

## Florida Decision Making Methodology: Caregiver Protective Capacity Reference

### Definition: Caregiver Protective Capacity

**Personal and caregiving behavioral, cognitive and emotional characteristics that specifically and directly can be associated with being protective to one's young. Protective capacities are personal qualities or characteristics that contribute to vigilant child protection.**

### Criteria for Determining Caregiver Protective Capacities

- The characteristic prepares the person to be protective.
- The characteristic enables or empowers the person to be protective.
- The characteristic is necessary or fundamental to being protective.
- The characteristic must exist prior to being protective.

### SCALING CRITERIA

**Note: Criteria for an "A" or "B" would be used by investigators to indicate a "YES" answer.**

#### A= EXCEPTIONAL

The protective capacity in this area is exceptional and not only leads to positive functioning in the area, but serves or can serve to compensate for limitations in other areas.

#### B=ACCEPTABLE

The protective capacity in this area is typical of most families. While there may be occasional struggles in the area, there is no significant adverse impact on child.

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**Note: Criteria for a "C" or "D" would be used by investigators to indicate a "NO" answer.**

#### C=SOMEWHAT DIMINISHED

Protective capacity in this area is somewhat diminished and the child may be experiencing more substantial adverse impact, however this area has not directly led to serious harm or danger.

#### D=INADEQUATE

Protective capacity in this area is so limited that there are clear connections between the lack of this protective capacity and serious harm that has already occurred or danger that serious harm is likely.

**Behavioral Protective Capacity**  
*Specific action, activity, performance that is consistent with and results in parenting and protective vigilance.*

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver demonstrates impulse control.**

This refers to a person who is deliberate and careful, who acts in managed and self-controlled ways.

- People who do not act on their urges or desires.
- People that do not over-react as a result of outside stimulation.
- People who think before they act.
- People who are planful.

**Scaling Guide:**

- A. Parent/Caregiver consistently acts thoughtfully regardless of outside stimulation, avoids whimsical responses, and thinks before they take action. Parent/Caregiver is plan full in their actions when caring for children and making life choices.
  
- B. Parent/Caregiver regularly is acts thoughtfully regardless of their on their urges or desires, avoids acting as a result of outside stimulation, avoids whimsical responses, thinks before they take action, and are plan full when caring for children and making life choices. When parent/caregiver does act on urges/desires, they do not result in negative affects to their children or family.
  
- C. Parent/Caregiver routinely (weekly/monthly) acts upon their urges/desires, is influenced by outside stimulation, thinks minimally before they take action, and are not plan full, resulting in their actions having negative affects on their children and family.
  
- D. Parent/Caregiver frequently (daily) acts upon their urges/desires, is highly influenced by outside stimulation, does not think before taking action, and do not plan. Parent/Caregiver's inability to control their impulses results in negative affects on their children and family.

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver takes action.**

**Takes Action**

This refers to a person who is action oriented as a human being, not just a caregiver.

- People who perform when necessary.
- People who proceed with a course of action.
- People who take necessary steps.
- People who are expedient and timely in doing things.
- People who discharge their duties.

**Physically Able**

This refers to people who are sufficiently healthy, mobile and strong.

- People who can move quickly when an unsafe situation presents (e.g. active toddlers who may dart out toward the street or water source, pool, canal, etc.).
- People who can lift children.
- People who are able to physically manage a child's behaviors.
- People with physical abilities to effectively deal with dangers (e.g. a child with special needs who may be prone to 'running' away, a child who requires close supervision, etc.

**Assertive and Responsive**

This refers to being positive and persistent.

- People who are firm and purposeful.
- People who are self-confident and self-assured.
- People who are secure with themselves and their ways.
- People who are poised and certain of themselves.

### **Adequate Energy**

This refers to the personal sustenance necessary to be ready and 'on the job' of being protective.

- People who are alert and focused
- People who can move, are on the move, ready to move, will move in a timely way
- People who are motivated and have the capacity to work and be active
- People who express force and power in their action and activity
- People who are not lethargic to the point of incapacitation or inability to be protective
- People who are rested or able to overcome being tired.

### **Uses Resources to Meet Basic Needs**

This refers to knowing what is needed, getting it, and using it to keep a child safe.

- People who get people to help them and their children
- People who use community public and private organizations
- People who will call on police or access the courts to help them
- People who use basic community services such as food and shelter

### **Scaling Guide:**

- A. Parent/Caregiver takes action, is assertive and responsive, and is physically able to respond to caregiving needs, such as chasing down children, lifting children, and is able to physically protect their children from harm consistently. Parent/Caregiver may have physical limitations, however demonstrates the ability to accommodate those physical limitations in order to take action.
- B. Parent/Caregiver is able to take action, is assertive and responsive, and/or is physically able to respond to caregiving needs, however requires assistance on occasion to be able to meet children's needs. Parent/Caregiver may have a physical limitation, and occasionally is not able to demonstrate the ability to accommodate those physical limitations in order to take action.
- C. Parent/Caregiver regularly is not able to take action, be assertive and responsive, and/or physically respond to caregiving needs. Parent/Caregiver needs assistance on a regular basis (weekly). Parent/Caregiver may have a physical limitation, and on a regular basis is not able to accommodate those physical limitations in order to take action.
- D. Parent/Caregiver is not able to take action, be assertive and responsive, and/or physically respond to meeting caregiving needs of children. Parent/Caregiver requires assistance routinely (daily). Parent/Caregiver may have a physical limitation, and routinely is not able to accommodate that physical limitation in order to take action.

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver sets aside her/his needs in favor of a child.**

This refers to people who can delay gratifying their own needs, who accept their children's needs as a priority over their own.

- People who do for themselves after they have done for their children.
- People who sacrifice for their children.
- People who can wait to be satisfied.
- People who seek ways to satisfy their children's needs as the priority.

This refers to people who adjust and make the best of whatever caregiving situation occurs.

- People who are flexible and can adapt.
- People who accept things and can move with them.
- People who are creative about caregiving.
- People who come up with solutions and ways of behaving that may be new, needed and unfamiliar but more fitting.

**Scaling Guide:**

- Parent/Caregiver identifies their child's needs as their number one priority. Parent/Caregiver has demonstrated through their actions that they place their child's needs above their own by waiting to be satisfied, sacrificing for their children, and through seeking ways to satisfy their child's needs as a priority. Parent/Caregiver does not need to be prompted by others in viewing their needs as secondary to the child's.
- Parent/Caregiver views the child's needs as a priority, however at times struggles to place their children's needs before their own. The lack of viewing the child's needs as a priority does not result in the children being maltreated or exposed to danger.
- Parent/Caregiver recognizes the need to place their child's needs as a priority, however is not able to set aside their own needs in favor of their child's needs, resulting in the child being maltreated and/or exposed to danger.
- Parent/Caregiver does not recognize the need to place the child's needs as a priority and does not set aside their own needs in favor of the child's, resulting in the child being maltreated and/or exposed to danger on regular occasions.

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver demonstrates adequate skill to fulfill caregiving responsibilities.**

This refers to the possession and use of skills that are related to being protective.

- People who can feed, care for, supervise children according to their basic needs.
- People who can handle, manage, oversee as related to protectiveness.
- People who can cook, clean, maintain, guide, shelter as related to protectiveness.

**Scaling Guide:**

- Parent/Caregiver is able to feed, care for, and supervise child. Parent/Caregiver has the skills necessary to cook, clean, maintain, guide and shelter child as related to protectiveness.
- Parent/Caregiver is able to feed, care for, and supervise child, however at times requires assistance in fulfilling these duties. Parent/Caregiver is able to seek assistance in meeting child's needs and the need for assistance does not result in the child's needs being unmet and/or children being maltreated.

- C. Parent/Caregiver has minimal skills related to providing for the basic needs of child. Parent/Caregiver lacks the ability to consistently feed, and/or care, and or/supervise child resulting in maltreatment and/or danger. Parent/Caregiver recognizes the need for assistance, however does not act to seek resources to assist in fulfilling caregiving responsibilities.
- D. Parent/Caregiver has little to no skills related to providing for basic needs of child. Parent/Caregiver does not feed, and/or, care, and/or supervise child resulting in child being maltreated and/or in danger. Parent/Caregiver does not recognize the need to provide for basic needs of child and/or the parent/caregiver will not or cannot seek resources to assist in fulfilling caregiving responsibilities.

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver is adaptive as a caregiver.**

This refers to people who adjust and make the best of whatever caregiving situation occurs.

- People who are flexible and can adapt.
- People who accept things and can move with them.
- People who are creative about caregiving.
- People who come up with solutions and ways of behaving that may be new, needed and unfamiliar but more fitting.

**Scaling Guide:**

- A. Parent/Caregiver is flexible and adjustable, is able to accept things and move, is creative in their caregiving, and are able to come up with solutions and way s of behaving that may be new, needed and unfamiliar but are fitting to their child’s needs.
- B. Parent/Caregiver is able to be flexible and adjustable in most situations, is able to accept most things and move forward, displays some creativity in their caregiving, and is able to come up with solutions and ways of behaving that are new, needed, and unfamiliar with some assistance. On occasion the parent/caregivers adaptation is not fitting to their child’s needs, however this does not result in maltreatment and/or danger.
- C. Parent/Caregiver lacks flexibility in most situations, including routine caregiving responsibilities. Parent/Caregiver struggles with adapting to meet child needs, including identifying solutions for ways of behaving or caretaking that does not result in maltreatment and/or danger to child. Parent/Caregiver acknowledges their struggle with flexibility and adaptation, however has not sought assistance in changing their behavior.
- D. Parent/Caregiver is not flexible and/or adaptive in caregiving duties, resulting in children being maltreated and/or in danger. Parent/Caregiver cannot or will not acknowledge their lack of flexibility and/or adaptability in caregiving. Parent/Caregiver has not sought assistance in changing their behavior.

**History of Protecting**

This refers to a person with many experiences and events in which he or she has demonstrated clear and reportable evidence of having been protective. Examples might include:

- People who have raised children (now older) with no evidence of maltreatment or exposure to danger.

- People who have protected their children in demonstrative ways by separating them from danger, seeking assistance from others or similar clear evidence.
- Caregivers and other reliable people who can describe various events and experiences where protectiveness was evident.

**Scaling Guide:**

- A. Parent/Caregiver has raised children (older) with no evidence of maltreatment or exposure to danger, have demonstrated ways of protecting their children by separating them from danger, seeking assistance from others. Parent/Caregiver can describe events and experiences where they have protected children in the past.
- B. Parent/Caregiver has raised children (older) with minimal exposure to danger or evidence of maltreatment. This may or may not include prior child welfare system involvement with the family. Parent/Caregiver is able to seek assistance from others and can describe events and experiences where they have protected their children in the past, as well as describe how they were not able to protect their children in past. Parent/Caregiver is able to differentiate between prior protective actions and lack of protective actions.
- C. Parent/Caregiver has demonstrated minimal ability to raise children without exposure to danger or maltreatment. Parent/Caregiver has had frequent (three or more contacts with the child welfare system due to repeated exposure to maltreatment and parental conduct. Parent/Caregiver is not able to articulate how they have protected their children in the past and/or how they could take protective measures to ensure that their children are protected.
- D. Parent/Caregiver has not been able to raise children without exposure to danger and/or maltreatment. Parent/Caregiver has had repeated contact with child welfare system (three or more reports within 1 year) due to repeated exposure to maltreatment and parental conduct.

## Cognitive Protective Capacity

*Specific intellect, knowledge, understanding and perception that results in parenting and protective vigilance.*

### **The person is self-aware as a parent/legal guardian/caregiver.**

This refers to sensitivity to one's thinking and actions and their effects on others – on a child.

- People who understand the cause – effect relationship between their own actions and results for their children
- People who are open to who they are, to what they do and to the effects of what they do.
- People who think about themselves and judge the quality of their thoughts, emotions and behavior.  
People who see that the part of them that is a caregiver is unique and requires different things from them.

### **Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/Caregiver understands the cause-effect relationship between their own actions and effects on child. They are open to who they are and to what they do and the effects of what they do. They are able to think about themselves and judge the quality of their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. They are able to view their role as a caregiver as being unique.
- B. Parent/Caregiver is able to understand the cause-effect relationship between their own actions and effects on children, however at times struggle to be open in regards to themselves and the quality of their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in relation to providing for care of the child. The Parent/Caregiver struggles do not result in child being maltreated and/or being in dangerous situations.
- C. Parent/Caregiver is able to understand the cause-effect relationship between their own actions, however are not able to relate their actions to the effects on their child. Parent/Caregiver is not open in reflecting their own thoughts, emotions, and/or behavior in relation to providing for care of their children, resulting in children being maltreated and/or in danger. Parent/Caregiver recognizes the need for understanding the causal relationship and the effects on child.
- D. Parent/Caregiver is not able to understand the cause-effect relationship between their own actions and are not able to relate those actions to the effects on their child. Parent/Caregiver is not open in regard to their own thoughts, emotions, and/or behavior, resulting in child being maltreated and/or in danger. Parent/Caregiver does not recognize the need for understanding the causal relationship of their actions and the effects on child.

### **The parent/legal guardian/caregiver is intellectually able/capable.**

#### **Adequate Knowledge to Fulfill Caregiving Duties**

This refers to information and personal knowledge that is specific to caregiving that is associated with protection.

- People who know enough about child development to keep kids safe.

- People who have information related to what is needed to keep a child safe.
- People who know how to provide basic care which assures that children are safe.

**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver possess essential knowledge regarding caregiving and child development. Parent/caregiver seeks to increase their knowledge in correlation with child’s needs and is able to recognize the need for increased knowledge as being essential to providing for child safety. Parent/caregiver may have cognitive limitations, however has supports and/or resources to assist in knowledge development.
- B. Parent/caregiver possesses essential knowledge regarding caregiving and child development, however at times struggles in recognizing the correlation with child’s needs and the need for increased/varied knowledge for providing for child safety. Parent/caregiver is open to seeking assistance and may or may not have a support network to assist in increasing their knowledge regarding child development. Maltreatment has not occurred as a result of the parent/caregiver’s knowledge capacity.
- C. Parent/caregiver lacks essential knowledge regarding caregiving and child development and does not correlate the lack of knowledge to the responsibility for child safety and development. Parent/caregiver may have a cognitive delay that affects their ability to increase their knowledge regarding caregiving and safety and the lack of resources or supports for their cognitive delay is a contributing factor to the parent/caregiver intellectual capacity. Parent/caregiver is not or will not seek assistance in increasing their knowledge. Maltreatment has occurred as a result of the parent/caregivers knowledge capacity.
- D. Parent/caregiver lacks essential and basic child development knowledge in regards to caregiving needs and child safety. Parent/caregiver may have a cognitive delay that is debilitating and is not being addressed through informal or formal supports. The parent/caregiver knowledge is such that it leaves children in danger and has resulted in maltreatment. Parent/caregiver is not or will not seek assistance in increasing their knowledge or accessing supports to develop knowledge regarding child development and child safety.

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver recognizes and understands threats to the child.**

This refers to mental awareness and accuracy about one’s surroundings, correct perceptions of what is happening and the viability and appropriateness of responses to what is real and factual.

- People who recognize threatening situations and people.
- People who are alert to danger about persons and their environment.
- People who are able to distinguish threats to child safety.

**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver is attuning with their surroundings, in particular to their perceptions regarding life situations, recognizing dangerous and threatening situations and people. Parent/caregivers are reality orientated and consistently operate in realistic ways.

- B. Parent/caregiver is aware of their surroundings and life situations. Parent/caregiver is aware of dangerous and threatening situations and people, however at times struggles to correlate the impact of dangerous and threatening situations and people with their role as a parent/caregiver. Parent/caregiver ability does not result in children being maltreated and/or unsafe. Parent/caregiver is able to recognize the need for increased awareness and is able to access resources without assistance in increasing their mental awareness in regards to providing for safety of children.
- C. Parent/caregiver frequently is not aware of their surroundings and life situations. In particular this occurs when presented with dangerous and/or threatening situations. Parent/caregiver is not able to recognize the correlation with child safety and mental awareness, resulting in children being maltreated and/or unsafe. Parent/caregiver is not or will not access resources to increase their mental awareness without assistance.
- D. Parent/caregiver is not aware of their surrounding and life situations, particularly when caring for children. Parent/caregiver does not recognize dangerous and/or threatening situations/people, resulting in children being maltreated and/or unsafe. Parent/caregiver may have an unmanaged mental health condition that affects their ability to be aware. The unmanaged mental health condition is known to the parent/caregiver and they have not or will not seek assistance to manage the mental health condition.

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver recognizes the child's needs.**

**Accurate Perceptions of the Child**

This refers to seeing and understanding a child's capabilities, temperament, needs and limitations correctly.

- People who know what children of a certain age or with particular characteristics are capable of.
- People who respect uniqueness in others.
- People who see a child essentially as the child is and as others see the child.
- People who recognize the child's needs, strengths and limitations. People who can explain what a child requires, generally, for protection and why.
- People who see and value the capabilities of a child and are sensitive to difficulties a child experiences.
- People who appreciate uniqueness and difference.
- People who are accepting and understanding.

**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver consistently recognizes the child's needs, strengths and limitations. Parent/caregiver is able to appreciate the uniqueness and differences in children with acceptance and understanding. Parent/caregiver are sensitive to the child and their experiences.
- B. Parent/caregiver recognizes the child's needs, strengths and limitations. Parent/caregiver is able to appreciate the uniqueness and differences in children, however at times struggles in understanding and accepting the child's differences and uniqueness. At times the parent/caregiver struggles with identifying with the child and their experiences. Parent/caregiver is aware during these times and may have sought assistance in continuing to develop their parenting skills in regards to recognizing child's needs and differences. The parent/caregiver has supports and/or resources available for assistance. Children have not been maltreated and/or unsafe

due to the parent/caregiver capacity of being able to recognize child needs and strengths.

- C. Parent/caregiver does not identify with the child's needs, strengths, and/or limitations resulting in the parent/caregiver acting in ways that have resulted in the child being maltreated and/or unsafe. The parent/caregiver is able to recognize their inability to identify with children and is open to assistance in increasing their parenting capacity.
- D. Parent/caregiver does not identify with the child's needs, strengths, and/or limitations that have resulted in the child being maltreated and/or unsafe. The parent/caregiver does not see value in the capabilities of the child and are not sensitive to the child and their experiences. Parent/caregiver view of the child is incongruent to the child and how others view the child. Parent/caregiver is not able to recognize their inability to identify with child and the child's needs and are not willing or able to seek assistance in increasing their parenting capacity.

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver understands his/her protective role.**

This refers to awareness. This refers to knowing there are certain solely owned responsibilities and obligations that are specific to protecting a child.

- People who possess an internal sense and appreciation for their protective role.
- People who can explain what the "protective role" means and involves and why it is so important.
- People who recognize the accountability and stakes associated with the role.
- People who value and believe it is his/her primary responsibility to protect the child.

**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver values and believes that is their primary responsibility to protect the child. Parent/caregiver is convicted in their beliefs and posses an internal sense and appreciation for their protective role. Parent/caregiver is unwavering in their protective role and are able to articulate the significance of their role.
- B. Parent/caregiver believes that protecting their child is a primary responsibility, however at times struggles with their internal sense and appreciation for their protective role resulting in times where the parent/caregiver has abdicated their role for protectiveness to others without regard for the protectiveness of the alternate caregiver. Parent/caregiver recognizes their limitations in regards to protectiveness and their actions have not resulted in maltreatment and/or an unsafe child.
- C. Parent/caregiver does not value and/or believe that their primary responsibility is to protect the child. Parent/caregiver may have an internal sense for being protective, however does not or cannot internalize the primary responsibility for protection of the child. Parent/caregiver does not or cannot accept responsibility for child protection, resulting in children being maltreated and/or unsafe.
- D. Parent/caregiver does not recognize and/or value the responsibility to protect children as a primary role of a caregiver. Parent/caregiver does not have an internal sense for being protective and takes no responsibility for keeping children safe, resulting in children being maltreated and/or unsafe.

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver plans and is able to articulate a plan to protect children.**

This refers to the thinking ability that is evidenced in a reasonable, well-thought-out plan.

- People who are realistic in their idea and arrangements about what is needed to protect a child.

- People whose thinking and estimates of what dangers exist and what arrangement or actions are necessary to safeguard a child.
- People who are aware and show a conscious focused process for thinking that results in an acceptable plan.
- People whose awareness of the plan is best illustrated by their ability to explain it and reason out why it is sufficient

**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver has developed, either currently or in the past, plans to protect children. Parent/caregiver is realistic in their planning and arrangement about what is needed to ensure child safety. Parent/caregiver is aware of danger and is focused on their processing and development of a plan for safety.
- B. Parent/caregiver is realistic in their plan for child safety and is able to make arrangements to ensure child safety, however may or may not have developed a plan for protection in the past. Parent/caregiver is able to articulate a plan and has the resources to execute the plan if needed. Parent/caregiver is realistic in their plan for child safety and is able to make arrangements to ensure child safety, however may or may not have developed a plan for protection in the past. Parent/caregiver is able to articulate a plan and has the resources to execute the plan if needed.
- C. Parent/caregiver does not recognize the need to plan for child safety and has not developed a plan in the past or has developed plans that were unrealistic to ensure safety, thus resulting in maltreatment and/or children being unsafe. Parent/caretaker may have cognitive limitations that affect their ability to conceptualize a plan for protection and are open to assistance in developing plans and/or accessing resources.
- D. Parent/caregiver does not recognize the need to develop a plan to ensure child safety and has not developed a plan in the past or has developed plans that were unrealistic, resulting in children being maltreated and/or unsafe. Parent/caretaker does correlate the inaction of developing a plan and children being maltreated and/or unsafe. Parent/caretaker may have cognitive limitations that affect their ability to conceptualize a plan for protection. Parent/caregiver is unwilling or unable to seek assistance in developing plans and/or accessing resources to assure child safety. Parent/caregiver is unrealistic and unaware of the necessity as parents/caregivers to develop and execute plans for protection of children.

## Emotional Protective Capacity

*Specific feelings, attitudes, identification with a child and motivation that results in parenting and protective vigilance.*

### **The parent/legal guardian/caregiver is able to meet own emotional needs.**

This refers to the parent/caregiver satisfying their feelings in reasonable, appropriate ways that are not dependent on or take advantage of others, in particular children.

- People who use personal and social means for feeling well and happy that are acceptable, sensible and practical.
- People who employ mature, responsible ways of satisfying their feelings and emotional needs.
- People who understand and accept that their feelings and gratification of those feelings are separate from their child.

### **Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver recognizes and understands their own emotional needs and is effectively manages their needs in ways that do not interfere with their ability to parent and does not take advantage of others. Parent/caregiver makes choices in regards to satisfying their feelings and emotional needs that are mature, acceptable, sensible, and practical.
- B. Parent/caregiver recognizes their own emotional needs, however struggles to manage their needs in ways that do not interfere with their ability to parent and/or takes advantage of others. Parent/caregiver makes choices in regards to satisfying their emotional needs that at times are not mature and/or acceptable and/or sensible and/or practical. Parent/caregiver choices do not result in maltreatment and/or unsafe. Parent/caregiver has and uses resources necessary to ensure children are safe while ensuring their emotional needs are met.
- C. Parent/caregiver shows limited understanding and recognition of their own emotional needs. Parent/caregiver often seeks to satisfy their own emotional needs through means that take advantage of others, primarily their children. Parent/caretaker uses avenues to satisfy their own emotional needs that are unacceptable, resulting in children being maltreated and/or unsafe.
- D. Parent/caregiver does not recognize their own emotional needs, resulting in their needs being unmanaged and interfering with their ability to parent children. The unmanaged needs results in children being maltreated and/or unsafe.

### **The parent/legal guardian/caregiver is resilient as a caregiver.**

This refers to responsiveness and being able and ready to act promptly.

- People who recover quickly from setbacks or being upset.

- People who spring into action.
- People who can withstand challenges and stress.
- People who are effective at coping as a caregiver.

**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver has demonstrated that they are able to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune and/or change. Recovery and adjustment are focused on maintaining their role as a caregiver and providing for protection of their children. Parent/caregiver recognizes the need for resiliency as a caregiver and is effective at taking action and coping as a caregiver.
- B. Parent/caregiver has demonstrated that they are able to recover from or adjust under most situations in regards to misfortune and/or change. Recovery and adjustment are mostly focused on their role as a caregiver and for providing protection. Parent/caregiver struggles with coping and taking action during these times. Children are not maltreated and/or unsafe due to the parents coping and/or taking action.
- C. Parent/caregiver when faced with adversity/challenges is not able to recover or adjust. Recovery and adjustment requires frequent interventions by support and resources. Parent/caregiver cannot focus their role during these times to caretaking, resulting in children being maltreated and/or unsafe.
- D. Parent/caregiver does not respond to adversity/challenges and recovery or adjustment is not existent. Parent/caregiver does not respond to interventions by supports and resources and children are maltreated and/or unsafe due to the parent/caregivers responses.

**The parent/caregiver is tolerant as a caregiver**

This refers to caregiver who is able to endure trying circumstances with even temper, be understanding and sympathetic of experiences, express forgiveness under provocation, broad-minded, and patient as a caregiver.

- People who can let things pass.
- People who have a big picture attitude, who don't overreact to mistakes and accidents.
- People who value how others feel and what they think.

**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver maintains an even temper and patience under trying circumstances. Parent/caregiver recognizes the need for tolerance as a caregiver and works to ensure that they are open minded and understanding as a caregiver.
- B. Parent/caregiver frequently maintains an even temper and displays patience under most situations. Parent/caregiver at times struggles with temper and patience, however does not impact their role as a caregiver or result in maltreatment and/or unsafe children. Parent/caregiver is aware of their challenges with tolerance and has the ability to access resources to assist in increasing their tolerance.
- C. Parent/caregiver frequently cannot or will not maintain their temper and/or patience while providing care for children. Parent/caregiver are aware of their decreased tolerance however are not able to correlate the need for tolerance in parenting. Parent/caregivers lack of tolerance has resulted in children being maltreated and/or

being unsafe. Parent/caregiver is willing to access resources and/or supports to increase their tolerance as a caregiver.

- D. Parent/caregiver cannot or will not maintain their temper and/or patience while providing care for children. Parent/caregiver is not aware of their decreased tolerance and are not able to correlate the need for tolerance in parenting. Parent/caregiver lack of tolerance has resulted in children being maltreated and/or being unsafe. Parent/caregiver cannot or will not access resources and/or supports to increase their tolerance as a caregiver.

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver expresses love, empathy and sensitivity toward the child; experiences specific empathy with the child's perspective and feelings.**

This refers to active affection, compassion, warmth and sympathy.

- People who fully relate to, can explain and feel what a child feels, thinks and goes through.
- People who relate to a child with expressed positive regard and feeling and physical touching.
- People who are understanding of children and their life situation.

**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver is able to relate to their child and demonstrates actions that are reflective of expressing love, affection, compassion, warmth, and sympathy for the child and their experiences. Parent/caregiver is able to explain child feelings and emotions and is able to respond accordingly.
- B. Parent/caregiver is able to relate to the child, however at times struggles to demonstrate either physically or verbally, love affection, compassion, warmth, and sympathy. While the parent/caretaker acknowledges their love, compassion, warmth, and sympathy, they struggle with displaying affection to the child. This does not result in child being maltreated and/or unsafe.
- C. Parent/caregiver frequently cannot or will not relate to their children's feelings. Parent/caregiver do not express love, empathy, and/or sympathy for the child on a frequent or consistent basis. Parent/caregiver is able to recognize the absence of relating to the child's feelings. The parent/caregiver's feeling towards the child result in the child being maltreated and/or unsafe.
- D. Parent/Caregiver is not able to relate to the child's feelings. The parent/caregiver does not express any love, empathy, and/or sympathy for the child. The parent/caregiver's lack of feelings towards the child results in the child being maltreated and/or unsafe.

**The parent/caregiver is stable and able to intervene to protect children.**

This refers to the mental health, emotional energy, and emotional stability of the parent/caregiver in providing for protection of children.

- People who are doing well enough emotionally that their needs and feelings don't immobilize them or reduce their ability to act promptly and appropriately.
- People who are not consumed with their own feelings and anxieties.
- People who are mentally alert, in touch with reality.
- People who are motivated as a caregiver and with respect to protectiveness.

**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver’s mental, emotional stability, and energy are sufficient to meet the needs of the child. Feelings and emotions are not paralyzing to the parent/caregiver. Parent/caregivers are alert and reality orientated to their own emotions/feelings and actions. Parent/caregiver is motivated in ensuring their own mental, emotional stability and energy are sufficient to ensure that the child is safe.
- B. Parent/caregiver’s mental, emotional stability, and energy are sufficient under most daily routines, however during times of adversity or challenges the parent/caregiver’s struggle to maintain their stability. Parent/caregiver seeks resources and supports during these times and accesses resources to ensure that child is safe.
- C. Parent/caregiver is frequently not able to maintain emotional stability during daily routines, resulting in the child’s needs not being met. Parent/caregiver is aware of instability, however is immobilized in taking action to access resources or supports to provide for child safety, resulting in child being maltreated and/or unsafe.
- D. Parent/caregiver is not able to maintain emotional stability during daily routines and challenging life events. Parent/caretaker is not aware of their instability and has taken not action to access resources and/or supports to ensure for child safety, resulting in child being maltreated and/or unsafe.

**The parent/caregiver is positively attached to the child.**

This refers to a strong attachment that places a child’s interest above all else.

- People who act on behalf of a child because of the closeness and identity the person feels for the child.
- People who order their lives according to what is best for their children because of the special connection and attachment that exists between them.
- People whose closeness with a child exceeds other relationships.
- People who are properly attached to a child.

**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver demonstrates their attachment to the child through actions such as ordering their lives according to what is best for their child, displays affectionate regard for their child and the child’s experiences, and identifies their closeness with the child exceeds other personal relationships.
- B. Parent/caregiver demonstrates their attachment to the child through actions, however at times struggles with ordering their lives according to what is best for the child, displaying their affection for the child, and identifying the closeness of the relationship with the child. Parent/caregiver attachment struggle are not intentional and the parent/caregivers is aware of the struggle. Parent/caregiver has or has the ability to seek resources and/or supports for increasing their parenting capacity. Children have not been maltreated and/or unsafe due to the parental and child attachment.
- C. Parent/caregiver frequently does not demonstrate their attachment to the child. This is evidenced by the ordering of their lives, lack of affectionate regard for the child, and the parent identifying other relationships as being their primary relationship. Child has suffered maltreatment and/or is unsafe as a result of the parent/caregiver’s lack of attachment to the child.

- D. Parent/Caregiver has no attachment to the child, shows no regard for the child and the parent/caregiver relationship. Parent/caregivers does not identify them as a parent/caregiver. Parent/caregiver cannot or will not seek resources and/or supports to enhance their attachment and does not recognize the correlation between the lack of attachment and maltreatment.

**The parent/legal guardian/caregiver is supportive and aligned with the child.**

**Supports**

This refers to actual, observable sustaining, encouraging and maintaining a child's psychological, physical and social well-being.

- People who spend considerable time with a child filled with positive regard.
- People who take action to assure that children are encouraged and reassured.
- People who take an obvious stand on behalf of a child.

**Aligned**

This refers to a mental state or an identity with a child.

- People who strongly think of themselves as closely related to or associated with a child.
- People who think that they are highly connected to a child and therefore responsible for a child's well-being and safety.
- People who consider their relationship with a child as the highest priority.

**Displays concern for the child**

This refers to a sensitivity to understand and feel some sense of responsibility for a child and what the child is going through in such a manner to compel one to comfort and reassure.

- People who show compassion through sheltering and soothing a child.
- People who calm, pacify and appease a child.
- People who physically take action or provide physical responses that reassure a child, that generate security.
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**Scaling Criteria:**

- A. Parent/caregiver demonstrates that they are strongly related and/or associated with the child, thus showing compassion for the child by calming, pacifying, and appeasing children as needed. Parent/caregiver is aligned with the child, as demonstrated by the actions and responses towards the child. Parent/caregiver identifies their relationship with the child as being the highest priority.
- B. Parent/caregiver frequently is aligned with the child through their actions, however at times struggles in demonstrating compassion for the child and/or being responsive. The parent/caregiver's actions do not result in the child being maltreated and/or unsafe. The parent/caregiver acknowledges their struggle, and has the resources and/or supports to increase their responsiveness and compassion for the child.
- C. Parent/caregiver does not identify with the child through their actions and lacks compassion for the child. Parent/caregiver infrequently non-responsive to the child when the child needs to be calmed, pacified, and/or appeased. The parent/caregiver acknowledges their inability to align with the child however cannot or will not take actions to increase their alignment with the child. The parent/caregiver actions have resulted in children being maltreated and/or unsafe.

D. Parent/caregiver is not aligned with the child as demonstrated by their non-responsiveness to the child and the lack of compassion for the child. Parent/caregiver does not express concern and/or does not acknowledge their lack of alignment with the child. The lack of parent/caregiver actions has resulted in the child being maltreated and/or unsafe.