

# Levels of Family Functioning

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## I. Independent and Adequate

Families in this category are able to meet the needs of their children by combining their own skills, help from friends and relatives, and services which they seek and use. Such families, like all families, face problems and crises. It is their competence at resolving these problems which makes them adequate.

## II. Vulnerable to Crisis

Families in this category need temporary, i.e., six months to a year, help resolving unusual problems; otherwise the family functions independently and adequately. Examples of common precipitating crises include birth of a handicapped child, divorce, loss of employment, death of a family member, entry of a handicapped child into school, and sexual abuse in day care of a child. Because each of these crises could result in chronic problems, it is the nature of the family's response, not the nature of the crisis, which results in the Vulnerable classification.

## III. Restorable

Families in this category are multi-problem families who need several types of training in specific skills or therapy around specific issues. Following intervention, it is expected that the family will function independently and adequately. The period of intervention can be expected to last 1-4 years and require active case management to organize the sequence of service delivery and to integrate the services.

## IV. Supportable

There are no rehabilitative services which can be expected to enable these families to become independent and adequate. With specific on-going services, the family can meet the basic physical, intellectual, emotional, and economic needs of their children. Services, and management of those services, will be needed until all the children are grown. Examples of supportable families include those with a mentally retarded mother, a depressed mother, or a parent who abuses alcohol or drugs chronically.

## V. Inadequate

There are no services sufficient to enable these families to meet the basic needs of their children, now or in the future. Permanent removal of the children should be sought.

Crittenden, P.M. (1992). The social ecology of treatment: Case study of a service system for maltreated children. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 62, 22-34.