehab?
- ✦ Does the mother recognize the impact substance abuse may have on her infant?
- ✦ Does the mother have any plans to stop using substances now?
- ✦ Does the mother have any plans on how to keep the baby safe if/when she chooses to use substances?

Lack of Understanding of Developmental Milestones:

- ✦ Do the parents ever ask their supports questions about the child's development? What questions have they asked? Who are these supports?
- ✦ Have the parents ever attended a parenting class?
- ✦ If others try to give the parents advice and/or information about the child's development, do the parents appear to accept the information?
- ✦ Have the parents taken the child to their well child checks?

Sexualized Behavior, No Disclosure of Sexual Abuse:

- ✦ Have the parents increased supervision of the child to try to prevent any inappropriate sexual behavior between their child and other children?
- ✦ Are the parents taking the child to any mental health services for the concern of the sexualized behavior?
- ✦ Has the parent taken the child to the primary care physician for the concerns of the sexualized behavior?
- ✦ Have the parents talked to the child about private parts and explained the rules to them?
- ✦ What attempts have the parents made to stop the child's sexualized behaviors?