

# Definition of Dental Neglect

**Originating Committee**  
Child Abuse Committee

**Review Council**  
Council on Clinical Affairs

**Adopted**  
1983

**Reaffirmed**  
1996, 2001

**Revised**  
1987, 1992

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.

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