

TIPS ON DEALING WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Communication

- Tell your child that the violence is never their fault.
- Use play to help your child to show and talk about their feelings. Playing together is very important.
- Give your child lots of affection (hugs, cuddles, kisses)
- Give simple and truthful explanations and responses that suit your child's age.

Behavior and Self Esteem

- Teach your child what is okay behavior. Eg; it is not okay to hit or hurt anyone.
- Talk with staff at childcare or pre-school about ways to help your child.
- Tell your child what they are good at. For example 'That's great colouring in' or 'You are so helpful' or 'Well done'.

Feelings

- Listen to your child and show that you understand that things are hard, scary, or frustrating for them.
- Let your child cry and be sad if they need to
- Talk with your child about ways of showing feelings especially about safe ways of showing anger
- Reassure your child that it is okay to be angry, its just not okay to hurt anyone.
- Don't feel like you have to hide your own feelings but make sure you let your child know that whatever you are feeling, you will be okay.

Where to get help

Every child is different and each develops at their own rate. Trauma or stress can mean that a child's development might be slower than average. Often your child will catch up when the violence has stopped and they feel safe again. The ideas mentioned in this brochure can help as well.

Who can help me and my baby?

If you are worried about your child's development or if you would like some ideas to help them out, it might be good to talk with somebody whose opinion and knowledge you value.

Talking things through might also help you to feel better.

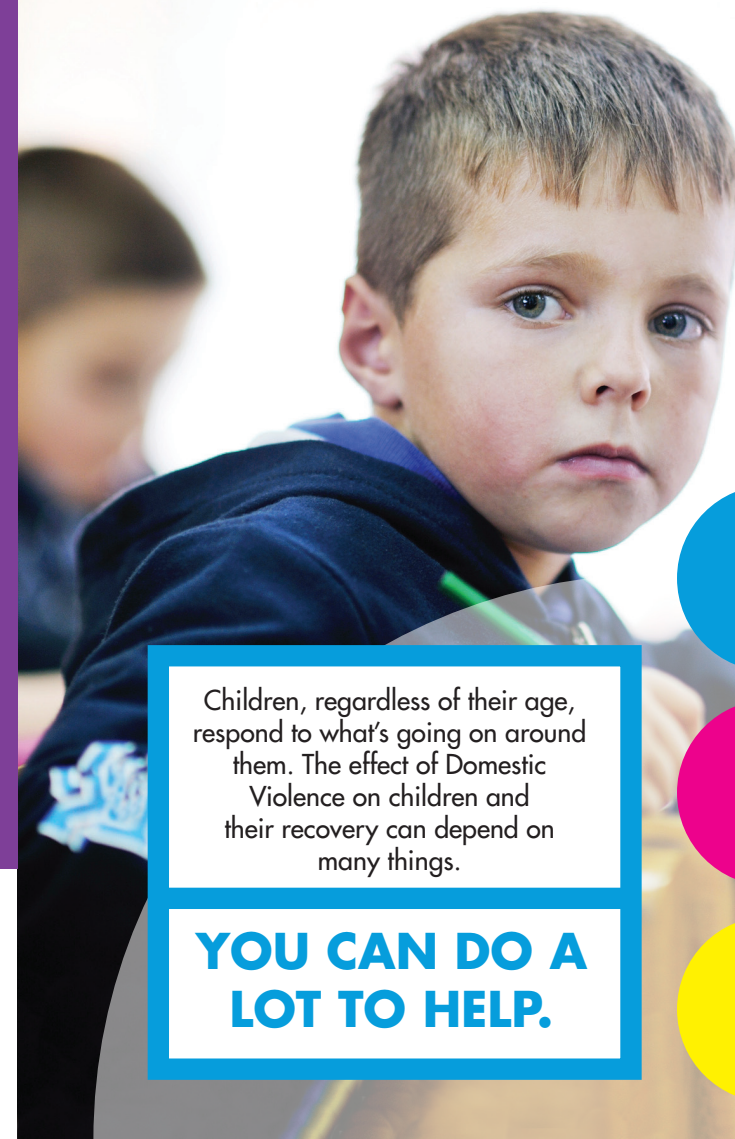
This is just as important.

Some people who might be able to help are:

Gunnedah Family Support	6742 1515
Parent Help Line (24/7)	1300 130 052
Kids Help Line (24/7)	1800 551 800
Domestic Violence Line (24/7)	1800 656 463
Tamworth Women's Refuge (24/7)	1800 073 388
Child Protection Helpline (24/7)	132 111
Gunnedah Police	6742 9099
Gunnedah Hospital	6741 8000

FOR PARENTS OF A PRE-SCHOOLER

Who have experienced Domestic Violence



Children, regardless of their age, respond to what's going on around them. The effect of Domestic Violence on children and their recovery can depend on many things.

YOU CAN DO A LOT TO HELP.



 Zonta Club of Gunnedah Inc.
Member of Zonta International
Advancing the Status of Women Worldwide

THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence and its effects

What happens to children experiencing Domestic Violence?

During or after an experiences of domestic violence, your child will probably be feeling a huge mix of emotions. Common feelings in pre-schoolers who have experienced violence in their family are:

- Confusion about what is happening and why.
- Fear of you or themselves being hurt, of their other parent being 'taken away' by police.
- Sadness about their parents fighting, about the separation, about their own losses.
- Anger about what is happening.
- Like younger children, pre-schoolers will often pick up on the emotions and stresses of those around them.
- At this age, children show you how they are feeling through their behaviour.
- They could be teary or irritable if they are feeling unsafe or insecure.
- They are more likely to be confident and happy if they feel safe.

How do Pre-Schoolers think ?

- Pre – Schoolers are at the age when they are beginning to test their independence and their parents boundaries
- They think the whole world revolves around them.
- They may believe that the problems or violence are their fault.
- The way children see the world might be different to the way we see it.
- It's important to ask your child how they are going.

You and your child

- You might find that experiences of violence have affected your relationship with your child.
- It may take time and patience to rebuild trust and communication between you.

Will Domestic Violence effect my baby forever?

Many people worry that the domestic violence will effect their child forever. Children need time and support to recover from traumatic situations. Once the violence has stopped and they feel safe, your child can heal from their experience.

If your child has experienced violence they might:

- Feel responsible for arguments they hear
- Be very clingy or unwilling to try new things
- Be difficult to understand or use baby talk
- Find it hard to share
- Withdraw, become quite, not play much

- Have difficult behaviour (for example, doing the opposite of what is being asked)
- Be aggressive towards other people—including you (for example, biting, kicking, hitting)
- Wet their bed, have bad dreams or trouble sleeping
- Be picky or not interested in food

How can I help my pre-schooler recover from a Domestic Violence situation?

- Give them lots of affection, care and reassurance (using hugs, play and words)
- Give them simple and truthful explanations and responses
- Encourage them to make and act on choices

All children need to learn to express their feelings and know what behavior is okay.

