

# Definition of Dental Neglect

## Review Council

Council on Clinical Affairs

## Latest Reaffirmation

2016

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.

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 originally developed by the Child Abuse Committee of the Council on Clinical Affairs and adopted in 1983. This document is a reaffirmation of the 2010 version.