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Parental neglect causes behavior problems in children

Parental neglect should be a crime, but in many cases unfortunately it is not. If it is a case of neglecting to feed your child, of course this is a punishable offence. But the general neglect of the child's emotional needs continues to run rampant through many families.

Not all parents of course are bad parents. Many parents guilty of neglect aren't even aware themselves that this is going on. The dictionary definition of neglect is "to disregard; to leave undone or unattended." This pattern often cycles through family's generation after generation. The end result is inevitably that the child will end up having some sort of behavioral problems.

Many times neglect occurs due to what we consider at the time to be circumstances beyond our control. For example, older siblings are often left with the responsibility and daily care of the younger children due to financial constraints. While it is certainly healthy for children to assist with family chores, it is never healthy to force children to be parental substitutes. This is a huge burden on them that they cannot and should not be expected to shoulder.

When mom and dad get home from work, there are still chores such as a meal prep, laundry, yard work and so on that needs to be done. This often times leaves no room for any quality attention and time spent with the children. This is another example of how children get neglected unintentionally.

Many times the behavioral problems that the child is having are brushed off as merely temper tantrums or "just a phase" and they are not given the attention they deserve. Too many times parents are so busy controlling the negatives that they fail to see the positive aspects of the child. Spend just 15 minutes each day in quality time with your child, and give him your undivided attention. Asking your child "how was school?" and accepting a mumbled response as he trudges past you to the television set is NOT quality communication.

Never blame or ignore your child due to your own daily frustrations or disappointments. This only sets a pattern for your child to model his own behaviors to. This is not good parenting; this is cop-out that will result in lasting emotional problems for both of you.

Also do not indicate or express the idea that any personal setback, yours, theirs or the family's, is an indication of inadequacy or a permanent situation. Children who assume responsibility for issues beyond their control at a young age will often mature with fear of intimacy or anger issues of their own. A child needs the protection of a safe and loving environment no matter what hardships the family may be experiencing at the time.

Do not always think that because your child has food, clothing and shelter, that your job as a parent is done. Emotional neglect leaves childhood scars every bit as deep as other types of abuse. Even the most well intended parents can easily make mistakes. It is the "bad" parent that refuses to make any change necessary to ensure they raise an emotionally healthy child.

Children are not born with behavior problems; they are raised in some manner that fails to meet their emotional and psychological needs. This is neglect, it is abuse and it needs to be addressed with diligence, love and perseverance.