

Appendix A

High risk indicators associated with child abuse

Child characteristics which may predispose them to be at risk.

- Child with a congenital abnormality, either mental or physical.
- Premature infant or ill newborn who is separated during the neo-natal period.
- Colicky or irritable child.
- Child who is rigid or non-cuddly.
- Child who is unwanted.
- Child who is not the gender expected/desired by the parents.
- Foster child, adopted child, or step-child.
- Child who is intellectually impaired, highly intelligent or hyperactive.
- Child is particularly difficult (or is seen as difficult).

Caregiver's perceptions of child that may predispose some children to be at risk.

- 'Bad', 'naughty', or 'manipulative'.
- 'Difficult' and unrewarding to care for.
- Unloving or rejecting of the parents.
- Resembling a disliked person in appearance, behaviour or temperament.
- A rival for attention or affection that parents themselves desire.

Family factors that may place children at higher risk of abuse.

- Partner abuse is present.
- Parent was abused or seriously neglected as a child.
- Parent has serious mental health problems.
- Parent has had frequent trouble with the law.
- Parent has an alcohol or drug problem.
- Parent has rigid or unrealistic expectations of child.
- Previous abuse towards this or another child.
- Parent has violent temper or outburst towards things or people.
- Family socially isolated.
- Parents with low self-esteem.
- Parent is a teenager.
- Family suffers from multiple crises.
- Parent administers harsh or unusual punishment.

From: *Child Abuse Indicators: Information for General Practitioners and Community Workers*.
Child and Adolescent Health Service, Taranaki Healthcare (1993, Second Edition).