



Profile of Abusive or Neglectful Parents

Abusive or neglectful parents are likely to share several of the following characteristics:

- They are isolated from family supports such as friends, relatives, neighbors and community groups.
- They consistently fail to keep appointments and discourage social contact, rarely or never participate in school activities.
- They seem to trust no one.
- They are reluctant to give information about the child's injuries or condition. They are unable to explain the injuries or give far-fetched explanations.
- They respond inappropriately to the child's condition, either by over-reacting or seeming hostile and antagonistic when questioned. Or, they may under-react, showing little concern or awareness and seem more occupied with their own problems.
- They refuse to consent to diagnostic studies of the child.
- They delay or fail to take the child for medical care - for routine check-ups or for treatment of injury or illness. Or they may choose a different doctor or hospital each time.
- They are overly critical of the child and seldom discuss the child in positive terms.
- They have unrealistic expectations of the child, expecting or demanding behavior that is beyond the child's age or ability.
- They believe in harsh punishment.
- They seldom touch or look at the child.
- They ignore the child's crying or react with impatience.
- They keep the child confined - perhaps in a crib or playpen - for very long periods of time.
- They seem to lack understanding of the child's physical and emotional needs.
- They are hard to locate.
- They may be abusing drugs or alcohol.
- They appear to lack control or fear that they may lose control.
- Their behavior may generally be irrational; they may seem incapable of child rearing and may seem cruel and sadistic.