



Intimate Partner Violence and Young Children

Intimate partner violence (IPV) refers to abuse that occurs within an intimate relationship. IPV can happen in any intimate relationship, regardless of income level, marital status, lifestyle choices, or living arrangements. Physical, emotional, sexual, financial, and spiritual abuse are all kinds of abuse that can be considered IPV. Saskatchewan has some of the highest provincial rates of police-reported IPV in Canada.

Even if children do not see the violence, they are still impacted by IPV.

1319 Colony Street, Saskatoon, SK S7N 2Z1

Bus. 306.651.4300 Fax. 306.651.4301

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How are young children impacted by intimate partner violence (IPV)?

Young children are especially vulnerable to IPV because they are small, unable to protect themselves, and likely to be home when conflict is occurring. Young children may not understand what is happening, why it is happening, and who is at fault. They are also less likely than older children to have support and relationships outside of their home, or the language development, to be able to tell someone about the abuse. Similar to other forms of child abuse, everyone has a duty to report exposure of a child to violence.

How can you help children deal with IPV?

- Once the child is safe, help them to understand that it was not their fault, that abuse is not right, and that it is okay to feel confused about everything that happened.
- Allow the child to be a child; don't give them adult responsibilities and roles.
- Provide a safe place for play and exploration.
- Help the child learn how to recognize and manage their emotions.
- Teach the child problem-solving skills (including how to deal with success and failure) and coping skills (e.g., relaxation techniques).
- Model social skills for the child, such as healthy communication and respect.

If you or someone you know is experiencing IPV, there is help available. Visit *Services for People Experiencing Violence & Abuse* (<https://abuse.sk.211.ca/>) for more information. For information about shelters, counselling and support centers, and programs for people who use violence, visit <https://pathssk.org/get-helpnow/>.