

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE

Statistics

- During 2006 in Texas, there were 275,539 alleged victims of child abuse and neglect. Of these 67,737 were confirmed. In Harris County, there were 35,033 alleged and 6,883 confirmed victims. *Texas Department of Family and Protective Services 2006 Data Book*
- In homes where partner abuse occurs, children are 1,500 times more likely to be abused. *American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence. 2005. <http://www.abanet.org/domviol/home.html>*
- Judges must be made aware that abusers will sometimes turn their wrath on children when the adult victim is no longer accessible. *National Conference on Specialized Court Judges in the ABA's Judicial Division, 2005*

Overview of the Issue

- Child abuse is domestic abuse. Children may be direct targets, victimized as a threat to an adult victim, or inadvertently injured. Children are also neglected because of parental ignorance, apathy, or cruelty.
- Children are physically abused through hitting, punching, kicking, choking, etc. They are emotionally abused through intimidation, threats, isolation, constant rejection, shaming, bullying, inconsistent behavior, etc. They are neglected when needs such as hygiene, medicine, love, food and shelter are withheld.
- Children who are most likely to be abused are the disabled, unwanted, premature and demanding of parents. Children who are most likely to be seriously injured or killed are those under 4 years of age.

What You Can Do

- Prevention is the best solution. Learn to recognize the symptoms of child abuse and neglect. If you suspect a child is in danger, report it.
- Children need love, encouragement, discipline, consistency and positive attention. Teach a child that s/he deserves respect and protection. Don't be afraid to apologize to a child if you do or say something hurtful.

Impact on Victims

- Children may be neglected or abused when parents who are victims give their full attention to appeasing the abuser and become unresponsive to or frustrated with their children's care.
- Children who are abused may believe that violence and mistrust are normal in relationships. They risk growing up to perpetuate those beliefs, become abusive as adults, and have higher rates of suicidal and criminal behavior.

Quotable

Children have a right to grow up safe, respected, loved and nurtured. Maltreatment during childhood puts them at risk of growing up to continue the cycle of violence. If you suspect a child is being abused, call the police or child protective services at 1- 800-252-5400.