

# AFFLUENT NEGLECT

## What is affluent neglect?

Affluent neglect refers to the neglect experienced by children in wealthy families. Often this neglect can be more difficult to spot, as the type of neglect experienced by children and young people is often emotional.

## What does it look like?

### Emotional Disconnect

Parents working long hours may leave children in the care of paid carers, leading to emotional distance and loneliness.

### Academic Pressure

Affluent parents may pressure their children to succeed academically, which can result in psychological and emotional issues.

### Toxic Trio

Issues like parental alcohol/substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness affect children in affluent homes too.

### Relaxed Attitude

Wealthy parents may have a more relaxed attitude toward their children's risky behaviours (e.g. drug use, sexual activity).

## What is the impact?

The emotional neglect, exposure to the toxic trio, and lack of supervision sometimes faced by children from affluent families are considered to be adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

ACEs can affect brain development and change how a person's body will respond to stress.

They have a lasting impact on an individual and the consequences of these adverse experiences can lead to long-term mental and physical health problems, as well as substance misuse and addiction in adulthood.

## What are the risks?

There are a huge number of risks that face children from all walks of life and being a child in an affluent family is often perceived to protect those children from some of these dangers. Children from affluent families are not as sheltered from neglect as some of us may think.

## Why does affluent neglect get overlooked?

Symptoms of neglect may be harder to spot. The nature of emotional neglect can make it much harder to identify than other types of neglect.

Also, staff training often focuses on case studies looking at children from poor or working-class families, so staff may not be adequately trained to identify and intervene with cases of neglect among wealthier families.

It is also often the case when working with poorer families that they are already known to social services, so it is easier to know who to look out for.

There is also a case to be made for the role of unconscious bias when working with children from wealthier families. We may miss important pieces of the puzzle when they assume that children from wealthy families are less at risk than those from poorer backgrounds.

These children may be coming in with new clothes and fancy designer labels – not signs you would usually associate with a case of parental neglect.

## What next?

If you have any concerns about any child or adult at risk, you should report it to the local authorities OR if you believe a person to be in immediate danger ring 999.

Remember, always seek advice and support if you are unsure of what to do.

**If you have concerns or worries regarding a person, please consider the following:**

**NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000 Childline: 0800 1111 Contact your local protection services**

