

## **RISK FACTORS FOR MALTREATMENT RECIDIVISM**

From Larrieu, J. A., Heller, S. H., Smyke, A. T., & Zeanah, C. H. (2008). Predictors of permanent loss of custody for mothers of infants and toddlers in foster care. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 29, 48-60.

### **Variables identified as risk factors for maltreatment and placement of children in foster care:**

Poverty

Low socioeconomic status

Parental psychopathology

Criminal behavior

Social isolation

Impaired parenting skills

Marital discord

Substance abuse

Abuse as a child

Foster home placement as a child

REFERENCES: (Courtney, 1994; Ethier, Couture, & Lecharite, 2004; Hulsey & White, 1989; Katz & Robinson, 1991; Kopp & McIntosh, 1997).

No one factor consistently has been identified as a specific risk that predicts maltreatment.

### **Barriers to reunification related to caregiver functioning include:**

Parental mental illness

Substance abuse

Being homeless

Having a record of criminal behavior

Being unresponsive to prior mental health services

Having poor support systems

Having financial support that relies solely on drug-related activity

REFERENCES: (Jellinek et al., 1992; Katz & Robinson, 1991; Rzepnicki et al. 1997).

**Reunification of children with their biological parents most strongly predicted by:**

Parents' compliance with Court-ordered services

REFERENCE: (Jellinek et al., 1992)

**LONG-TERM FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF MATERNAL RECIDIVISM:**

Mothers who maltreated their children followed longitudinally,,assessed at time of identification, at the conclusion of a 2-year intervention program, and two years later.

At the four-year follow-up:

Parents who had **8 or more risk factors** were 4 times more likely to be in the chronic maltreating group.

When the risk factors were considered individually, only two were statistically associated with chronic maltreatment. These were

Being a victim of sexual abuse as a child

Being placed in a foster home.

REFERENCE: Ethier et al. (2004)

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