

CAREGIVER PROTECTIVE CAPACITY REFERENCE
Assessing & Enhancing Caregiver Protective Capacities

Caregiver Protective Capacity:

Protective capacities are the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional characteristics that are specifically and directly associated with a person’s ability to care for and keep a child safe. This is the ability, capacity, and willingness of a parent or caretaker who has responsibility for the care of a child and can protect the child from actual or substantial risk of physical or psychological harm to a child(ren).

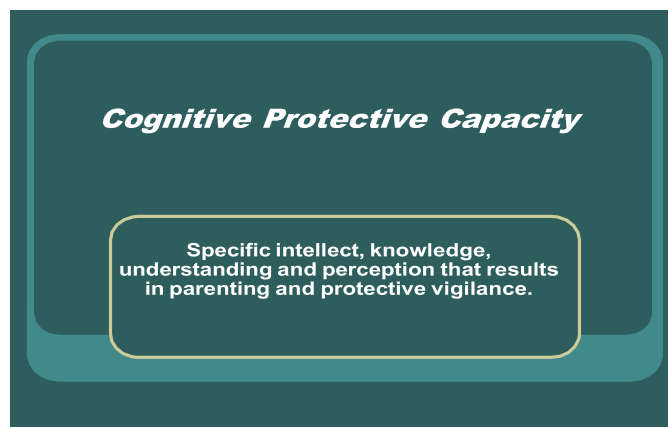
Criteria for Determining Caregiver Protective Capacities

- The attributes have to mitigate actual or substantial risk of physical or psychological harm from arising or having an unsafe impact on the child.
- The caretaker will have demonstrated the ability to protect the child in the past while under similar or comparable circumstances and family conditions.
- The characteristic is necessary or fundamental to being protective.
- The caretaker is protective and understands the significance of the threat without the prompting of Department involvement.
- The characteristic can be related to acting or being able to act on behalf of a child.



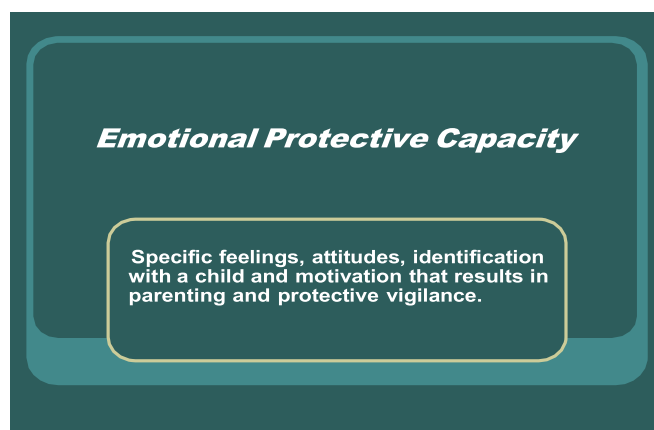
<p><u>The parent/caregiver has a history of protecting</u></p>	<p>The parent/caregiver has a history of protecting. This refers to a person with many experiences and events in which they have demonstrated clear and reportable evidence of having been protective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who have protected their children in demonstrated ways, seeking assistance from others. • Parents/caregivers and other reliable people who can describe various events and experiences where protectiveness was evident. • People who proceed with a positive course of action in resolving issues.
<p><u>The parent/caregiver demonstrates</u></p>	<p>This refers to a person who is deliberate and careful; who acts in managed and self-controlled ways.</p>

<u>impulse control</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who think about consequences and act accordingly. • People who are able to plan. • People who can handle and manage their caregiving responsibilities.
<u>The parent/caregiver uses resources necessary to meet the child's basic needs</u>	<p>This refers to knowing what is needed, getting it, and using it to keep a child safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who seek ways to satisfy their children's needs as the priority. • People who advocate for their child. • People who use community, public, and private organizations. • People who will call the police or access the courts to help them.



<u>The parent/caregiver plans and articulates a plan to protect the child</u>	<p>This refers to the thinking ability that is evidenced in a reasonable, well thought out plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are realistic in their idea and arrangements about what is needed to protect a child. • People who have information related to what is needed to keep a child safe.
<u>The parent/caregiver is reality oriented; perceives reality accurately</u>	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who describe life situations in an accurate and realistic way. • People who recognize and respond to threatening situations and people.
<u>The parent/caregiver understands his/her protective role</u>	<p>This refers to awareness...knowing there are certain responsibilities and obligations that are specific to protecting a child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who value and believe it is his/her primary responsibility to protect the child.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who can explain what the “protective role” means and why it is important. • People who recognize the child’s needs, strengths and limitations. People who can explain what a child requires for protection. • People who are accepting and understanding of the capabilities of the child.
<u>The parent/caregiver is self-aware</u>	<p>This refers to a parent’s/caregiver’s sensitivity to one’s thinking and actions and their effects on others – on a child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who understand the cause-effect relationship between their own actions and results for their children. • People who think that they are highly connected to a child and responsible for the child’s well-being and safety.



<u>The parent/caregiver is emotionally able to intervene to protect the child.</u>	<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 do not reduce their ability to act promptly and appropriately. • People who have a big picture attitude, who don’t overreact to mistakes and accidents. • People who are effective at coping as a parent/caregiver. • People who are reasonable, appropriate and have mature/adult like ways of satisfying their feelings and emotions.
<u>The parent/caregiver displays concern for the child and the child’s experience and is intent on emotionally protecting the child.</u>	<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 by soothing a child. • People who calm, pacify and help the child. • People who can relate to, can explain and feel what a child feels, thinks and goes through.

JUSTIFYING A CAREGIVER CAN AND WILL PROTECT- *A Reference Guide*

To have protective capacities, the attributes have to mitigate actual or substantial risk of physical or psychological harm from arising or having an unsafe impact on the child. To demonstrate protective capacities the caretaker will have demonstrated the ability to protect the child in the past while under similar or comparable circumstances and family conditions and understands the significance of the threat without the prompting of Department involvement.

- Caregiver has demonstrated the ability to protect the child in the past while under similar circumstances and family conditions.
- Caregiver has made appropriate arrangements which have been confirmed to assure that the child is not left alone with the maltreating person. This may include having another adult present within the home who is aware of the protective concerns and is able to protect the child.
- Caregiver can specifically articulate a plan to protect the child, such as the caregiver leaving when a situation escalates, calling the police in the event a restraining order is violated, etc.
- Caregiver believes the child's report of maltreatment and is supportive of the child.
- Caregiver is physically able to intervene to protect the child.
- Caregiver does not have significant individual needs which might affect the safety of the child, such as severe depression, lack of impulse control, medical needs, etc.
- Caregiver has asked, demands, expects the maltreating adult to leave the household and can assure the separation is maintained effectively.
- Caregiver has adequate resources necessary to meet the child's basic needs.
- Caregiver is capable of understanding the specific threat to the child and the need to protect.
- Caregiver has adequate knowledge and skill to fulfill caregiving responsibilities and tasks. This may involve considering the caregiver's ability to meet any exceptional needs that the child might have.
- Caregiver is cooperating with the caseworker's efforts to provide services and assess the specific needs of the family.
- There is no precedence for the current maltreatment in respect to type and severity, and the caregiver demonstrates appropriate concern and tolerance.
- Caregiver is emotionally able to carry out a plan and/or intervene to protect the child (caregiver not incapacitated by fear of maltreating person).
- Caregiver has legally separated from maltreating caregiver and has/does demonstrate behavior to suggest he/she will not reunite until circumstance warrants or they are proceeding with divorce action.
- Displays concern for the child and the child's experience and is intent on emotionally protecting the child.
- Caregiver and child have strong bond, and caregiver is clear that the number one priority is the well-being of the child.
- The caregiver consistently expresses belief that the maltreating person is in need of help, and he/she supports the maltreating person getting help. This is caregiver's point of view without being prompted by CPS.
- While the caregiver may be having a difficult time believing the other person would maltreat the child, the caregiver describes the child as believable and trustworthy.
- Caregiver does not place responsibility on the child for the problems of the family.