

# Child Abuse Prevention Month:



## Ideas for your Community

During April, as well as throughout the year, you can encourage groups of concerned citizens to participate in child abuse prevention activities. Here are a few suggested calls to action:

### Everyone

- Many communities have Child Abuse Prevention Councils or programs such as crisis nurseries or home visiting programs. Find out what is available in your community and how you can support their efforts.
- Wear a blue ribbon every day in April and encourage others in your community to do so.
- Smile and be supportive of families and children wherever you are all the time.

### Government Officials

- Encourage fire and police departments to sound sirens and churches to ring bells at noon on April 1. This can be followed by a moment of silence and prayers for children and families and a proclamation signing ceremony, naming April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.
- Encourage government employees to get involved in child abuse prevention activities.
- In areas with city or county-run utilities, research the possibility of adding positive parenting brochures to monthly statements.

### Parents and Families

- Start a playgroup in your neighborhood. Schedule a meeting with other parents and organize the group to do a project that benefits the community.
- Do something every week that tells your children they are special – even by putting a note in their lunchbox or scheduling activities together. Visit children at school, attend their sporting events, and talk to them about their interests.
- Watch television with your children. Discuss issues such as violence and fantasy versus reality.
- Create “safe houses” in your neighborhood where children can go in case of emergency.
- Know where your children are and who they are with. Know their friends and friends’ parents and don’t hesitate to tell other parents what your family rules are.
- Encourage child abuse prevention activities through local youth groups.

### Faith-based and Religious Communities

- Organize volunteers to visit with or provide transportation for pregnant women, parents, and children attending health clinics for prenatal and pediatric care.
- Arrange for parenting classes or Circle of Parents® support groups. Call 1-800-CHILDREN to learn how to organize a support group in your congregation. Donate space for classes or support groups. Enlist specialized trainers such as pediatricians, teachers, and those experienced in child development and adult education to help.
- Create a pool of volunteers from your congregation to provide respite care to parents.
- Hold a community baby shower for your local crisis nursery or shelter. Enlist local groups to help.
- Form or participate in partnerships with child advocates, schools, childcare facilities, and others. Address issues such as teen pregnancy prevention.
- Adopt a child protection or family services worker to assist with family needs.

## **Educators**

- Hold essay or poster contests during April with a child abuse prevention or family-oriented theme. Involve writing and journalism classes to promote child abuse prevention in school newspapers and newsletters. Suggest that children participate in sidewalk art with chalk depicting positive family experiences.
- Hold special trainings for parents and teachers sponsored by the school district or parent association. Ask school service organizations to plan and participate in child abuse prevention activities.
- Support after school programs that support working parents by providing children with a safe place for activities.
- Invite speakers from Child Protection Services, Child Abuse Prevention Councils, battered women's shelters, and other community organizations to speak to high school students and teen pregnancy classes about positive parenting and abuse-free relationships.
- Display child abuse prevention materials in school halls that give the most exposure, and suggest titles of books that discuss child abuse and its impact on our communities.

## **Health Care Professionals**

- Educate new parents on brain development, including the importance of providing nurturing care, talking, singing, and reading to their babies.
- Display child abuse prevention posters in waiting rooms, clinics, and emergency rooms.
- Help develop information kits with positive parenting information for new mothers, especially teen mothers.
- Organize and participate in health fairs, parenting classes, and other community outreach programs.
- Let parents know that they can call you regarding parental problems with newborns.
- Provide training to your community on how to recognize child abuse and neglect.
- Provide new parents with information about Shaken Baby Syndrome, postpartum depression and other health-related concerns.

## **Childcare and Early Childhood Education**

- Encourage employers to support families. Studies show that new mothers tend to use fewer sick-leave days and are more productive when employers are supportive and flexible.
- Encourage parents to spend quality time with children at home.
- Share parenting information with parents.
- Seek training for staff on issues related to child abuse and neglect, including Shaken Baby Syndrome, fetal alcohol effects, and other topics.

## **Local Businesses**

- Make a list of community resources available to employees, including after-school programs and parent support groups and classes.
- Coordinate or participate in fundraising events for local service organizations that support children and families.
- Promote child abuse prevention awareness by printing an ad on your shopping bags or including a message on your customer receipts. Print bookmarks and use as bag or paycheck stuffers. Post child abuse prevention materials on employee bulletin boards.
- Support employees with family issues. Encourage employees to display pictures of children. Periodically, schedule a speaker to discuss balancing work and family.
- Allow employees time to volunteer in child abuse prevention efforts.
- Promote quality childcare among employees. Start or support a childcare center for employees.
- Create safe and welcoming places for families.