



NEWSLETTER

June 2020

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child abuse and neglect can look like many things:

- It can be an act of commission or omission, meaning that it can be something someone *does* (child abuse), or something someone *does not do* (child neglect).
- It can be committed by a parent or other caregiver such as a member of the clergy, a coach, or a teacher.
- It can cause harm, potentially cause harm, or even threaten to cause harm.

Any way you define it, child abuse and neglect is a public health issue that impacts children everywhere.



Image Credit: Creative Commons

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN MARYLAND¹

In 2018, there were an estimated **22,059 referrals** screened in for investigation for Child Abuse and Neglect to Child Protective Services in Maryland.

In that same year, Maryland reported **7,743 victims** of child abuse or neglect for a rate of 5.8 child victims for every 1,000 children.

Sadly, there were **40 child fatalities** in Maryland in 2018 as a result of child abuse or neglect.

Common Types of Child Abuse and Neglect

- Physical abuse- such as hitting, kicking, burning, or shaking
- Sexual abuse- such as fondling or penetration
- Emotional abuse- such as withholding love or shaming
- Neglect- such as failing to provide adequate food or shelter

What can WE do?²

As a society, there are a few strategies and approaches for preventing child abuse and neglect:

- Strengthen economic supports to families
- Change social norms to support parents and positive parenting
- Provide quality care and education early in life
- Enhance parenting skills to promote healthy child development
- Intervene to lessen harms and future risk

What can I do?

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, you can report it to the local authorities. Find your local number below:

<http://dhs.mymdthink.maryland.gov/blog/child-protective-services/reporting-suspected-child-abuse-or-neglect/local-offices/>

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¹ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2020). *Child Maltreatment 2018*. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>

² Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland Core Violence and Injury Prevention Program. (2016). *Child Abuse and Neglect*. Available from <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/ohpetup/Shared%20Documents/EIP-RESOURCE/ChildAbuseNeglect.pdf>

FEATURE ARTICLE: Help Calm the Storm

By: [Frank J. Kros, MSW, JD](#)



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One of the many unintended consequences of the COVID-19 interventions has been and will continue to be a dramatic increase in child maltreatment. Social distancing, in particular, will likely create a “perfect storm” of extreme social isolation, high parental stress, economic hardship, limited access to resources and inadequate supports that result in child abuse, neglect and family violence. But there are actions each of us can take today to prevent child maltreatment by limiting the impact of these conditions.

You do not have to be a social worker, therapist or law enforcement professional to help prevent child abuse. By understanding and addressing some of the root causes of child maltreatment and taking action to limit the impact of these conditions, you can help families avoid maltreatment and build resilience.

In the rest of his article, Kros outlines four things we can do **today** to prevent child maltreatment while still doing social distancing.

Read it [here](#).

POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

- You see bruises or other injuries in multiple locations or on both sides of the child’s body.
- You see or hear of frequent or unexplained injuries to the child, especially in a distinctive pattern (such as grab marks).
- The child expresses fear of remaining at home.
- The child lacks personal hygiene (dirty body and dirty/or torn clothing).
- The child exhibits or expresses sexual knowledge that is inappropriate for his or her age.

(Kros 2020)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

For information on statistics and resources that are made readily available to the public, please visit the following links to other PSM members:

[Maryland Department of Human Services- Child Protective Services- What is Child Abuse and Neglect](#)

[Maryland Department of Health’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau- Child Maltreatment](#)

The American Academy of Pediatrics developed a webinar on Child Abuse in the COVID-19 Era. It is available online [here](#).

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services is accepting applications for additional CARES Act Funding to support domestic violence victim service providers and their efforts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Learn more [here](#).

WHAT’S NEXT?

PSM’s next webinar will be presented by Indu Radhakrishnan on Wednesday, July 8 from 1-2pm. The topic is Suicide Prevention. To register, click [here](#)!

September’s Newsletter will highlight **Intimate Partner Violence**. If you would like to contribute information, advertise an event/webinar, or highlight your organization, please email us at partnership.safer.md@gmail.com