



## FACT SHEET:

# Children Witnessing Domestic Violence

## Every year, Rhode Island children are witnesses to domestic violence

- Children were present for 1,549 domestic violence arrests out of 5,553 domestic violence arrests in Rhode Island in 2015 (nearly 30%).
- In 2017, 604 children received services from the member agencies of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence. This includes 261 children who stayed in domestic violence shelters and 117 children who lived in transitional housing for victims of domestic violence.
- In 2017, 23% (or 1,254) of the indicated allegations of child neglect in Rhode Island involved a child witnessing domestic violence.

*2017 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook. 2017. Providence, RI: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT.*

## Children witnessing domestic violence is a nationwide public health crisis

- 90% of children in violent homes know the abuse is going on.  
*Shelter from the Storm, a Training Curriculum for Clinicians, 2000.*
- A national census of individuals served by domestic violence agencies in a single day counted 21,758 children in the U.S. staying in a domestic violence shelter or other housing for victims of domestic violence, as well as 6,063 children receiving non-residential domestic violence victims' services.  
*Domestic Violence Counts Census. 2015. National Network to End Domestic Violence, Washington, D.C.*
- An estimated 15.5 million children in the United States live in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year.  
*McDonald, Jouriles, and Ramisetty-Mikler. 2006. Estimating the Number of American Children Living in Partner-Violent Families. Journal of Family Psychology.*

## Witnessing domestic violence as a child can lead to long-term health effects

- A Michigan study found that children who have been exposed to family violence suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and are at greater risk of having allergies, asthma, stomach problems, headaches, and flu.  
*Graham-Bermann, SA, and Seng, J. 2005. Violence Exposure and Traumatic Stress Symptoms as Additional Predictors of Health Problems in High-Risk Children. Journal of Pediatrics. 146(3): 309-10.*
- The CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study revealed that witnessing domestic violence as a child leads to increased risk of serious long-term health and developmental consequences, including depression, drug-use and poor academic achievement.  
*CDC-Kaiser ACE Study. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html>*