

The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

Age	Physical	Emotional	Behavioral	Cognitive	Social
0-1	Eating disturbances Sleep disturbances Being colicky or sick Developmental delays Physical injuries Physical/sexual abuse	Not responsive/cuddly Nervous, jumpy Cries a lot Freight Fear of male voice or loud noises Insecurity	Nervous, jumpy Cries a lot	Developmental delays	Not responsive/cuddly
2-4	Eating problems Sleep problems Psychosomatic Disorders Developmental delays Physical injuries Physical/sexual abuse	Fear Fear of male voice or loud noises Nervous, Jumpy Cries a lot Insecurity/confusion Withdrawal Anger Difficulty trusting Conflicted loyalties Depression Delayed toileting Stress Begins to feel responsible for the abuse (guilt)	Nervous, jumpy Cries a lot Poor impulse control Regression Acting out violently sometimes to divert the violence	Learning that hitting others to gain control is ok Developmental delays No real basis for learning "cause and effect" Blurred parental boundaries Confusion about gender roles	Difficulty trusting Problems relating to other children Social isolation Blurred social boundaries

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Age	Physical	Emotional	Behavioral	Cognitive	Social
5-12	<p>Psychosomatic disorders Physical injuries Physical/sexual abuse</p>	<p>Fear Insecurity/ low self-esteem Withdrawal Anger Difficulty trusting Conflicted loyalties Depression Bed wetting Begin embarrassed by family (shame) School problems Stress Feeling responsible for the abuse (guilt)</p>	<p>Poor impulse control Becoming overachiever Becoming caretaker of younger siblings Becoming caretaker of adults Developing problems to divert parents from fighting School problems Running away Early interest in drugs and alcohol Premature sexual activity Acting out violently Regression Adult Affect</p>	<p>Confusion about gender roles Learns that hitting others to gain control is ok</p>	<p>Difficulty trusting Problems relating to other children School problems Social isolation</p>

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Age	Physical	Emotional	Behavioral	Cognitive	Social
Teens	Psychosomatic disorders Physical injuries Physical/sexual abuse Suicide	Fear Insecurity/low self-esteem Withdrawal Anger Difficulty trusting Conflicted loyalties Depression Begin embarrassed by family (shame) School problems Stress Feeling responsible for the abuse (guilt) Suicide	Becoming overachiever School problems Running away Truancy Drug and alcohol use Premature sexual activity Acting out violently Becoming abusive in dating relationships	Confusion about gender roles Learning problems	Difficulty trusting School problems Social isolation

Variables

The effects of domestic violence on children vary widely among those who are exposed to it. The severity of the effects depends factors including:

- The developmental stage of the child
- When and how often the violence occurred
- Gender
- Birth order
- The relationship of the child to the abuser
- The strength of the relationship of the child to the mother
- The strength and existence of other family and community support for the child
- The child's own character and capacity to cope with the situation

Not all children experience severe repercussions from having been exposed to domestic violence.