

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem which requires the involvement of all private citizens and professionals in the community for the purpose of prevention, identification, and treatment. In Maryland, the child abuse and neglect law requires that anyone who **SUSPECTS** a child has been or is being mistreated must report the matter to the Department of Social Services. (In case of child abuse, a report may be made to Social Services or the Police.) Any professional who **Knowingly** fails to make a required report of child abuse may be subjected to certain practitioners, police officers, educators, and social workers. And any person who, in good faith, makes a report of abuse or neglect is **IMMUNE** from civil liability or criminal penalty.

The following information is provided so that you will be familiar with the physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse, neglect or mental injury. Please note that the presence of any of these indicators does not necessarily mean a child is being abused, neglected or is a victim of mental injury. They may, however, lead you to suspect abuse, neglect or mental injury and, therefore, to report it.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

Bruises: on any infant; facial bruises; in unusual patterns; clustered in one area of the body; various stages of healing; both eyes "blackened" with no injury to the nose.

Burns: caused by immersion in hot liquid; cigarette burns usually on palms of hands (leaving "carter" shaped burns); caused by hot implement, such as an electric curling iron (leaving burn marks in the shape of the implement); or caused by ropes that indicate confinement.

Welts, cuts, abrasions, fractures, and internal injuries may also indicate abuse. Since these injuries may occur through normal childhood experiences, they should only cause concern when coupled with some other physical or behavioral indicator. You should also be concerned if the injury does not seem likely to have resulted from normal activity, given the child's age and physical development.

Behavioral Indicators

Child: overly compliant, shy, or aggressive behavior; avoids parents; inhibited crying; hyperactive; avoids physical contact; low tolerance for frustration; distrustful.

Parent: hold unrealistic expectations for the child's physical or emotional development; "immature"; dependent; aggressive; low sense of self-esteem; sees the child as "bad", "different", or "evil"; low tolerance for frustration; inappropriate coping skills.



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Social Services Administration • 311 West Saratoga Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Equal Opportunity Employer

NEGLECT

Physical Indicators

Child: extremely dirty and unkempt; clothes inadequate for the weather; serious medical problems left untreated; inadequately supervised; undernourished.

Behavioral Indicators

Child: withdrawn; shy; passive; always tired; developmentally slow.

Parent: apathetic; shows little concern or awareness of the child's needs; shows anger when questioned about child's care; impulsive in making decisions; inconsistent disciplinary practice; overwhelming personal needs.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

Child: difficulty in sitting or walking; repeated symptoms of medical problem with genitals of sexually transmitted disease; pregnancy.

Behavioral Indicators

Child: unusual sexual behavior or knowledge; nightmares; poor peer relationships; few social skills, extremeley isolated; repeated "runaways."

Parent: extmrly overprotective; overly intrested in child's social and sexual life; sees child as highly sexualized; jealous.

MENTAL INJURY

Behavioral Indicators

Child: any observable, substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function that is a direct result of an act or omission by a parent or caretaker. The child may have severe problems in areas of functioning such as family and/or social relationship, sleeping and eating, academics and overall development, and need specific psychiatric, psychological or social work intervention.

Parent: frequently threatens to harm or kill the child, threatens to harm or kill the child's pet, constantly denigrates the child or subjects the child to extensive emotional or physical isolation or confinement.

Prince George's County Department of Social Services



Rosbern L. Baker, III
County Executive

The Department of Social Services (DSS) partners with the community, our customers and other service providers to stabilize and strengthen families, to protect children and vulnerable adults, and to encourage self-sufficiency and personal responsibility. Generally, DSS is known for assistance with provision of emergency housing, cash, medical and food assistance programs, utility assistance, foster care and adoption services and child and adult protective services. Below you will find greater detail of some of the services the Department of Social Services provides to the community.



Gloria L. Brown
Director

SAIL is a web-based screening and application tool that will allow Maryland applicants to apply on-line any time of day or night. Apply for various services and more at www.marylandsail.org.

Medicaid is a comprehensive health care insurance program for individuals with low-income. Apply for medical assistance services at www.marylandsail.org.

QMB (Qualified Medicare Beneficiary) and SLIMB (Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary)
The Program connects the two largest public health programs in the country, Medicare and Medicaid, as Medicaid pays for all or part of the Medicare premium and deductible amounts for individuals with low-income who are financially eligible.
www.marylandsail.org.

Emergency Assistance to Families with Children (EAFC) - Provides emergency cash assistance to families who need emergency help paying rent, utilities, or other emergency bills. Apply for these services and more at www.marylandsail.org.

• **Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)** - short-term cash assistance, to stabilize those seeking employment who have dependent children (up to age 21).

• **Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP)** - Provides limited cash assistance for disabled adults.

• **Food Supplemental Program (Food Stamps)**
- Helps individuals with low-income buy the food they need for good health.

The Child Care Subsidy Program (formerly known as POC) helps eligible families pay for child care. Vouchers, issued to eligible families by DSS, are used to purchase care from any regulated child care center or home or from an informal provider approved by the department. Apply for these services and more at www.marylandsail.org.

Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigates alleged child abuse, child sexual abuse and child neglect. Abuse and neglect prevention requires identification, treatment and the involvement of everyone in our community.

Child Abuse is the physical or mental injury of a child by a parent, caregiver or family member; or sexual abuse of a child whether physical injuries are sustained or not.

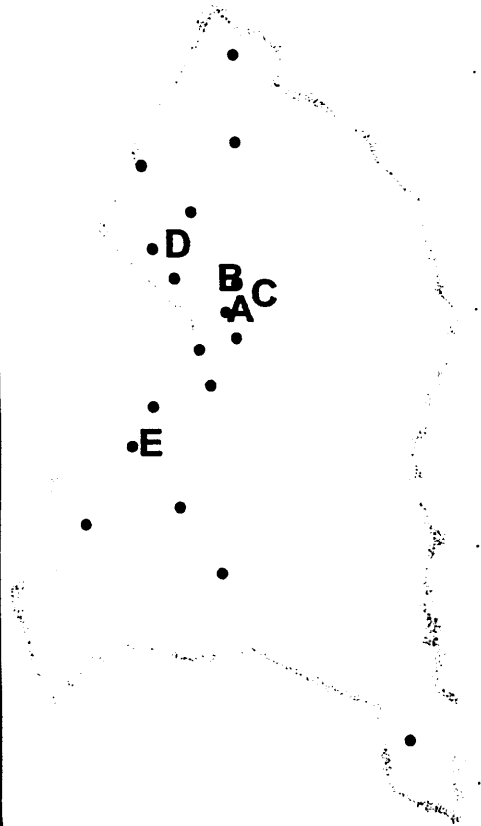
Child Neglect is the failure to give proper care and attention to a child, thereby placing the child's health and welfare in jeopardy. **Report Child Abuse and Neglect on (301) 909-2450 or 211 24-hours daily; TDD (301) 779-2179**

Foster Care is the provision of short-term care and supportive services to children who are unable to live at home due to child abuse and neglect. DSS places children in family foster homes, as well as in group-care settings. If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, please call **(301) 909-CARE (2273)**.

Adult Protective Services Charged with preventing neglect, self-neglect, abuse and exploitation of vulnerable adults over the age of 18. DSS serves adults that lack the physical or mental ability to provide for their own basic needs. **Report Abuse and Neglect of vulnerable adults on (301) 909-2228**

Where to Find Us

"Providing Quality Service at Every Interaction"



A. Administration

Location: 805 Brightseat Road, Landover, MD
(All DSS offices are open from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

B. Centre Pointe (PS Business Parks) Child, Adult & Family Services ◆

Location: 925 Brightseat Rd.
Landover, MD
Tel: (301) 909-2000
Fax: (301) 909-2200

C. 425 R.I.S.E. Office Family Investment & Community Services ■ ▲

Location: 425 Brightseat Rd.
Landover, MD
Tel: (301) 909-6000
Fax: (301) 909-6067

D. 6505 R.I.S.E. Office Family Investment ■

Location: 6505 Belcrest Rd.
Hyattsville, MD
Tel: (301) 209-5000
Fax: (301) 209-5216

E. 4235 R.I.S.E. Office Family Investment ■

Location: 4235 28th Avenue
Temple Hills, MD
Tel: (301) 316-7700
Fax: (301) 316-7701

- We now offer community based SAIL Service Centers. For locations visit <http://princegeorgescountymd.gov/dss>

*R.I.S.E.- Respectful Innovative Service Employees

3/22/12

Additional Services

In-Home Aide Services provides assistance with activities of daily living for clients who either live alone or with their families. Clients include children, families with disabled adults and the elderly. A sliding fee scale is used. For more information, please call (301) 909-2228. ◆

Homelessness Prevention is a program that helps residents avoid eviction or foreclosure. You may be eligible to receive financial help to pay your rent or mortgage if you are faced with a one-time crisis. Please contact the **Emergency Assistance Hotline on (301) 864-7161** or dial 211 from a MD exchange for more information. ▲

The **Office of Home Energy Programs** helps households and individuals with low-income to pay their utility bills, minimize heating crises, and make energy costs more affordable. The **Maryland Energy Assistance Program & Electric Universal Service Program** promote energy conservation, customer financial responsibility and energy independence. Note: This program accepts applications from July 1 thru May 15th. Apply for these services and more at www.marylandsail.org or dial 211 from a MD exchange for more information. ▲

Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) distributes federal surplus foods to emergency food pantries for needy households. You can call the DSS Emergency Food Assistance Program at (301) 909-6300. DSS acts as a clearinghouse for the distribution of donated food. Over 30 local community pantries and shelters currently participate in the program. All food is provided to eligible individuals and families free of charge. ▲

Emergency Housing is provided through the Homeless Hotline. The Hotline provides emergency referral for people experiencing homelessness 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Individuals and families in need of emergency shelter may call the **Homeless Hotline directly on 1(888) 731-0999**. ▲

Volunteer Services provides opportunities for citizens and residents to contribute their time, expertise and good will to people less fortunate than themselves. Volunteers make a difference for the community everyday! For more information call (301) 909-6319. ▲

- Refusing to undress in physical education class
- Passivity during a pelvic examination
- Isolation/poor peer relationships and/or withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating/poor academic progress
- Regressive or aggressive behaviors
- Poor self-concept
- Flat affect
- Recurrent nightmares, disturbed sleep patterns, fear of the dark
- Use of drugs and delinquent acts e.g. running away

What is Neglect?

Child neglect means the leaving of a child unattended or other failure to give proper care and attention to a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for the supervision of the child under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm, or there is mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury.

What is Physical Abuse?

The following list is not inclusive and is meant as an aid.

Physical Signs

- Bruises or welts on the face, back, buttocks and patterns often

indicating the implement used to inflict pain/punishment (e.g. belt, belt buckle, electrical cord)

- Burns on palms, sides, back, buttocks; burns on genitalia, caused by cigarettes, cigars; burns caused by immersion in hot liquid or various implements, such as irons or curling irons
- Suspicious cuts and abrasions
- Head injuries — bleeding and hair loss caused by hair pulling
- Fractures, especially long bone caused by pulling or twisting
- Internal injuries caused by hitting or kicking in the abdomen
- Inappropriate clothing for the weather to mask body injuries

Behaviors

- Hyperactivity, impulsivity
- Extreme behaviors, either aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Nervous habits or movements
- Excessive requests for food and tokens of affection
- Distrust of adults
- Display of adult responsibilities
- Frequent school absences or lateness
- Guarded responses when questioned regarding an injury or home life

If you have a reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect, you must contact your local:

Department of Social Services
or
The Police Department

Prince George's Department
of Social Services
(301) 909-2450

Evenings and Weekends
(301) 699-8605

Toll Free Hot Line
1-800-552-7096

Prince George's County
Police Domestic Investigation
Division
(301) 336-8800



*Inquires regarding this pamphlet
should be directed to:*

Dr. Diane E. Powell
*Director, Department Student
Engagement and School Support*

Director, Department Student
Engagement and School Support
Prince George's County Public Schools
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
301-567-5702

Prince George's County
Public Schools

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures



What is Child Maltreatment?

Child maltreatment is an intentional action that damages the personal health, safety and dignity of the victim in such a way that healing may take months, years or a lifetime.

The Maryland State Department of Education has maintained that all school employees and volunteers be informed of their legal obligation to report incidences of child maltreatment whether in the form of physical abuse, sexual, mental injury or neglect.

This brochure addresses all aspects of the Maryland State Law for reporting child maltreatment as of the 1995 session of the Maryland General Assembly.

Who is Responsible for Reporting Child Maltreatment?

Any health practitioner, police officer, educator or human service worker, or other school employee or volunteer acting in a professional capacity, who believes or has reason to believe that a child has been abused or subjected to abuse by any parent, or other person who has permanent or temporary care, custody, or responsibility for the supervision of a child, or by any household or family member under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed must report the abuse immediately.

Educators or human service workers includes any teachers, counselors, social workers, caseworkers, probation or parole officers.

Any educator, or human service worker, or other school employee or volunteer, who believes or has reason to believe that a child has been neglected due to leaving a child unattended or other failure to give proper care and attention to a child, by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for the supervision of the child under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm or that there is mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury shall report it.

What is the Process for Reporting Child Maltreatment?

Any school employee, or volunteer in the local school system, who has reason to believe that a case of child abuse has occurred shall make an immediate report by telephone or other direct communication to the County Department of Social Services or to the Domestic Investigation Unit, Criminal Investigation Division of the County Police Department. *In the case of child neglect, the school employee or volunteer shall make the report as soon as possible to the county Department of Social Services only.*

In addition to making an oral report, the school employee or volunteer shall also inform the immediate supervisor or local school principal that a case of suspected child abuse or neglect has been reported. It is the obligation of the supervisor or principal to ensure that cases of suspected child abuse brought to his/her attention by any school employee or volunteer are duly reported by the employer or volunteer if this has not already been done.

Within 48 hours of occurrence causing suspicion of abuse or neglect, the employee or volunteer will complete a written report using Form PS-60 (Revised 06/10), Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect. Copies of the report are available in each school and/or office. Distribution must be as designated on the form.

Are there Consequences for Failure to Report?

Yes, failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is a violation of Maryland law. Mandated reporters who fail to report these acts may be subject to suspension or revocation of professional licensing or certification.

What About My Rights?

Any person who in good faith reports a suspicion of child abuse or neglect or any person who participates in an investigation or in a judicial proceeding regarding a report of child abuse or neglect shall be immune from any civil liability or criminal penalty, which might otherwise arise.

What is Abuse?

Abuse is defined as the physical or mental injury of a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at a substantial risk of being harmed.

What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not, includes any act that involves sexual molestation or

exploitation of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member. Sexual abuse includes incest, rape or sexual offense in any degree, sodomy and unnatural or perverted sexual practices.

The following list is not inclusive and is meant as an aid.

Physical Signs

- Self inflicted injuries and/or suicidal actions
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Pain, offensive odor or itching in genital areas
- Bleeding in or bruises on genital areas
- Frequent use of bathroom/urinary tract infections
- Penile discharge or swelling
- Pregnancy or positive test for sexually transmitted disease
- Sophisticated attire inappropriate for age of child

Behaviors

- Clinging to adults or wary of adult contact
- Expressing affection inappropriately
- Unusual knowledge of sexual matters and sophisticated sexual play

Child Abuse

*How to report it
and help stop it*



Prince George's County
Department of Social Services



"Strengthening Families & Building Communities"

(301) 209-5000

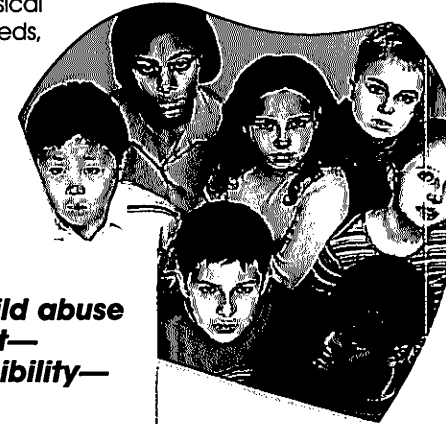
Child abuse hurts everyone.

Children suffer emotionally and physically. Society is also affected—by troubled families, crime and other problems that result from child abuse.

Child abuse takes several forms.

These include:

- **physical abuse**—such as hitting, shaking and burning
- **sexual abuse**—including sexual contact with a child, exposing a child to adult sexual activity, and using a child for sexual purposes, such as pornography
- **emotional (or verbal) abuse**—such as threats or insults
- **neglect**—including not providing for a child's physical or emotional needs, such as clothing and medical care or love and attention.



**Anyone who
suspects child abuse
has the right—
and responsibility—
to report it.**

Please read:

Talk to a professional! This folder is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified expert. • The photos in this folder are of models. The models have no relation to the issues presented.

You can take positive actions.

Here's how:

Stay alert.

People who abuse children may be family members, friends, trusted adults or strangers. They may:

- leave the child alone without supervision
- hide or make excuses for the child's injuries
- punish the child harshly
- overreact
- show little or no concern for the child
- be excessively friendly or generous to the child
- try to keep the child away from friends or concerned adults
- try to spend a lot of time with the child
- be aggressive or defensive when asked about the child
- have an alcohol or other drug problem.

Report abuse— and make a difference.

It may help protect the child from more harm. And it can help children—and families—get the help they need.



**Child abuse may occur in any
ethnic, racial or social group.**

Know the signs of child abuse.

Child abuse can have many signs.

Physical abuse	Physical signs	Behavioral signs
	<p>The child may have unusual or unexplained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ bruises, welts, cuts or other injuries ■ broken bones ■ burns. 	<p>The child may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ fear going home ■ be aggressive ■ wear inappropriate clothes to hide injuries ■ act withdrawn or depressed ■ avoid physical contact.
Sexual abuse	Sexual signs	Behavioral signs
	<p>The child may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ torn, stained or bloody underwear ■ difficulty walking or sitting ■ pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital area ■ a sexually transmitted disease. 	<p>The child may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ have unusual knowledge of sex or seductive behavior ■ fear a particular person ■ act withdrawn or depressed ■ have rapid weight changes ■ avoid physical contact ■ run away from home.
Emotional abuse	Emotional signs	Behavioral signs
	<p>The child may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ speech disorders ■ physical development that is slow. 	<p>The child may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ act overly mature or immature ■ have difficulty making or keeping friends ■ have extreme behavior changes.
Neglect	Neglect signs	Behavioral signs
	<p>The child may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ poor hygiene ■ physical development that is slow (possibly underweight) ■ untreated medical problems ■ little or no supervision at home. 	<p>The child may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ get to school very early or late, or have frequent absences ■ be tired or hungry often ■ steal food ■ dress inappropriately for the weather.

There is no simple "formula" for identifying children who are victims of abuse. Each child—and situation—is unique. But knowing the signs can help.



As long as you have a reasonable suspicion, state law protects you if you are wrong about a report of child abuse.

Note: This is not a complete list of all the possible physical and behavioral signs of abuse. The signs listed in each category are not limited to that type of abuse. Some of the signs listed may indicate problems that do not involve abuse.

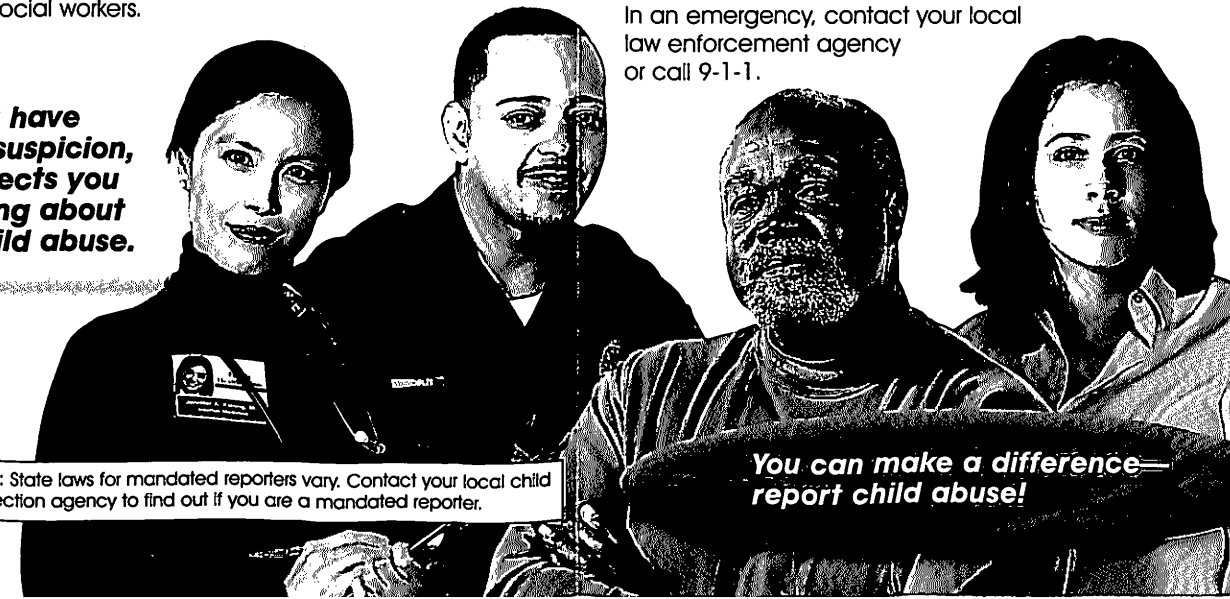
Know what to do if you suspect abuse.

Here are some ways you can help:

- Watch for signs of abuse.
- Make sure children know you are available to talk about anything.
- If a child tells you about abuse, listen and be supportive—but remain calm. Strong reactions can frighten children into silence.
- Write down what you observe and anything the child tells you.
- Use your judgment—get immediate help if a child seems to be in danger or injured.
- If you suspect abuse, report it. Suspicion alone is often enough to file a report.

Some of the people required to report child abuse are:

- school personnel, such as teachers and school administrators
- health-care professionals, such as doctors, nurses and dentists
- child-care workers
- law enforcement professionals
- social workers.



Note: State laws for mandated reporters vary. Contact your local child protection agency to find out if you are a mandated reporter.

You can make a difference—report child abuse!

How to make a report

Keep a record.

If you have witnessed or been told about abuse, record what you were told, when and by whom.



Provide as much information as you can.

You will need to give the child's name, age and location. If any of this is not known, give whatever information you do have, such as a physical description of the child. Also give any information you have about the suspected abuse, the type of abuse, any other witnesses and your own relationship to the child. Don't worry if you don't have all the information—making the report is the most important thing.

Contact your local child protection agency to make a report.

Look in the phone book for listings under:

- child abuse
- Department of Social Services or Human Services
- Children, Youth and Family Services.

In an emergency, contact your local law enforcement agency or call 9-1-1.

Encourage positive behavior

through these basic steps:

Give your child love and understanding.

Children need plenty of hugs, kisses, smiles and encouragement.

Listen to your child carefully.

Notice the changing needs and wants of your child. For example, young children need to know parents are near, while most teenagers need some privacy.

Set limits.

All children need rules for things like bedtime and behavior.

- Explain and discuss the need for limits.
- Make sure the limits are understood.
- Remind your child about limits, when needed. Children may forget them or try to test you.

Try setting aside a special time with your child each day. Go for a walk, or talk before bedtime.



Other positive strategies

Reward good behavior.

Use hugs, special privileges, etc. (Use material rewards sparingly.)

Promote responsibility and independence.

Allow your child to make more decisions as he or she grows. Provide encouragement and comfort when your child fails.

Acknowledge your child's emotions.

Let him or her know it's OK to feel angry or frustrated. Teach your child to vent emotions in positive ways.

Set a good example.

If you want your child to be on time, to speak softly or to be polite, make sure you do those things, too.

Seek professional help if discipline becomes a problem.

Talk to your child's school counselor. Or, check with family counseling, mental health services or social service agencies.

When a child misbehaves,

take action that is appropriate. For example, consider:

Discussing the misbehavior

Talk about what the child did. Remind him or her of what is expected. Do this in private—not in front of your child's friends.

Removing privileges

For example, forbid your child to watch TV. Be sure your child understands why privileges are being removed.

Calling a time-out

Bring your child to a calm, safe place. Have your child stay there until he or she calms down—or for a set length of time. Praise your child for calming down.



Do not use physical punishment.

Spanking, hitting, etc., provide a bad example and easily become a habit. And there's evidence it may hurt a child's development.

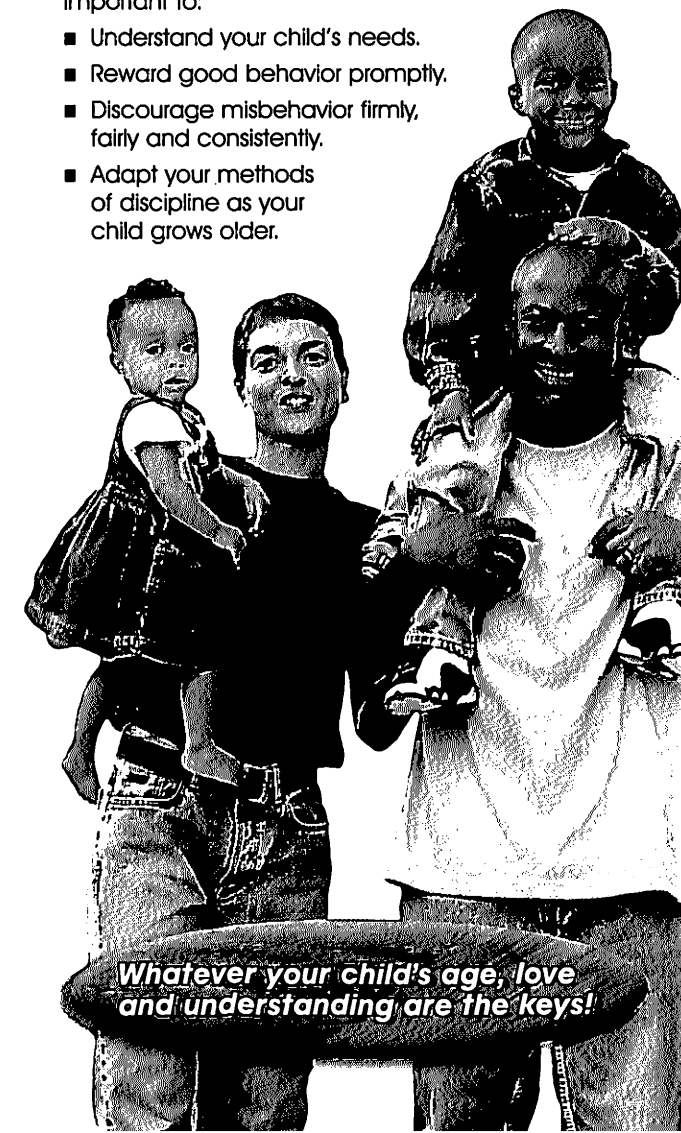
Discipline makes life easier

for you, your child and your family.

It also helps shape your child

into the kind of adult he or she will become. That's why it is so important to:

- Understand your child's needs.
- Reward good behavior promptly.
- Discourage misbehavior firmly, fairly and consistently.
- Adapt your methods of discipline as your child grows older.



Whatever your child's age, love and understanding are the keys!

Disciplining Your Child

What parents need to know



Prince George's County
Department of Social Services



"Strengthening Families & Building Communities"

(301) 209-5000

Channing
Bete
COMPANY

What is discipline?

It's teaching your child to follow limits and rules. It's part of your job as a parent.

Discipline helps children:

- develop self-control
- respect others
- feel secure
- express emotions appropriately
- build self-esteem
- become self-reliant
- develop organizational skills.

Discipline is an ongoing process.

It begins early in your child's life and changes as he or she matures. It continues as self-discipline in adulthood.



The publisher has taken care in the preparation of this folder, but the information it contains does not necessarily describe particular situations you may encounter. You should ask a qualified expert or professional for advice about your particular situation.

The persons whose pictures are depicted are models. Any characters they are portraying are fictional.

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2011 Edition

Price List A

Understanding the causes of misbehavior

can help you choose an effective method of changing it.

Common causes

include:

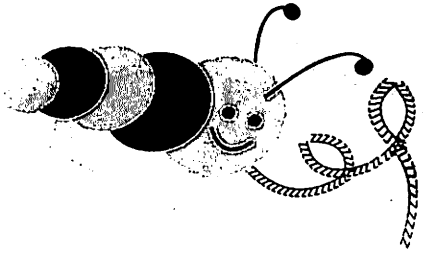
- being tired, hungry or sick
- not understanding what is expected or that a certain behavior is wrong
- being angry—for example, when children don't get what they want
- being afraid—of darkness, new people, failing, losing their parents' love, etc.
- trying to get attention when jealous of a new baby, a brother's or sister's accomplishments, etc.
- feeling hurt—lashing out at people who have hurt them.

Negative patterns develop

when parents give in to misbehavior. Children tend to repeat it because it "works."



Effective discipline can break negative patterns.



**Protect yourself and your children!
Know and follow the
Maryland Law!**

**Staff are available to answer
your specific questions about
leaving children unattended.
There are also other brochures
available to help you with
important decisions about leaving
your child or children without
adult supervision.**

**For inquiries, call
Prince George's County
Department of Social Services
(301) 909-2450**

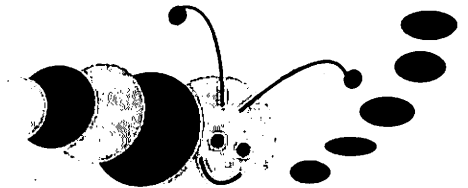


**This brochure can be
reproduced. Please insert your
local information
here. However, no other
changes are permitted.**



**This document is generously funded
by the Children's Trust Fund,
Governor's Office for Children, Youth
and Families.**

**What's the buzz on
when your child can
be left alone?**



**What
You need to know!**

**In response to many calls
and inquiries, this brochure
is intended to inform parents
about**

**Maryland Family Law
requirements to prevent
accidents and tragedies caused by
"SUPERVISION NEGLECT."**

Maryland Family Law (Section 5-801) requires that:



Children under 8...

Children under 8 no matter how bright, mature, or "independent" cannot be left alone.

Children under 8 cannot be left alone in parked cars or in public places, like libraries, stores, swimming pools or parks where other adults are just "around."

Children under 8 must have an assigned, dependable caretaker, 13 years or older, to watch them in public places.

Children under 8 can never be left to be supervised by a child who is under 13.

Children over 8 . . .

Children over 8 can be left alone for short periods of time, if certain commonsense requirements are met. . .

Children over 8 need to know what to do in the case of an emergency, accident, illness. . .

Children over 8 need to know your work and cell phone numbers, how to call 911 and how to give their correct address.

Children over 8 cannot be alone overnight.

Children over 8 with any kind of disabling mental, physical or emotional handicaps should not be left alone.

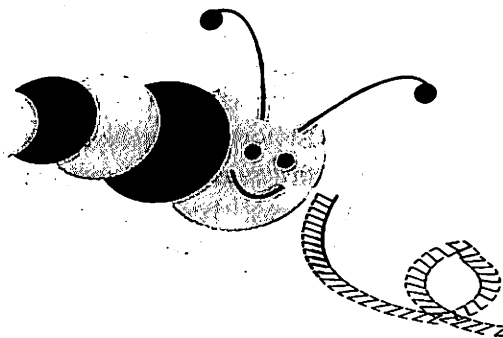
Children over 8 need to have a simple "fire drill" since fire is the most common hazard for the child at home alone.



When to leave an older child in charge

A child must be 13 years or older, be dependable and have no disabling handicaps in order to watch a child under 8. Even then, certain commonsense guidelines should be followed . . .

- Do a "test run" first. While you are at home, have the 13-year-old practice supervision of the younger child.
- Do let the 13-year-old (or older) supervise younger children for short periods of time (while you're away for 20 or 30 minutes) before leaving them to supervise for longer periods of time.
- Don't leave the older child with extra responsibilities, like cooking, cleaning, while supervising younger children.
- Don't leave a 13-year-old with infant care when they are supervising other children. Even Licensed Daycare Providers have limits on the number of infants and toddlers they can watch.



The "buzz" words are "8" and "13"