

Effects of violence on children.

A child's development is very important and can be greatly affected in many ways. We know that a child's development rests solely on the parents. If they are not nurtured in a stable environment free from all types of abuse we know factually that they are adversely affected.

NAPCAN is our national peak body on this issue and with programs such as the *Hawkesbury kids say NO to Domestic Violence* campaign we are finding ways that we can protect our kids.

How early in children's lives does domestic violence have an impact?

The incidence of domestic violence among pregnant Australian teenagers is higher than rates reported for the general community. Women often report domestic violence beginning when they were pregnant or escalating in severity when they were pregnant. The effects on an unborn baby may range from miscarriage, still birth, disabilities, poor foetal growth and poor brain development.

Children may experience:

- Bed-wetting
- Delayed speech development
- Bullying
- Anxiety
- Compulsions
- Isolation
- Depression
- Low self esteem
- Low confidence
- Poor social interaction
- Disturbed sleeping patterns and nightmares
- Cruelty to animals
- Aggressive language and behaviour
- Substance abuse

When children witness family members fighting in their homes, they don't forget. Children can be direct victims of violence. It can affect children differently according to their age, sex, position and role in the family.

Ways you can help...

- Encourage children to talk about anything that is worrying them.
- Make sure the child knows the violence at home is not their fault.
- Tell the child they are a very special person and that they are not alone.
- Help them make a safety plan which they can follow if needed.
- Let them know that other children have also had similar experiences.

Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. Speaking out and refusing to look the other way can break the silence surrounding violence in the home.



