



# NATIONAL CENTER

## on Domestic and Sexual Violence

*training • consulting • advocacy*

### ***Warning Signs of Children Living with Domestic Violence***

Children are the silent victims of domestic violence. Their voices may not be heard and their pain often goes unnoticed. Every child from an abusive home is abused. Witnessing the two most important people in their life hurting and being hurt damages the core of the child's emotional being. The following is a *partial* list of the ramifications and consequences for children living with and witnessing domestic abuse.

#### Pre-Natal

- Increased miscarriages due to increased beatings and / or adult victim's stress
- Poor health due to adult victim's stress and lack of proper nutrition

#### Infants

- Irritability and crying
- Frequently ill
- Difficulty sleeping

#### Toddlers / Preschool

- Aggressive
- Withdrawn
- Delayed development
- Poor motor skills
- Anxiety / general fearfulness
- Stomach aches
- Nightmares
- Lack of bladder / bowel control
- Lack of confidence to begin new tasks

### School age

- Aggressive / bullying
- Anxiety
- Stomach aches
- Nightmares
- Lack of bowel / bladder control
- Poor grades / failure of one or more grades
- Low self-esteem / poor social skills
- Digestive problems
- Headaches
- Fear of abandonment
- Grief and guilt

### Teenager

- Withdrawn
- Nightmares
- Lack of bowel / bladder control
- Poor grades / fails or quits schools
- Headaches / ulcers
- Immunity / irresponsible
- Become victim or batterer
- Violent outbursts
- Property destruction
- Runaways
- Unable to express feelings
- Refuses to bring home friends
- Low self-esteem
- Feels responsible for taking care of home and adult victim
- Joining in on beatings of adult victim

### Manipulation of Children

- Guilt about children
- Child relays messages
- Threatening to take children
- Threatening to harm children
- Manipulating children
- Belittling
- Making child / children choose sides
- Using visitation as a way to harass victim