Services For Education

POVERTY OR NEGLECT? - UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNS.

Poverty is when a family lack the finances or resources to provide an adequate diet or appropriate living conditions.

People tend to equate poverty to having limited or no money, but it is defined by being unable to provide a decent standard of living for oneself or their family.

Around 29% of families across the UK live in poverty.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs and is the most common form of child abuse. Neglect can be wilful and intentional, but it can also be as a result of other circumstances which render a parent unable to provide what their child needs, for example parental drug or alcohol misuse or mental health issues.

1 in 10 children in the UK have experienced neglect in their lifetime.

POVERTY IS A RISK FACTOR FOR NEGLECT, BUT POVERTY DOES NOT EQUATE TO NEGLECT....

The occurrence of poverty on its own does not mean that a child is unsafe or at risk, unloved, or that a parent lacks the capacity to care for their child. Poverty can make it more challenging for parents to meet their child's needs, but despite this they actively want to change their situation or provide for their children, but they do not have the means. But recent research has proved that increased financial and other pressures on family life will lead to the risk that more children will be subject to harm, abuse and neglect.

Signs of Poverty:	Signs of Neglect:
*Poor hygiene and cleanliness**	
*Inappropriate uniform, shoes or clothing**	
*Lack of food provided or money for food**	
*Malnutrition**	
*Missing school equipment or other required items**	
*Poor or inappropriate living conditions**	
*Negative impact on mental health and self-worth**	
*Tiredness or inability to concentrate at school**	
*Stealing or taking things to use, eat or sell**	
*Children being left home alone**	
Parents requesting support from school	No or limited access to health care
Children working jobs outside school	Repeated absence from school
Children concerned about parents and situation	Lack of parental involvement

**Many of the signs are the same for both neglect and poverty and professional curiosity must be used to find out more about a situation so action can be taken.*

TAKING ACTION...

Against Poverty:

Support: Provide 'extended' services where possible- homework support, uniforms, free school meals or wrap around care.

Signpost: There are organisations who can provide support for families who are struggling with the cost of living. Have resources available to share with parents.

Teach: Ensure children are taught about money and how to manage as part of the curriculum.

Against Neglect:

Refer: If you suspect a child is experiencing neglect you must refer to your local authority threshold guidance and speak to children's social care.

Train: All staff must be trained to look out for the signs of neglect and know what to do if they identify children at risk.

Teach: Children should be taught to identify the signs themselves and to speak up if they are not being treated correctly.

Need more support with this topic?

Please contact: *safeguarding@servicesforeducation.co.uk*

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