

Enrollment

To enroll your child in Safe Start , you must first receive a referral.

Referrals can be made through County agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of the Sheriff, the Police Department, State's Attorney's Office, Montgomery County Public Schools, or private schools

Once a referral form is completed, it may be mailed or faxed to the Montgomery County Family Justice Center for further processing.



**Montgomery County
Family Justice Center**

Attn: Safe Start

600 Jefferson Plaza, 5th Floor

Rockville, MD 20852

Fax: 240-773-0443

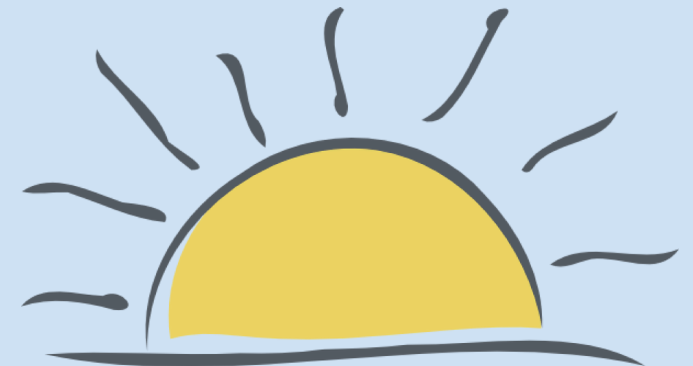
“I want to let you know that my sons’ Psychotherapist is beyond fantastic. She has earned their trust and is able to help them be able to communicate their fears, troubles and feelings.”
– Safe Start Parent



**For more information or questions
regarding the Safe Start program,
please call 240-773-0444**

Safe Start

**A counseling program for
children who have been
exposed to domestic violence**



The Safe Start Program

WHAT

Safe Start is a Montgomery County, MD program which provides psycho education and counseling to encourage healing in youth who have witnessed domestic violence.

Therapy services are offered in:

- ◆ English
- ◆ Spanish
- ◆ French

FOR WHOM

Youth ages 3– 18.

FEES

Safe Start will work with private insurance, Medicaid and the County to cover the cost of therapy. However, if using private insurance, the client will be responsible for any copays.

LOCATION

Counselors are available to work with children at various locations, including schools, county facilities, and counselors' offices.

The Program

Safe Start is a 12-week program designed specifically for youth who have been exposed to domestic violence.

Therapy techniques:

- ◆ Group therapy
- ◆ Talk therapy
- ◆ Play therapy
- ◆ Art therapy



The program aims to help youth learn and grow in the following areas:

- ◆ Conflict resolution
- ◆ Fear management
- ◆ Safety planning
- ◆ Peer relations
- ◆ Self-esteem
- ◆ Guilt reduction
- ◆ Positive communication

The licensed counselors will provide an assessment of each child's needs, as well as information and referrals for these needs.

Witnessing

Domestic Violence as a Child

Domestic violence is a pattern of controlling behavior that can include physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, or financial abuse.

For a child, witnessing domestic violence in the home can be a traumatic experience with lasting mental and physical health consequences

Some of the negative effects include*:

- ◆ Anger
- ◆ Frequent nightmares
- ◆ Fear, even of being at home
- ◆ Low Self esteem
- ◆ Mental illness
- ◆ Poor school performance
- ◆ Difficulty with attachment
- ◆ Other psycho social difficulties

**These are just a few examples*

Through the Safe Start program, children learn how to cope with the psychological effects of their trauma in an effort to prevent those effects from persisting long-term. Counseling can be an important step in a family's healing and making steps towards a positive future.

