

Physical Abuse: Serious physical injury requiring medical attention including hemorrhage, fractures, dislocations, internal injuries, poisonings, burns, scalds, cuts, and severe bruising.

A child may be considered abused if:

- Injuries are not accidental
- Injuries were inflicted by someone other than parent/caretaker and parent/caretaker had knowledge of potential harm.
- Child is forced to ingest food or liquid for punishment.
- Child is locked in closets/small rooms or restrained with belts, ropes, etc. for punishment.
- Child is prevented from exercising normal bodily functions.
- Child is disciplined for behavior beyond their control (i.e. bed-wetting, disabilities, and handicaps).
- Child is prevented from sleeping as a means of punishment.
- Child is forced to bathe in harmful solutions (i.e. Clorox, disinfectants, etc.).
- Child is subjected to grossly inappropriate discipline such as scalding, beating with an instrument, biting, shaking or suffocating.

Sexual Abuse:

- Sexually provocative comments should not be made to child nor should they be shown pornographic material.
- Child should not be harassed, encouraged, pressured or propositioned to perform sex acts.
- Persons should not exhibit himself/herself sexually in front of the child.
- Children should not be sexually molested
- Sexual intercourse should not occur with a child.
- Non-offending parent/caretaker should take action to prevent any reoccurrence if violation of sexual abuse laws has occurred.

- Non-offending parent/ caretaker should take all necessary steps to protect and support the child upon learning of the child's sexual abuse.

Emotional Abuse: Child suffers emotional damage as evidenced by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or aggressive behavior toward himself/herself or others as a result of treatment/actions by caretakers.

Moral Corruption: Caretaker involvement in extensive criminal activity, drug usage, violence, fraud, immoral behavior can influence the child to participate in the same activities. Caretaker should attempt to correct behavior or secure services for children involved in acts involving moral corruption.

Dependency: A Child is dependent when he/she needs assistance/placement because he/she has no parent, guardian or custodian due to physical or mental incapacity and no appropriate alternative childcare arrangement has been made.

A child is dependent if:

- Parent/caretaker is deceased or unknown.
- Parent/caretaker is physically unavailable to provide care.
- Plans for care of child are unknown, unclear, or unsafe.
- No appropriate alternative child care arrangements have been made or sanctioned when necessary.

For Information on Child Protective Services Contact

Catawba County Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 669, Newton NC 28658
828-324-9111

Endorsed by the
Children's Protection Council
PO Box 1415
Hickory, NC 28603
(828) 465-9297

**CATAWBA COUNTY DEPARTMENT
OF
SOCIAL SERVICES**

**CHILD PROTECTIVE
SERVICES**



**COMMUNITY
MINIMUM
STANDARDS OF CARE**

Minimum standards of care have been developed as a general guide to assist in evaluating safety and protection of children. If a child does not receive sufficient care to maintain his/her physical, mental or emotional growth at this minimal level, then abuse or neglect may be present. Abuse, neglect and dependency issues are viewed within the context of total family dynamics and how parental behaviors and interactions impact the child's safety. In order to determine if minimum care is being provided, standards should not be considered in isolation, but in conjunction with each other. Therefore, in determining if a neglectful or abusive situation exists, a total assessment, including issues of proper care, discipline and environment must be made.

Neglect: A juvenile who does not receive proper care, supervision or discipline; who has been abandoned; is not provided necessary medical/remedial care; lives in an environment potentially injurious to his/her welfare; or has been placed for care or adoption in violation of the law.

Proper Care Minimum Standards are met if:

- Caretaker provides/arranges for **sufficient food** to prevent malnourishment, dehydration or any other condition requiring medical attention.
- Caretaker provides reasonably clean and **serviceable clothing**.
- Child's **hygiene** does not create a condition requiring medical attention. Caretaker attempts to provide necessary items for hygiene maintenance as well as instruction for use. Caretaker should also show willingness to cooperate with public health personnel to eradicate lice and infectious diseases.
- Child's **enrollment in school** is legally required.
- A lack of **adequate parenting skills** does not impair a child's emotional, mental or physical development.

Proper Supervision Standards:

- Children birth through age 5 should be supervised by their caretaker at all times.
- Children older than 10 can usually supervise themselves outside, but the caretaker should be aware of their general whereabouts and activities. Children age 6 to 10 should be supervised periodically.
- Children 13 years old can be caretakers for short periods of time (i.e. briefly after school).
- Supervision of younger children overnight is reserved for the older teenager (16 or older).
- Primary caretakers should obtain responsible substitute care providers when needed.

- Children under age 18 should not be denied access to the home unless he/she has a safe, accessible, appropriate, alternative place to stay and has safe access to this alternate placement.
- Children under 18 should not be allowed permitted, or encouraged to participate in a co-habitation arrangement.

Proper Discipline Standards:

- Caretaker should make effort to teach a child the consequences for unacceptable behavior.
- Corporal punishment should not be used on a child who is not walking. AN INFANT SHOULD NEVER BE HIT. Corporal punishment for older children should be on the buttocks and legs only. NEVER SHAKE OR THROW AN INFANT OR YOUNG CHILD.
- Withholding of food, water or other fluids as a means of punishment should not occur.
- Children should never be confined in any way as a means of punishment.
- Caretakers should not allow others to physically punish a child in a way that would result in injury.

Abandonment: A caretaker/parent may be absent for an extended period of time, but adequate arrangements for substitute child care should have been made in order to meet the child's essential needs. The caretaker must have intention of returning after a period of absence.

Necessary Medical/Remedial Care:

- Children should receive needed medical treatment and/or prescribed medication.
- Children should not experience pain that could be alleviated by medical treatment.
- Remedial care should be sought and followed through with needed remedial care where failure to seek needed remedial care would have a significant impact on the child's development.

Injurious Environment:

- **Physical:** The home should be free of safety hazards in or around the house, have adequate heating with safe ventilation, and have safe sleeping areas for all the children. Housekeeping standards should be such that children are not exposed to possible disease, infections, and injuries or fire hazards.
- **Parental Behavior (general):** Parental behavior should not pose threat of risk of sexual/physical abuse or neglect due to caretaker behavior or parental relationship with another individual.
 - ❖ Child isn't exposed to a pattern of domestic violence between adults.
 - ❖ Children (11 to 18) are not allowed to use or have access to guns or any dangerous weapons without adult supervision.
 - ❖ Children (birth to 11) are to have no exposure or access to guns.
 - ❖ A child isn't placed in danger due to the criminal behavior of a parent, caretaker or other adults.

Parental behavior (substance abuse):

- Newborn children should be free of evidence of illegal substances in his/her system.
- Children should not be placed in any danger due to parental substance use.
- Parents who abuse drugs or alcohol should arrange for a sober caretaker for appropriate supervision of their child.

Abuse:

Physical Abuse: Caretaker inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon a child physical injury; creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of physical injury; commits, permits or encourages violation of the child sexual abuse laws of North Carolina; creates or allows to be created emotional damage to a child; encourages, directs or approves of delinquent acts involving moral corruption.