

# Definition of Dental Neglect

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## Latest Reaffirmation

2020

Dental caries, periodontal diseases, and other oral conditions, if left untreated, can lead to pain, infection, and loss of function. These undesirable outcomes can adversely affect learning, communication, nutrition, and other activities necessary for normal growth and development.

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Dental neglect is willful failure of parent or guardian to seek and follow through with treatment necessary to ensure a level of oral health essential for adequate function and freedom from pain and infection.

This definition was developed by the Child Abuse Subcommittee of the Clinical Affairs Committee and adopted in 1983. This is the sixth reaffirmation of the 1992 version.