

Child Advocacy

Child advocacy (CA) consists of age appropriate activities focused on helping children in transition due to domestic or sexual violence. The goal of our program is for children to develop safety plans and gain life skills needed to prepare themselves for self-sufficiency in the family.

What child advocacy is NOT: It does not include childcare. Parents must be on site at all times during CA meetings between the child and a trained advocate. If childcare is needed by a parent, staff would be happy to assist with finding the needed resource.

Tips for interacting with your children:

- S** SQUARE off your body and be eye level with your child when talking with them
- M** watch your MANNERISMS
- I** INITIATE positive interactions
- L** LAUGH, LISTEN, and LEARN
- E** ENJOY time with children

- S** STOP and consider the situation
- T** take a TIME OUT
- O** OVERVIEW the situation
- M** cautious MOVEMENTS
- P** PAUSE and make a PLAN for action

Child Advocacy Activities

Child Advocacy activities provide individual attention and one-on-one education for each child.

Child advocacy programs include:

Support Groups: an opportunity for children and child advocates to participate in supportive activities and play.

Fun and Focus: a fun curriculum for children exposed to domestic and/or sexual violence.

In Court: with a 72 hour notice, we may be able to provide child advocacy at court appointments or hearings.

Junior House Meeting: gives children residing in shelter an opportunity to express their concerns, conflicts, and successes.

Family Case Management: provides resources and support while residing in shelter. The program helps to develop family plans and goals.



Facts about Domestic Violence and Children

- Children under the age of 4 accounted for 76% of child abuse and neglect fatalities in 1997.*
- Being abused or neglected as a child increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53%.*
- Being abused or neglected as a child increases the likelihood of arrest for a violent crime as an adult by 38%.*
- Approximately 2 million adolescents (age 12-17) suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder every year due to violent experiences in their past.*
- Although many adults believe that they have protected their children from exposure to domestic violence, 80-90% of those children can give detailed descriptions of the violence that took place in their homes.**

* Wilson, John J. Safe From The Start. *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*. Nov. 2000).

** Custody Disputes Involving Domestic Violence. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*. 1999.

Children and Domestic Violence

Children, regardless of whether they have experienced abuse directly, are effected by violence in the home. Children who witness abuse display the same emotional responses as children who have been physically and emotionally abused.

Effects of Abuse

Age 0-2

Victims of domestic violence may be unable to nurture and care for their infants as they would normally wish to. In response infants may:

- Become detached and unresponsive to adult attention
- Or become inconsolable, crying and fussing incessantly in response to the stress
- Suffer sleep disturbances or develop eating disorders

Age 3-6

- Sleeping and eating disorders
- Somatic complaints such as stomach aches and headaches
- Separation anxiety
- Nightmares about violence
- Difficulty expressing emotions other than anger

Age 7-12 & older:

- Symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Guilt, sadness, and depression
- Feelings of powerlessness

ATVP Celebrating 25 Years of Survivors' Strength in 2005

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24-Hour Hotline

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OR

(208) 883-HELP

Collect Crisis Calls Accepted

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Help for victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault

24 hour Crisis Hotline

(509) 332-HELP

OR

(208) 883-HELP