

Fact Sheet on Child Abuse

- Throughout the decade of the 1990's, three American children died every day as the result of child abuse.
- During 2003, 354 children ages 15 and below were referred to the Prosecutor's Office for apparent sexual abuse by an adult. Their average age was a little over 10 years. All of them were sexually abused by an adult they knew well: parents, step parents, other relatives and acquaintances; at least 42% of the assaults included oral or genital intercourse.
- During 2003, over 2000 people, mostly women and children, were referred to the Prosecutor's office for domestic violence in which children were closely involved.
- Children who see, hear or receive physical violence in their every day life are more vulnerable than other children to the negative influences of media violence. They are also more likely to be either the perpetrators or victims of violence later in their lives.
- One of the big costs of child abuse is the lost potential. More children who are abused than children who are not have difficulties in school or the community.
- Children who are physically abused while still very young will not only learn different kinds of behaviors than will children who are raised in protective and caring homes. Their brains will physically develop differently.
- Children who live in dangerous communities, such as in countries at war, will still do reasonably well if they are able to stay close to their parents, and their parents can convey a sense of protection and hopefulness. Children in abusive or violent homes are living in dangerous communities without that protection.
- Child abuse is much more likely to happen when there are other kinds of domestic violence in their homes. And, vice versa. There is more likely to be partner abuse between adults in homes where there is child abuse.
- Battered women often have to try up to seven times to leave their dangerous partner. They are at their greatest risk at exactly the point when they finally make their successful break for safety.
- Children sometimes can talk about being sexually abused themselves more easily than they can talk about seeing their mother get beat up by her boy friend or husband.

