



Children are innocent and precious members of our society, but also the most vulnerable to neglect, abuse and exploitation. If not diligently protected children can easily fall prey to criminals. Those who commit

crimes against children cause serious and long-term harm, both physically and psychologically. These young victims often face a lifetime of suffering.

By vigorously prosecuting those who commit child abuse, my office seeks justice for crime victims and prevention of future instances of child abuse. We work to treat all child victims with gentle care while effectively prosecuting the criminals who prey on them.

If you know of an abused or neglected child, please call the police immediately and review the information in this brochure to help keep the children of our community safe.

Sincerely,

Andrew P. Thomas
Maricopa County Attorney

CHILD ABUSE



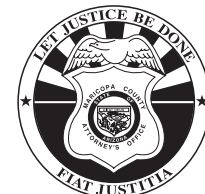
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Children as victims

What should you do if a child you know is being abused?

Signs and symptoms

Resources



ANDREW THOMAS
County Attorney

The Maricopa County Attorney's Office is dedicated to prosecuting individuals who harm children. Using a team approach to prosecution enables the Family Violence Bureau to effectively handle the complexities of child abuse cases.

The team consists of the following members:

- Family Violence Bureau or Sex Crimes Bureau — Attorneys who are experts in prosecuting cases involving crimes against children.
- Victim Witness Division — Victim Witness Advocates who specialize in helping child victims and their families throughout the prosecution of a case. These advocates work closely with the attorneys to avoid secondary victimization to the child.
- Investigation Division — Investigators provide investigative follow-up information and locate witnesses.
- Legal Assistant Bureau — Legal Assistants provide legal research and assist the attorneys with case management.
- Police agencies — Officers investigate any allegation of child abuse using the Child Abuse Protocol guidelines. The officer will also coordinate with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office to ensure the needs of the crime victim are met.

This team is dedicated to the investigation, prosecution and welfare of crime victims.

Children as victims

Children are more vulnerable because of their size, age and dependence on adults. Children have little or no control over who lives in their home or who associates with members of the household. Certain children are targeted more frequently, including shy, lonely and compliant children, as well as pre-verbal and very young children and those labeled "bad kids." Children with physical, emotional or developmental disabilities are particularly vulnerable.

What should you do if a child you know is being abused?

- Tell someone who will listen and take action
- Call 911
- Try not to be in the same room with the offender by yourself

Individuals who hurt children can be charged with various crimes including:

- sexual abuse
- sexual conduct with a minor
- sexual assault
- molestation of a child
- homicide
- commercial sexual exploitation of a minor
- sexual exploitation of a minor
- incest
- child prostitution
- child abuse

The offender may be a parent, but could be other family members, friends, neighbors, acquaintances, babysitters, caretakers and strangers.

The closer the relationship of the child to the offender, the stronger the feelings of betrayal and loss of trust felt by the child.

Detecting initial injuries, signs or symptoms and providing intervention can minimize or prevent further abuse.

Signs and symptoms

Some signs and symptoms of child abuse include:

- head injuries and/or multiple injuries to the body
- frequent bacterial infection, genital rash, vaginal discharge

- fractures or bruises in an infant who has not yet learned to walk
- immersion burns from scalding hot water, cigarette burns
- injury to buttocks or scalp (bruising or hair loss).
- injury to bony body parts (shins, knees, elbows etc.)
- dramatic changes in performance at school, disruptive or overly aggressive behavior
- emotional/behavioral changes, runaway, truancy, drug abuse
- interest in sexual acts or display of sexual knowledge beyond child's years, masturbatory behavior
- extremely passive, withdrawn or hostile towards authority figures

Resources

**Maricopa County Attorney's Office
Victim Witness Division**
(602) 506-8522

Community Information & Referral
(602) 263-8856 or 1-800-352-3792

**Childhelp USA
Child Abuse Hotline**

1-(800)-4-A-Child (422-4453)

National Sexual Abuse Hotline — RAINN
1-(800)-656-HOPE (4673)

www.cyberangels.org
provides general online safety information

Center Against Sexual Abuse
1 (888) 446-2272 (24 hour hotline)

Family Advocacy Center
(602) 263-8900 or
1-(888) 246-0303

www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov
access Superior Court information by using case number or defendant's name