



Dear fellow citizen,

The Maricopa County Attorney's Office has an entire bureau staffed with specially trained and experienced attorneys who are dedicated to aggressively prosecuting child abuse. This bureau works in partnership with law enforcement agencies to bring child abusers to justice while minimizing the secondary trauma often associated with child abuse investigations. Throughout this process we treat all children with dignity and respect.

This brochure outlines the work of the Maricopa County Attorney's Family Violence Bureau, describes the signs and symptoms of child abuse, and includes a list of resources for reporting and preventing abuse. You can also view the Child Abuse Protocol on our website at www.maricopacountyattorney.org. This is a standardized guide that details how medical, legal, and law enforcement professionals investigate cases of abuse and neglect.

Although the Maricopa County Attorney's Office handles many child abuse cases, many more of these crimes go unreported. National statistics indicate the actual number of child abuse and neglect cases is as much as three times greater than the number reported to authorities. Everyone has a role to play in preventing this tragedy. Stepping forward and reporting an incident of suspected child abuse to the local police department is the first step in breaking this cycle of crime and prosecuting those who harm children.

Together we can protect and strengthen our community by bringing child abusers to justice.

Sincerely,

Bill Montgomery

Bill Montgomery
Maricopa County Attorney

Maricopa County Attorney's Office
301 West Jefferson Street, 9th Floor
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CHILD ABUSE



VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION

- Children as Victims
- What Should You Do if a Child You Know is Being Abused
- Signs and Symptoms
- Resources



BILL MONTGOMERY
Maricopa County Attorney

The Maricopa County Attorney's Office is dedicated to prosecuting individuals who harm children. Using a team approach to prosecution enables the Family Violence and Sex Crimes Bureau to effectively handle the complexities of child abuse cases.

The team consists of the following members:

- Family Violence Bureau and Sex Crimes Bureau: Attorneys who are experts in prosecuting cases involving crimes against children.
- Victim Services Division: Victim Services Advocates who specialize in helping child victims and their families throughout the prosecution of a case. These advocates work closely with the attorneys to avoid secondary victimization to the child.
- Investigations Division: Detectives provide follow-up information and locate witnesses.
- Paralegals provide legal research and assist the attorneys with case management.
- Police Agencies: Officers investigate any allegation of child abuse using the Multidisciplinary Protocol for the Investigation of Child Abuse guidelines. The officers will also coordinate with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office to ensure the needs of the crime victim are met.

This team is dedicated to the investigation, prosecution, and welfare of child victims.

CHILDREN AS VICTIMS

Children are more vulnerable because of their size, age, and dependence on adults. Children have little or no control over who lives in their home or who associates with members of the household. Certain children

are targeted more frequently, including shy, lonely and compliant children, as well as pre-verbal children, very young children, and those labeled "bad kids." Children with physical, emotional, or developmental disabilities are particularly vulnerable.

WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD YOU KNOW IS BEING ABUSED

- If you believe the child may be in immediate physical danger, call 911.
- Depending on your relationship to the minor, you may have a legal duty to report the suspected abuse to law enforcement and/or Child Protective Services, and failure to do so could be a criminal offense.
- If you are unsure, you should tell someone who will listen and take action.

Individuals who hurt children can be charged with various crimes including:

- Sexual abuse,
- Sexual conduct with a minor,
- Sexual assault,
- Molestation of a child,
- Homicide,
- Commercial sexual exploitation of a minor,
- Sexual exploitation of a minor,
- Incest,
- Child prostitution,
- Child abuse.

The offender may be a parent, but could be other family members, friends, neighbors, acquaintances, babysitters, caretakers, and strangers. The closer the relationship of the child to the offender, the stronger the feelings of betrayal and loss of trust felt by the child. Detecting initial injuries, signs or symptoms and providing intervention can minimize or prevent further abuse.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Some signs and symptoms of child abuse include:

- Head injuries and/or multiple injuries to the body;
- Frequent bacterial infections, genital rash, vaginal discharge;
- Fractures or bruises in an infant who has not yet learned to walk;
- Immersion burns from scalding hot water or cigarette burns;
- Injury to buttocks or scalp (bruising or hair loss);
- Injury to bony body parts (shins, knees, elbows, etc.);
- Dramatic changes in performance at school, disruptive or overly aggressive behavior;
- Emotional/behavioral changes, runaway, truancy, drug abuse;
- Interest in sexual acts or display of sexual knowledge beyond child's years, including masturbatory behavior; or
- Extremely passive, withdrawn or hostile towards authority figures.

RESOURCES

**Maricopa County Attorney's Office
Victim Services Division**
301 West Jefferson Street, 9th Floor
Phoenix, Arizona 85003
PH: (602) 506-8522

Community Information & Referral
(602) 263-8856

Childhelp USA—Child Abuse Hotline
1-(800)-4-A-Child (422-4453)

National Criminal Justice Reference Service
Internet Safety for Children
<http://www.ncjrs.gov/internetsafety/children.html>

National Sexual Abuse Hotline — RAINN
1-(800)-656-HOPE (4673)

Phoenix Family Advocacy Center
(602) 534-2120

Superior Court Information
www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov
access Superior Court information by using case number or defendant's name