

Forensic Evaluation of Child Neglect

Framework for forensic evaluation of child neglect – N.E.G.L.E.C.T.I.N.G.

Think about	Assess	Recommend
NURTURE	Security of attachment (warmth and love) Relationship with carers (reliably responsive) Is child's wellbeing a priority? Is child left alone/abandoned Changes of primary caregiver? Stable placement?	Early parenting centre (mother-baby unit) Infant mental health /parenting supports Child and family psychology/therapy Extended family support Parenting education / support groups Supportive MCHN & GP & NGOs
EMOTIONAL NEEDS	Ask about exposure to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental drug/alcohol use • Parental mental illness • Violence in the home Ask child about feelings of worth, safety, love, discipline, role at home Moral guidance to encourage good citizenship	Parental drug/alcohol rehab programs Men's behaviour change programs Parental mental health assessment Be aware of the concept of cumulative harm and comment on it – trial of capacity to change. Alternative placement might be considered
GROWTH & NUTRITION	Stature, overweight or underweight? Diet – balanced, healthy? Growth parameters and history - plot Adolescents – body image Clinical evidence nutritional deficiencies? Consider blood tests for nutritional /vitamin abnormalities (including NAFLD)	<u>Poor growth</u> – appropriate medical Ix plus paediatric F/U 3 monthly, dietician referral <u>Obesity</u> –Dietician, weight clinic, bloods for fatty liver and lipid profile, realistic exercise plan Clear advice regarding change
LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT	Screen for delay using Brigance, ASQ or similar Contact kinder staff/school teachers and ask about; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Achievement • Homework • Learning potential • Attention/behaviour • Peer relationships Comparison assessments before and during/after periods of OOHC might be useful	Developmental skills assessment Consider further multidisciplinary assessment of medical conditions that affect learning (eg ASD, ADHD) or Ix for genetic/metabolic causes of Devel Delay Enrol in childcare Educational psychology assessment Test vision and hearing Cognitive tests Speech and language processing tests
ENVIRONMENT AT HOME	Stability/Transience/quality of residence Number of schools/homes /rate of change Evidence of environmental neglect – contact CP/family supports/workers for information Exposure to hazards/safety in the home – needles, vermin, unhygienic substances Supervision in the home (left alone/unsupervised)	Housing recommendations/support Enrol in childcare Removal of children from home until cleaned up Ongoing commitment to improving environment at home Provide safe sleeping and play spaces Protect from hazards
CLOTHING	Clean? Malodorous? In need of repair? Well-fitting footwear and clothing? Appropriate for weather?	
TEETH	Good dental hygiene Routine teeth cleaning (owns a toothbrush?) No caries, healthy gums and oral soft tissues	Dental assessment and treatment Diet for healthy teeth
IMMUNISATIONS, INFESTATIONS & INFECTION	Up to date? – check ACIR Lice, scabies, worms GIT, ear, skin infections	Organise vaccination catch-up (RCH or MMC) Treat infestations & infections
NORMAL SOCIAL ACTIVITY	Time to play and people to play with Suitable toys Engages with peers (d/w school/kinder) Caregivers promote spiritual and cultural identity and sense of belonging	Enrol in childcare /school Encourage out of school activities for pleasure and social connectedness Consider spiritual /cultural needs
GENERAL HEALTH	Vision and hearing Hospital/healthcare attendances and FTA's Number of different Dr's consulted Sexual health Mental health (adolescents, suicide risk etc) Consider factitious illness by proxy	Vision and hearing checks Provide clear advice re healthcare Refer for regular paed f/u if required Register with local GP. Plan for preventive healthcare and surveillance/monitoring of health and growth