

## Resources

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/dfs/factsheets/healthyfamilies.htm>

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/dfs/factsheets/ChildAbsNeglect.htm>

<http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/home/index.shtml>

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/factsheets/nurturingparenting.htm>

Contact your local county libraries, parks and recreation services for fun free summer activities.



Written by Mary Curry Narayan, MSN, APRN, BC, CTN

Edited by The Rev. Sandi John, MDiv, MS, APRN, BC, Senior Manager, Congregational Health Partnership.

Articles in this newsletter are not a substitute for the care and advice of medical professionals. When you have a question or need medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, consult your physician.

This newsletter is produced by Inova Health System in conjunction with your faith community. If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please notify the appropriate personnel in your faith community.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit health care system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services including emergency and urgent care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health, blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community we serve through excellence in patient care, education and research.



Congregational Health Partnership  
Inova HealthSource  
2832 Juniper Street Suite 201  
Fairfax, VA 22031

Phone: 703-208-3628  
Fax: 703-208-5601

[www.inova.org/chp](http://www.inova.org/chp)  
[www.inova.org](http://www.inova.org)



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*Congregational Health Partnership is a program of Inova HealthSource, Community Health Division*



## For Your Health

### Prevent Child Abuse

The waning weeks of summer are often times for fun family vacation activities. They may also be times that try the nerves and patience of parents. Summer can be a prime time for child abuse and neglect.

Child Abuse and Neglect can be prevented by:

- \* Identifying parents *at risk* for abusing or neglecting their children BEFORE a problem occurs.
- \* Helping "at risk" parents obtain the support they need to be better parents!



Every child deserves a nurturing family.

What is NEGLECT?

Neglect is when parents do not meet their children's physical, emotional or developmental needs.

What is ABUSE?

Abuse is when parents hurt their children physically or emotionally.

## *There is Help Available*

### **How Could a Parent Ever Abuse or Neglect a Child?**

Most parents WANT to be good parents BUT. . .

- \* Parenting is learned from one's own parents. Parents whose own parents had serious limitations did not have the opportunity to learn good parenting skills.
- \* Good parenting requires energy and patience. Parents who have many problems and stressors in their lives can run out of energy and patience.
- \* Good parenting requires support. Some parents have no one to turn to when they need advice or help.



Help prevent child abuse and neglect. To make a referral or to learn more, call:

703-324-7922

TTY: 703-222-9452

### **Let Your Faith Community Support You:**

Perhaps you see yourself in the "at risk" group. Maybe you have felt vulnerable to abuse or neglect your child. If so, here are some tips:

- \* Be gentle with yourself.
- \* Get the help you need.
- \* Talk to your clergy person or health care provider.
- \* Remind yourself you are a strong and loving person to get the support you need to nurture yourself and your children.

The best time to help an "at risk" parent is before the child is born. When the mother is pregnant with her first child.

## *Your Faith Community Can Help*

Identify parents at risk for abusing or neglecting their children. Parents "at risk" include parents who:

- \* Were abused themselves when they were children
- \* Had parents who were limited parents
- \* Are young, immature, or become easily frustrated
- \* Suffer from low self-esteem, depression, or substance abuse
- \* Do not have a supportive family
- \* Have inappropriate expectations of small children
- \* Have a "difficult" child or many small children
- \* Have many stressors—financial, social or emotional—in their lives

"At risk" parents CAN become GREAT PARENTS by:

- \* Teaching them parenting and coping skills
- \* Providing them with a mentor or supportive friend

## *Support Preventive Programs*

Parents learn:

- \* How to develop empathy, the ability to appreciate and value the thoughts and feelings of themselves and others
- \* How to promote their children's physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual health and well-being
- \* Healthy ways to manage frustrating childhood behaviors
- \* Coping and problem-solving skills to use when they feel overwhelmed or very stressed

Parents also have someone to:

- \* Talk to about their challenges and stresses
- \* Keep them from feeling alone
- \* Call when they feel they might "lose it"

