



Children impacted by domestic violence may be identified as CHINS due to trauma-related behaviors and family instability rather than delinquency. Strong, family-centered support strategies are critical to reducing escalation into the juvenile justice system.



**Domestic Violence (DV)** is a pattern of abusive, coercive, or controlling behaviors used by an individual to gain or maintain power over another. A child is **impacted** by domestic violence when they have directly witnessed it or experienced harm or trauma as a result.



**O.C.G.A §15-11-2** designates **Children in Need of Services (CHINS)** as those under 18 requiring care, guidance, or rehabilitation due to status offenses or behaviors only illegal for minors.

# IN GEORGIA

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



From FY21 to FY25\*: <sup>2</sup>

- The number of new victims of child witness to DV served

**36,021**

- The number of new victims of DV served

**388,833**

- The combined number of new victims of child witness to DV and new victims of DV served

**424,854**

\*Fiscal Year runs October-September

## CHINS



From 2016 to 2023, juvenile court filings decreased by

**3%**

but CHINS increased by <sup>1</sup>

**14%**



During the 2022-2023 school year, **23%** of students missed **more than 15 days of school** compared to **12%** pre-pandemic (2018-2019).

➤ an **89% increase** in potential CHINS cases <sup>1</sup>

# HIGH IMPACT CHINS STRATEGIES

A strong CHINS system should strive to have the ability to identify DV early, respond with a specialized pathway, connect families to coordinated trauma-informed services, and track outcomes to evaluate effectiveness.



## Universal Domestic Violence and Trauma Screening

Standardized routine screening at the earliest point of contact to identify potential exposure to DV or trauma

Completed by Juvenile Court Officers, School Social Workers, Behavioral Health Clinicians, etc.



## DV-Specific CHINS Pathway

Structured response track within the CHINS process

Allows a specialized, trauma-informed pathway for DV-impacted CHINS



## Formal Court-Domestic Violence Partnerships

Formalized and ongoing collaboration between Juvenile Courts and certified Domestic Violence providers

Includes structured agreements, memorandum of understandings (MOUs), and protocols



## Expanded Trauma-Informed Services

A broad and accessible network of services to address trauma resulting from domestic violence  
Available to all affected individuals, the victim and family

Focus is on healing and stabilizing the family unit



## Data Tracking (CHINS + DV Indicators)

A centralized system that tracks CHINS cases

Includes specific indicators to domestic violence exposure as well as service outcomes

### Implementation

### Impact

- ✓ Prevents mislabeling trauma responses as misconduct
- ✓ Identifies possible domestic violence cases early
- ✓ Triggers the appropriate referrals, e.g. advocacy and therapy

- ✓ Recognizes exposure to DV as a root cause, not a side issue
- ✓ Ensures safety is addressed alongside behavior
- ✓ Prevents re-traumatization through the court process

- ✓ Provides immediate support for caregivers
- ✓ Improves safety planning
- ✓ Reduces barriers to accessing necessary DV services

- ✓ Addresses the root cause of CHINS behaviors
- ✓ Improves long-term outcomes
- ✓ Reduces repeat involvement in the Juvenile Justice or Court system

- ✓ Enables evidence-based decision making
- ✓ Identifies service and program gaps and tracks the effectiveness of interventions
- ✓ Supports funding and program accountability

### Coordinated Response Summary



Applying these strategies to CHINS cases involving children impacted by domestic violence will help ensure that both children and their caregivers receive the support they need. This approach strengthens family stability and support systems, ultimately reducing the likelihood of children becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.