

*"The programs provided by this agency are partially funded by the County of Dutchess"*

## **Child Abuse in the United States**

### **Some Basic Facts**

- A report of child abuse is made every ten seconds.
- Every year approximately 4.3 million referrals are made to child protection agencies involving 7.8 million children (a referral can include multiple children).
- 37% of American children are reported to Child Protective Services by their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Child abuse occurs within all religious groups, all races, all ethnic and cultural groups and crosses all socioeconomic and educational levels.
- Signs of abuse are often emotional or behavioral, not physical.

### **Sexual Abuse**

- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old.
- 9 is the median age of a child who is sexually abused.
- More than 80% of sexual abuse cases occur in isolated, one-on-one situations.

### **Perpetrators**

- More than 90% of abusers are people that children love and/or trust and/or at least already know.
- 80% of child fatalities involve at least one parent.
- In one study, children whose parents abuse alcohol and other drugs are 3x more likely to be abused and more than 4x more likely to be neglected than children from non-abusing families.
- 54% of reported abusers are women, 45% are men.
- Between 25% and 33% of child abuse and neglect takes place within an environment of domestic abuse.

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## **Effects of Child Abuse**

### **- Victims of abuse are ...**

- 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile. 28% more likely to be arrested as an adult.
- 30% more likely to commit a violent crime. 25% more likely to experience teen pregnancy
- 30% will likely abuse their own children. 60% more likely to live in poverty.
- 14% of all men in prison and 36% of women in prison were abused as children, about twice the frequency seen in the general population.
- 80% of 21-year old's that were abused as children met the criteria for at least one psychological disorder.
- 75% of the people in treatment for drug abuse reported being abused as children.
- More than 33% of adolescents with a report of abuse or neglect will have a substance use disorder before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday ... 3x more likely than those without a report of abuse or neglect.

## **Economic Cost to the Nation**

- Child abuse and neglect cost the nation at least \$500 billion each year in extra education, physical and mental health care, criminal justice costs, and lost productivity.
- Child abuse and neglect cost the U.S. \$80 billion each year in direct costs and lost productivity.
- A single case of nonfatal child abuse and neglect costs \$210,012 over a lifetime.
- A case of fatal abuse and neglect costs \$1.27million, mostly due to lost productivity.

## **Fatalities**

- 5-7 children die each day because of child abuse. However, studies also indicate significant undercounting of child maltreatment fatalities by state agencies— by 50% or more.
- 80% of children who die from abuse are under the age of 4.

## **Disclosure**

- The average age for disclosure by adults who were victims of child abuse is 52.
- 60% of child sexual abuse victims never tell anyone.

# What You Can Do to Stop Child Abuse

## Easiest Things to Do

- **Listen to** a "Keeping Children Safe: Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse" presentation.
- Talk to at least **3 people this week** about this presentation and child abuse in general.  
Maybe even commit to talking with 3 people about child abuse each week? month?
- Read the **material** and take the **online survey** that was emailed to you after the presentation.
- **"Like and share"** our Facebook page.
- **Keep in contact.** Let us know if you have applied the information gained in the presentation to a real life situation.

## A Little Bit of Effort

- **Listen in** on one of our online "Internet Safety" presentations.
- If you suspect abuse is being directed towards a child or domestic violence is happening in a home, **document** what you see and hear ... and **report it.**
- **Identify two** (or more) organizations to whom I could offer a presentation. "Organizations" can be a group of friends, a book club, a neighborhood organization, a church or temple congregation, a group of work colleagues, a PTA, Scout leaders, a group of volunteer coaches, etc.  
Email your ideas to me.

## A Little More Effort

- **Invite our Community Education Facilitator** to do a presentation for a group that you are a part of. As you know, this can be done through Zoom.
- **Volunteer** with the CPCA. We need help creating awareness of the work we do, fundraising to support programs, and accomplishing many different specific tasks that help us be successful.  
Let us know your interests, your skills, and your availability. We will find ways for you to help children.
- **Contact politicians, lawmakers, and/or newspapers**, telling them your concerns about child abuse and what should be done about it, like supporting legislation intended to protect children.  
Or post information on **your Facebook page.**  
If you would like, **we can help you** identify the points that need to be made and can provide you with the actual text for your email, letter, or Facebook post and the script for your phone call.
- **Monetary donations to the CPCA** will help us continue our mission, that of stopping child abuse. Onetime contributions or smaller periodic ones will all help to protect children from the horrors of abuse.

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# Signs of Child Abuse

**1. Changes in behavior.** Abuse can lead to many changes in behavior. Abused children often appear



scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn or more aggressive.

**2. Returning to earlier behaviors.** Abused children may display behaviors shown at earlier ages, such as thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, fear of the dark or fear of strangers. For some children, even loss of acquired language or memory problems may be an issue.

**3. Fear of going home.** Abused children may express apprehension or anxiety about leaving school or about going places with the person who is abusing them or exhibit an unusual fear of a familiar person or place.

**4. Changes in eating.** The stress, fear, and anxiety caused by abuse can lead to changes in a child's eating behaviors, which may result in weight gain or weight loss.



**5. Changes in sleeping.** Abused children may have frequent nightmares or have difficulty falling asleep, and as a result, may appear tired or fatigued.

**6. Changes in school performance and attendance.** Abused children may have difficulty concentrating in school or have excessive absences, sometimes due to adults trying to hide the children's injuries from authorities.

**7. Lack of personal care or hygiene.** Abused and neglected children may appear uncared for. They may present as consistently dirty and have severe body odor, or they may lack sufficient clothing for the weather.

**8. Risk-taking behaviors.** Young people who are being abused may engage in high-risk activities such as using drugs or alcohol or carrying a weapon.

**9. Inappropriate sexual behaviors.** Children who have been sexually abused may exhibit overly sexualized behavior or use explicit sexual language and may exhibit symptoms of a genital infection.



**10. Unexplained injuries.** Children who have been physically abused may exhibit unexplained burns or bruises in the shape of objects. You may also hear unconvincing explanations of a child's injuries.

## Dos and Don'ts

### DO:

- Allow the child to use his/her own words to describe the incident
- Assure the child they are not to blame for what happened
- Treat the child normally
- Take care of the child's emotional needs
- Listen and take notes
- Allow the child to talk about the incident if they bring it up
- Write down concerns and questions for CPS, police officers and therapists
- Love and support the child

### DON'T:

- Use your language to help the child describe what happened
- Try to interview or investigate
- Overreact
- Express fear, anger and anxiety
- Initiate conversation about the incident
- Let personal feelings influence the child
- Reward child for giving information

### REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT:

If a child's life is in danger, you should call 911 immediately. To report any type of abuse, including child abuse or elder abuse, please call the 24/7 statewide hotline:

**1-800-342-3720**

Suspicion is enough to call the hotline – you don't have to have evidence or proof to make a call. Hotline screeners are trained to help guide you through the process.

*We know it takes courage to report abuse. You may be a child's only hope.* **Protecting Your**  
**Child from Abuse**

- **Maintain interest** in your child's life. Participate in your child's activities and get to know your child's friends.
- Teach your child to **use their voice** to allow them to prevent abuse in their own life.
- Let them know it's okay to trust their instincts and **it's okay to say "NO"** to unwelcome touch.
- Teach your child the **correct names** of his/her private body parts.
- **Be alert** for any talk that reveals premature sexual understanding.
- **Ask questions**; for example, when your child tells you he or she doesn't want to be with someone, this could be a red flag.
- **Listen** to them **and believe** what they say.
- If your child does not seem interested in talking, **don't be discouraged or give up**. They may need time to open up.
- Keep conversations **short, simple, and frequent**.
- Be a **good listener**.
- Be aware of **changes in** your child's **behavior or attitude** and inquire into it.
- **Never** leave your child **unattended**, especially in the car.
- **Teach your child** what to do if you and your child become separated while away from home.
- **Pay attention** when someone shows greater than normal interest in your child.
- Make certain your child's school or day care center will release him/her **only to you or someone you officially designate**.
- **Never** discipline your child when your anger is **out of control**.

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