



October 2021

The Play Times

Tip Sheet + Resources

Playtime staff and trained volunteers protect your children's rights to learn and play by partnering with shelters across the Washington, D.C., region. We create bright, safe spaces with fun activities for children and give parents a break. Play reduces stress, increases confidence and resiliency, and contributes to healthy brain development.



Back to School Bonanza

Did you know only 30% of fourth-graders in D.C. scored at or above grade level on reading in 2019? The scores were even worse for students of color. The pandemic is deepening this gap, and many families want more reading support for their children. Speak with your child's teacher to ask how your child is doing with reading and ask for ways you can help them at home.

Books From Birth

Do you have kids under age 5? They can get a FREE new book in the mail every month! These books focus on diversity and encourage self-esteem and a love of reading. **To register your child for free books, visit dclibrary.org/freebooks.** Registration includes sharing you and your child's name, date of birth, contact information, and a current DC location where you live. Using a friend or family's address is acceptable. If you prefer not to register online, do not have an email address, or need any other kind of assistance with registration, please email: booksfrombirth@dc.gov or call the MLK Jr. Memorial Library (Central Library) at (202)727-0321.

Free Daily Homework Help

HelpNow is an online resource offered by DC Public Library and designed for K-12 students. Live tutoring is available in English and Spanish from 1 p.m. - 10 p.m. to provide homework help for core subjects, including mathematics, science, and English language arts. Practice long division, improve reading comprehension, and learn other key skills for free! Visit: <https://www.dclibrary.org/helpnow>.

Do you know...

your child's rights at school?

"McKinney-Vento" is a federal law that protects the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness. Under this Act you and your child have the right to:

- **Enroll, attend classes, and participate in all school activities immediately**, even if you do not have school records, medical records, or other school documents yet.
- **Stay in your child's school of origin** or the school in which they were last enrolled, if you choose to and it is in the child's best interest to do so.
- **Alternatively, your child can attend the local school closest to where you currently live**, if you so choose.
- **Receive transportation assistance** to and from school, if needed.
- **Receive uniform assistance**, if wearing uniforms is a requirement.
- **Request help from the school's Homeless Liaison** for support, such as medical, dental, mental, and other health-related services.

Ask your school who is the "Homeless Liaison" and introduce yourself so you can ask them for support with any of these needs! For questions, call: (202) 576-9502. For support for English learners, call: (202) 671-0750.

Playtime Honors National Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month

Domestic violence happens in every community, but many find it difficult to talk about openly. The goals of this month are to acknowledge domestic violence survivors and their experiences, highlight available resources, and work towards preventing abuse.

Did you know?

- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner.
- In 43% of domestic violence incidents with female victims, children are residents of the household where the incident occurred.
- 1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence. -National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV)

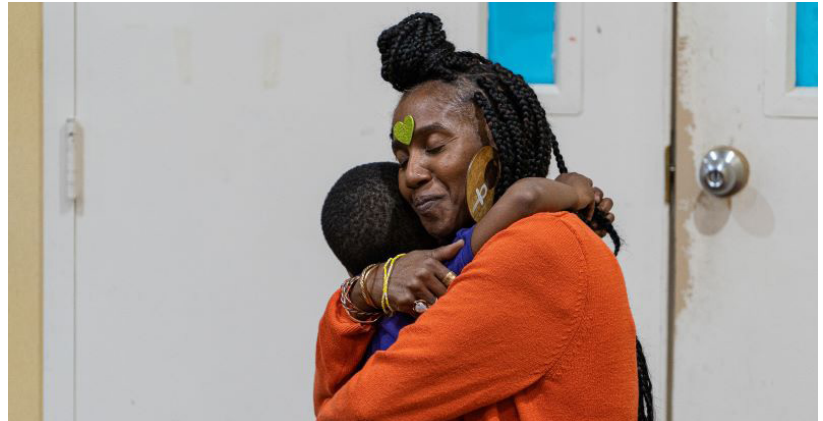
The Impact of DV on Children

Children's reactions to experiencing domestic violence can include anxiety, sleeplessness, aggression, difficulty concentrating, nightmares, and high levels of activity. Long-term, they may be "more likely to perpetuate the cycle of abuse in their own relationships as they grow into adulthood" (NCADV). Parents can play a key role in helping children overcome these reactions! To help make your child feel loved and supported, identify and celebrate your child's strengths, find ways to spend meaningful time together, and talk to your child about their experiences.

When you allow your child to talk with you about domestic violence, "you're telling your child it is safe to talk and that she doesn't have to be alone with her thoughts and worries" (NCADV). That is a powerful and important message for children to hear. Reflecting on how your experiences have affected you can be helpful when getting ready to talk about domestic violence with your child. It is possible that your child may share something that is difficult and painful for you to hear, but giving your child the space to share with you safely lets them know that you are there for them and that they are loved.

Play and Domestic Violence

Creative play helps children's brain development by making opportunities to practice social-emotional learning, verbal and non-verbal communication, and problem-solving skills that are key to future successes. Play also has the potential to strengthen children's resilience, supporting their capacity to cope during



Helpful Messages for Kids about Domestic Violence

- Violence isn't OK.
- It isn't your fault.
- I will do everything I can to help you be safe.
- It's not your job to fix what is happening in the family.
- I want you to tell me how you feel. It's important, and I can handle it.
- It's OK to have mixed feelings about either or both of your parents.

- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

stressful times and to recover after abuse. Playing with a parent and other caring adults can be even more impactful as the safe playful interactions allow children to rebuild trusting relationships with adults and the world around them. Playtime is here to help make unique, trauma-informed play experiences available to you and your children.

Playtime programming reduces potential trauma by engaging youth cognitively, physically, and emotionally, allowing children to build healthy relationships with caring adults and other children.

Confidential help is a phone call away

- In an Emergency, call 911
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or www.TheHotline.org
- Domestic Victim Hotline: (844) 443-5732
- Domestic Violence Coordinator at Police HQ: (202) 727-7137
- My Sister's Place Domestic Violence Hotline: (202) 529-5991
- House of Ruth Domestic Violence Hotline: (202) 667-7001