



PLACE MATTERS **digest**

NOTHING MATTERS MORE TO A CHILD THAN A PLACE TO CALL HOME

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Although daylight savings time doesn't end until Sunday, November 3rd, the days have seem to have already gotten shorter. With the start of football season, we began to pull out our jeans, turtlenecks to wear under our jerseys, sweatshirts and jackets to shield us for the cooler evenings whether in the stadium or not.

The Baltimore City Health Department shares the following information:

Flu Facts

Influenza (flu) is a respiratory disease caused by a virus. Every year, between 5 and 20% of Americans are infected, 225,000 are hospitalized due to pneumonia and other complications of infection, and 24,000 die from the disease.

There are several groups especially at risk:

- **The Very Young or Old**
- **People with Chronic Diseases of the Heart, Lungs, Blood, or Kidneys**
- **People with Asthma**
- **People with Diabetes**
- **People with Weakened Immune Systems**

The single best way to avoid catching the flu is to get vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that every American **ages, 6 months and up** receive the influenza vaccine. Vaccination is safe, effective, and fast.

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Safety Tips**
- **Sexual Assault**



Help your teen stay engaged

- Find out if your child feels engaged by his classes and feels safe from bullies and other threats. Make sure he/she is not missing class because of behavioral issues and school discipline policies. If any of these are problems, work with your school.
- Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary. Make sure teachers know how to contact you.
- Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.



Molly McGrath Tierney
Director

As the holidays draw near, I want to take the opportunity to say thank you for everything you do to provide family connections, bring comfort and stability to Baltimore City youth in care. During the upcoming months, friends and families will come together to share stories of loved ones who are no longer with us, current events and plans for the future. I appreciate you giving the *Sons & Daughters of Baltimore City* a place to call home and opportunity to share in those special experiences.

As members of our extended family, I wish you, your family and loved ones an amazing holiday season.

*Happy
Holidays*

The **single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated** each year, but good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu. There also are flu antiviral drugs that can be used to treat and prevent the flu.

1. **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
2. **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
3. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
4. **Clean your hands** often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
5. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
6. **Practice other good health habits.** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Getting Vaccinated

Ask your medical provider. Many health insurance plans cover the cost of flu vaccinations. If you do not have health insurance and live in Baltimore City, the Health Department's T.I.K.E Van offers **FREE** vaccinations to those in need Monday through Thursday. No appointment is necessary. Supply of certain vaccines may be limited and are distributed on a "first-come, first-serve" basis. Please bring your child's vaccination records. Free flu shots and flu mists are now available at all TIKE clinics. The monthly TIKE Immunization Clinic Schedule listing the latest clinic days and times is available online at: <http://www.baltimorehealth.org/tikeschedule.html>. You can also call 410-396-4454 or 311 for more information.

Remember: ***Vaccinate against the flu for a happier, healthier you!***

Personal Safety **Starts with YOU**



It gets darker a lot sooner now, so it's important to be mindful of your surroundings, exercise caution in everything you do and know how to get help when needed.

What can we do to protect ourselves?





Below are some suggestions from the Baltimore City Police Department:

Remember, whenever possible, to...

- Reduce or eliminate opportunities that make you a target
- Increase awareness in places you are most vulnerable
- Trust your instincts regardless of feeling embarrassed
- Prepare your outing or routine with safety in mind



- Always be aware of your surroundings and carry your purse clasp-side inward, close to the body, in the bend of your elbow (as if carrying a football).
- Never carry a wallet in your rear pocket, use a front pocket or inside jacket pocket instead.
- Be aware of arguments or disturbances that may be designed to distract you from pick-pockets.
- Reduce the amount of money or valuables that you carry, particularly around the holidays. Take only what is necessary as you travel about.

When Walking	While Driving	At Home	Nightlife Safety
<p>Use well-travelled, well-lit streets and paths.</p> <p>Travel in groups if possible.</p> <p>If followed, head toward populated or open areas.</p> <p>Don't allow texting or phone conversations to distract you from your surroundings.</p> <p>If a person in a vehicle bothers you reverse direction and head to a safe, populated, well-lit place.</p> <p>When walking to your car, pay attention to those around and potentially, anyone inside.</p>	<p>Keep doors locked at all times and windows up, if possible.</p> <p>Keep valuables stored in the trunk, out of sight, remembering, however, not to place items in the trunk and walk away.</p> <p>Plan your route in advance. Displaying maps can send a message that you are unfamiliar with the area and make you a potential target.</p> <p>When stopped in traffic remember to always leave enough space between your vehicle and the one in front that will allow space to pass easily, if necessary.</p> <p>Keep your car well-maintained and the gas tank half-full to avoid being stranded or gassing-up in unfamiliar areas.</p>	<p>Have your keys out and ready before you approach your front door.</p> <p>The front and rear door areas should be well-lit.</p> <p>Consider motion-sensing lights.</p> <p>If you live in an apartment building, always make sure the door is closed behind you.</p> <p>If a stranger asks to use the phone or makes another request which could allow him or her into your home, refuse confidently and offer to make the call for them.</p> <p>If you arrive home and there are signs of a burglary, STAY OUT and immediately call 911.</p>	<p>Don't drink excessively. You are a far more attractive target for criminals.</p> <p>Don't flash large amounts of cash when paying the tab.</p> <p>Don't talk loudly about the next venue you may be headed to. Criminals may pick a point along the route there to await your passing.</p> <p>Consider calling for a cab instead of flagging one down.</p>
			

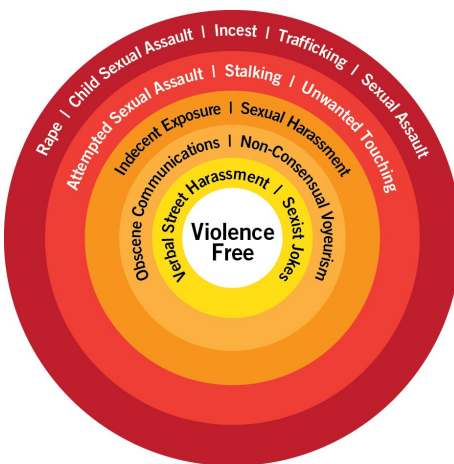
According to the Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention, 2010 Uniform Crime Report, reported sexual assault in Baltimore City has risen in the past several years. The mission of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is to help prevent sexual assault, advocate for accessible, compassionate care for survivors of sexual violence and work to hold offenders accountable.

Sexual Assault - How Do I know?

A sexual assault is never your fault and it is important that you know help is always available to you. Sexual assault can happen to anyone, at any time. It doesn't matter how old you are, what you look like, what you wear, where you hang out and who you hang out with. Offenders can be strangers, but most likely they are friends, family members or acquaintances that we think we can trust. (Sexual assaults may involve a weapon, threats, coercion, alcohol or drugs, or nothing but the violent attack itself.)

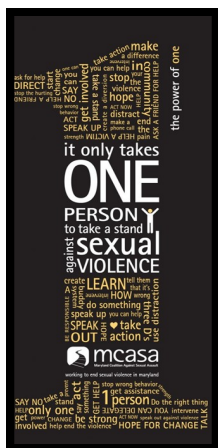
Sexual assault is any unwanted or forced sexual act and includes:

- Rape and attempted rape
- Unwanted touching or groping
- Sexual harassment
- Unwanted showing of private parts
- Sexual exploitation
- Child sexual abuse
- Incest
- Sexually obscene communications (in person, by phone, texting, email or social networking)



You have options when it comes to stopping sexual violence. It's important to remember that even when it is hard, there is always something you can do. By taking a stand, you can help stop sexual violence in your community.

Just remember you have the Three D's*



1. You can be **DIRECT**

Walk up and intervene. Respectfully ask that the offender stop the behavior and explain to them why it's wrong.

2. You can **DISTRACT**

Use a diversion to stop the behavior. Walk up and ask for directions or ask for the time. If it's someone you know, talk about something you have in common with them.

3. You can **DELEGATE**

Ask a friend, use the buddy system or call your local authorities to stop the behavior.

Most importantly, safety comes first. If you ever feel that there is immediate physical danger to yourself or the victim, you should dial 911. If everyone does their small part, we can help prevent sexual violence of any kind.

* Edwards (2009), *Green Dot Violence Prevention Strategy*, www.livethegreendot.com



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The Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS) does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, physical handicaps, matriculation or political affiliation.

Reporting Crimes

As residents of this community, we have an obligation to help one another.

If you have questions, concerns or suspect a crime has been committed against a youth in care, call the

BCDSS 24-hour Hotline at
410-361-2235.



And Remember...
"...IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!"
...And Call 911!

Crime Prevention

- Don't be a car break-in victim
- Do not leave your valuables in plain sight purses, cell phones, laptops
- Secure all valuables even if you're running in the store for a quick purchase.
- Simply locking your doors and hiding your valuables
- Don't be a victim – Hide your valuables

BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

For more information about
Baltimore City youth, contact the
BCDSS Welcome Line

410-685-8231