



CHILD ABUSE in Northern Virginia

Child abuse cuts across all boundaries of socio-economics, race, ethnic heritage, and religious faith.

Child abuse occurs in all segments of our society, and risk factors are greater in families where parents are:

- experiencing economic or housing barriers or crises,
- isolated from their family or community,
- living in violent homes or communities,
- having difficulty controlling anger or managing stress,
- dealing with physical or mental health issues,
- abusing alcohol or drugs,
- inattentive to or not informed about the care, nourishment or safety of their children, or
- experiencing other life crises.

By helping parents who might be struggling with any of these challenges, **you could reduce the likelihood that their children will be abused or neglected.**

Reach out to the children, too, and show them that you care.

How many children are impacted in Northern Virginia?*

9,831 children were reported as abused and/or neglected.

6,662 children were involved in **valid cases** of abuse and neglect.

1,100 children were in **founded cases** of abuse and neglect.

* Online Automated Services Information System (OASIS), as of February 2017 | Virginia Department of Social Services

Unfortunately, we know that child abuse is underreported and far more children are affected by abuse and neglect in our communities. Where possible, CPS works to provide **family assessment, safety planning** and **services for families** in valid cases where there isn't evidence that rises to a "founded" case.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is any mistreatment of a child (under 18) by a parent or caregiver that results in harm or injury. **Child abuse includes physical abuse, physical neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect.**

Child abuse can be a one-time occurrence but more often it is a pattern of behavior. Frequently, the longer child abuse goes on, the more serious the consequences.

Child abuse is more likely to happen when an adult has low levels of tolerance for frustration, inadequate coping skills, and/or misconceptions about child development and what it means to be a parent or caregiver.

What can YOU do to prevent child abuse and neglect?

As a community member, the most important things you can do are:

- 1. REPORT ABUSE** if you suspect it by calling **1-800-552-7096**.
- 2. OFFER HELP AND SUPPORT** to a struggling parent.
- 3. ASK FOR HELP** if you're a parent or caregiver.
(Find more resources for parents online at **www.scanva.org/prc**)