

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Local family violence agency promoting events around Child Abuse Prevention Month**

HAMPTON, VA—This April will mark the 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Transitions Family Violence Services and Protect Our Kids, two family violence agencies serving the Peninsula, are encouraging area groups and schools to hold events to promote child abuse awareness and prevention.

Child abuse is a widespread and devastating problem. On average, three children a day die as a result of abuse and neglect, and countless others remain silent, their pain unnoticed and unreported. This abuse is very often linked with domestic violence. According to the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance (VSDVAA), as many as 10 million children witness domestic violence each year. Several studies have found that in 60% to 75% of families in which a woman is battered, the children are also battered. In fact, child abuse is 15 times more likely to occur in families where there is domestic violence.

Witnessing violence in the home is a form of child abuse, as it has devastating consequences for the children involved. Children raised in violent homes are six times more likely to commit suicide; 26 times more likely to commit sexual assault; 57 times more likely to abuse drugs; and 74 times more likely to commit other crimes against persons.

**Area schools and youth groups that are interested in having a speaker or conducting an event or presentation around child abuse prevention and awareness should contact Julia Campbell at (757) 728-0025.**

Transitions Family Violence Services is the largest domestic violence agency in Virginia, providing comprehensive family violence services in Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and York County. Since 1977, Transitions has provided "*a pathway to safety . . . a source of hope*" to tens of thousands of women, children and men on the Virginia Peninsula. The agency offers comprehensive and intervention programs to help families with essential needs including emergency shelter, transitional housing, counseling, legal advocacy, childcare and children's services. To date, Transitions has sheltered more than 15,000 victims of abuse for 150,000 nights and has provided outreach support to many thousands more.

The goal of Protect Our Kids is to work with Hampton and Newport News community partners to improve the health and well-being of children exposed to violence and to reduce the number of children exposed to violence. Violence impacts children in their homes, neighborhoods, schools and parks. Protect Our Kids includes community education, services and referrals to programs to help Hampton children who have witnessed violence.

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