



Fact Sheet

THE PROBLEM:

- Throughout the United States, millions of children are exposed to violence--current estimates indicates that as many as 10 million children have witnessed or been victims of violence in their homes or communities. *
- There were 68 family related homicides in New York City in 2005 according to the Family Justice Center of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence - 23 of those victims, nearly a third, were Bronx residents
- Children's exposure to violence has been significantly linked with increased depression, anxiety, anger, and alcohol and drug abuse and with decreased academic achievement. *
- Approximately 2 million adolescents ages 12-17 appear to have suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder, presumably stemming from violent experiences in their past. *
- Research shows that children who witness domestic violence experience higher levels of childhood behavioral, social, and emotional problems than children who have not witnessed such violence and that the emotional consequences of viewing or hearing violent acts may often have the same lasting effects on children as being a direct victim of violence. *

SAFE START PROMISING APPROACHES:

The St. Barnabas Hospital Child Advocacy Center (SBHCAC) is one of 15 sites across the county that was awarded \$420,000 to support children and families exposed to violence, including experiencing and witnessing violent crime, sexual and physical assault, child abuse and domestic violence. The purpose of this initiative is to prevent and reduce the impact of family and community violence on young children (primarily from birth to age 6) and their families. The goal of the Safe Start demonstration project is to expand existing partnerships among service providers in key areas such as early childhood education/development, health, mental health, child welfare, family support, substance abuse prevention/intervention, domestic violence/crisis intervention, law enforcement, courts, and legal services. The project seeks to create a comprehensive service delivery system that will meet the needs of children and their families at any point of entry into the system. This comprehensive system should improve the accessibility, delivery, and quality of services for young children who have been exposed to violence or are at high risk of exposure.

The SBHCAC, in partnership with The Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, Bronx Domestic Violence Program and the Administration for Children's Services, has initiated a **Family Safety Center** located on the 1st Floor of Union Community Health Center. The Family Safety Center was created to provide free information for families on a variety of safety issues that include: Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, Elder Abuse, Legal Resources, Counseling Referrals, Emergency Shelters and 24 Hour Hotlines. An advocate from the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services will staff the Family Safety Center one day a week