



Out of the Shadows

North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys

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APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

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How to Contact the Child Abuse Resource Prosecutor

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Upcoming Child Abuse Trainings

State:

Advanced Child Death Investigations

Date: May 20, 2008

Location: Salemburg Justice Academy

National:

Forensic Interviewing of Children

Dates: June 23-27, 2008, July 21-25, 2008

Location: Huntsville, AL

Equal Justice for Children: Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse

Dates: June 2-6, 2008

Location: Memphis, TN

Unsafe Havens II: Prosecuting Online Crimes Against Children

Dates: August 4-8, 2008

Location: Columbia, SC

For more information on these trainings, please visit:

www.ncdistrictattorney.org/childabuse/training.htm

A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined that approximately 1 in every 50 infants in the United States is a victim of nonfatal child abuse or neglect in a year.¹ More than 91,000 infant victims of abuse or neglect were counted in the period from October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006, based on cases substantiated by state and local children's protective services agencies.² Although the study focused on children younger than the age of 1 year, it found that more than 84 percent of the victims were less than a month old when the neglect or abuse occurred³, nearly a third of the victims were one week old or younger.⁴

Approximately 68 percent of the cases involved in the study were attributed to neglect.⁵ The study defined neglect as a failure to meet a child's basic needs including housing, clothing, feeding and access to medical care.⁶ It specifically excluded cases involving new parents stumbling their way through feeding or making rookie mistakes.⁷ "Things like abandonment and newborn drug addiction would qualify as neglect, not things like parents learning how to be parents," said Rebecca Leeb, co-author of the study.⁸

Clear-cut physical abuse comprised about 13 percent of the cases, defined as "the intentional use of physical force by a parent or caregiver against a child that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury" such as beating, kicking, biting, burning, and shaking.⁹ Although the study focused on non-fatal maltreatment, officials estimated that abuse killed an additional 499 children in 2006 before their first birthday.¹⁰

In North Carolina, 24,597 children were confirmed as victims of child abuse or neglect or found to be in need of services for the year 2005-2006.¹¹ Thirty-four children died of child abuse homicide in 2006 in North Carolina.¹²

With Child Abuse Awareness Month upon us, we must be ever cognizant of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in our communities. This knowledge should give us the courage and motivation to continue fighting against perpetrators of abuse and neglect in the courtroom - fighting on behalf of the innocents that cannot fight for themselves.

Footnotes

1. Stobbe, Mike (April 4, 2008), "Neglect, Abuse Seen in 90,000 Infants," The Washington Post, www.washingtonpost.com, (available April 7, 2008).
2. Id.
3. Stein, Rob (April 4, 2008), "Report Cites Abuse of 91,000 Babies Under 1," The Washington Post, www.washingtonpost.com, (available April 7, 2008).
4. Stobbe, Mike (April 4, 2008), "Neglect, Abuse Seen in 90,000 Infants," The Washington Post, www.washingtonpost.com, (available April 7, 2008).
5. Id.
6. Id.
7. Id.
8. Id.
9. Stein, Rob (April 4, 2008), "Report Cites Abuse of 91,000 Babies Under 1," The Washington Post, www.washingtonpost.com, (available April 7, 2008).
10. Id.
11. Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina, www.preventchildabusenc.org, Prevent Child Abuse Month Packet (available April 7, 2008), citing The NC Department of Human Resources, Division of Social Services, Central Registry Reports on Child Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency.
12. Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina, www.preventchildabusenc.org, Prevent Child Abuse Month Packet (available April 7, 2008), citing NC Child Fatality Prevention Team.

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NC CLEARINGHOUSE ON FAMILY AND CHILD WELL-BEING WEBSITE

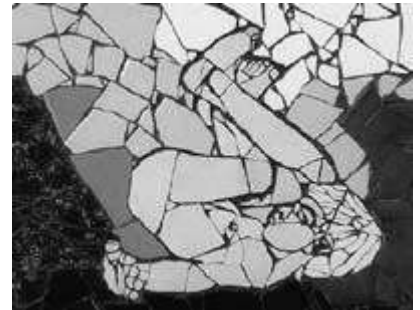
The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Social Work has announced the establishment of the North Carolina Clearinghouse on Family and Child Well-being website. The website was established through funding from the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission.

The Clearinghouse is dedicated to providing a central source of information about learning opportunities and training resources throughout North Carolina for those working to strengthen families and to prevent and respond to child maltreatment and family violence. The purpose of the website is to disseminate training information and to facilitate collaboration among professions in training efforts. The Conference of District Attorneys serves on the advisory committee for the Clearinghouse in on-going development of the website.

Please visit the website at www.ncclearinghouse.org to find more information about trainings across the state related to child and family maltreatment.

ADVANCED CHILD DEATH INVESTIGATIONS COURSE

The North Carolina Justice Academy will present Advanced Child Death Investigations on May 20, 2008 at the Salemburg location. This course serves as a follow-up to the Basic Child Death Investigations course that is also provided by the Justice Academy, taught by Lisa Mayhew, Child Fatality Investigator/Trainer with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for North Carolina. The Advanced course is taught by Mayhew and Laura Parker, Child Abuse Resource Prosecutor with the Conference of District Attorneys. This course provides a more in-depth overview of child abuse fatalities, specifically abusive head trauma, and legal issues pertinent to child abuse homicides. The one-day training also includes several case studies of child abuse homicide with an opportunity for class participants to discuss and strategize effective investigative techniques specific to the cases covered. If you are interested in attending, or know a law enforcement officer who would like to attend, please contact Judy Ivey (Salemburg location) at 910.525.4151 to register for the course.



ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE RESOURCE MANUAL

The Conference of District Attorneys has additional copies of the Child Abuse Resource Manual for prosecutors. This comprehensive manual covers information on topics spanning the investigation, medical examination, trial preparation and strategy, and sentencing in child sexual abuse cases. If your office is need of extra copies, please contact Laura Parker at Laura.E.Parker@nccourts.org or at 919.890.1500.

"IN THE NEWS" SUBMISSIONS

The Conference of District Attorneys would like to ask for your submissions to include on the "In the News" portion of our child abuse website. If you have recently prosecuted a child abuse case (or someone in your office has) and would like for us to post any newspaper article related to the case on the Conference website, please contact Laura Parker at Laura.E.Parker@nccourts.org or at 919.890.1500.