

New Mexico Family Impact Seminar

***Family Violence and Children:
Perspectives for Policy***

January 2005



Department of Extension Home Economics
Department of Family & Consumer Sciences
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
New Mexico State University

Please note copyright information for the section by Sarah Buel entitled, "Criminal Matters: Prosecution in Domestic Violence Cases" (pp. 19-23):

From Buel, S. 2004. Prosecution in Domestic Violence Cases. In M. Drew, L. Jordan, D. Mathews & R. Runge (Eds.), *The Impact of Domestic Violence on Your Legal Practice: A Lawyer's Handbook*, 2nd Edition (pp. 340-344). Copyright © 2004 by the American Bar Association. Reproduced with permission. All rights reserved. This information or any portion thereof may not be copied or disseminated in any form or by any means or downloaded or stored in an electronic database or retrieval system without the express written consent of the American Bar Association.

Briefing Report
for the
New Mexico Family Impact Seminar

***Family Violence and Children:
Perspectives for Policy****

The New Mexico Family Impact Seminar is a service project for state policy makers
provided by
the Department of Extension Home Economics
the Department of Family & Consumer Sciences
in the College of Agriculture and Home Economics
at New Mexico State University

Edited by

Bruce Jacobs, Ph.D.
Extension Specialist
Department of Extension Home Economics
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
New Mexico State University

January, 2005

Table of Contents

Purpose and Presenters.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Executive Summary.....	vii
A Checklist for Assessing the Impact of Policies on Families.....	ix
Family Violence and Children: An Introduction	
by <i>Bruce Jacobs</i>	
Definitions.....	1
The Nature of Domestic Violence.....	1
The Extent of Domestic Violence in the United States.....	2
Domestic Violence in New Mexico.....	3
The Consequences of Domestic Violence.....	7
The Adverse Impact on Children of Exposure to Domestic Violence	
by <i>Victor LaCerva</i>	
How Large is the Problem in New Mexico?.....	13
What are the Adverse Effects on Children?.....	13
What is Currently Being Done in the State to Address this Issue?.....	14
What are the Emerging Best Practices from Around the Country?.....	15
What Steps Do We Need to Take to Move Forward in New Mexico?.....	15
Criminal Matters: Prosecution in Domestic Violence Case	
by <i>Sarah Buel</i>	
Effective Prosecutor Interventions: Laying the Groundwork.....	19
Work Closely With and Train Police.....	20
Advocacy Throughout the Protection Order and Criminal Court Process.....	20
Evidence-Based Prosecution.....	21
Domestic Violence and Children	
by <i>Stephanie Walton</i>	
Effects of Domestic Violence on Children.....	25
Policy responses to help Children in Violent Homes.....	27
What Can Legislators Do?.....	32
Conclusion.....	33
Conclusion.....	35
Selected Resources.....	36

Purpose and Presenters

Family Violence and Children: Perspectives for Policy is New Mexico State University's first Family Impact Seminar. Family Impact Seminars – which do not lobby for particular policies – provide up-to-date, objective and nonpartisan, solution-oriented research information on current issues that affect families. The Family Impact Seminars are intended for state legislators and their aides, Governor's and Lieutenant Governor's Office staff, legislative service agency personnel, and state agency representatives. Briefing Reports supplement the seminars.

One of the ultimate goals of New Mexico State University's Departments of Extension Home Economics and Family & Consumer Sciences in the College of Agriculture and Extension Home Economics is to enhance the quality of life of families in New Mexico. To this end, we bring the Family Impact Seminar to New Mexico.

Featured seminar speakers:

Victor LaCerva, M.D.
Medical Director
Family Health Bureau
Public Health Division
New Mexico Department of Health
2040 S. Pacheco Street
Santa Fe; NM 87505
(505) 476-8905, fax (505) 476-8959
Victor.LaCerva@doh.state.nm.us

Sarah Buel, J.D.
Clinical Professor
University of Texas at Austin - School of Law
727 E. Dean Keeton Street
Austin; TX 78705
(512) 232-9326, fax (512) 471-6988
sbuel@mail.law.utexas.edu

Stephanie Walton, B.A.
Senior Policy Specialist
Children & Families Program
National Conference of State Legislatures
7700 East First Place
Denver; CO 80230
(303) 364-7700, fax (303) 364-7800
stephanie.walton@ncsl.org

For further information on the New Mexico Family Impact Seminar, contact:

Bruce Jacobs, Ph.D
Extension Specialist
New Mexico State University
Department of Extension Home Economics
MSC 3AE
P.O. Box 30003
Las Cruces, NM 88003-0003
(505) 646-4270; Fax: (505) 646-1889
bjacobs@nmsu.edu

or

Charolette Collins, M.S.
Extension Specialist
New Mexico State University
Department of Extension Home Economics
9301 Indian School Road NE, Suite 108
Albuquerque, NM 87112
(505) 332-3765; Fax: (505) 332-3681
collins@nmsu.edu

For further information on bringing a family perspective to policymaking, see the Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars website at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/familyimpact/wisconsin.htm>.

Acknowledgements

Ann Vail, Department Head for Extension Home Economics and Family & Consumer Sciences / New Mexico State University, for identifying the need for the Family Impact Seminar and providing staff and financial resources for its implementation.

Charolette Collins, Extension Specialist, Department of Extension Home Economics / New Mexico State University, for providing leadership for the establishment of the Family Impact Seminar.

Paul Gutierrez, Associate Dean and Associate Director, Cooperative Extension Service / College of Agriculture and Extension Home Economics / New Mexico State University, for supporting and encouraging the Departments of Extension Home Economics and Family & Consumer Sciences during our first Family Impact Seminar.

Jerry G. Schickedanz, Dean, College of Agriculture and Extension Home Economics / New Mexico State University, for providing wisdom and insight throughout the establishment of the Family Impact Seminar.

Victor LaCerva, Sarah Buel, and Stephanie Walton for sharing their expertise via their seminar presentations and briefing report articles, so that we might improve the quality of life for persons living in New Mexico.

The Family Impact Seminar Advisory Committee for providing guidance regarding the establishment of the Family Impact Seminar:

Mark Boitano	Senator
Charolette Collins	Department of Extension Home Economics College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Mary Helen Garcia	Representative
Paul H. Gutierrez	Cooperative Extension Service College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Bruce Jacobs	Department of Extension Home Economics College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Rhonda S. King	Representative
Steve Komadina	Senator
Linda M. Lopez	Senator

Phil Lynch	Legislative Council Service
Brian K. Moore	Representative
Helen Nelson	Income Support Division New Mexico Department of Human Services
Jane Peacock	Family Health Bureau Public Health Division New Mexico Department of Health
Patricia L. Quintana	Government Affairs Office New Mexico State University
Dianne Rivera-Valencia	New Mexico Children, Youth, & Families Department
Jerry G. Schickedanz	College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
J. Paul Taylor	Representative
Ann Vail	Department of Family & Consumer Sciences Department of Extension Home Economics College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Jeannette O. Wallace	Representative
Avon W. Wilson	Representative
Holly Woelber	New Mexico Cooperative Extension Support Council

The Family Impact Seminar Steering Committee for providing suggestions for the implementation of all aspects of the Family Impact Seminar:

Terry Canup	Agricultural Communications College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Charolette Collins	Department of Extension Home Economics College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Esther Devall	Department of Family & Consumer Sciences College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University



Janet Green	Department of Hotel, Restaurant & Tourism Management College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Paul H Gutierrez	Cooperative Extension Service College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Bruce Jacobs	Department of Extension Home Economics College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Roberta Rios	Cooperative Extension Service College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Jerry G. Schickedanz	College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University
Ann Vail	Department of Family & Consumer Sciences College of Agriculture & Home Economics New Mexico State University

The Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, especially Karen Bogenschneider, for providing training and technical support for implementing the Family Impact Seminar.

For permission to reprint material for use in this report:

- The National Conference of State Legislatures' Domestic Violence and Children by Stephanie Walton;
- The American Bar Association's Criminal Matters: Prosecution in Domestic Violence Cases by Sarah Buel.

Executive Summary

The term *family violence* in this briefing report refers to (1) intimate partner violence (domestic violence) and (2) a child's exposure to intimate partner violence. The problem of domestic violence is pervasive in the United States, and New Mexico is no exception. Domestic violence is experienced by thousands of individuals and families each year living in New Mexico. All too often we read or hear about another domestic violence event and the sad outcome for the victims. The number of victims affected by this violence – including children – is simply staggering. And, the negative physical, psychological, emotional, and social impact domestic violence can have on a victim's health and safety is truly tragic.

This briefing report discusses domestic violence in general, and specifically addresses the problem of domestic violence and children.

The first chapter provides an introduction to domestic violence. While men can be victimized by an intimate partner's abuse, the vast majority of adult victims are women. Domestic violence is a systematic pattern of domination and control which usually escalates in frequency and intensity. This violence has highly negative and often dire consequences for both the adult and child victim. When children are exposed to domestic violence a whole new dimension of consequential reverberations occur. The prevalence and incidence of domestic violence in New Mexico is high; yet, prosecutions and convictions are low. This chapter also highlights this data.

In the second chapter, Victor LaCerva discusses the impact of domestic violence on children, the extent of the problem of children in New Mexico being exposed to domestic violence, ongoing activities in New Mexico to address the problem, best practices for protecting the children, as well as seven recommendations for New Mexico to address the problem of domestic violence and children. Many of New Mexico's children are exposed to domestic violence. Research on children exposed to violence shows that they will suffer because of it – physically, psychologically, emotionally, developmentally, and socially. There are current ongoing activities in New Mexico to address the problem, but much yet needs to be done based on best practices. These best practices form the basis for the recommendations given, recommendations focusing on both prevention and intervention efforts.

Recommendations presented in this chapter include: (1) strengthening voluntary early home visitation programs for early identification of violence in the home and safety planning; (2) enhancing parental bonding with the non-offending parent (to counteract the negative effects of domestic violence) while addressing the issue of violence to create safe homes; (3) encouraging early identification, assessment and referral for children exposed to domestic violence through various providers; (4) promoting resiliency in children; (5) dealing more effectively with prevention and intervention with teen dating violence; (6) expanding activities of the currently federally funded national child traumatic stress network; and (7) improving the medical, judicial and law enforcement responses when children are present at a domestic violence scene.

New Mexico needs to enhance its law enforcement and judicial response to domestic violence, including its prosecution rate of offenders. Without effective prosecution of the offenders, the violence will continue as well as children's exposure to it. Thus, in the next chapter, Sarah Buel discusses prosecution in domestic violence cases. Specific policies, protocols, and practices are presented to increase prosecution rates and to enhance victim safety, e.g., adopting written protocols and policies for evidence-based prosecution (moving forward with prosecution with or without the victim's testimony) or for mandating physical custody arrests when probable cause exists to believe that domestic violence has occurred. Other talking points include, for example, prosecutors ensuring that all victims have an advocate's support and guidance in court; police training in the response to and reporting of domestic violence incidents; and appropriate sentencing.

In the third chapter, Stephanie Walton provides an overview of the effects of domestic violence on children and other states' legislative responses to children being exposed to domestic violence. These responses are discussed within the domains of family law, criminal law, child maltreatment law, and legislative initiatives to support child welfare and domestic violence service systems. For example, 12 states have laws that enhance penalties when domestic violence is committed in the presence of a minor. Some laws are not without controversy, e.g., defining child neglect to include witnessing domestic violence as was done in Minnesota in 1999 can overwhelm child welfare agencies or even hold victims responsible. The unintended consequences were such that the Minnesota Legislature repealed the law in 2000. Pros, cons, and cautions are discussed regarding various legislative approaches to addressing the problem of children exposed to domestic violence. The specific question, *What can legislators do?* about the problem is addressed.

The checklist on the following page is a useful guide for viewing public policy or potential public policy through a family lens. With it, policymakers and those who implement policies can assess the impact of policy on families....



A Checklist for Assessing the Impact of Policies on Families

The first step in developing family-friendly policies is to ask the right questions:

- What can government and communities do to enhance the family's capacity to help itself and others?
- What effect does (or will) this policy (or proposed program) have for families? Will it help or hurt, strengthen or weaken family life?

These questions sound simple, but they can be difficult to answer.

The Family Criteria (Ad Hoc) Task Force of the Consortium of Family Organizations (COFO) developed a checklist to assess the intended and unintended consequences of policies and programs on family stability, family relationships, and family responsibilities. The checklist includes six basic principles that serve as the criteria of how sensitive to and supportive of families policies and programs are. Each principle is accompanied by a series of family impact questions.

The principles are not rank ordered and sometimes they conflict with each other, requiring trade-offs. Cost effectiveness also must be considered. Some questions are value-neutral and others incorporate specific values. People may not always agree on these values, so sometimes the questions will require rephrasing. This tool, however, reflects a broad nonpartisan consensus, and it can be useful to people across the political spectrum.

Principle 1. Family support and responsibilities.

Policies and programs should aim to support and supplement family functioning and provide substitute services only as a last resort.

This checklist can be used to conduct a family impact analysis of policies and programs.

✓ For questions that apply to your policy or program, record the impact on family well-being.

Does the proposal or program:

- support and supplement parents' and other family members' ability to carry out their responsibilities?
- provide incentives for other persons to take over family functioning when doing so may not be necessary?
- set unrealistic expectations for families to assume financial and/or caregiving responsibilities for dependent, seriously ill, or disabled family members?
- enforce absent parents' obligations to provide financial support for their children?

Principle 2. Family membership and stability.

Whenever possible, policies and programs should encourage and reinforce marital, parental, and family commitment and stability, especially when children are involved. Intervention in family membership and living arrangements is usually justified only to protect family members from serious harm or at the request of the family itself.

Does the policy or program:

- provide incentives or disincentives to marry, separate, or divorce?
- provide incentives or disincentives to give birth to, foster, or adopt children?
- strengthen marital commitment or parental obligations?
- use appropriate criteria to justify removal of a child or adult from the family?
- allocate resources to help keep the marriage or family together when this is the appropriate goal?
- recognize that major changes in family relationships such as divorce or adoption are processes that extend over time and require continuing support and attention?

Principle 3. Family involvement and interdependence.

Policies and programs must recognize the interdependence of family relationships, the strength and persistence of family ties and obligations, and the wealth of resources that families can mobilize to help their members.

To what extent does the policy or program:

- recognize the reciprocal influence of family needs on individual needs, and the influence of individual needs on family needs?
- recognize the complexity and responsibilities involved in caring for family members with special

needs (e.g., physically or mentally disabled, or chronically ill)?

- involve immediate and extended family members in working toward a solution?
- acknowledge the power and persistence of family ties, even when they are problematic or destructive?
- build on informal social support networks (such as community/neighborhood organizations, religious communities) that are essential to families' lives?
- respect family decisions about the division of labor?
- address issues of power inequity in families?
- ensure perspectives of all family members are represented?
- assess and balance the competing needs, rights, and interests of various family members?
- protect the rights and safety of families while respecting parents' rights and family integrity?

Principle 4. Family partnership and empowerment.

Policies and programs must encourage individuals and their close family members to collaborate as partners with program professionals in delivery of services to an individual. In addition, parent and family representatives are an essential resource in policy development, program planning, and evaluation.

In what specific ways does the policy or program:

- provide full information and a range of choices to families?
- respect family autonomy and allow families to make their own decisions? On what principles are family autonomy breached and program staff allowed to intervene and make decisions?
- encourage professionals to work in collaboration with the families of their clients, patients, or students?
- take into account the family's need to coordinate the multiple services they may require and integrate well with other programs and services that the families use?
- make services easily accessible to families in terms of location, operating hours, and easy-to-use application and intake forms?
- prevent participating families from being devalued, stigmatized, or subjected to humiliating circumstances?
- involve parents and family representatives in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation?

Principle 5. Family diversity.

Families come in many forms and configurations, and policies and programs must take into account their varying effects on different types of families. Policies and programs must acknowledge and value the diversity of family life and not discriminate against or penalize families solely for reasons of structure, roles, cultural values, or life stage.

How does the policy or program:

- affect various types of families?
- acknowledge intergenerational relationships and responsibilities among family members?
- provide good justification for targeting only certain family types, for example, only employed parents or single parents? Does it discriminate against or penalize other types of families for in sufficient reason?
- identify and respect the different values, attitudes, and behavior of families from various racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, and geographic backgrounds that are relevant to program effectiveness?

Principle 6. Support of vulnerable families.

Families in greatest economic and social need, as well as those determined to be most vulnerable to breakdown, should be included in government policies and programs.

Does the policy or program:

- identify and publicly support services for families in the most extreme economic or social need?
- give support to families who are most vulnerable to breakdown and have the fewest resources?
- target efforts and resources toward preventing family problems before they become serious crises or chronic situations?

This checklist was adapted by the Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars from Ooms, T. (1995). *Taking families seriously as an essential policy tool*. Permission for use is given by the Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars at the University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension. For further information and resources, see <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/familyimpact>.

Family Violence and Children: An Introduction

Bruce Jacobs^a

Definitions

The term *family violence* traditionally encompasses *domestic violence, child abuse, and elderly abuse*. In this report, domestic violence (also used interchangeably with the term *intimate partner violence*) refers to violence perpetrated against a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend. This report focuses on domestic violence and the children of the intimate partner(s) who are exposed to it.

Exposing children to domestic violence legally constitutes criminal child abuse in some states.^b Whether or not a state defines a child's exposure to domestic violence as child abuse, the children who are exposed to domestic violence experience that violence with their eyes, ears, hearts, minds and bodies.

The Nature of Domestic Violence

Although men can certainly be victims of domestic violence, women are victims of domestic violence much more than men.¹ Statistics at both the national² and our state³ level overwhelmingly demonstrate this fact. Thus, this report stresses a gender orientation which reflects this situation. Among women, the following groups may be at a somewhat higher risk for domestic violence:

- Women who are single, separated, or divorced (or are planning a separation or divorce);
- Women between the ages of 17 and 28;
- Women who are pregnant;
- Women whose partners are excessively jealous or possessive.⁴

Domestic violence, a systematic pattern of domination and control characterized by a coercive pattern of behavior, may include repeated battery and injury, psychological abuse, sexual assault, progressive social isolation, deprivation, intimidation, and restriction of access to food, clothing, money, friends, transportation, healthcare, and employment.⁵ Furthermore, these behaviors can be categorized into *criminal acts* and

^aBruce Jacobs, Ph.D., is an Extension Specialist with the Department of Extension Home Economics, College of Agriculture and Home Economics, New Mexico State University.

^bSaid statutes have been the cause of unintended negative consequences at both the individual (victim) and system level; see article, *Domestic Violence and Children*, by Stephanie Walton in this report.

*non-criminal acts*⁶:

Criminal Acts

- Hitting
- Choking
- Kicking
- Assault with a weapon
- Sexual assault
- Kidnapping
- Threats of violence
- Stalking
- Damaging property
- Attacking pets
- Abusing children

Non-criminal Acts:

- Degradation
- Interrogating children
- Threatening/attempting suicide
- Controlling access to money
- Monitoring a victim's time and activities

Repeated exposure of domestic violence is, for the victim, an ongoing, debilitating experience of physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse.

The abusers perpetrating such behaviors have a problem with power and control.⁷ This abusive behavior usually escalates in both frequency and severity.⁸ Repeated exposure of domestic violence is, for the victim, an ongoing, debilitating experience of physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse.⁹

Because domestic violence occurs between intimates, there is a heightened potential for danger for the victim since (1) the abuser knows what the victim's daily routine is (what she does; where she goes); (2) the abuser has increased access to the victim; and (3) domestic violence frequently occurs behind closed doors, in the home, giving the abuser more control over the situation (including who witnesses or does not witness the violence).¹⁰

The potential danger for the victim is at its highest when the victim tries to leave the abuser.¹¹ At this time, there is the greatest risk for serious injury or death. Thus, leaving an abusive relationship can have serious consequences for the victim. This is one of various reasons why a woman may stay in an abusive relationship. In considering reasons why women stay in an abusive relationship,¹² simply asking the question *Why do women stay in violent relationships?* in response to a victim's abuse is blaming the victim. The appropriate and applicable question is "Why do men batter?"¹³ and "What can be done about it?"

Having briefly looked at the nature of domestic violence, we will now turn to the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence in the United States.

The Extent of Domestic Violence in the United States

Domestic violence incidence and prevalence is pervasive in the United States. The numbers are staggering. It is a serious individual and public

health and safety problem affecting millions of people:

- Nearly 5.3 million intimate partner victimizations are estimated to occur each year among U.S. women ages 18 and older.¹⁴
- Intimate partner violence made up 20% of all nonfatal violent crimes experienced by women in 2001¹⁵ (while making up 3% of the nonfatal violence against men).¹⁶
- In 2003 about 3 in 1,000 households included a member victimized by an intimate partner.¹⁷
- Health care costs resulting from intimate partner violence exceed \$4.1 billion annually.¹⁸

Findings¹⁹ from the National Violence Against Women Survey^c indicate that:

- 25 % of women said they were raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner at some time in their life.
- An estimated 4.8 million intimate partner rapes and physical assaults are perpetrated against women annually.
- The majority of intimate partner victimizations go unreported suggesting that most of the victims did not turn to the police for help and justice.

Domestic Violence in New Mexico

When considering the prevalence and incidence of domestic violence in New Mexico and its impact upon all who are affected, the following demonstrative statement sums up the situation in New Mexico:

[In New Mexico] the statistics on domestic violence (DV) are appalling, and the implications troubling. Thousands of individuals, children and families in New Mexico are experiencing the dangerous and destructive effects of violence in their homes. The problems are far-reaching and impact the overall well-being of our state.²⁰

While New Mexico has extremely dedicated individuals working “the front lines” to confront domestic violence and serve its victims, and quality services and agencies addressing the problem of domestic violence within its borders, major problems need to be addressed at local, state and systemic levels.²¹ These problems include (but are not necessarily limited to) a lack of:

- Availability of victim resources;

Thousands of individuals, children and families in New Mexico are experiencing the dangerous and destructive effects of violence in their homes.

^cA survey conducted from 11/95-5/96 with a sample of 8000 U.S. women and 8000 U.S. men

- Consistent and sustained leadership at various levels for tackling the problem;
- Comprehensive implementation and sustainment of best practices applicable to various levels (e.g., local, state) and domains (e.g., law enforcement, provider services, prosecution, judiciary, legislation);
- Prosecution of offenders;
- Sufficient collaborative strategies, and a coordinated system and subsystems to implement those strategies.²² (Effective collaborative strategies, addressing multiple aspects of the problem of domestic violence, involve: law enforcement, the courts, health and human service agencies, community based providers (including coalitions), employers and schools.²³)

Statistical Trends

Compiled statistics on domestic violence in New Mexico are kept via the *New Mexico Interpersonal Violence Data Central Repository*. Recent statistical trends have been reported in the publication, *Domestic Violence Trends in New Mexico, 2001-2003*²⁴, based on this repository. In the report, the author categorizes reporting into three main categories, i.e., reporting by *Law Enforcement*, *Domestic Violence Service Providers*, and the *Courts*. The following sections highlight findings of the report within the context of these three categories.

(A Note on Terms and Associated Data: Although the *Domestic Violence Trends in New Mexico, 2001-2003* has the term *Domestic Violence* in its title, the term is used differently than we have used it throughout this report:

- The current way data is collected in New Mexico regarding intimate partner violence using *Law Enforcement* reports does not allow us to get a comprehensive and specific picture of its prevalence, incidence and characteristics. The compiled data reflect a composite of incidents of Crimes Against Household Members^d and stalking,^e which include intimate partner violence *plus* violence between family members (who are not intimate partners). When considering the data in this section, one can keep in mind for those reports documenting the victim/offender relationship, 67% of these reports identified the relationship between the suspect and victim as current or former intimate partners.
- Similarly, for the *Provider* reports, the data reflect domestic

^d*Household member* means a spouse, former spouse, family member (including a relative, parent, present or former stepparent, present or former in-law, child or co-parent of a child), or a person with whom a person has had a continuing personal relationship. Cohabitation is not necessary to be deemed a household member. (1978 NMSA. Crimes Against Household Members Act. 30-3-11: Definitions).

^eA cautionary note: The author states that regarding the Law Enforcement reporting trend from 2001-2003, stalking incidents were not consistently reported over this 3 year period; consistency specifically for 2003 is not specified.

abuse incidents which *include* intimate partner violence incidents. Not all persons seeking services – about whom the following data reflects – are seeking services from intimate partner violence. Some sought services as a result of violence between household or family members who are not intimate partners. When considering the data in this section, one can keep in mind for those reports documenting the victim/offender relationship, 89% of these reports identified the relationship between the suspect and victim as current or former intimate partners.

- In keeping with the definition of domestic violence used in this report, reported incidents will be called *domestic abuse* incidents, which, by the nature of the crime, will *include* former or current intimate partner incidents.)

Law Enforcement and the Courts (2003)

“The criminal justice system...teaches that abuse is acceptable when it fails to impose appropriate sanctions on violent behavior.” (New Mexico Domestic Violence Benchbook, University of New Mexico School of Law)^f

The criminal justice system... teaches that abuse is acceptable when it fails to impose appropriate sanctions on violent behavior.

Law Enforcement

There were a total of 25,644 reported domestic abuse incidents to law enforcement in 2003:

- 15,517 victims were identified in 60% of reported incidents^g
 - 75% were female
- 14,284 suspects were identified in 56% of reported incidents^g
 - 78% were male
- 90% of the reports documented the suspect relation to victim
 - 67% were current or former intimate partners
- The arrest status was documented in 71% of the reports
 - There were no arrests made in 69%
 - A suspect arrest was made in 31%
- 16 deaths occurred among the reported incidents
- The number of incidents in which children were present is unknown.

^fNew Mexico Judicial Education Center at the Institute of Public Law, University of New Mexico School of Law. (n.d.). New Mexico Domestic Violence Benchbook. Chapter 1.4.1, p.1. Retrieved: November 15, 2004, from http://jec.unm.edu/resources/benchbooks/dv/ch_1.htm#141.

^gA percentage of non-identification of victims and suspects is a result of coding procedures, e.g., Albuquerque police may code a victim as “person reporting” or “person interviewed” instead of victim.

The Courts

In 2003, there were 12,201 domestic abuse cases processed to disposition across all courts:^h

Bernalillo County Metro Court:

- Handled 36% of all disposed cases
- 89% of disposed cases were dismissed
 - Almost 50% were dismissed due to procedural issues (e.g., no discovery brief / State not prepared)
 - 27% were dismissed due to victim or witness not appearing in court
 - 25% were dismissed due to defendant issues beyond court control (e.g., wrong or deceased defendant)
- Guilty verdict: 1%
- There were a total of 5,178 total cases filed; therefore, 732 cases were not disposed.

Magistrate Courts:

- Handled 55% of all disposed cases
- Guilty verdict: 43%
- Dismissal rate: unknown
- The number of total cases filed is unknown; therefore, the number of non-disposed cases is unknown.

District Courts:

- Handled 9% of all disposed cases
- Guilty verdict: 45%
- Dismissal rate: unknown
- The number of total cases filed is unknown; therefore, the number of non-disposed cases is unknown.

Two final data points regarding the courts:

(1) all cases filed across the courts specified below represent 48% of law enforcement cases for the same time period;

(2) of all domestic abuse cases known to law enforcement, for the same time period, Metro and Magistrate Courts' combined convictions represent 1%, and the District Courts' convictions represent 5%.

Domestic Abuse Service Provider Reports (2003)

New Clients Served:

In 2003, there were a total of 16,960 new clients. Children (< 18 years of age) made up 34% (Figure 1.).

^hIncludes law enforcement charges of: assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, assault with intent to commit violent felony

In Bernalillo County Metro Court, 89% of disposed cases were dismissed.

Of all domestic abuse cases known to law enforcement, for the same time period, Metro and Magistrate Courts' combined convictions represent 1%, and the District Courts' convictions represent 5%.

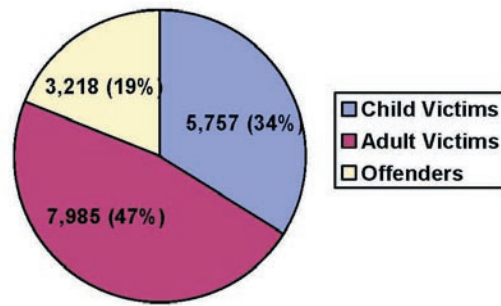


Figure 1. Provider Reports: New Clients (2003)

Reporting on adult victims and their children:

- Adult victim gender was identified in 92% of the reports
 - o 93% were female
- Victim-offender relationship was identified in 91% of the adult victim reports
 - o 89% were current or former intimate partners
- 87% of the reports identified if children were present at the domestic abuse incident
 - o Children were present in 58% of the incidents

87% of provider reports identified if children were present at the domestic abuse incident; children were present in 58% of these incidents.

Reporting on offenders:

- Of 3,218 offender reports, offender gender was identified in 81%
- o 86% were male

On a final note, for 2002 (latest known data) New Mexico ranked 3rd highest among the states for rate of females murdered by males. For homicides in which the victim/offender relationship was identified, 88% (21 out of 24) of female victims knew their murderer. Out of these 88%, 52% of the victims were former or current wives or girlfriends of the offender.²⁵

The Consequences of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence seriously threatens the health and well-being of its victims. In the data related sections above, we get an understanding of the breadth of the problem of domestic violence by the use of descriptive statistics. However, to truly embrace these statistics, one needs to consider and grasp the depth of experience for each and every victim who experiences this violence. The following two sections, *Associated Health Problems For Women Who Experience Domestic Violence and Children* speak to the physical, psychological, and emotional consequences of domestic violence for the victim.

Associated Health Problems For Women Who Experience Domestic Violence

“Her body aches, her stomach feels as if it’s on fire, her pulse is racing, she has no energy to do her daily routine, and there is no chance she will sleep tonight...he’s been on a rampage” (p.64).²⁶

An intimate male partner’s brutal assaults severely compromise a women’s physical health and psychological well-being.

Domestic violence has a serious impact on the physical, psychological and social well-being of women.²⁷ Put succinctly, “an intimate male partner’s brutal assaults severely compromise a women’s physical health and psychological well-being” (p.64).²⁸

Studies involving women victims of intimate partner violence attest to the facts that a woman victimized by domestic violence is likely to experience long lasting effects of the abuse on her physical and psychological health;²⁹ ongoing abuse is related to increased physical and psychological problems;³⁰ the prevalence of mental health problems among battered women is high;³¹ women with a history of being battered by an intimate partner, on average, are about 4 times more likely to experience mental health problems such as depression, suicidality and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder;³² and compared to women with no or lower rates of abuse, higher rates of abuse are associated with higher rates of injuries, physical health symptoms, anxiety, depression, and higher levels of stress.^{33,34}

Research shows that (1) with continued violence, anxiety, depression, and physical health problems continue and intensify; and (2) take away the violence, and there is an associated, but gradual, improvement of physical and psychological well-being. Therefore, the clear and poignant indication is to “Stop the Violence.”³⁵

Common sense tells us that the impact of domestic violence on a woman’s physical and psychological wellbeing will affect her ability to nurture and provide for her child or children. This is an indirect effect of domestic violence on children. We will now turn to associated outcomes of a child’s direct exposure to domestic violence.

Domestic Violence and Children

Domestic violence is terribly sad and tragic. When children are exposed to domestic violence, the threat to well-being not only occurs for the adult victim but for the child victim as well. When children are involved, a special kind of tears fall and, at times, their precious blood is shed:

From seeing a mother being battered and being told he was going to kill

her:

[He] and the Victim had lived together for eleven years and have two daughters, who were eight- and three-years-old at the time....he awakened [the] Victim by yelling at her and insulting her.... [and] began hitting her with the buckle end of a belt....[He] tried to strangle her with the belt, saying he was going to kill her and hide her body so that it would be an “unsolved mystery”....

The couple’s eight-year-old daughter...came to the bedroom door and saw her father hitting her mother while her mother was telling him to stop....

[He] ordered [his daughter] to go back to her own room saying, “Get your little f--ing ass back to bed because I don’t want to have you see me kill your mother.” [The] victim also told [her] daughter to go back to bed. [The] daughter returned to her bedroom, where she remained while [he] continued his attack on [the] Victim³⁶...

To being in her arms as he attempts to kill her with an ax:

Man Accused of Swinging Ax at Ex (12/7/2004, Albuquerque Journal):

An Albuquerque man has been jailed after he allegedly attacked his ex-girlfriend with an ax while she was holding her 11-month-old baby....

To seeing a mother and others killed:

Girl, [age] 3, in Home When Deputy, Two Others Fatally Shot (12/19/2004, Albuquerque Journal):

“Killed were [a county sheriff’s deputy]... [an adult female]...and [an adult male]Police believe [the adult male] fatally shot [the adult female partner] during a domestic fight before the deputies arrived....When the deputies came to the house, they encountered [the adult male]... and the child....They also noticed blood on the floor” [The deputy was shot and killed by the adult male, who was then killed by another deputy]....

To being killed along with her mother:

Fight Blamed for 3 Deaths (5/21/2004, Albuquerque Journal):

New Mexico State Police investigators concluded ... that the three family deaths ... likely resulted from a fiercely violent domestic dispute....Police investigators believe [the husband/father] bludgeoned his wife...and her daughter, his [13 year old] stepdaughter ...to death....

Police recovered a crowbar in the bedroom, consistent with the blunt force trauma that killed both mother and daughter....

Investigators surmise a fight erupted between [the two adults] and the girl intervened at some point...Police believe [the husband/father] probably lit the bedroom fire that burned the two bodies....Then [he], stabbed at least six times in the chest during a struggle with his wife, likely died of smoke inhalation in the living room.... State Police responded at least twice in the past year to domestic disputes at the home...

One of these children's lives ended because of a domestic violence event.

... all of these children, along with their mothers, experienced the trauma, horror, and brutality of domestic violence. We will never know the specifics of the deep psychological and emotional wounds they experienced. We also do not know how close to death any of the children that survived the violence came. We do know, with utmost certainty, that one of these children's lives ended because of a domestic violence event. All of these children's lives were changed forever. They are among the all too many children who have been exposed to violence perpetrated against their mother by an intimate partner.

The violent events described above demonstrate a wide spectrum within which a child can be exposed to domestic violence. Children who are exposed to domestic violence can witness the violence with their eyes and ears. Additionally, besides seeing and hearing the violence, exposure can include being:

- Taken hostage by the abuser to coerce their mother back to the abuser
- Used as a physical weapon against their mother
- Forced to watch the abuse against their mother
- Interrogated to extract information about their mother's activities
- Used as leverage by the abuser to keep the mother under his control and domination³⁷
- Physically harmed including being killed.

Furthermore, children can also experience the aftermath of the violence, e.g., a mother's injuries, police intervention, moving to a shelter.³⁸

Many studies have demonstrated the association between a child's exposure to domestic violence and compromised social, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and general health functioning.³⁹ Children exposed to domestic violence are at risk for multiple problems:

- aggression
- alcohol/drug use

- anxiety
- depression
- low self-esteem
- withdrawal
- sadness
- suicidality
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- school problems
- social behavior and competency problems
- physical problems (e.g., headaches, ulcers, insomnia).⁴⁰

Some research has also shown an association of exposure to domestic violence and a child's own use of violence.⁴¹

Finally, there is a large overlap between child abuse and domestic violence. A review of the research done in this area indicates that, in families where domestic violence exists, child abuse exists in approximately 50% of these same families.⁴² This, of course, exponentially exacerbates the tragic plight a child experiences at the hands of an abuser.

END NOTES

¹Tajden, P. , & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence – research report: findings from the national violence against women survey*. U.S. Department of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved: November 15, 2004, from <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/181867.pdf>.

²U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (February, 2003). *Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001*. Retrieved: November 15, 2004, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cnh03.htm>.

³Caponera, B. (June 2004). Domestic violence trends in New Mexico, 2001-2003: an analysis of data from the New Mexico interpersonal violence data central repository. (505) 883-8020; nmcsaas@swcp.com.

⁴American Medical Association (1992). Diagnostic and treatment guidelines on domestic violence. Retrieved: November 15, 2004, from <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/386/domesticviolence.pdf>.

⁵American Medical Association, op. cit.

⁶New Mexico Judicial Education Center at the Institute of Public Law, University of New Mexico School of Law. (n.d.). New Mexico Domestic Violence Benchbook. Retrieved: November 15, 2004, from http://jec.unm.edu/resources/benchbooks/dv/ch_1.htm#12.

⁷American Psychological Association (n.d.). APA press releases: facts about family violence. Retrieved November 15, 2004, from <http://www.apa.org/releases/facts.html>.

⁸American Medical Association, op. cit.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰New Mexico Judicial Education Center at the Institute of Public Law, op. cit.

¹¹American Psychological Association, op. cit.

¹²National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (n.d.). Why do women stay? Retrieved November 15, 2004, from <http://www.ncadv.org/problem/why2.htm>.

¹³Family Violence and Law Center (n.d.). *Why do women stay?* Retrieved November 15, 2004, from http://www.fvlc.org/gethelp_whywomenstay.html. (Also, see Domestic Violence and Children by Stephanie Walton, in this report).

¹⁴National Center for Injury Prevention and Control & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(2003). *Costs of intimate partner violence against women in the United States*. Retrieved: November 15, 2004, from http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv_cost/IPVBook-Final-Feb18.pdf

¹⁵Rennison, C. (February, 2003). *Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001*. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved: November 15, 2004, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ipv01.pdf>

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (October, 2004). *Crime and the Nation's Households, 2003*. Retrieved: November 15, 2004, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cnh03.htm>

¹⁸National Center for Injury Prevention and Control & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2003), op. cit.

¹⁹Tajden, P., & Thoennes, N., op. cit.

²⁰Governor Richardson's Domestic Violence Advisory Board (June 2004). *Final Report*, p. 3.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³National Governor's Association. *Building Bridges Across Systems: State Innovations to Address and Prevent Family Violence*. Retrieved: November 15, 2005, from <http://www.nga.org/cda/files/001017FAMVIOLENCE.PDF>

²⁴Caponera, B. (2004). *Domestic Violence Trends in New Mexico, 2001-2003*. Copies can be obtained by calling (505) 883-8020.

²⁵Violence Policy Center (2002). *When men murder women: an analysis of 2002 homicide data*. Retrieved: November 15, 2004, from <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2004.pdf>

²⁶Sutherland, C., Bybee, D., & Sullivan, C. (1998). The long-term effects of battering on women's health. *Women's Health: Research on Gender, Behavior, and Policy*, 4(1), 41-70.

²⁷American Medical Association, op. cit.

²⁸Sutherland, C., Bybee, D., & Sullivan, C. (1998), op. cit.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Golding, J. (1999). Intimate partner violence as a risk factor for mental disorders: a meta-analysis. *Journal of family Violence*, 14(2), 99-132.

³²Ibid.

³³Sutherland, C., Bybee, D., & Sullivan, C. (1998), op. cit.

³⁴Sutherland, C., Bybee, D., & Sullivan, C. (2002). Beyond bruises and broken bones: the joint effects of stress and injuries on battered women's health. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, (30)5, 609-628.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶State v. Trujillo, Court of Appeals of New Mexico, 132 N.M. 649; 2002 NMCA 100; 53 p.3d 909; 2002 N.M. App. Lexis 78; 41 N.M. St. B. Bull. 39 (2002).

³⁷Edleson, J. (1999). Children's witnessing of adult domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 14(8), 839-870 (highlighting/referencing Ganley, L., & Schecter, S. (1996). Domestic violence: a national curriculum for children's protective services. San Francisco: Family Violence Prevention Fund).

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹For reviews and meta-analyses of these studies, see: endnote #18; endnote #21; Kitzmann, K., Gaylord, N., Holt, A., & Kenny, E. (2003). Child witness to domestic violence: a meta-analytic review. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71(2), 339-352; Fantuzzo, J., & Mohr, W. (Winter 1999). Prevalence and effects of child exposure to domestic violence. *The Future of Children (Domestic Violence and Children)*, 9(3), 21-32. Retrieved: November 15, 2005, from http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/vol9no3Art2.pdf; Wolfe, D., Crooks, C., Lee, V., McIntyre-Smith, A., & Jaffe, P. (2003). The effects of children's exposure to domestic violence: a meta-analysis and critique. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 6(3), 171-187.

⁴⁰Holden, G. (1998). Introduction: the development of research into another consequence of family violence. In C. Holden, R. Geffner & E. Jouriles (Eds.), *Children exposed to marital violence: theory, research and applied issues*, (pp. 1-18). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

⁴¹Edleson, J. (April 1999). Problems Associated with Children's Witnessing of Domestic Violence. Retrieved: November 15, 2005, from <http://www.vaw.umn.edu/documents/vawnet/witness/witness.html>

⁴²Edleson, J. (April 1999). *The Overlap Between Child Maltreatment and Woman Abuse*. Retrieved: November 15, 2005, from <http://www.vaw.umn.edu/documents/vawnet/overlap/overlap.html>

The Adverse Impact on Children of Exposure to Domestic Violence

*Victor LaCerva**

“Anyone who is a witness to violence is a victim of violence, whether or not they have been physically touched.”

How large is the problem in New Mexico?

The number of both children and adult victims seeking services continues to increase. In 2003, 5,757 children received services from provider agencies, a 37% increase in the last three years. All of the data in the table below is from annual reports of the NM Interpersonal (formerly DV) Data Central Repository.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Children present at DV event*	3710 at 19,822 reported DV cases	2910 at 18,085 reported DV cases	3716 at 21,228 reported DV cases	3381 at 24,905 reported DV cases	5543 At 25,644 reported DV cases
Children served by DV service providers	3313	5710	4199	5418	5757
% children experiencing child abuse by the DV perpetrator	22%	15%	20%	14%	22%
% children experiencing sexual abuse by the DV perpetrator	7%	4%	7%	5%	5%

*Present at the scene as reported by law enforcement. Since not law enforcement agencies indicate when children are present, this is clearly undercounted.

What are the adverse effects on children?

Multiple research studies have shown that the more violence children are exposed to, the more likely they are to be violent themselves, be labeled as conduct disorder, misuse drugs and alcohol, and be depressed and suicidal. Males especially are also likely to repeat the cycle of domestic

Multiple research studies have shown that the more violence children are exposed to, the more likely they are to be violent themselves, be labeled as conduct disorder, misuse drugs and alcohol, and be depressed and suicidal.

*Victor LaCerva, M.D. is the Medical Director for the Family Health Bureau in the Public Health Division, New Mexico Department of Health.

violence when they become teenagers, engaging in physical, emotional and sexual dating violence patterns.

We have finally begun to fully appreciate the correlation between domestic violence and child abuse, and the extent of detrimental neurobiological changes in the early developing brains of exposed children. Children suffer in every domain when they are chronically exposed to violence in the home. Besides the exposure to domestic violence between their parents or caretakers, they may also be victims of neglect, or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Some of the negative effects include emotional distress, somatic complaints, developmental delays or regression, post-traumatic stress symptoms, externalizing behaviors such as aggression and delinquency, and internalizing behavior problems such as anxiety and social withdrawal. These problems may negatively affect overall functioning, social competence, school performance, and future relationships.

Recently the Adverse Childhood Experiences study found that “mother being treated violently” during their childhood was one of 9 factors that dramatically contributed to poor health and lifestyle choices among the 17,000 adult participants. They had an increase in adverse conditions related to alcohol, tobacco, illegal drug use, and an increase in obesity, depression and suicide attempts.

Estimates of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among DV shelter populations range from 40% to 84%. PTSD is found in 25% to 50% of children witnessing significant violence, with the higher prevalence occurring in response to witnessing maternal assault. Children diagnosed with PTSD are more likely to maintain that diagnosis 2 years later if their mother also had PTSD.

A child with PTSD may appear anxious, behaviorally impulsive, hypervigilant, motorically hyperactive, withdrawn or depressed, have sleep difficulties, have increased heart rate or blood pressure. Diagnostic labels given to a child with PTSD include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorders, anxiety disorders, mood disorders. Factors important in the development of PTSD following trauma include the nature of the trauma, degree of threat, available support system, availability of early intervention, and sense of control. Multiple victimization experiences (child abuse, sexual abuse, DV) increase the likelihood of PTSD. In addition, depression, dysthymia, suicide risk and substance abuse may accompany PTSD in DV victims.

What is currently being done in the state to address this issue?

- NM Alliance for Children with Traumatic Stress is a collaborative that works with established systems of care, including the health,

mental health, education, law enforcement, child welfare and juvenile justice systems, to ensure that there is a comprehensive continuum of care available and accessible to all traumatized children and their families.

- Some DV shelters and local agencies offer services that include free or low cost counseling for children.
- Head start screening activities
- Law enforcement, judicial education and health care provider training activities
- Expansion of school based health centers to provide more mental health and substance abuse services for adolescents

What are the emerging best practices from around the country?

- There are a number of initiatives that address the physical and psychological health and safety concerns for children in violent households. The negative effects of exposure to violence in the home can be balanced by esteem-building experiences and close, lasting relationships with caring adults.
- Safety planning for children not only helps them stay safe during an incident, but empowers them to call 911, or ask other caring adults for help with the situation.
- Brief, school based, group and individual cognitive therapy approaches appear to be promising, especially in reducing symptoms of PTSD among children exposed to violence.
- Increased collaboration among domestic violence, family preservation, and child protection services has been accomplished in many states, with a decrease in children being removed from the home for the mother's "failure to protect", and an increase in holding the batterer accountable.

What steps do we need to take to move forward in New Mexico?

The following recommendations are modified from the Governor's Task Force Report on Domestic Violence June 2004.

1. STRENGTHEN VOLUNTARY EARLY HOME VISITATION PROGRAMS

Such efforts, particularly with "safety planning" for adults and children, have been shown to reduce violence in the home and to increase positive

Increased collaboration among domestic violence, family preservation, and child protection services has been accomplished in many states, with a decrease in children being removed from the home for the mother's "failure to protect", and an increase in holding the batterer accountable.

health outcomes. These programs can detect early warning signs and can make help accessible very early on. We recommend taking steps to bolster and increase the availability of voluntary early home visitations.

2. ENHANCE PARENTAL BONDING AND CREATE SAFE HOMES

A strong parental bond can help to counteract the negative effects of domestic violence. An ongoing relationship with a non-offending parent is critical for these children, and every effort should be made to preserve and enhance this bond. Obviously the problem of violence in the home makes this a complicated issue. A delicate balance is involved in maintaining the parental bond while addressing the issue of violence. Any steps, however well-meaning, that seek to remove the child from the home should be carefully scrutinized, and “victim-blaming” should be minimized. New Mexico’s Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) has taken active steps to insure cross training of Child Protective Services and DV workers to maximize cooperative efforts in this area in order to protect the best interests of the child. A relatively new program of Safe Havens grants is available on the federal level to provide supervised visitation in the case of domestic violence.

3. ENCOURAGE EARLY IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL

Outside the home, all the pathways that connect with children provide opportunities to step in and intervene when a need presents. Certain identifiable characteristics in children are strong predictors of future violent behavior. Childcare, schools, medical services, and faith communities should all become proficient in identifying child aggression and other signs of DV for purposes of intervention.

4. PROMOTE RESILIENCY

Teaching children “safety planning” is beneficial. Developing stable, nurturing, consistent support systems, and finding ways to connect children to those systems, is paramount. Children can and must learn that violence is not the way to solve a problem.

5. DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION WITH TEEN DATING VIOLENCE.

Teen dating/family violence is a problem that occurs with alarming frequency and it must be addressed. Many advocacy programs are making excellent materials available for use in the schools and through pathway communities, and assistance for teen parents is an important and necessary component of DV services. We also note that the current Children’s Code does not provide for the possibility of Orders of Protection, and legislation should be prepared to address this insufficiency.

6. EXPAND ACTIVITIES OF THE CURRENTLY FEDERALLY FUNDED NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK

Ultimately, and ideally, the state could consider a specialized center catering to the needs of children exposed to violence, if such an action would not detract from current ongoing programs. Such a center could:

- Serve as a training and technical resource.
- Be the focus of child-centered policy shifts.
- Find funding to run healthy summer camps for children and their families to increase the potential for healing.
- Launch a public education campaign to create a nurturing response for children in communities and neighborhoods.
- Find funding and establish best practice for children's services, including monitored and safe child visitation and exchange programs, perhaps using domestic violence child advocate service providers.
- Secure foundation and grant monies for community prevention, education, intervention and referral efforts.

7. IMPROVE THE MEDICAL, JUDICIAL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSES WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT AT A DV SCENE

Using funds from the Violence Against Women Act, a number of states have created and implemented law enforcement model policies that address specific concerns of children in domestic violence families. Helpful judicial responses include parenting classes for both parents, and case coordination when there are ongoing divorce, custody or juvenile justice proceedings with the same family. There are also best practice guidelines for EMS and other medical providers. These need to be more widely disseminated and implemented.

Sources

Final Report Governors Task Force on Domestic Violence, June 2004

Incidence and Nature of Domestic Violence in NM Volumes I through IV
NM Interpersonal Violence Data Central Repository

Domestic Violence Trends in NM 2001-2003. NM Interpersonal Violence Data Central Repository. June 2004

Let peace Begin With Us: The Problem of Violence in NM. Volume IV, May 2002
Domestic Violence and Children, Future of Children Report, Vol 9 # 3 Winter 1999

Domestic Violence and Children. Zero to three Report, Vol20#5 April 2000.

Surgeon General's Report on Children's Mental Health,
Jan 2001. www.surgeongeneral.gov/library

[REDACTED]

Domestic Violence and Children*

Stephanie Walton[†]

Violence negatively affects not only the abused partner, but also children in the home. Domestic violence advocates and child welfare experts are increasingly aware of the effects of violence on children in the household.

Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

Where there is partner abuse, there is a higher likelihood that children also are abused or neglected. In fact, studies estimate that in 30 percent to 60 percent of homes where domestic violence occurs, child abuse and neglect also occur.¹ Even when the children are not being directly maltreated, they are affected by the violence. Researchers report that 80 percent to 90 percent of children who live in homes with domestic violence are aware of the violence. Parents often underreport children's awareness of the violence, mistakenly assuming that children were asleep or otherwise engaged.²

Where there is partner abuse, there is a higher likelihood that children also are abused or neglected.

Domestic violence can affect parents' ability to meet their children's needs. As noted, men who batter their partners also are more likely to abuse children in the home. Research indicates that fathers who batter are less available to their children, less likely to engage rationally with their children, and less affectionate.³ Advocates argue that there are other, obvious effects, such as the lessons about the use of power in relationships and the confusing emotions children experience when one parent abuses the other. Victims of domestic violence may be less emotionally available to their children for several reasons: because they are preoccupied with keeping themselves and the children safe or they are experiencing depression or other emotional trauma related to the battering.⁴ Some studies suggest that women who are victims of domestic violence use more punitive measures on their children or exhibit more aggression toward their children,⁵ and a few studies have shown that women who are abused are more likely to abuse their children.⁶ Advocates assert that, in spite of the trauma they are experiencing, most women still may be able to parent their children effectively, and that they do all they can to protect their children from harm and exposure to the violence.

*From Walton, S. 2003. Domestic Violence and Children. In S. Walton, When Violence Hits Home: Domestic Abuse and Families (pp. 23-29). Copyright © 2003 by the National Conference of State Legislatures. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

[†]Stephanie Walton, B.A., is a Senior Policy Specialist with the Children & Families Program, National Conference of State Legislatures (Denver office)

The primary risk factor for boys to become batterers as adults is exposure to domestic violence as a child.

Girls who are exposed to violence are more likely to become victims of domestic abuse as adults.

The primary risk factor for boys to become batterers as adults is exposure to domestic violence as a child.⁷ Girls who are exposed to violence are more likely to become victims of domestic abuse as adults.⁸ Other effects include the following.

- Children who are exposed to violence are more aggressive than children from nonviolent homes. They are more likely to act out physically against their peers.⁹
- They may exhibit depression, anxiety, fear, insomnia, and low self-esteem.¹⁰
- They demonstrate lower cognitive ability. They may have difficulty concentrating, and generally perform poorly in school compared to children in nonviolent homes. They have lower scores on a variety of verbal, motor and cognitive skills.¹¹
- Children also may display physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, diarrhea, ulcers and asthma, probably as reactions to increased stress.¹²
- It is unclear whether children's exposure to domestic violence leads to impaired social function, other than their increased aggression.¹³

Researchers caution that not all children are affected in the same ways by exposure to domestic violence. Some children are more resilient than others, and the effects of witnessing violence are mitigated by particular circumstances.¹⁴ Experts have identified various protective factors that may lessen the effects on children, including:

- The level of violence in each family,
- The degree to which a child is exposed to the violence,
- The presence or lack of other stressors in the child's environment,
- The presence or lack of harms faced by the child,
- Individual coping skills of the child, and
- Other protective factors, such as the child's relationship to adults in the home or a close relationship with another adult such as a relative or teacher.

The co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse poses particular challenges. Often, the children and the mother are equally in need of services, but the systems in place may work at cross-purposes. Domestic violence advocates attempt to assist the mother. They believe that helping her achieve safety is the best way to help her children. Most advocates respect individual women's choices, even when women return to their abusers. They believe that she is best able to judge how to keep herself and her children safe.

Child welfare workers focus primarily on the children. Because they may not recognize the dynamics of domestic abuse, they may hold mothers responsible for children's abuse, even when the partner is the perpetrator. Mothers have been charged with "failure to protect" their children from abuse, and have had children taken from their care. This lack of understanding has caused victims of domestic violence to not trust the child welfare system or, in some instances, domestic violence advocates. Some women hesitate to seek help because they fear losing custody of their children. In some cases, removing children from the home is warranted. Even when caseworkers are sensitive to the circumstances of women in violent homes, they may feel that children will be safer away from the abusive environment. When victims are not in control of a situation, they cannot guarantee their children's safety

Policy Responses to Help Children in Violent Homes

Lawmakers have become increasingly aware of the problems faced by children who are exposed to domestic violence and the complexities of providing services for families that are experiencing violence. They have responded in the areas of family law, criminal domestic violence law and child welfare law. More recently, policymakers have begun to address the service systems that help families deal with violence.

Family Law

Most states have addressed domestic violence in divorce and custody laws. In many states, judges are required to consider evidence of domestic violence when determining the best interests of the child in custody decisions. Since 1996, at least six states have created a presumption against awarding sole or joint custody to a domestic violence perpetrator.¹⁵ States also have limited the visitation rights of domestic violence perpetrators. They may create a presumption against awarding visitation or allow judges to order supervised visitation in some cases. During the past six years, 13 states have passed laws creating a presumption against awarding custody to a parent who is convicted of murdering the other parent.¹⁶

Some of these laws can be controversial. Noncustodial parents' advocates

Law makers have responded in the areas of family law, criminal domestic violence law and child welfare law. More recently, policymakers have begun to address the service systems that help families deal with violence.

argue that some parents will falsely allege domestic abuse to enhance their chances of gaining custody. In response, some state laws require evidence of domestic abuse—such as restraining orders or records of police visits to the home—before such abuse can be considered in custody decisions. Laws prohibiting custody awards to parents who murder their partners may prevent some battered women who kill their abusers in self-defense from having custody of their children.

Criminal Law

Two approaches exist within criminal law to address children’s exposure to domestic violence. At least 12 states have laws that enhance penalties when domestic violence is committed in the presence of a minor.¹⁷ At least three states have created a separate crime of committing domestic violence in the presence of a minor.¹⁸ In Georgia, such a crime is characterized as criminal child abuse. Utah defines it as both criminal child abuse and as a separate domestic abuse crime. Proponents of these laws argue that benefits include:

- Increasing awareness of the effects of childhood exposure to domestic violence;
- Expanding the resources that are available to help children who are exposed to domestic violence (such as making children eligible for Victims of Crime Act [VOCA] funding); and
- Holding batterers accountable for the effects of their actions on children.

Other experts caution that such laws could have unintended consequences, such as unnecessary referrals to the child welfare system, which could lead to removal of children from the care of the battered spouse or mothers who are charged with “failure to protect” their children from exposure to domestic abuse. Children also may be forced to testify against their parents, causing undue anxiety and stress, and these laws may lead to an increased burden on the justice system.¹⁹

A 2000 study of prosecutors’ offices in jurisdictions that have enhanced penalties or separate crimes found that prosecutors in those jurisdictions were more likely to report cases involving children to child protection authorities, but not to pursue “failure to protect” charges against the mothers. However, children were not more likely to be removed from the home solely due to the presence of domestic violence. In those cases where children were removed from the home, other risk factors also were present, such as child abuse or substance abuse.²⁰ The study found that the statutes enabled prosecutors to more aggressively pursue charges against the offender; that law enforcement officers were more likely to list children that witnessed the incident in their reports; and that children

became eligible for other services, such as victim compensation funds. However, the study was limited to jurisdictions with increased awareness of domestic violence and children, as identified by prosecutor coordinators in each state, and the situation may be different in other jurisdictions.

Changing the Definition of Child Maltreatment

Alaska broadened its definition of child maltreatment to include witnessing domestic violence. Alaska's law differs from those in other states where child protection workers investigate children who are exposed to domestic violence under the state's general child maltreatment definitions. It specifically authorizes child welfare intervention in a family when domestic violence is present. Supporters of laws such as Alaska's argue that they can alert authorities to other possible child maltreatment, since there is an established link between child maltreatment and domestic abuse. They also can facilitate treatment for children to help them cope with the domestic abuse. In addition, such laws may encourage increased cooperation between child welfare and battered women's advocates.

A number of domestic violence experts and child welfare advocates express caution regarding these laws. They feel that defining all childhood exposure to domestic violence as maltreatment is overly broad, because not all children are harmed by such exposure. Intervention may not be warranted in all cases. In the absence of a close relationship between domestic violence service providers and child welfare workers and lack of understanding of domestic violence on the part of child welfare workers, experts are concerned that children will be removed from the home and the mother will be held accountable for the violence against her. In addition, most child welfare offices already are understaffed and have difficulty serving the children in their care. Experts question the wisdom of adding to the burden of child welfare agencies without providing adequate training and resources.

Broadening the definition of child maltreatment can overwhelm child welfare agencies. In 1999, Minnesota passed a law defining child neglect to include domestic violence that occurs within sight or sound of a child. All domestic violence cases where children were present were reported to county child welfare agencies as possible child maltreatment, prompting investigation by child welfare workers. The state experienced a 100 percent increase in reports of child maltreatment. The Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators estimated that counties would need an additional \$30 million annually to respond to the increased workload.²¹ In addition, the wording of the law and its interpretation by the department led some workers to hold victims responsible for the violence and to attempt to remove children from their mothers' care, even when they were residing in shelters.²² The Legislature repealed the law in 2000.

The Alaska Legislature passed laws outlining procedures for investigating cases.

Some advocates argue that, if such laws are appropriately worded and implemented, they can be effective. Alaska adopted a more limited definition of exposure to domestic violence as child maltreatment and implemented the law with extensive training of child welfare workers. In contrast to the Minnesota law, which defines exposure to violence as per se maltreatment, Alaska's statute requires that the child be subjected to specifically defined conduct that places him or her at risk of harm before the state can intervene on the child's behalf.²³ The Alaska Legislature also passed laws outlining procedures for investigating cases, with an emphasis on keeping the child in the custody of the non-offending parent; exempting certain mandatory reporters, such as shelter workers, from reporting exposure to domestic violence if the child is not in danger; and exempting mothers who flee for their own safety from charges of child abandonment.²⁴

In addition, the child welfare system and domestic violence advocates in Alaska worked closely to educate child welfare workers, prosecutors, law enforcement officers and others about the law. Lawmakers and advocates believe that the law has successfully helped families deal with violence and educated the appropriate people about the dynamics of violent relationships and the effects of domestic violence on children. They emphasize the importance of a collaborative approach and training of involved workers to ensure the success of this approach. The Alaska statutes resulted from months of work by advocates, the Department of Health and Social Services, staff from the governor's and lieutenant governor's offices, members of the judiciary, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Public Safety, and the attorney general's office.

Working with Child Welfare and Domestic Violence Service Systems

Practitioners have become increasingly aware of the overlap between domestic violence and child maltreatment. As a result, they have focused more attention on the relationship between domestic violence and child welfare service systems. Experts are coming to the realization that these systems, along with the courts, law enforcement and other service providers, must work together to address the needs of children in violent families and achieve safety for all family members.

Several innovative programs around the country have achieved some level of collaboration among systems and have enhanced services for families. Massachusetts, for example, began in 1986 to examine the relationship between the Department of Social Services (DSS), which delivers child protective services, and community-based domestic violence service providers.²⁵ The child protection and domestic violence service communities worked to overcome mistrust and competition for resources to reach a common goal of better services for families. The department established a Domestic Violence Unit, staffed by specialists who offer

training to other DSS staff and consultation on individual cases. The specialists also co-facilitate, with shelter staff, support groups for battered women and act as liaisons between DSS and the domestic violence service providers. Based on the success of this program, DSS added staff who specialize in batterer intervention services. The legislature supported efforts to help domestic violence victims by allocating funding for a continuum of services, including a network of programs and a statewide hotline. Programs include emergency shelters, transitional housing, community education and outreach, and economic and legal advocacy. Other legislative appropriations include funding for services— such as therapy—for children who are exposed to violence and specialized shelters for battered women who have substance abuse problems. Most of these programs are funded with federal funds appropriated by the legislature, the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), and Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) funding.

National experts have identified several effective practices from these programs and have developed a set of recommendations contained in the book, *Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence And Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice*, also known as the “Greenbook.” The Greenbook states that successful approaches to helping children in violent homes include all the relevant players. In addition to collaboration between child welfare systems and domestic violence advocates, it is important to involve law enforcement agencies; the courts; batterer intervention program providers; probation officers; health, mental health and substance abuse treatment providers; public housing providers; welfare caseworkers; and job training programs. Everyone involved with these families needs to be trained about the dynamics of domestic violence and the role and resources of the other service providers. Services should be tailored to meet the individual needs of families and should be culturally appropriate. Communities need to develop methods for sharing information, as needed, to help family members, but also need to be careful to maintain confidentiality. Various programs and approaches need to be studied and evaluated for effectiveness. Are they improving the safety of women and children? Are they succeeding in keeping children in the custody of at least one parent? Currently, only limited information is available regarding the effectiveness of these efforts.

The federal government has funded six demonstration sites based on recommendations from the Greenbook. The grants include an evaluation component, which will enhance knowledge of the effectiveness of such programs. The six demonstration sites are San Francisco County, Calif.; Santa Clara County, Calif.; El Paso County, Colo.; St. Louis County, Mo.; Grafton County, N.H.; and Lane County, Ore. In addition, Connecticut, North Carolina, Texas and West Virginia have initiated pilot projects based on the Greenbook recommendations and have funded them through other means.

What Can Legislators Do?

Legislators can take a number of steps to enhance community efforts to protect children and their mothers in violent homes.

Legislators can take a number of steps to enhance community efforts to protect children and their mothers in violent homes.

- Mandate cross-training. Child welfare workers, health care workers, law enforcement officers and others involved with violent families should learn about domestic violence, how it affects children, ways to assist victims of violence, and the resources available in the community. Many communities report that the most successful training brings together workers from different disciplines to learn from each other and build better relationships.
- Mandate or encourage co-location of services. State and local governments are asking staff from various agencies to provide services in one location. For example, domestic violence advocates work in child welfare and public assistance offices, helping to screen families for violence and provide needed services. Officials report that workers are more likely to discover violence that otherwise may go undetected and provide appropriate interventions. Co-location of staff also can contribute to improved relations among various service providers.
- Fund pilot programs, or use funding to encourage collaboration. Several states have passed legislation to provide funding for pilot programs, such as supervised visitation centers, or to pay for co-location of service providers. In Tennessee, for example, the legislature appropriated child abuse prevention funds and stipulated that funding²⁶ should first serve families where there is domestic violence. Often, federal funds are available for innovative programs if states provide matching funds, so the costs of programs can be shared.
- Mandate counseling and services for some children in violent homes. Providing services for children in domestic violence cases highlights their needs and brings attention to the effects of domestic violence on children. Such laws should include screening so that more resilient children do not receive unnecessary services and unnecessary intervention in the family is avoided. In 2001, Nevada passed legislation that authorizes courts to refer children who witness domestic violence to protective services for counseling; funding was provided through the victims of crime fund.²⁷
- Create state certification standards for batterer intervention programs that include parenting training and responsible fatherhood training, or authorize a state department to set standards and certify

programs. Setting statewide standards for batterer intervention programs helps to ensure consistency and quality. In addition, the legislature can direct that such programs include parenting training and information about the effects of domestic violence on children. Georgia passed legislation in 2002 that directs the Department of Corrections to establish statewide standards and certification for batterer intervention programs.²⁸

- Create or expand membership of statewide domestic violence task forces or commissions. Commissions should include representatives from domestic violence programs, health care and child welfare agencies, prosecutors' offices, law enforcement agencies and so forth. Legislatures also can enhance existing partnerships—such as state fatality review boards—by including child welfare and domestic violence advocates.
- Grant child welfare workers authority to order that batterers be removed from the home when appropriate, rather than removing a child from the care of the non-offending parent. This may be accomplished either through agency regulations or legislation.
- Incorporate evaluation components into any programs or initiatives that are directed at helping children in violent homes. To determine the effectiveness of new programs and enhance the chances of continued funding, legislatures need to know if new laws and programs are operating successfully.

Practitioners emphasize that these approaches are effective only with active participation by and support from people in the various systems that are involved. Some legislative approaches may not be effective until relationships have improved among different service providers. It also is important for legislators to encourage and support local efforts to enhance communication and trust.

Conclusion

Intervening quickly with children who are exposed to violence is critical to improving their lives and ending the cycle of violence, and most advocates agree that helping women achieve safety also is key to helping children. A number of promising approaches exist to help families escape domestic abuse. Legislators can play a significant role in encouraging collaboration between the various systems that can help mothers and their children achieve safety.

Intervening quickly with children who are exposed to violence is critical to improving their lives and ending the cycle of violence.

End Notes

- ¹“Domestic Violence and Children: Analysis and Recommendations,” *The Future of Children* 9, no. 3 (Winter 1999), 4.
- ²Children’s Defense Fund, *Domestic Violence and its Impact on Children: Fact Sheet* (Washington, D.C.: Children’s Defense Fund, Summer 2002), 1.
- ³“Domestic Violence and Children,” 7.
- ⁴*Ibid.*, 40-41.
- ⁵*Ibid.*, 7.
- ⁶U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, *In Harm’s Way: Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment*. (Washington, D.C., U.S. DHHS, n.d.).
- ⁷APA, *Violence and the Family*, 37.
- ⁸*Ibid.*, 19.
- ⁹“Domestic Violence and Children,” 27.
- ¹⁰*Ibid.*
- ¹¹*Ibid.*
- ¹²Children’s Defense Fund, *Domestic Violence and its Impact on Children*, 2.
- ¹³“Domestic Violence and Children,” 27.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*, 38-39.
- ¹⁵NCSL, *Children, Youth and Families Legislative Summaries*.
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*
- ¹⁷Alaska Stat. §12.55.155; Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. §13-702; Ark. Stat. Ann. §5-4-702; Calif. Pen. Code §1170.76; Fla. Stat. Ann. §921.0024; Hawaii Rev. Stat. §706-606.4; Idaho Code §18-918(7)(b); Miss. Code Ann. §97-3-7; Mont. Code Ann. §45-5-206; Okla. Stat. Ann. Tit. ²¹ §644; Or. Rev. Stat. §163.160(3); Wash. Rev. Code Ann. §9.94A.535.
- ¹⁸Del. Code Ann. Tit. 11, §1102; Ga. Code Ann. §16-5-70; Utah Code Ann. §76-5-109.1.
- ¹⁹Debra Whitcomb, “Prosecutors, Kids, and Domestic Violence Cases,” *NIJ Journal* no. 248 (2002), 3.
- ²⁰Debra Whitcomb, *Children and Domestic Violence: Challenges for Prosecutors* (Newton, Mass.: Education Development Center Inc., 2000), 82.
- ²¹Lois Wiethorn, “Protecting Children from Exposure to Domestic Violence: The Use and Abuse of Child Maltreatment Statutes,” *Hastings Law Journal* 53, no. 1 (November 2001): 106.
- ²²*Ibid.*, 105-106.
- ²³Alaska Stat. §47.10.011.
- ²⁴Alaska Stat. §§47.17.035, 47.17.020, 47.10.013.
- ²⁵Pamela Whitney and Susan Schechter, *Building an Integrated Statewide Response to Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment: Massachusetts Service and Fiscal Strategies*. (Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, 2000), 1.
- ²⁶Tenn. Code Ann. §71-6-203.
- ²⁷Nev. Rev. Stats. §§200.485, 217.160.
- ²⁸Ga. Code Ann. §§19-13-10 et seq., 19-13-17.

Conclusion

Domestic violence is pervasive in New Mexico, impacting thousands of individuals and families each year, including many children. It leaves physical, psychological, and emotional wounds and scars in its wake – and sometimes death – for both the adult and child victim. While domestic violence is a sad and tragic situation for any victim, a child being exposed to domestic violence is a special circumstance needing a specific focus.

New Mexico has extremely dedicated individuals and agencies working to improve its domestic violence problem and to help its victims. Still, major problems need to be addressed at local, state and systemic levels. For example, New Mexico needs to enhance its law enforcement and judicial response to domestic violence, including its prosecution of offenders. This would help to protect both the adult victims and the children exposed to the violence.

Policies can and need to be implemented at the legislative level to enhance New Mexico's response to domestic violence, including for the safety and well-being of the children. This report has discussed various perspectives for such policies.

Policies can and need to be implemented at the legislative level to enhance New Mexico's response to domestic violence, including for the safety and well-being of the children.

Selected Resources

State Organizations and Associations

New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department
Family Services Division
Domestic Violence Unit
P.O. Drawer 5160
Santa Fe, NM 87502
Phone: (505) 827-8018
Fax: (505) 476-0225
<http://www.cyfd.org>

Provides state and federal funding to develop and maintain a statewide coordinated, comprehensive service delivery system to improve and enhance the emotional, mental, and behavioral health of children, youth, families and individuals among: adult victims of domestic violence, children victims/witnesses of domestic violence, and domestic violence offenders.

New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NMCADV)
200 Oak NE, Suite 4
Albuquerque, NM 87106
Phone: (505) 246-9240
Fax: (505) 246-9434
agnesm@nmcadv.org
www.nmcadv.org

Coordinates local, regional, and statewide response to domestic violence; serves as a clearinghouse for domestic violence information and referral; provides training and education to the public about domestic violence; legislation and policy advocacy.

New Mexico Interpersonal Violence Data Central Repository
3090 Juan Tabo NE, Suite 6
Albuquerque, NM 87111
Phone: (505) 883-8020
Fax: (505) 883-7530
nmcsaas@swcp.com

Statewide data collection and reporting of interpersonal violence including domestic violence

National Organizations and Associations

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
P.O. Box 18749
Denver, CO 80218
Phone: (303) 839-1852
Fax: (303) 831-9251
mainoffice@ncadv.org
www.ncadv.org

Coalition building at the local, state, regional and national levels;
leadership and program development; public education and technical
assistance; public policy and legislative issues

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)
7700 East First Place
Denver, CO 80230
Phone: (303) 364-7700
Fax: (303) 364-7800
www.ncsl.org

A bipartisan organization serving legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories; provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on pressing state issues. The NCSL has a policy associate specializing in domestic violence in their Children and Families Program.

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)
Family Violence Department
P.O. Box 8970
Reno, NV 89507
Phone: (775) 784-6012
Fax: (775) 784-6628
admin@ncjfcj.org
<http://www.ncjfcj.org/dept/fvd>

Dedicated to improving the way courts, law enforcement, agencies and others respond to family violence. The NCJFCJ Family Violence Department provides conferences and symposiums, judicial training, publications, and other family violence related resources (including an on-line search engine for state-by-state domestic violence law).

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20447
(800) 394-3366 or (703) 385-7565
Fax: (703) 385-3206
nccanch@caliber.com
<http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>

Multiple publications on domestic violence and children, including a report on state statutes regarding domestic violence and children (State Statutes Series 2004 – Children and Domestic Violence: Summary of State Laws)



©2005 by the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator. NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

For further information on the New Mexico Family Impact Seminar, contact:

Bruce Jacobs, Ph.D
Extension Specialist
New Mexico State University
Department of Extension Home Economics
MSC 3AEP.O. Box 30003
Las Cruces, NM 88003-0003
(505) 646-4270; Fax: (505) 646-1889
bjacobs@nmsu.edu

or

Charolette Collins, M.S.
Extension Specialist
New Mexico State University
Department of Extension Home Economics
9301 Indian School Road NE, Suite 108
Albuquerque, NM 87112
(505) 332-3765; Fax: (505) 332-3681
collins@nmsu.edu

For further information on bringing a family perspective to policymaking, see the Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars website at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/familyimpact/>

Jacobs, B. (Ed.) (2005). *Family violence and children: Perspectives for policy* (New Mexico Family Impact Seminar Briefing Report #1). Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico State University.