**TEACH KIDS TO BE S.A.F.E.**

**S**tay out of the fight.

**A**sk for help.

**F**ind an adult who will listen.

**E**veryone knows it's not your fault.

## HOW TO REPORT ABUSE TO DCFS

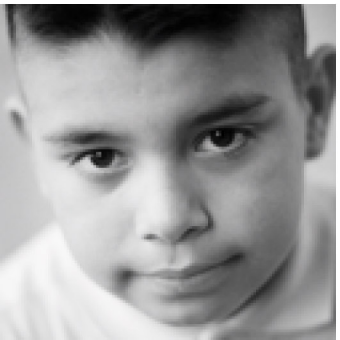
- Call the DCFS hotline at 1-800-25ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)
- Have the following information, if possible:

| | |
|---|---|
| Name | Date of birth |
| Address | Phone number |
| Information about siblings | Parent/guardian's name |

- Identify if you are a mandated reporter.
- State if you think it is an emergency.
- State why you have reason to believe the child is abused (report factual information and observations).
- Document the name of the hotline worker and the date and time of your call.
- Complete the DCFS report form. This form must be sent to the local DCFS Investigative Unit. (Keep a copy of your records).
- Your name is not given to those being investigated. Laws protect confidentiality of mandated reporters.

***Each year, approximately 900,000 American children are victims of abuse and neglect.***

***More than half the children whose mothers are battered are likely to be abused themselves.***



**Child abuse is everyone's business.**

**You may be a child's only lifeline to safety.**

**PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE...**
**WE CAN SUCCEED!**

Prevent Child Abuse Illinois™


***Prevention Resource Development Project***
4617 North Prospect, #8
Peoria, Illinois 61616
309.688.6246 (office)
309.688.5744 (fax)

**www.preventchildabuseillinois.org**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# THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

## LIVING IN FEAR

Prevent Child Abuse Illinois™

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DOES AFFECT CHILDREN!

*Making the Connection*

## THE FACTS

**Domestic Violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners.**

*National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges 1998*

**"Child abuse and neglect" means, at a minimum, any recent act, or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.**

*Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)*
*June 2003*

**"I heard a loud monster, but it wasn't. It was my daddy. He makes loud monster noises."**

*Child Witness to Violence Program*
*Boston Medical Center*

It is common for parents to believe that they can shield their children from abusive incidents. The fact is, experts estimate that 3.3 million children have witnessed violent acts in their home and can often repeat exactly what happened.

## WARNING SIGNS IN CHILDREN

### *Infants –*

- Frequent illnesses or other health problems
- Sleeping problems
- Excessive crying

### *Toddlers – All of the above, plus...*

- Shyness or withdrawn behavior
- Reluctance to be touched
- Aggressive behavior, excessive biting and hitting
- Speech problems
- Loss of skills such as toilet training

### *School-Age Children – All of the above, plus...*

- Increased aches and pains
- Headaches and/or stomach aches
- Stealing and lying
- Nightmares
- Eating disorders
- Self-abusive behaviors
- Depression
- Perfectionism
- Regression
- Takes on parenting role
- Anger at siblings
- Drug/alcohol use

### *Teenagers – All of the above, plus...*

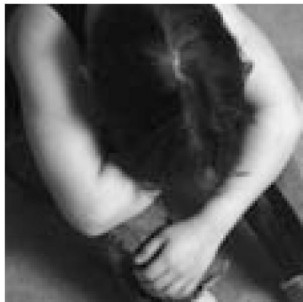
- Helplessness and/or hopelessness
- Anger and confused feelings toward parents—both the abusing and the abused parent
- Isolation—doesn't bring friends home
- Delinquent behavior
- Sexual acting out
- Violent relationships with others
- Suicide thoughts and/or attempts

# WHAT CHILDREN NEED

*Making a Difference*

## WHAT CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW

- It's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to hit.
- They are not alone and other families sometimes have the same problem.
- Learn alternatives to violent behaviors.
- Realize they are not to blame for the violence.
- Learn to protect themselves.
- Discover personal strengths and develop goals.
- Help is available to keep them safe.

## WHAT YOU SAY TO KIDS WHO HAVE WITNESSED ABUSE

- I am sorry you were hurt.
- It's not your fault
- It was okay to tell.
- I am not mad at you for telling me.
- I believe you.
- I want you to be safe.
- It's okay to tell me what happened.
- You have a right not to talk about it.
- Sometimes grownups say things to kids they shouldn't.
- Reassure the child.
- Comfort and give space to the child.
- Use the child's words and phrases.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.