



RISK FACTORS VS PROTECTIVE FACTORS



RISK FACTORS FOR PERPETRATION / VICTIMIZATION

Risk factors are characteristics that may increase the likelihood of experiencing or perpetrating child abuse and neglect, but they may or may not be direct causes. A combination of individual, relational, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of child abuse and neglect.

INDIVIDUAL RISK FACTORS

- Children younger than 5 years old
- Children with special needs that may increase caregiver burden (e.g., disabilities, mental health issues and chronic physical illnesses)
- Caregivers with drug, alcohol or mental health issues
- Caregivers who don't understand children's needs or development
- Caregivers who were abused or neglected as children
- Young or single parents or parents with many children
- Caregivers with low education or income
- Caregivers experiencing high levels of stress
- Caregivers who use corporal punishment for discipline
- Non-biological caregivers
- Caregivers with attitudes accepting of or justifying violence or aggression

COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS

- Community violence
- Concentrated neighborhood disadvantage (e.g., high poverty, high unemployment rates and easy drug/alcohol access)
- Poor social connections

FAMILY RISK FACTORS

- Social isolation
- Family stress, separation or divorce, and violence, including intimate partner violence
- Parenting stress, poor parent-child relationships, and negative interactions

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Protective factors may lessen the likelihood of children being abused or neglected. Identifying and understanding protective factors are equally as important as researching risk factors.

INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Caregivers who create safe, positive relationships with children
- Caregivers who practice nurturing parenting skills and provide emotional support
- Caregivers who can meet basic needs of food, shelter, education, and health services
- Caregivers who have a college degree or higher and have steady employment
- Children with ability to manage or control emotions
- Children with ability to form positive bonds and connections with others

COMMUNITY PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Communities with access to resources that aid in supporting basic needs (e.g. safe, stable housing, medical and mental health care and financial supports)
- Communities where families have access to high-quality preschool, childcare and after school programs/activities
- Communities where adults have work opportunities with family-friendly policies
- Communities with access to social supports and networks to connect individuals and families

FAMILY PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Families with strong social support networks and stable, positive relationships with the people around them
- Families where caregivers are present and interested in the child
- Families where caregivers enforce household rules and engage in child monitoring
- Families with caring adults outside the family who can serve as role models or mentors

For more information, visit CACCentral.com.