

PARENT / CAREGIVER PROTECTIVE CAPACITIES GUIDE

Protective Capacities are caregiver characteristics directly related to child safety. A parent/caregiver with these characteristics ensures the safety of his or her child and responds to threats in ways that keep the child safe from harm. Building protective capacities contributes to a reduction in risk.

DEFINITIONS		
<p>BEHAVIORAL (Actions)</p> <p>Does the parent/caregiver behave in a manner that is consistent with protecting the child?</p>	<p>COGNITIVE (Thinking)</p> <p>Does the parent/caregiver have the knowledge, understanding, and perceptions to protect the child?</p>	<p>EMOTIONAL (Feelings)</p> <p>Does the parent/caregiver have the feelings, attitudes, attachment, and motivation to protect the child?</p>

The following chart further explains each Protective Capacity in detail.

BEHAVIORAL PROTECTIVE CAPACITIES		
<p>Behavioral Protective Capacities are observable. We can see tangible behaviors and can describe when they occur, in the present and when they have occurred in the past. Information of past behaviors provides us with information that a parent/caregiver has the ability and focuses our attention on what is precluding that behavior from happening. Use of exception finding questions are critical with this concept. For example, "What was different about two months ago when you were successfully supervising your child?" Behavioral Protective Capacities also focus on actions and the caregiver's ability to control their actions (impulses).</p>		
<p>1. The parent / caregiver has a history of protecting.</p> <p><i>Adult Functioning</i></p>	<p>This refers to a person with many experiences and events in which he or she has demonstrated clear and reportable evidence on having been protective. Examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
<p>2. The parent / caregiver takes action.</p> <p><i>Adult Functioning</i></p>	<p>This refers to a person who is action oriented as a human being, not just a caregiver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 execute their duties 	
<p>3. The parent / caregiver demonstrates impulse control.</p> <p><i>Adult Functioning</i></p>	<p>This refers to a person who is deliberate and careful; who acts in managed and self-controlled ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who do not act on their urges or desires. • People that do not behave as a result of outside stimulation. • People who avoid whimsical responses. • People who think before they act. • People who are planful. 	
<p>4. The parent / caregiver is physically able.</p> <p><i>Adult Functioning</i></p>	<p>This refers to people who are sufficiently healthy, mobile, and strong.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who can chase down children. • People who can lift children. • People who are able to restrain children. • People with physical abilities to effectively deal with dangers like fires or physical threats. 	
<p>5. The parent / caregiver possesses adequate energy.</p> <p><i>Adult Functioning</i></p>	<p>This refers to the personal sustenance necessary to be ready and on the job of being protective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 lazy or lethargic. • People who are rested or able to overcome being tired. 	
<p>6. The parent / caregiver demonstrates adequate skill to fulfill caregiving responsibilities.</p> <p><i>Parenting</i></p>	<p>This refers to the possession and use of skills that are related to being protective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, and shelter as related to protectiveness. 	
<p>7. The parent / caregiver sets aside own needs in favor of child.</p> <p><i>Parenting</i></p>	<p>This refers to people who can delay gratifying their own needs, who accept their children's needs as a priority over their own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who do for themselves after they've 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. 	

8.	The parent / caregiver is adaptive as a caregiver. <i>Parenting</i>	This refers to people who adjust and make the best of whatever caregiving situation occurs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are flexible and adjustable. • 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.
9.	The parent / caregiver is assertive as a caregiver. <i>Parenting</i>	This refers to being positive and persistent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are firm and convicted. • 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. • People who are forceful and forward.
10.	The parent / caregiver uses resources necessary to meet child's basic needs. <i>Parenting</i>	This refers to knowing what is needed, getting it, and using it to keep a child safe. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who get people to help them and their children. • People who use community and public and private organizations • People who will call on police or access the courts to help them. • People who use basic services such as food or shelter.
11.	The parent / caregiver supports the child. <i>Parenting</i>	This refers to actual, observable, sustaining, encouraging, and maintaining a child's psychological, physical, and social well-being. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

COGNITIVE PROTECTIVE CAPACITIES

Cognitive Protective Capacities explore how the parent/caregiver is thinking. While not as obvious as Behavioral Protective Capacities, we should still be able to make observations about and be able to describe cognitive processes. How a person thinks often translates into how they act, and their verbal and nonverbal expressions. Particular emphasis should be placed on mental operations that empower a person to act or to take responsibility for their actions (or lack of action). Another facet of Cognitive Protective Capacities is a caregiver's perception of reality and their understanding of what is dangerous to a child.

12.	The parent / caregiver has adequate knowledge to fulfill caregiving responsibilities and tasks. <i>Adult Functioning</i>	This refers to information and personal knowledge that is specific to caregiving that is associated with protection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
13.	The parent / caregiver is reality oriented; perceives reality accurately. <i>Adult Functioning</i>	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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who describe life circumstances accurately. • People who recognize threatening situations and people. • People who do not deny reality or operate in unrealistic ways. • People who are alert to danger within persons and the environment. • People who are able to distinguish threats to child safety.
14.	The parent/caregiver is self-aware as a caregiver. <i>Adult Functioning</i>	This refers to sensitivity to one's thinking and actions and their effects on others – on a child. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
15.	The parent/caregiver plans and articulates a plan to protect the child. <i>Parenting</i>	This refers to the thinking ability that is evidenced in a reasonable, well thought out plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
16.	The parent/caregiver is aligned with the child. <i>Parenting</i>	This refers to a mental state or an identity with a child. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

17.	The caregiver has accurate perceptions of the child. <i>Parenting</i>	<p>This refers to seeing and understanding a child’s capabilities, needs, and limitations correctly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 exactly 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.
18.	The parent/caregiver understands his/her protective role. <i>Parenting</i>	<p>This refers to awareness...knowing there are certain solely owned responsibilities and obligations that are specific to protecting a child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

EMOTIONAL PROTECTIVE CAPACITIES

Emotional Protective Capacities explore the emotional bond and attachment between a parent/caregiver and his/her child. It is this bond that might drive some caregivers to be overly protective and some to be passive. Emotional Protective Capacity, however, goes beyond the expression of love for a child to explore how that love is a motivating force to protect the child from harm. This category of capacity would also include a caregiver’s ability and willingness to cope with a situation.

19.	The parent/caregiver is able to meet his/her own emotional needs. <i>Adult Functioning</i>	<p>This refers to satisfying how one feels in reasonable, appropriate ways that are not dependent on or take advantage of others, in particular, children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who use personal and social means for feeling well and happy that are acceptable, sensible, and practical. • People who employ mature, adult-like 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.
20.	The parent/caregiver is emotionally able to intervene and protect the child. <i>Adult Functioning</i>	<p>This refers to mental health, emotional energy, and emotional stability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
21.	The parent/caregiver is resilient as a caregiver. <i>Adult Functioning</i>	<p>This refers to responsiveness and being able and ready to act promptly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who recover quickly from setbacks or being upset. • People who spring into action. • People who can withstand. • People who are effective at coping as a caregiver.
22.	The parent/caregiver is tolerant as a caregiver. <i>Adult Functioning</i>	<p>This refers to acceptance, allowing and understanding, and respect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
23.	The parent/caregiver displays concern for the child and the child’s experience and is intent on emotionally protecting the child. <i>Parenting</i>	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who show compassion through sheltering and soothing a child. • People who can calm, pacify, and appease a child. • People who physically take action or provide physical responses that reassure a child, that generate security.
24.	The parent/caregiver and child have a strong bond and the caregiver is clear that the number one priority is the well-being of the child. <i>Parenting</i>	<p>This refers to a strong attachment that places a child’s interest above all else.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
25.	The parent/caregiver expresses love, empathy, and sensitivity toward the child; experiences specific empathy with the child’s perspective and feelings. <i>Parenting</i>	<p>This refers to active affection, compassion, warmth, and sympathy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.