



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

QUICK TIPS: HOW TO GET HELP FOR CHILDREN WHO WITNESS VIOLENT CRIME

Witnessing violence takes a terrible toll on children. We know from research that exposure to community violence affects everything from children's sleep and their school success to the physical development of their brains. These children suffer from profound anxiety, fear and lack of alertness, similar to the experience of being in a war zone. Even a modest amount of counseling can substantially increase life prospects for children who are exposed to violence and keep them from being claimed by the streets as victims or perpetrators of violence later in life. Here are two resources from our office that can help:

- **AB 2809:** AB 2809, the "Violent Crime Witness Reimbursement for Minors" law, was passed by the California legislature in January, 2009. The law acknowledges the grave impacts of community violence and PTSD on children and youth, and created an opportunity for children who are "witnesses to violence" to access up to \$5,000 in State Victim Compensation Funds for mental and behavioral health treatments. Please contact Victim Services at (415) 553-9044 for tips on how to access these funds.
- **SKY (Support for Kids and Youth):** In 2005, the District Attorney launched SKY (Support for Kids and Youth) to provide specialized therapy for children and youth who have experienced trauma due to violence, including children who have been physically or sexually abused, or who have witnessed domestic violence in the home. The first program of its kind housed directly within a District Attorney's Office, the SKY Program ensures that juvenile victims and witnesses of crime receive culturally and age appropriate services to help combat the negative effects of crime. SKY also builds upon the District Attorney's dedication to violence prevention programs designed to provide at-risk youth with the opportunities they need to succeed. To learn more about SKY, contact Victim Services at (415) 553-9044.