



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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## **PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE** *Safe Start Conference to Take Place March 18*

Given that some of the biggest victims of violence are children, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) and its many partners are sponsoring the Safe Start San Diego 2011 Conference.

The event, titled "*Working with Children and Families Impacted by Violence*", will take place Friday, March 18, 2011, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Marina Village Conference Center, 1936 Quivira Way, San Diego, CA 92109. The conference is free and designed for professionals from any organization that serves children, youth and families; however, the general public is also welcome.

"Early intervention can help stop the abuse of children and put an end to the cycle of family violence," said Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, a strong advocate against domestic violence. "Domestic violence affects people of all socio-economic backgrounds and possibly for generations if not properly addressed early on."

The Safe Start conference will feature leading local and national experts on violence, abuse and trauma. The keynote speaker will be Larry Cohen, Executive Director of the Prevention Institute.

An estimated one out of every four children in California has been a victim or exposed to violence, according to the San Diego Domestic Violence Council.

"The goal of the conference is to provide participants current research and models that have been effective in reducing children and family violence," said Nick Macchione, HHS Director. "Domestic violence affects every community across the United States. Domestic violence takes place in every region of San Diego County and should be a concern for everyone."

Exposure to this trauma negatively affects children's emotional, social, and cognitive development. Furthermore, as these children grow up, they are at greater risk for delinquency, adult criminality, and violent behavior.

"No one, especially children, should ever be a victim of or have to witness violence," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. "Children who witness violence often have the same symptoms and effects as children who are victims of the violence themselves."

The Safe Start conference is also sponsored by the San Diego Domestic Violence Council, First 5 San Diego, Safe Start San Diego and the San Diego County Commission on Children, Youth and Families.

For more information or to register for the Safe Start conference, call (619) 515-4398 or e-mail [Chesley.Blevins@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Chesley.Blevins@sdcounty.ca.gov).

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