

Community Resources

Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services 216-696-KIDS

(to report child abuse and neglect)

www.cuyahogacounty.us

Starting Point 216-575-0061

(for childcare information)

<http://starting-point.org>

First Call for Help 216-436-2000

(for parenting and other resources)

www.211cleveland.org

Help Me Grow 216-736-4300

(supportive services for children under the age of three and their families)

www.helpmegrow.org

Domestic Violence Center

216-391-HELP

(domestic violence and teen dating violence services for adults, teens and children)

www.domesticviolencecenter.org

Cleveland Rape Crisis Center

216-619-6192

(for questions about sexual abuse or to request help following sexual abuse or rape)

www.clevelandrapecrisis.org

Providence House 216-651-5982

(temporary safe housing for children and support services for parents)

www.provhouse.org

Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services

(County Logo)

Choose Your Partner Carefully

Your child's life depends on it.....



When you choose a partner for yourself, you choose for your child too.

Your child is counting on you to make the right decision.

Never leave your child with someone you don't trust with your child's life.

When you choose a partner for yourself, you are choosing one for your child, as well.

78 % of Child Deaths investigated by Cuyahoga County in the past 2 years were caused by a mother's partner; often, the boyfriend or step-father of the child.

When choosing your partner, you are not just choosing for yourself. You are choosing for your child, too! Your partner plays an important role in your child's life. Choosing the wrong partner can be deadly.

Violence affects children from every income level and race. Each year, thousands of children end up seriously injured or killed.

No matter how much you may love your partner, no matter what his feelings for you might be.....he may not love your child.

It is important that you know the warning signs.

Warning Signs

Sometimes, when you are in love, you can miss the warning signs. One of the most important signs to look for is how your child acts when left alone with your partner. Is your child afraid every time you leave? Does he or she cry often? Shake with fear?

Other questions you should ask yourself. Does your partner:

- get easily angered or short-tempered when talking to you or your child?
- demand constant attention?
- deliver harsh punishment for minor misbehaviors?
- show anger or impatience when your child cries or throws a tantrum?
- call your child names or put down your child?
- think it is funny to scare your child?
- stop you and your child from attending family events?
- make all the decisions for you and your child?
- say you are a bad parent and not strict enough?
- hurt your child and blame you?
- handle guns and knives around you or your child?
- does your partner think your child is a problem?
- prevent or make it difficult for you and your child to be with friends and family?
- moved you and your child away from family and friends?

If you have answered yes to even a few of these questions, your child could be at risk.

NEVER ignore the warning signs!

The Facts

Far too often, a child is abused or even killed when left in the care of a mother's partner, usually a boyfriend (who is typically not the biological father).

In 2009, a study, published in the August issue of *Pediatrics* found that 83% of beating/shaking injuries causing the death of the child were at the hands of mother's partner. In more than half of these incidents, he gave a false story to explain the injuries.

Why

Many non-biological partners have no relationship or commitment to the child. They are primarily interested in their own romantic involvement with the mother and become irritated when problems with the child arise.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the common circumstances for a child's death are the child being at home, being alone with the mother's partner, and crying.

40% of babies born in the United States are born to single women. Many of these mothers lack childcare but need to work in order to keep their public assistance benefits. Instead of seeking a qualified childcare center or person to care for their children, mothers are leaving them with their partner. Not only do the partners often times have no relationship with the child, they have even less patience.