



Domestic Violence and Children

Domestic violence is abuse by a spouse or partner used to gain power and control over the other person. Domestic violence can be physical, verbal, emotional, financial, or sexual abuse.

Children are often aware of the abuse in the home and may show signs they are hurting. This may include:



INFANTS

- Frequent illnesses
- Sleeping problems
- Crying a lot
- Developmental delays
- Increased or decreased startle reflex



TODDLERS

- Shyness or withdrawn
- Aggressive behavior such as excessive biting
- Speech problems
- Loss of skills such as toilet training



SCHOOL-AGE

- Increased aches or pains such as stomach aches
- Depression
- Self-abusive behaviors
- Takes on parenting responsibilities
- Eating disorders
- Anger at others
- Drug or alcohol use



TEENAGERS

- Helplessness or hopelessness
- Sexual acting out
- Violent relationships with others
- Isolation
- Suicide thoughts or attempts
- Drug or alcohol use
- Running away from home

Every child's experience is different and the response to the violence may be different too.

It is important to know that domestic violence, child abuse, and animal abuse are connected and often happen in the same family.



**Prevent Child Abuse
Illinois™**

www.preventchildabuseillinois.org

What Children Need To Know

VIOLENCE IN THE HOME IS NOT THEIR FAULT!



Talking about domestic violence is not easy. Children may feel confused, scared, guilty or helpless. Some things you can say to children who have experienced violence in the home are:

“It’s not your fault.”

“I care about you and want you to be safe.”

“I’m sorry you were hurt.”

“Violence is not okay.”

“It’s not your job to stop the fighting.”

“It’s okay to feel confused, angry, or scared.”

“I’m glad you told me what’s happening.”



“I believe you.”

The right time to talk to a child about violence in the home is whenever they are ready. Comfort and give space to the child and don’t make promises you can’t keep like “everything will be okay” or “this will never happen again.”

For more information about domestic violence or to get help:

www.ilcadv.org
www.thehotline.org

**ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE
(877)-863-6338**