



Child Abuse Prevention Month • April 2005

Fact Sheet

(July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004)

What is child abuse or neglect?

Under Virginia law, an abused or neglected child is any child under 18 whose parent, or any other person responsible for the care of the child, does any or all of the following:

- ◆ causes, or threatens to cause, a physical or mental injury except for an accident.
- ◆ fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or caring support.
- ◆ abandons the child.
- ◆ fails to provide the kind of supervision necessary for a child's age or level of development.
- ◆ commits, or allows to be committed, any illegal sexual act involving the child -- including incest, rape, fondling, indecent exposure, prostitution -- or allows the child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

Child abuse is not usually just one physical attack or just one instance of failure to meet a child's most basic needs. Usually child abuse is a pattern of behavior which takes place over a period of time. The longer child abuse continues, the more serious it becomes, and the more difficult it is to stop.

How many children were reported as victims of maltreatment in Virginia?

From July of 2003 through June of 2004, **47,445** children were reported as possible victims of abuse and/or neglect in **32,148** reports to Virginia's city and county departments of social services.

Were all these reports founded?

Founded means that a review of the facts met the legal criteria for abuse. **6,876** children were victims in **4,507** founded reports of child abuse and/or neglect. In addition **8,597** were at high or moderate risk for abuse and/or neglect.

How many children died as a result of child abuse/neglect?

29 children in Virginia died from injuries attributable to abuse and/or neglect in fiscal year 2004 — **21** of these children (72%) were aged 4 or under.



Who were the children?

45% of all victims of child abuse and neglect were children aged 6 or under. **65%** of all victims were children aged 10 and under.

54% of all victims were white, **34%** were black, less than **1%** were Asian and **4%** were multiracial

What were the types of maltreatment?

57% of the maltreatment was due to physical neglect (Officially described as failure to provide food, clothing, shelter or supervision to the child to the extent that the child's health or safety was endangered).

23% of the maltreatment was due to physical abuse.

16% of the maltreatment was due to sexual abuse.

2% of the maltreatment was due to mental abuse/neglect and **4%** was due to medical neglect.

Who are the abusers?

Abusive parents can be your friends, your neighbors or your relatives. Child maltreatment affects all economic, racial, social, ethnic and religious groups.

What is the cost of child abuse and neglect in monetary and human terms?

The cost of child abuse and neglect in the United States is estimated at \$258 million per day, according to a study by Prevent Child Abuse America.

How can child abuse and neglect be prevented?

Recognize the warning signs: parents under chronic stress, children exhibiting negative and anxious behaviors, signs of physical abuse.

Encourage families under stress to seek out support services. Call the **1-800-CHILDREN** support line.

Report suspected child abuse and neglect. Call your local social services department or call the Virginia Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at **1-800-552-7096**.

