

9 top tips to use when assessing whether a child is being neglected

Recognising and understanding child negligence is difficult to do but absolutely essential when considering a child's welfare.

- **1. Offer praise to parents as well as constructive criticism**

Highlight what parents are doing well whilst also noting what needs to improve. Parents are more likely to respond proactively to criticism if they are also commended for their positive actions.
- **2. Concentrate on the child**

Understand situations from the child's point of view, especially in regards to their needs. Recognising the impact of household and environmental factors, involve children in the evaluation procedure and understand their opinions.
- **3. Be adaptable**

Co-work with someone to ensure an in-depth assessment synchronised approach, especially when working with alternative organisations. Surprise visits are also effective.
- **4. Be easy to understand**

Do not use language that is too technical and complicated, it is crucial to use vocabulary that everyone is comfortable with.
- **5. Use a range of evidence**

Observe interactions with the child at different parts of the day and during different activities, such as meal times. Align these observations with assessments of the child's clothes, types of food typically consumed, and discussions with the family.
- **6. Points system**

Use a points system that allows different aspects of a parent's care to be rated from 1 – 5. Neglect can then be easily observed and clearly communicated to parents and fellow social workers in a manner that everyone can understand.
- **7. Perform a thorough assessment**

Fully explore all features of parental care and set out key areas for investigation such as physical care, safety, emotional care and development care.
- **8. Create a clear strategy**

Set targets that are attainable within practical timescales. Breakdown overall plans into small, achievable goals which allow parents to easily see what needs to be done and how.
- **9. Revisits are crucial**

Revisit families to check if progress has been made and measure if targets have been met or not.