



domestic violence

CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN CHICAGO

APRIL 2010

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FAQS Child Abuse Prevention

The month of April is designated as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. In the United States, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention define child maltreatment as "any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child"

Most child abuse is perpetrated in the home by a parent, relative or child care provider; however; children are abused in other environments as well. For this reason it is important to understand the forms of child abuse in order to assist in the identification and prevention.

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse takes four main forms, physical, psychological, sexual and neglect.

1.) Physical abuse involves striking, kicking, burning, bruising, drowning or; strangulation or shaking. The transmission of alcohol or drugs to an unborn fetus could also be considered a form of abuse as it can result in fetal alcohol syndrome.²

2.) Emotional abuse is non-physical in nature, but is powerful and the effects of emotional abuse are serious and long lasting. This type of abuse can take the form of intimidation, coercion, name calling, terrorizing, ignoring, destruction of personal property, torture or destruction of pets.³

3.) Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or older adolescent seeks sexual gratification from a child. Sexual abuse includes behaviors such as physical

contact with the child's breast and genitals, viewing the child's genitalia without physical contact, transmission of STDs', using the child to produce child pornography or to participate in prostitution.⁴

4). Neglect is the failure of the parent or guardian to provide fundamental needs of the child, i.e., adequate food, clothing and shelter; leaving a child home alone overnight and not providing medical attention.

CHILD ABUSE STATISTICS IN THE U.S.

According to Child Abuse in America:

- A report of child abuse is made every 10 seconds.
- Child abuse occurs at every socioeconomic level.
- Children who experience child abuse and neglect are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system.⁵

CAUSES OF CHILD ABUSE

There is no one simple cause of child abuse and it is more than likely a combination of numerous factors and correlations. Individuals replicating the way they were disciplined as children are very common, in spite of the fact they felt the discipline they received as children was abusive. About 30% of abused and neglected children will later abuse their own children.⁶

Parents that physically abuse their intimate partners are more likely than others to physically abuse their children.

Studies have also indicated a strong correlation



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between alcohol and physical abuse as well as cocaine and sexual abuse.⁷ There is information that leads us to believe that economic situations are responsible for an increase in child abuse due to financial stress. The inability to talk about it openly in the family leads to frustration inappropriately directed at the children.⁸ No matter what the cause(s), the community can assist in the prevention and identification of child abuse.

HOW DO WE HELP THE CHILDREN?

Research indicates that resiliency gives children the ability to grow into productive, healthy adults. Providing a strong bond of attachment and opportunities to enhance self esteem, constructive coping strategies, intellectual ability and an ability to seek social support outside of the family are important attributes in developing this resiliency. Social support should include both male and female gender so the child can learn to assimilate both male and female attributes, for a strong sense of self.⁹

Adults who dedicate themselves absolutely are important anchors in helping children meet their developmental needs. Other factors that reoccur in research as improving resiliency are reducing stress, connection to family members, relationships with friends and community, and the ability to trust others. In addition, development of special interests and talents that give the child a feeling of accomplishment and the belief that they are unique and special are of extreme importance.¹⁰

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Anyone can contact the Child Abuse Hotline at:

- 1 800 25 Abuse (22873)
- 1 800 358 5117 (TTY)
- 1 217 524 2606 (Outside of Illinois)

In case of emergency where a child is at risk of being injured or has been injured contact 911.

All mandated reporters must contact the hotline with a report if there is reasonable belief a child known to them may be an abused or neglected child.¹¹ Failure to report can result in being charged with a Class A misdemeanor.

The following is an abbreviated list of mandated reporters:

- Police Officers
- Physicians, nurses, personnel engaged in examination, care and treatment of persons
- Dentists
- Coroner and Medical Examiner
- Funeral Home Director
- Educational Advocates, Teachers, Principals and School Board Members, Social Workers and Truant Officers
- Domestic Violence Program Personnel
- Licensed Professional Counselors, Substance Abuse Counselors, Psychologists and their staff
- Human Services Staff
- Any member of the Clergy
- Animal Control Officers

1. Leeb, R.T.; Paulozzi, L.J.; C., Simon, T.R.; Arias, I. (1 January 2008)."Child Maltreatment Surveillance: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (20 October 2008).
- 2-4. Ibid.
5. Prevent Child Abuse America: Current Trends in Reporting Child Abuse and Fatalities: The 2000 Fifty State Survey.
6. Ibid.
7. Famularo, R; Kinscherff, Fenton T.; (1992) "Parental Substance Abuse and the Nature of Child Maltreatment!"
8. Hughes, Sandra; (20 May 2009)"Child Abuse Spikes During Recession", CBS News.
9. Garbarino, James; Lost Boys, How Our Sons Turn Violent and How We can Save Them. (1999).
10. Ibid.
11. (325 ILCS 5/4) (From Ch. 23, Par 2045) www.ilga.gov.

For additional information regarding domestic violence or topics to be discussed, contact the **Domestic Violence Program at: 312-745-6340 or FAX: 312- 745-6856.**

If you or someone you know needs immediate assistance, call 911.

***The City of Chicago Domestic Violence Help Line
number is:
1-877-863-6338 or 1-877-863-6339 (TTY)***

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