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April 2, 2019

### My Guardian Mentor

One great saying expresses that children are the future of the world. Imagine if parents and guardians could make the future devastating by treating their child awful or even worse, neglecting them. Child neglect is a serious issue not only for the child, but for the future of the world. Children were brought into this world to be given attention and cared for. They are supposed to be treated kindly and loved by their parent(s) or guardian(s). They also should not be looked at as a burden. Truthfully, it is not fair bringing a child into this world if parents are not one hundred percent certain and dedicated to take care of them. It was definitely not the child's choice to be born just to suffer. So many parents take up multiple jobs or even shifts and dump their kid in day care. This typically happens to children of younger ages. From that young age, it sticks with them unto adulthood. Leaving the children with a void, where their memories with their parents should be. Child neglect can have long lasting negative effects, poor diet, academic failure, being a social outcast, and lack of empathy, on a child, but mentoring can help prevent or even reverse it, by giving children the attention they need and deserve.

It would be essential to know what child neglect is. Child neglect is the absence by a parent or guardian that denies a child of their basic required needs and can result in harm ("Child Neglect"). People may not understand what child neglect really is, although it is quite self-explanatory. Just imagine if a toddler was kept locked in a room with minimal food and

attention. If their parents gave them attention once a week, or they were given to their grandparents or extended family to be taken care of. That is dangerous to the child's health and future. Some children end up being taken away by CPS, child protection services, and more times than not, put into foster care. Foster care is when another pair or couple takes care of children that are unfortunate to not have parents. Also, if they were to have parents, they would be in foster care, because they were not taken care of by those parents. Most cases than going in to foster care, "children are responsible for themselves without adult supervision or older children take care of themselves and their younger siblings during parental absence" (Park and Zahn). Usually if there is more than one child the eldest takes care of the others. They are treated as the parent of the house when their parents are not around. The eldest are treated as an adult and must be responsible of taking care of their younger siblings. There are so many negative consequences of child neglect, and the pain and suffering are more likely felt by the children. Without parents around, the child is for themselves or for their younger siblings.

The effects of child neglect can be significant and perpetual in their future. Effects of child neglect can negatively affect children within four factors. These four areas that can be altered due to how children were treated and or abandoned while young. The four areas are physically, education-wise, medically, and emotionally. The physical appearance of a child can be altered negatively if they are not getting proper nutrition. If they do not eat, they will be below proper weight for their height and age. Unhealthy eating habits and poor diet can stick with them as they get older. Apart from physical appearance, a child's education can be lacking. They can perform poorly in school, if they have no support system, due to lack of parenting. They will feel unmotivated and they will feel like school is useless. In addition to the physical aspect and education, medically the child would be unsatisfied. In the case of nutrients, kids will be harmed

physically and medically due to lack of food. Child abuse can be a leading issue caused by child neglect. There is a link between parents that neglect their children and parents that abuse their children. Lastly, the child can be emotionally harmed due to their parents being absent. It is known that children without parents, “have difficulty understanding the emotions of others, regulating their own emotions, or forming and maintaining relationships with others” (DePanfilis 25). Without parents to influence them on how to treat people, they are lost on how their actions affect others. They do not know how to openly express their emotion, which will affect them in communication. These neglected children, “have a limited ability to feel remorse or empathy, which may mean that they could hurt others without feeling their actions were wrong” (DePanfilis 25). They may tend to hurt others emotionally, without even knowing. Neglecting a child can lead them to being negatively impacted in four areas, physically, education-wise, medically, and emotionally.

One step to preventing or even reversing the effects of child neglect would be mentoring. To understand why mentoring is effective and its essential to know what mentoring is. According to Wayne Hart, “mentoring is an intentional, developmental relationship in which a more experienced, more knowledgeable person nurtures the professional and personal life of a less experienced, less knowledgeable person” (Hart 7). It is where a person of great experience and knowledge shares helpful assistance to someone without such experience. In addition, “there have been a number of studies that have found that mentoring relationships (or, in some studies, perceived security in mentoring) lead to significant changes in a number of cognitive and emotional outcome variables, including attitudes toward school, academic confidence, self-concept, attitudes toward helping, feelings of school connectedness, representations of parental and teacher relationships, and perceptions of support from significant adults outside mentoring

relationships” (Balcazar et al. 44). It expresses the areas in which mentoring can be helpful and an impact. Also, children that have been neglected or abandoned lives typically change for the better due to a good relationship with a mentor. Although mentors must be close to their mentees, “research on the relationship in child and family welfare has shown that effective relationships are those which are characterized by close personal contact, which clients frequently consider to be “friendship-like” in nature, contained within professional boundaries” (Reimer 316). It is a good thing that mentors are close with the troubled youth and children. However, mentors must establish and gain respect from their mentees. The mentees, troubled and neglected youth and children, must also have discipline that their parents possibly failed to teach them.

Apart from knowing what a mentor is, it would be appropriate to know what a mentor does and how they impact the children. The impact of mentors can prevent or even reverse the effect of child mistreatment on children. mentors want to know how they can affect troubled youth affectively. mentors cannot certainly replace parents, “however, research has begun to point to a set of factors that distinguish more effective mentoring relationships, with duration, consistency, and a close emotional connection emerging as key characteristics” (Reimer 317-318). With that being said the more time a mentor mentors a child the more he or she will become comfortable. mentors can also have an impact on foster care children and youth. it is common that a, “foster parents are more likely to seek a mentor for their child because the child was insecure and did not trust adults and had poor relationships with others” (Spencer et al.). It is common that children that were neglected or put into foster care would not trust adults. Only because the first adults in their life abandoned and neglected them. Unfortunately, that causes a strong hatred and mistrust toward adults, but “mentors can provide children with a sense of

safety, dedication, and nurturance to children who are recovering from earlier traumatic experiences” (Day 197). Mentors also can help troubled and neglected youth go through the process of resiliency. Mentors should know that, “resiliency is a quality that helps victims of child maltreatment resist and recover from adversities” (Day 198). Mentors help an assist trouble use a neglect youth “recover” from the harm in the pain caused by child neglect. Also, they provide income to trouble views with open arms, they treat them with care. During the process of resiliency, “children possess cognitive coping skills that build confidence and reduce anxiety, social coping skills that involve forming and maintaining supportive social relationships, and behavioral coping skills that involve engaging in actions, like relaxation, to successfully cope with stress” (Day 198). Troubled and neglected children tend to be uneasy, mistrusting, and typically social outcasts. Mentors help with this process to reverse all those negative adaptations. To help back up mentoring, “lastly, a significant body of evidence suggests that mentoring and social skills training may address the needs of at-risk children and youth facing issues of aggression, behavior problems, mental health disorders, poor social competence, and low academic achievement” (Williams 62). Mentors are proven to help reverse the effects of children and youth “at-risk”. Those troubled children and youth are, “essentially, youth identified as being at risk are typically offered specific programs and services in an attempt to decrease the likelihood that they will experience negative outcomes such as poor academic achievement, psychological and emotional challenges, and homelessness outcomes similar for youth in foster care” (Williams 62). Obviously, those services would be mentoring to help divert and decrease the negative results of being neglected.

Some argue that it may be unintentional or even necessary that the parents are absent. Do to providing for the child’s or children’s needs. Some households are not financially stable,

therefore causing the parent to work more. Parents or guardians will take on multiple shifts to provide for the household. Leaving the children lonely and neglected but must understand that their parents or guardians are doing it for them to survive. They might drop their children with a relative that may do a better job taking care of them. According to Park and Zahn, “nationally, 52% of the time the caretakers are the children's grandmothers” (Park and Zahn). Typically, when a child is without parents or if they are facing absence of their parents, their grandparents take care of them. Besides that, people argue of the children that lost their parents and have to stay with relatives or in foster care. Apart from what cannot be helped, children have to deal with their parents being incarcerated. Some will say that it is inevitable that some children are bound to lose their parents in one way or the other. A way to substitute that missing gap for their parents would be having a great relationship with a mentor.

Parents should never negatively affect children through child neglect, although mentoring can help avert it with attention. Many children and youth are neglected, abused, or even abandoned. Children cannot survive on their own. Children cannot beat their own parents. Although it is clearly inevitable for some children to be neglected or abandoned, mentoring can help decrease the negative outcome over those children. Mentorship “mentoring relationships for many of these youth are assumed to provide a context for the revision of negative representations of self, parents, peers, teachers and school, thus preventing school maladjustment, failure and dropout. This assumption concerns the identification of cognitive and emotional variables associated with abuse and neglect, potentially linked to the impact of mentoring relationships on their future development” (Balcazar et al. 44). Mentoring basically covers or reverses the negative impact of neglect, therefore preventing failure and bad performance in school or their future. However, parents must know that neglecting their child or

children. They did not ask to be born nor did they ask to be neglected. Children are the future of the world, and it must be ensured that the future will be bright and successful period mentorship can help to side track all the negative outcomes in the future and guaranteed positive ones.

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