



A MESSAGE FROM ANTHONY A. SCARPINO, JR.  
Westchester County District Attorney

Dear Friends,

Children are the most precious and the most vulnerable members of our community. In Westchester County, more than 6,000 children are reported to be the victims of abuse and neglect every year. The District Attorney's Office staff know the value of treating each child victim with compassion and care. Our Child Abuse Bureau is committed to bringing justice to children and giving each child a voice. Together with law enforcement and Child Protective Services, we work as a team to protect the children of Westchester County. If you know of a child at risk-act! Our Child Abuse Bureau is ready to assist.

## Recognizing the Signs of Child Abuse

The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when the signs appear repeatedly or in combination you should take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse:

- Unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, and black eyes.
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school.
- Seems frightened of a parent or caretaker or protests or cries when it is time to go home.
- Withdraws at the approach of adults.
- Is frequently absent from school.
- Demonstrates sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior.
- Demonstrates violence in play, art, etc.
- Demonstrates self-destructive behavior.
- Begs or steals food or money.
- Lacks needed medical/dental care, not clean or lacks sufficient clothing for the weather.
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities.



# CHILD ABUSE

Protecting the Children of Our Community



**Office of the District Attorney**

RICHARD J. DARONCO COURTHOUSE  
111 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
White Plains, NY 10601  
(914) 995-3414  
westchesterda.net



**Anthony A. Scarpino, Jr.**  
Westchester County District Attorney

## The Child Abuse Bureau

at the District Attorney's Office

The Child Abuse Bureau handles investigations and prosecutions of crimes against children. Assistant District Attorneys in the Child Abuse Bureau investigate and prosecute allegations of sexual and physical abuse of children age 16 and under. Our mission is to thoroughly investigate all allegations of abuse to ensure the safety and welfare of children in Westchester County. We investigate and prosecute those who abuse children to obtain justice for the victims of abuse and prevent future harm to other children. Prosecutors in the Child Abuse Bureau have specialized training on the best practices method to forensically interview children and continue to receive training to enhance their skills. Each Child Abuse case reported is individually assigned to an Assistant District Attorney who handles the case from beginning to end so that children and their families can be as comfortable as possible throughout the duration of the investigation and prosecution.

The Child Abuse Bureau is located at 110 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in White Plains directly across from the Westchester County Courthouse. The Child Abuse Bureau is located within the Special Prosecutions Division of the District Attorney's Office and has a child-friendly waiting area where children can play and families can be at ease in our office. We have social services staff on site, including a trauma therapist as well as members of the Victim Justice Center who help children feel comfortable and ensure that both parents and children understand the criminal justice process and get the services that they need. Referrals are available for individual counseling, family counseling and medical treatment. There is an Assistant District Attorney from this Bureau on call 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

## Child Advocacy Center

Once a report of suspected child abuse is received, most children are seen at the Child Advocacy Center (CAC), located at the Westchester Institute for Human Development on the site of the Westchester Medical Center Campus. At the center, specially trained forensic interviewers, a forensic pediatrician who is an expert in identifying and treating child abuse, members of the Department of Social Services, Victims Assistance Services, prosecutors from the Child Abuse Bureau and members of local law enforcement all work together as a team in a child-friendly environment to promote an effective and coordinated response to child abuse while minimizing the trauma to child victims. The CAC allows for an immediate forensic interview of the child, a medical examination and provides victim services to ensure that the child and their family receive the emotional support that they need. The CAC is open from 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday, and can be opened on for an emergent case overnight and on weekends.

## Types of Child Abuse

Child Abuse comes in many forms. The most common forms of Child Abuse are Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect.

Physical Abuse is when an adult causes a physical injury to a child, whether intentional or not, and that is not accidental. This includes hitting, shoving, kicking, burning, biting, hair pulling, and choking.

Sexual Abuse is when an adult exposes a child to sexual involvement or acts. This includes having sexual contact with a child, exploitation, child pornography, inappropriate sexual talk, or making a child view sex acts.

Neglect is when an adult fails to give the proper care and support needed for a child's well-being. This includes failing to provide adequate food and drink, failing to provide needed medical and dental care, failing to provide appropriate clothing for the weather, not supervising a child appropriately, and exposing a child to unsafe situations.

Emotional Abuse is when an adult harms a child's psychological development by using words or actions to seriously harm a child's social or mental development. This includes but is not limited to, criticizing or name calling, threatening abandonment, showing little interest in the child, confining a child to small areas such as a closet or small room, setting a child up for failure, or encouraging misbehavior.



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## What is Child Abuse?

Child Abuse is injury or harm caused to a child by an adult. While most cases of child abuse include a parent or caregiver, child abuse can be caused by a stranger or close friend.

## Reporting Child Abuse

Child Abuse is a very sad, difficult and emotional event for a child and family to go through. However, often child victims and their families are afraid or embarrassed to report the abuse, out of concern for another family member or a concern for their own privacy. Reporting the physical or sexual abuse is always the right thing to do. Reporting the abuse can stop it from continuing and protect other potential victims from being abused. In case of an emergency, call 911 immediately.

If you suspect a child is the victim of abuse or maltreatment please call the New York State Child Abuse Hotline at **(800) 342-3720**

Mandated reporters must make reports when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child before them in their official capacity is an abused or maltreated child. Mandated reporters include, doctors, nurses, and medical providers, therapists, social workers, mental health providers, teachers, school administrators and guidance counselors, daycare workers, and law enforcement personnel. Mandated Reporters should call the New York State Central Registry at **(800) 635-1522**

The Child Abuse Bureau in the Westchester County District Attorney's Office **(914) 995-3000**