

RISK ASSESSMENT DEFINITIONS

The Risk Assessment Tool is composed of two indices: the neglect assessment index and the abuse assessment index. Only one household can be assessed on a risk assessment form. If two households are involved in the alleged incident (s), separate risk assessment forms should be completed for each household.

The household includes all persons who have a significant in-home contact with child(ren), including those who have a familial or intimate relationship with any person in the home.

The primary caretaker is the adult living in the household where the allegation occurs who assumes the most responsibility for child care. When two adult caretakers are present and the social worker is in doubt which one assumes the most child care responsibility, the adult with legal responsibility for the child(ren) involved in the incident should be selected as the primary caretaker. For example, when a mother and her boyfriend reside in the same household and appear to equally share caretaking responsibilities for the child, the mother is selected. If this does not resolve the question, the legally responsible adult who was a perpetrator or alleged perpetrator should be selected. For example, when a mother and a father reside in the same household and appear to equally share caretaking responsibilities for the child and the mother is the perpetrator (or the alleged perpetrator), the mother is selected. In circumstances where both parents are in the household, equally sharing caretaking responsibilities, and both have been identified as perpetrators or alleged perpetrator, the parent demonstrating the more severe behavior is selected. Only one primary caretaker can be identified.

The Secondary Caretaker is defined as an adult living in the household who has routine responsibility for child care, but less responsibility than the primary caretaker. A partner may be a secondary caretaker even though he/she has minimal responsibility for care of the child.

NEGLECT INDEX

N1. Current Complaint is for Neglect.

Score 1 if the current complaint is for any type of neglect. This includes:

- severe and general neglect;
- exploitation (excluding sexual exploitation); and
- caretaker absence/incapacity.

This includes referred allegations as well as allegations made during the course of the investigation.

N2. Prior Investigations.

- a) Score 0 if there were no investigations (do not include referrals that were not assigned for investigation) prior to the current investigation.
- b) Score 1 if there was one or more investigations (do not include referrals that were not assigned for investigation), substantiated or not, for any type of abuse prior to the current investigation. Abuse includes physical, emotional, or sexual abuse/sexual exploitation.
- c) Score 2 if there was one or two investigations (do not include referrals that were not assigned for investigation), substantiated or not, for any type of neglect prior to the current investigation, with or without abuse investigations.
- d) Score 3 if there were three or more investigations (do not include referrals that were not assigned for investigation), substantiated or not, for any type of neglect prior to the current investigation, with or without abuse investigations.

Neglect includes:

- severe and general neglect;
- exploitation (excluding sexual exploitation); and
- caretaker absent/incapacitated.

Where possible, history from other county or state jurisdictions should be checked. Exclude investigations of out-of-home perpetrators (e.g., day care) unless one or more caretakers failed to protect.

N3. Household has Previously Received CPS (voluntary/court-ordered).

Score 1 if household has previously received ongoing child protective services or is currently receiving services as a result of a prior investigation. Service history includes voluntary or court-ordered family services or Family Preservation Services, but does not include delinquency services.

N4. Number of Children Involved in the CA/N Incident.

Score the appropriate amount given the number of children under 18 years of age for whom abuse or neglect was alleged or substantiated in the current investigation.

N5. Age of Youngest Child in Household

Score the appropriate amount given the current age of the youngest child presently in the household where the maltreatment incident reportedly occurred. If a child is removed as a result of the current investigation; count the child as residing in the home.

N6. Primary Caretaker Provides Physical Care Inconsistent with Child Needs

Score 1 if physical care of child(ren) (age-appropriate feeding, clothing, shelter, hygiene, and medical care of child(ren) threatens the child(ren)'s well-being or results in harm to child(ren).

Examples include:

- repeated failure to obtain standard immunizations;
- failure to obtain medical care for severe or chronic illness;
- repeated failure to provide child(ren) with clothing appropriate to the weather;
- persistent rat or roach infestations;
- inadequate or inoperative plumbing or heating;
- poisonous substance or dangerous objects lying within reach of small child(ren);
- child(ren) is wearing filthy clothes for extended periods of time; or
- child(ren) is not being bathed on a regular basis resulting in dirt caked on skin and hair and a strong odor.

N7. Primary Caretaker has a Past or Current Mental Health Problem

Score 1 if credible and/or verifiable statements by the primary caretaker or others indicate that the primary caretaker:

- has been diagnosed with a Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) condition by a mental health clinician;
- had repeated referrals for mental health/psychological evaluations; or
- was recommended for treatment/hospitalization or treated/hospitalized for emotional problems at any time.

N8. Primary Caretaker has Historic or Current Alcohol or Drug Problem

The primary caretaker has a past or current alcohol/drug abuse problem that interferes with his/her or the family's functioning. Such interference is evidenced by:

- substance use that affects or affected:
- employment,
- criminal involvement,
- marital or family relationships, or
- ability to provide protection, supervision, and care for the child(ren);
- an arrest in the past two years for driving under the influence or refusing breathalyzer testing;
- self report of a problem;
- treatment received currently or in the past;
- multiple positive urine samples;
- health/medical problems resulting from substance use;
- child(ren) was diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or Exposure (FAS or FAE) or child had a positive toxicology screen at birth and primary caretaker was birthing parent.

Score the following characteristics and record the sum as the item score.

- a) Score 0 if no past or current substance abuse problems.
- b) Score 1 if past or current alcohol abuse.
- c) Score 1 if past or current drug abuse.

Legal, non-abusive prescription drug use should not be scored.

N9. Characteristics of Children in the Household

Score the appropriate amount for each characteristic present and record the sum as the item score:

- a) Score 0 if no child in the household exhibits characteristics listed below.
- b) Score 1 if any child in the household is medically fragile, defined as having a serious, ongoing illness or a chronic condition that has lasted or is anticipated to last six or more months or has required at least one month of hospitalization, AND which requires daily, ongoing medical treatments and monitoring by appropriately trained personnel which may include parents or other family members ; AND/OR requires the routine use of a medical device or the use of assistive technology to compensate for the loss of usefulness of a body function needed to participate in activities of daily living; AND/OR diagnosed as failure to thrive.
- c) Score 1 if any child is developmentally or physically disabled, including any of the following: mental retardation, learning disability, other developmental problem or significant physical handicap.
- d) Score 1 if any child had a positive toxicology report for alcohol or another drug at birth.

N10. Housing

Score the appropriate amount for each characteristic present and record the sum as the item score:

- a) Score 0 if the family has housing that is physically safe.
- b) Score 1 if the family has housing but the current housing situation is physically unsafe such that it does not meet the health or safety needs of the child(ren) (for example: exposed wiring, inoperable heat or plumbing, roach/rat infestations, human/animal waste on floors, rotting food)
- c) Score 2 if the family is homeless or about to be evicted at the time the investigation began.

ABUSE INDEX

A1. Current Complaint is for Abuse

Score 1 if the current complaint is for any type of abuse. This includes:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse; or
- sexual abuse/sexual exploitation.

This includes referred allegations as well as allegations made during the course of the investigation.

A2. Number of Prior Abuse Investigations

Score the appropriate amount given the count of all investigations, substantiated or not, which were assigned for CPS investigation for any type of abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual abuse/sexual exploitation) prior to the complaint resulting in the current investigation. Where possible, abuse history from other county or state jurisdictions should be checked. Exclude investigations of out-of-home perpetrators (e.g., day care) unless one or more caretakers failed to protect.

A3. Household has Previously Received CPS (voluntary/court-ordered)

Score 1 if household has previously received ongoing child protective services or is currently receiving services as a result of a prior investigation. Service history includes voluntary or court-ordered family services or Family Preservation Services, but does not include delinquency services.

A4. Prior Injury to a Child Resulting from CA/N

Score 1 if a child(ren) sustained an injury resulting from abuse and/or neglect prior to the complaint which resulted in the current investigation. Injury sustained as a result of abuse or neglect may range from bruises, cuts and welts to an injury which requires medical treatment or hospitalization such as a bone fracture or burn.

A5. Primary Caretaker's Assessment of Incident

Score the appropriate amount for each characteristic and record the sum as the item score:

- a) Score 0 if none of the characteristics below is applicable.
- b) Score 1 if the primary caretaker blames child(ren) for incident. Blaming refers to caretaker's statement that maltreatment incident occurred because of child(ren)'s action or inaction (for example, claiming that child seduced him/her, or child deserved beating because he/she misbehaved).

- c) Score 2 if the primary caretaker justifies maltreatment of child(ren). Justifying refers to caretaker's statement that their action or inaction, which resulted in harm to the child, was appropriate (for example, claiming that this form of discipline was how they were raised, so it is alright).

A6. Domestic Violence in the Household in the Past Year

Score 2 if in the previous year, there have been two or more physical assaults or multiple periods of intimidation/threats/harassment between caretakers or between a caretaker and another adult.

A7. Primary Caretaker Characteristics

Score the appropriate amount for each characteristic present and record the sum as the item score:

- a) Score 0 if the primary caretaker does not exhibit characteristics listed below.
- b) Score 1 if the primary caretaker provides insufficient emotional/psychological support to the child(ren), such as persistently berating/belittling/demeaning child(ren) or depriving child(ren) of affection or emotional support.
- c) Score 1 if the caretaker's disciplinary practices caused or threatened harm to child(ren) because they were excessively harsh physically or emotionally and/or inappropriate to the child(ren)'s age or development. Examples include:
 - a) locking child(ren) in closet or basement;
 - b) holding child(ren)'s hand over fire;
 - c) hitting child(ren) with dangerous instruments; or
 - d) depriving young child(ren) of physical and/or social activity for extended periods).
- d) Score 1 if the primary caretaker is domineering, indicated by controlling, abusive, overly-restrictive, or unfair behavior, or over reactive rules.

A8. Primary Caretaker has a History of Abuse or Neglect as a Child

Score 1 if credible statements by the primary caretaker or others indicate that the primary caretaker was maltreated as a child (maltreatment includes neglect or physical, sexual or other abuse).

A9. Secondary Caretaker has Historic or Current Alcohol or Drug Problem

The secondary caretaker has a past or current alcohol/drug abuse problem that interferes with his/her or the family's functioning. Such interference is evidenced by:

- substance use that affects or affected:
- employment,
- criminal involvement,
- marital or family relationships,
- ability to provide protection, supervision, and care for the child(ren), or
- an arrest in the past two years for driving under the influence or refusing breathalyzer testing;
- self report of a problem;
- received or is receiving treatment;
- multiple positive urine samples;
- health/medical problems resulting from substance use;

- child(ren) was diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS or FAE) or child had a positive toxicology screen at birth and secondary caretaker was birthing parent.

Score the following:

- a) Score 0 if no past or current substance abuse problems.
- b) Score 1 if past or current substance abuse.

Legal, non-abusive prescription drug use should not be scored.

A10. Characteristics of Children in Household

Score the appropriate amount for each characteristic present and record the sum as the item score:

- a) Score 0 if no child in the household exhibits characteristics listed below.
- b) Score 1 if any child in the household has been referred to juvenile court for delinquent or status offense behavior. Status offenses not brought to court attention but which create stress within the household should also be scored, such as children who run away or are habitually truant.
- c) Score 1 if any child is developmentally disabled, including any of the following: mental retardation, learning disability, or other developmental problem.
- d) Score 1 if any child in the household has mental health or behavioral problems not related to a physical or developmental disability (includes ADHD/ADDD). This could be indicated by:
 - a DSM diagnosis;
 - receiving mental health treatment;
 - attendance in a special classroom because of behavioral problems; or currently taking psychoactive medication.