

Risk Factors for Child Abuse

► Knowing the risk factors of child abuse and neglect can help individuals, families, and the community identify child maltreatment. Anyone experiencing these situations might be at risk of child abuse and neglect.

What Are Risk Factors?

Risk factors are the characteristics that may increase the chance of abuse and neglect. Individual, family, and community risk factors contribute to the possibility of abuse.

If You Are Experiencing Risk Factors:

Please reach out to someone you trust to ask for help. Contact your local physician for helpful referrals. Seek guidance and therapeutic treatment for advice on how to handle stressful experiences.

Individual Risk Factors

Caregivers who have any of the following circumstances may be more at risk of abusing children:

- Drug or alcohol issues
- Mental health issues
- A misunderstanding of children's needs
- A history of abuse or neglect themselves
- Low education or income
- High levels of parenting or economic stress
- Attitudes that justify violence or aggression
- Young parenthood or single parenthood
- Acceptance of corporal punishment

Family Risk Factors

Families that have any of the following circumstances may be more at risk of abusing children:

- Members in jail or prison
- Isolation from other people
- Violence in the home or relationships
- High conflict
- Negative communication

Community Risk Factors

Communities that have any of the following circumstances may be more at risk for child abuse:

- High rates of violence and crime
- High rates of poverty and limited education
- High unemployment rates
- Easy access to drugs and alcohol
- Limited neighbor support
- Few activities for children and adolescents
- Unstable housing
- Food insecurity



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