

APPENDIX. Risk Assessment Matrix in the Procedural Guide for Handling Child Abuse Cases of the Social Welfare Department, Hong Kong SAR Government⁶

Matrix No.	Action	Low risk
1	Child's age, physical and mental abilities	≥10 Years and cares for and protects self without or with limited adult assistance, no physical or mental handicaps / limitations
2	Severity and / or frequency of suspected abuse, physical or sexual	No injury or minor injury; not requiring medical attention; no discernible effect on child; isolated incident
3	Severity and / or frequency of suspected neglect and recentness	No discernible effect on child; isolated incident
4	Location of injuries	Bony body parts; knee, elbows, buttocks
5	School problems	Regular attendance; no reported school problems
6	Caretaker's physical, intellectual, or emotional abilities	No intellectual / physical limitations, realistic expectations of child; in full control of mental faculties
7	Caretaker's level of cooperation	Willingness and ability to work with agency to resolve problem and protect child
8	Caretaker's parenting skills and / or knowledge	Caretaker exhibits appropriate parenting skills and knowledge pertaining to child-rearing techniques or responsibilities
9	Presence of a parent substitute in the home	Parent substitute in the home is viewed as supportive / stabilising influence
10	History of abuse / neglect	No reported history of abuse / neglect
11	Strength of family support systems	Family, neighbours, or friends available and committed to help; participation in church, community, or social group
12	Perpetrator's access to child	Out of home, no access to child
13	Environmental condition of the home	Home in relatively clean with no apparent safety or health hazards; functional utilities
14	Stresses / crises	Stable family, steady employment or income; means of transportation available; strong relationship with relatives
15	Substance abuse drug / alcohol	No drug / alcohol use; caretaker's drug / alcohol use does not influence parenting

Intermediate risk	High risk
5-9 Years of age, any age requiring adult assistance to care for and protect self, emotionally withdrawn; minor physical illness / mental handicap; mild-to-moderately impaired development	<5 Years of age; any age unable to care for or protect self without adult assistance; severe physical illness / mental handicap; over-active; difficult or provocative; severely impaired development
Minor physical injury or unexplained injury requiring some form of medical treatment / diagnosis; history or pattern of punishment / discipline; mild sexual confrontation	Child requires immediate medical treatment and / or hospitalisation; history or pattern of excessive punishment / discipline / sexual molestation
Caretaker suspected of failing to meet minimum medical, food and / or shelter needs of child; unconfirmed history or pattern of leaving child unsupervised	Caretaker is unwilling to meet minimal medical, food and / or shelter needs of child, confirmed history or pattern of leaving child unsupervised or unprotected for excessive periods of time; child at severe risk of harm
Torso	Head, face, or genitals
Frequent absence; some behavioural problems; child comes unkempt and hungry	Severe behaviour problems; parents uncooperative; child fearful of parental contact
May be physically / emotionally handicapped; moderate intellectual limitations; history of criminal / mental health record / poor reasoning abilities; needs planning and assistance to protect child	Severely handicapped; poor perception of reality; unrealistic expectations / perception of child's behaviour; severe intellectual limitations; incapacity due to alcohol / drug intoxication
Overtly compliant with investigator; presence / ability of non-offending adult to assure minimal cooperation with agency	Does not believe there is a problem; refuses to cooperate; uninterested or evasive
Inconsistent display of the necessary parenting skills and / or knowledge required to provide a minimal level of child care	Caretaker is unwilling / incapable of exercising the necessary parenting skills and / or lacks minimal knowledge needed to assure a minimal level of child care
Parent substitute is in the home on an infrequent basis and / or assumes only minimal caretaker responsibility for the child	Parent substitute resides with the family and is the alleged offender
Previous indicated report of abuse / neglect; or protective services provided to the child, family, or offender	Pending child abuse / neglect investigation; previous indicated abuse / neglect report of a serious nature; multiple reports of abuse / neglect involving the child, family or offender; prior dependency
Family supportive but not in geographic area; some support from friends and neighbours; limited community services available	Relatives or friends unavailable / uncommitted or subversive; geographically isolated from community services, no phone or means of transportation available
In home, access to child is difficult; child is under constant supervision of other adult in the home	In home, complete access to child; uncertainty if other adult can protect child
Trash and garbage not disposed and hazardous water and / or electricity inoperative; infestation of ants, roaches or other vermin	Living in condemned and / or structurally unsound residence; exposed wiring and / or other potential fire / safety hazards present
Pregnancy or recent birth of a child; insufficient income and / or food; inadequate home management skills / knowledge; relationship with relatives characterised by mutual hostility	Death of spouse; recent change in marital or relationship status; acute psychiatric episodes; spouse abuse / marital conflict; drug / alcohol dependency; chaotic lifestyle; criminal activity; frequent arrests
Drug / alcohol use impairs caretaker's functioning; connected to major presenting problem	Regular heavy use of drug / alcohol resulting in chronic endangerment to child; prevents working on case plan