

IDENTIFYING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

Monroe County Child and Family Services 2020

Dorightbykids.org





CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

- The purpose of the New York State Child Protective Services Act of 1973 is:
- 1.) to encourage more complete reporting of child abuse and maltreatment
- 2.) to provide for the swift and competent investigation of such reports
- 3.) to protect children from further abuse and maltreatment
- 4.) to provide rehabilitative services

WHAT *IS* ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

ABUSE

- Subject inflicts or allows to be inflicted on a child **serious physical injury** by other than accidental means
- And**
- Such action causes or creates a substantial risk of death or serious protracted disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health or impairment of the function of any bodily organ
- Or**
- Subject commits or allows to be committed a sex offense as described in Sec. 130 of the Penal Law
 - Rape; Sexual misconduct; criminal sexual act; Forcible touching, Persistent sexual abuse; Sexual abuse; aggravated sexual abuse; course of conduct against a child.

NEGLECT/MALTREATMENT

- Failure to provide a minimal degree of care, but omission or commission that has a causal relationship with the worsening of a child's emotional or physical condition.
- Worsening of a child's condition, or impairment, must be more than minor.

MINIMUM
DEGREE OF
CARE

New York State Standard from
Family Court Act

A minimum baseline of care that all parents
must meet regardless of lifestyle, culture
social position or economic positions

Not “maximum or ideal” care

IMPACT ON CHILD....

- Making a connection between **parental actions or inactions** and **harm or impending danger of harm** to child is ESSENTIAL
 - Poor parenting choices does NOT equal neglect
 - Drug use alone does not equal neglect
 - A child AT RISK does not equal neglect
- Minimum Degree of Care can vary based on situation
- SSL and FCA are specific in terms of when CPS has legal authority to intervene

COVID IMPACT

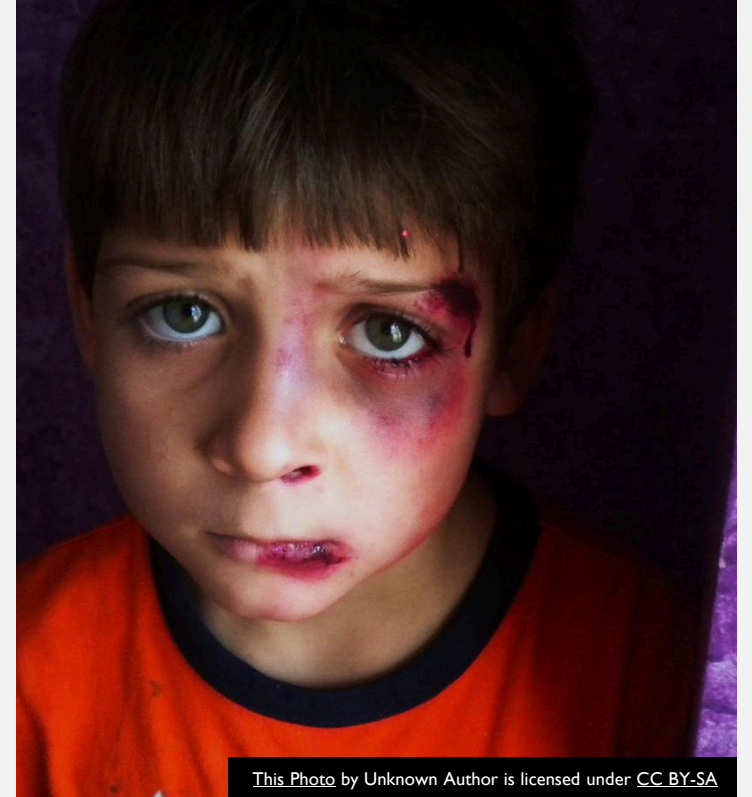
- Increase stress and isolation
- Increase in substance abuse
- Increases in domestic violence calls to law enforcement
- Increase in prevalence and acuity of mental health concerns including suicidal ideation
- Increase in severe abuse cases seen in hospitals
- YET.....national decrease in reports to child abuse hotlines
 - WHY?
 - Children having less contact with others- schools, medical, daycare, other mandated reporters, community, extended family

WHAT CAN WE LOOK FOR VIRTUALLY?

- **Peeking Through the Blinds....**
 - **Home Conditions Concerns: Messy or Neglectful?**
 - **Consider if what you see poses a **DANGER** to child**
 - **Drugs, drug use, drug paraphernalia accessible**
 - **Medication, chemicals, hazardous substances accessible**
 - **Lack of electricity, heat, exposed wires, fire hazards, deplorable conditions**
 - **Consider **AGE** and **DEVELOPMENT** of children in the home- what poses a danger to one child may not pose a danger to another**

PEEKING THROUGH THE BLINDS CONTINUED....

- **Children's Condition:**
 - **Visible injuries?**
 - Consider location, severity, pattern of injury
 - Red flags- trunk, ears, neck, face injuries not commonly found from play, any injuries on non-ambulatory infants or children
 - **Changes in child?**
 - Extreme weight loss
 - Signs of anxiety, depression, statements of suicidality or self-harm
- **Supervision Concerns?**
 - Children home alone
 - Consider their age and development, ability, timeframe, access to an adult



WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Identify children within class/school/caseload who are most at risk
 - Make proactive efforts to “check in” with these families and children
 - Offer support, make connections with caregivers and children, provide resources or information for resources
- Create opportunities in virtual learning for small group work, relationship building between teacher and students, and between students
 - Daily 3-2-1 “check in’s” with kids- provide opportunity to follow up with any kids who identify as a “1”
 - Intentional efforts can be made to discuss safety and well being with student
 - Children often disclose abuse or neglect to friends
 - Use social emotional learning times for activities

- Can we ask child or family questions?
 - Would it put the child in danger to do this?
 - Would it help clarify to consider if you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect?
 - Is there opportunity to virtually “meet” with child alone
 - Is there opportunity to virtually “meet” with parent alone
 - Would it help address a concern before it rises to level of neglect (primary prevention)?
- If situation is IMMEDIATELY occurring and UNSAFE- CALL 911
 - Active domestic violence, illegal activity, active emergency
- If information you have or have gathered gives you reasonable cause to suspect a child has been abused or neglected, call **SCR 1-800-635-1522**

HOW CAN WE
RESPOND

QUESTIONS?

- Julie Nichols, CFS Administrator
 - 753-5806
- Brice Meade, CFS Intake Supervisor
 - 461-5690

DO RIGHT BY KIDS

DORIGHTBYKIDS.ORG

Your authoritative source for answers to questions about preventing and reporting child abuse

Dorightbykids.org

