

language specialist may be necessary.

As in any situational crisis, parents need support and understanding if their child is treated for lead poisoning. Many families at the highest risk for lead poisoning have the fewest resources to comply with measures such as relocation or removal of lead from the environment where the child experiences exposure.

Child Maltreatment

The broad term *child maltreatment* includes intentional physical abuse or neglect, emotional abuse or neglect, and sexual abuse of children, usually by adults. It is one of the most significant social problems affecting children. In 2011, Child Protective Service agencies in the United States confirmed that an estimated 681,000 children were victims of one or more types of child maltreatment. Of the confirmed cases, about 18% suffered physical abuse, 9% sexual abuse, 79% neglect, and 8% psychological maltreatment or emotional abuse. In 2011, there were an estimated 1570 child fatalities as a result of child abuse and neglect ([US Department of Health and Human Services, 2012](#)). Reported statistics only partially represent the actual incidence of child maltreatment because many cases are believed to go unreported.*

Child Neglect

Child neglect is the most common form of maltreatment, and 50% of reported neglect cases involve children 5 years old or younger ([US Department of Health and Human Services, 2012](#)). Of the children who died, 71% suffered from neglect either exclusively or in combination with another type of maltreatment ([US Department of Health and Human Services, 2012](#)). **Neglect** is generally defined as the failure of a parent or other person legally responsible for the child's welfare to provide for the child's basic needs and an adequate level of care.

Important contributing factors for child neglect are lack of knowledge of child's needs, lack of resources, and caregiver substance abuse. For example, neglectful parents often demonstrate poor parenting skills. They may be unaware that an infant needs to be fed every 3 to 4 hours, may not know what to feed the child, and