



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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### **Take a moment....help a child**

*April is Child Abuse Prevention Month in Virginia*

**Richmond, Va.** – Governor Timothy Kaine has proclaimed April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in the Commonwealth.

“With our hectic schedules it may seem impossible to slow down, but the safety of a child may hang in the balance,” said Virginia Department of Social Services Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr. “For us parents, it can mean a more careful reaction to one of those button-pushing moments. But, it’s important for all of us to take more time to notice what children are trying to tell us – the signs of abuse aren’t limited to physical marks.”

In reality, child abuse includes: physical abuse; physical neglect; sexual abuse; medical neglect and emotional/mental maltreatment. Most abuse and neglect is not a one time event, but usually occurs in a pattern and over time.

In Virginia:

- A child is abused or neglected every 86 minutes
- Every 10 days, a child dies from abuse or neglect
- In fiscal year 2008, more than 50,000 children were reported as possible abuse and/or neglect victims in Virginia; 36 children died from injuries attributable to abuse and/or neglect, with 24 of these children age 4 or younger.

“If you are a parent and the stress is getting to you, don’t take it out on your children,” said Paul McWhinney, director of family services with the Virginia Department of Social Services. “If you feel you are losing control, stop. Walk away. Count to 10. Take a deep breath. Call a friend or family member or 1-800-CHILDREN.”

Visit [www.pauseforachild.org](http://www.pauseforachild.org)

To learn more about positive parenting and how to eliminate abuse and neglect, visit [www.dss.virginia.gov](http://www.dss.virginia.gov), [www.preventchildabuseva.org](http://www.preventchildabuseva.org) or [www.grscan.com](http://www.grscan.com).

To report suspected abuse and neglect, call the Virginia Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-552-7096.

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