

may have insufficient funds to buy food. The most serious lack of knowledge is failure to recognize emotional nurturing as an essential need of children. (See also [Failure to Thrive, Chapter 10.](#))

## Types of Neglect

Neglect takes many forms and can be classified broadly as physical or emotional maltreatment. **Physical neglect** involves the deprivation of necessities, such as food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care, and education. **Emotional neglect** generally refers to failure to meet the child's needs for affection, attention, and emotional nurturance.

Neglect may also include lack of intervention for or fostering of maladaptive behavior, such as delinquency or substance abuse. **Emotional abuse or psychological maltreatment**, an even more difficult aspect of maltreatment to define, refers to the deliberate attempt to destroy or significantly impair a child's self-esteem or competence. Emotional abuse may take the form of rejecting, isolating, terrorizing, ignoring, corrupting, verbally assaulting, or over pressuring the child ([Hibbard, Barlow, MacMillan, et al, 2012](#)).

## Physical Abuse

The deliberate infliction of physical injury on a child, usually by the child's caregiver, is termed *physical abuse*. Physical abuse can include anything from bruises and fractures to brain damage. Minor physical injury is responsible for more reported cases of maltreatment than major physical injury, but major physical abuse causes more deaths. In 2011, 48% of fatalities from abuse suffered physical abuse alone or in combination with other types of maltreatment ([US Department of Health and Human Services, 2012](#)). Despite the importance of the problem, a universally accepted definition of what constitutes minor and major physical abuse does not exist. Rather, each state in the United States defines abuse according to its individual reporting laws.

## Abusive Head Trauma

**Abusive head trauma (AHT)** is a serious form of physical abuse caused by violent shaking of infants and young children. Other commonly used terms including *shaken baby syndrome*, *inflicted head*