

**Safe Children and Healthy Families  
Are a Shared Responsibility**



**2006 Community Resource Packet**

Dear Colleagues:

A nurturing home environment, safe places to play, good medical care, stimulating schools—so many ingredients are necessary to help children grow up to be safe and healthy. When children are surrounded with secure relationships and stimulating experiences, they draw from that environment to become confident, caring adults. The primary responsibility for children's health and well-being rests with parents, but they cannot do it alone. All families benefit from the help of strong, supportive neighborhoods and communities. We all play a role in helping our children thrive.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect and its National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information created this resource packet in English and Spanish to support individuals, organizations, and communities in their efforts to promote safe children and healthy families. The packet was developed with valuable input from numerous national organizations and Federal partners committed to strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect. (A list of partners may be found in the resource directory beginning on page 47.) The Children's Bureau would like to acknowledge Prevent Child Abuse America, for providing design services, and the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention, for supporting the printing of the packets and posters.

Enclosed in the packet are many resources that organizations and individuals can use to help keep children safe right in their communities—including information on getting the word out about the need to support families and tip sheets on positive parenting. We encourage you to copy and distribute these materials widely, to spread the word that everyone has a role to play in supporting families in a way that prevents child abuse and neglect. These and other materials can also be downloaded from the Prevention section of the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information website at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention>. We hope these tools will mobilize parents and caring individuals everywhere to get involved in making our communities safe and supportive for families and children.

Strengthening families and preventing child abuse require the shared commitment of individuals and organizations in every community. Thank you for participating in this important effort.



Susan Orr, Ph.D.  
*Associate Commissioner*  
*Children's Bureau*  
*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*





# Safe Children and Healthy Families Are a Shared Responsibility

## 2006 Community Resource Packet

<b>Supporting Families: Preventing Child Abuse .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Promoting Safe Children and Healthy Families: What Organizations Can Do .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Building on Strengths: Enhancing Protective Factors for Children and Families .....	9
Sharing Your Message:	
Developing and Delivering Effective Messages to Promote Family Support .....	11
Examples of Community Awareness Activities .....	13
Sample OpEd.....	14
Ideas for Talking with Others.....	15
<b>Promoting Safe Children and Healthy Families: What Individuals Can Do .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Activities for Individuals to Help Build a Shared Responsibility .....	19
Celebrate National Family Month .....	21
50 Ways Family Members Can Say "I Love You" .....	22
Child Abuse Prevention Month Calendar of Activities .....	23
Tips for Being a Nurturing Parent.....	24
Understanding Your Child's Behavior .....	25
Soothing a Crying Infant .....	26
Surviving Toilet Training.....	27
"Healthy Dozen" List for Toddlers .....	28
Dealing with Temper Tantrums .....	29
Time Out .....	30
The Power of Choice .....	31
Winning the Chore War.....	32
Sibling Rivalry.....	33
Setting Rules and Consequences with Teens.....	34
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren .....	35
10 Little Things That Can Make a Big Difference in Your Marriage .....	37



**When Children Are Not Safe: Child Abuse and Neglect..... 39**

- An Issue Facing All Communities: The National Scope of the Problem..... 41
- Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect ..... 42
- Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect..... 43
- Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect..... 45

**Organizations and Programs That Promote Safe Children and Healthy Families ..... 47**

**Evaluation Form ..... 51**



# Supporting Families: Preventing Child Abuse

Most parents share a desire to provide the best for their children. But raising healthy, confident children can be difficult, especially when parents are frustrated, inexperienced, have serious mental health problems, or are facing stressful conditions such as relationship difficulties or financial crises.

## Why Support for Families Is Critical

Research has shown that parents and other caretakers who have resources and support are more likely to provide safe and healthy homes for their children. Specifically, parents need a network of supportive personal relationships and other resources for coping with stress, knowledge and understanding of critical child development issues, and financial and other concrete supports such as shelter, food, and childcare. A lack of these critical supports, on the other hand, can cause otherwise well-intentioned parents to make poor decisions that can lead to neglect or abuse. As we learn more about why child abuse and neglect occur, more organizations, agencies, and tribal communities are recognizing the best way to promote prevention is to provide parents with the skills and resources they need to understand and meet their children's emotional, physical, and developmental needs and protect their children from harm.

## How Support for Families Can Help

Parenting is one of the toughest and most important jobs in America, and we all have a stake in ensuring that parents have access to the tools and support they need to be successful. With the help of family support activities, many families are able to find the strength and resources they need to raise safe, healthy, and productive children. For example, local schools or family service centers can provide a place for parents to gather, socialize, and learn more about their children's growth and development. Faith communities offer parents additional opportunities for friendship and support. Pediatricians help parents by responding to questions, concerns, or frustrations about their children's behavior. Family support programs such as parent education, home visitation, respite care, and support groups help parents develop parenting skills, understand the benefits of positive discipline techniques, and meet their children's needs. Family support programs also offer assistance with other significant challenges facing caretakers, such as adequate housing and affordable childcare.

Through these and other family support activities, parents develop resources, knowledge, and skills to:

- ☆ Understand what is typical behavior for children at different ages
- ☆ Identify, respond to, and advocate for their children's needs
- ☆ Communicate calmly and clearly with children
- ☆ Set clear and realistic boundaries for children
- ☆ Correct and redirect children without losing control
- ☆ Handle stress in positive ways, including reaching out to friends, family, and community resources for support
- ☆ Develop positive bonds with their children and enjoy spending time together
- ☆ Have confidence in their own abilities as parents\*

\* Adapted from FRIENDS National Resource Center for CBFRS Programs, Outcome Accountability Initiative Field Test: Phase I Final Report, Attachment I: Sample "Common" Outcome Evaluation Tool. For more information, go to [www.friendsnrc.org](http://www.friendsnrc.org).





**Promoting Safe Children and Healthy Families:  
What Organizations Can Do**







## Building on Strengths: Enhancing Protective Factors for Children and Families

Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers are increasingly thinking about personal, family, and environmental factors that strengthen families and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect within families. Research shows that while certain risk factors have detrimental effects on children and families, other “protective” factors can mitigate those effects and provide benefits, resulting in greater resilience for parents and children. Successful family support activities and child abuse prevention programs are designed to promote these protective factors.

A body of research has identified protective factors known to be correlated with reductions in child abuse and neglect:

- ☆ Parental resilience
- ☆ Nurturing and attachment
- ☆ Social connections
- ☆ Knowledge of parenting and child development
- ☆ Effective problem solving and communication skills
- ☆ Concrete support in times of need
- ☆ Social and emotional competence of children
- ☆ Healthy marriages

### Family Support Strategies for Building on Strengths\*

Research has found that the following are effective strategies that family support and child abuse prevention programs can use to promote these protective factors:

- ☆ **Facilitate friendships and mutual support.** Offer opportunities for parents in the neighborhood to get to know each other, develop mutual support systems, and take leadership roles. Strategies may include sports teams, potlucks, classes, advisory groups, board leadership, and volunteer opportunities.
- ☆ **Strengthen parenting.** Develop ways for parents to get support on parenting issues when they need it. Possibilities include classes, support groups, home visits, tip sheets in pediatricians’ offices, and resource libraries.
- ☆ **Respond to family crises.** Offer extra support to families when they need it, as in times of illness, job loss, housing problems, and other stressors.
- ☆ **Link families to services and opportunities.** Provide referrals for job training, education, health care, mental health, and local faith-based and community services.
- ☆ **Value and support parents.** The relationship between parents and staff is essential to a program’s ability to connect with parents. The support, training, and supervision of staff are essential to help them do this effectively.
- ☆ **Facilitate children’s social and emotional development.** Some programs use curriculums that specifically focus on helping children articulate their feelings and get along with others. When children bring home what they learn in the classroom, parents benefit as well.
- ☆ **Observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse or neglect.** Train staff to observe children carefully and respond at the first sign of difficulty. Early intervention can help ensure children are safe and parents get the support and services they need.

\* Adapted from Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and Center for the Study of Social Policy, *Strengthening families through early care & education*. Find more information at [http://www.cssp.org/doris\\_duke/index.html](http://www.cssp.org/doris_duke/index.html).



## Effective Prevention Programs for Building on Strengths

In fiscal year 2003, the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, released the report, *Emerging Practices in the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect*. This report was the result of a three-year project to gather and disseminate new information on effective and innovative prevention programs. Under the guidance of an advisory group of experts in the field of child abuse prevention, including both researchers and practitioners, the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect evaluated many nominated prevention programs, looking for those that conducted rigorous program evaluation and showed positive outcomes. A total of 10 programs were selected as either effective or innovative, and 12 more programs were highlighted as having some noteworthy aspects. The report included an overview of the types of prevention programs that exist today, as well as a summary of research on the effectiveness of prevention programs.

Find the full report in the Prevention section of the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information website at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention/emerging/report/index.cfm>.

## Evaluation Resources

The FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) has a strong background in and commitment to helping CBCAP organizations improve their program outcome evaluations. As a step in this ongoing effort, FRIENDS is developing resources that prevention programs can use to evaluate their effectiveness. Prevention program managers, administrators, and others can use this information to help them gather evidence that their programs are making meaningful differences to families and children. Information will be available on topics such as building a logic model, outcomes and indicators, useful measures and instruments, and other resources.

The FRIENDS Evaluation Toolkit is being developed by the FRIENDS National Resource Center, a service of the Children's Bureau, in partnership with a group of representatives from the CBCAP lead agencies, parents, prevention program administrators and managers, and researchers. For more information, visit the FRIENDS website at [www.friendsnrc.org](http://www.friendsnrc.org) and click on outcome accountability.



## Sharing Your Message: Developing and Delivering Effective Messages to Promote Family Support

Effective child abuse prevention messages can increase awareness, build community support, change attitudes, teach skills, and reinforce healthy behaviors. Research shows those that take a positive approach, emphasizing the many ways communities can support and strengthen families, are more likely to resonate with the public. These messages may take many forms, depending on your goals and who you are trying to reach. The key to changing behavior is to tailor each message to reflect the point of view of a specific target audience. When developing messages promoting safe children and healthy families, keep the following considerations in mind.

### Choose the Right Audience

Who are you trying to reach with your message? In selecting a target audience, consider what specific behavior you want to impact and what specific group of people will have the greatest ability to influence or change behavior to make communities more supportive of children and families. Then tailor your message and method of delivery accordingly. For example, a message that works for child welfare professionals may be ineffective for parents.

### Understand Your Target Audience

Once you have selected the right audience, developing an effective communication plan requires some knowledge of or preliminary research into the beliefs, behaviors, and preferences of the target audience. Different groups have different parenting norms, different views on child abuse and neglect and of the role of the community in family life, and different ways of approaching the issue. As a result, they may raise different objections or encounter different barriers in changing their behavior. You will need to tailor your message to reflect the cultural context, in order to help your audience overcome barriers and accomplish the desired change.

### Consider the Method of Communication

Your method of communication is a vital element in reaching the intended audience. Part of your research into the target audience will be to understand how they prefer to receive information. What media do they watch/listen to? Are they more likely to read a poster or watch a video? Then, tailor your message to the appropriate medium. What sounds moving in a speech, for example, may be too long or complex for a poster.

### Consider the Messenger

When deciding who will deliver the message, the most important consideration is whether that messenger will be credible to the intended audience. Several factors impact this. Audiences often are more receptive to messengers they perceive to be similar to themselves (racially, culturally, etc.). For instance, if you want to reach students, involving student leaders from the group you are addressing (e.g., athletes, sorority members) is a highly effective approach.

Audiences also are more receptive when the messenger is someone they trust and perceive as knowledgeable. The signature of a medical doctor or psychologist may lend credibility to an OpEd about the health and mental health effects of child abuse. Finally, parents can serve as powerful messengers about the need to support families and protect children. When parents partner with program staff to speak out about the positive changes in their own lives, others gain valuable insights and may be moved to take action to help themselves and their neighbors.



## Consider the Message

The message itself is, of course, the most important element of all. When developing messages promoting safe children and healthy families, there is some evidence that positive motivations and emotions, rather than negative ones, may be more effective. For instance, a message about positive ways that communities can strengthen families is likely to be more readily accepted than one that emphasizes the civil and criminal consequences of child abuse and neglect. Likewise, acknowledging that parenting is difficult for everyone may help your audience identify with the need to support all parents. The following are other strategies that can assist in developing an effective message:

- ☆ Use relevant, localized statistics and figures in addition to or instead of national ones. (Many States provide State and local information about child welfare on the website for their Department of Social Services or Child and Family Services.)
- ☆ Aim to support and increase positive behaviors.
- ☆ Use “we” language when talking about social behaviors.
- ☆ Be culturally sensitive, including possibly developing the message in languages other than English.



## Sharing Your Message: Examples of Community Awareness Activities

Organizations, groups, and tribal communities not yet ready to undertake a year-round family support program like the ones described in the previous section can still do much to help raise awareness, strengthen families, and protect children. The following ideas offer some starting points for planning local community awareness activities. While some of these are specific to Child Abuse Prevention Month, most can be used at any time of year.

**Hold a Blue Ribbon Campaign.** Since 1989, millions of people across the country have participated in Blue Ribbon campaigns by wearing the ribbons and getting involved in community activities to promote safe children and healthy families. Prevent Child Abuse Virginia, a State chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, uses the blue ribbon to celebrate “Blue Ribbon Parents,” “Blue Ribbon Kids,” or “Blue Ribbon Communities” that find new and innovative ways to support families.

**Involve local faith communities.** Tips include organizing a parenting fair to educate parents about support services available in their community, holding a Family Fun Day or Parent’s Night Out, hosting a parent education or self-help group at the facility, and establishing a resource library focusing on parenting issues.

**Involve men and fathers.** The Hillsdale Child Abuse Council in Michigan kicked off its countywide “Real Men Rock” shaken baby public awareness campaign with an ad campaign showing local fathers nurturing and rocking their babies. Participants included a local emergency medical technician and a teacher.

**Involve local schools.** The Exchange Club Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse of the Trident Area, South Carolina, has developed a report card insert to show parents a positive approach to dealing with disappointing grades.

**Honor your community’s culture.** Parenting norms vary from culture to culture—be sure your techniques for supporting families are relevant. The child abuse prevention program for the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe hosted a conference called “Honor Our Children, Honor Our Heritage.” The conference included a spiritual run/walk and a pow-wow (“Honor Our Children, Drum Out Child Abuse”). Speakers from other reservations were invited to talk about child abuse prevention. (For more information on this and other prevention activities for Native American communities, see the listing for the National Indian Child Welfare Association in the resource directory on page 47.)

**Encourage community members to celebrate their own heroes.** The New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund, New Hampshire’s Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grantee, advertised the opportunity to make a contribution to the trust fund to honor a mother or someone else special to the donor. The message read, “When you make a gift to the New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund in the name of someone you love, your gift will not only honor her, but also help other women become strong, effective mothers, too.”

**Distribute educational resources for parents.** Find a number of tip sheets on positive parenting (in English and Spanish) in the “What Individuals Can Do” section of this resource packet. Many of the national organizations listed in the resource directory on page 47 also offer parenting resources.



## Sharing Your Message: Sample OpEd

Below is a sample article written for the Opinion/Editorial (OpEd) section of a local newspaper. Newspaper Op/Ed sections include articles written by experts in certain fields, offering a viewpoint on current events and hot topics.

A few points to keep in mind when adapting this OpEd or writing one of your own:

- ☆ **Choose the right “messenger.”** Consider carefully who should sign the OpEd piece. Articles like the one below are most effective when coming from a well-known, trusted member of the community. If a known individual is not an option, consider how your target audience will respond to the messenger’s profession and, if applicable, the name of his or her organization when making your decision.
- ☆ **Make it relevant.** Be sure to take into account local data, culture, and parenting norms or practices. Make sure your recommendations are realistic for your community.
- ☆ **Be aware of word count limitations.** Call the newspaper before submitting, if necessary, to ensure your OpEd is not too long.

### Community Solutions for Kids\*

*By [Your Local Messenger Here]*

Parents are children’s first teachers, but not their only teachers. Childcare providers, teachers, doctors, neighbors, coaches, and grandparents all influence children as well. The quality and stability of young children’s relationships affect virtually all aspects of their development. Children learn a lot in their early years—they learn respect for others, right from wrong, and how to get along with each other. All the people they come in contact with can help reinforce this learning and influence their long-term development.

Surround a child with secure relationships and stimulating experiences, and he will incorporate that environment to become a confident, caring adult, ready to be a part of society. But if he is surrounded by violence or given little intellectual or emotional stimulation, it will be much more difficult for him to grow up successfully. As members of the community, we should each ask ourselves: Are we providing the kind of environments that will allow children to grow into citizens who give back to communities?

Imagine coming home from the hospital with your new baby and having no family members nearby and no close ties to your neighbors. Imagine that these stresses are compounded by financial worries and a job in jeopardy. The loneliness and stress would put a strain on the most loving parent and could cause parents to neglect a child due to their own despair. Social isolation is common for new parents, often struggling to figure out how to juggle jobs and parenting. But it doesn’t have to be that way.

Some communities are working to prevent problems before they start by developing neighborhood ties that can bring people together. Some are creating playgroups for new families held at community centers, local libraries, or schools. At these groups, parents meet others who are having the same experiences, and they build relationships that can lead to long-term friendships and support. Other communities are working with health professionals to provide at-home visits to new parents to help them adjust to the new demands of parenthood and provide a link to the community. From financial assistance, to safe places for children to play, to better housing, there are many ways that communities can support families.

Children do well when their parents do well. And parents do better when they live in communities that actively support families. We can all play a positive part. Contact [your organization] to talk to some people already working in this community.

\* Adapted with permission from Prevent Child Abuse America.



## Sharing Your Message: Ideas for Talking with Others

There are many opportunities to talk about what can be done in your community to support children and families. Raising the issue over and over again is important to spur action among others in your community. Community association meetings, school functions, planned media events, or events at churches, synagogues, and mosques all provide good opportunities to share the message about promoting safe children and healthy families.

It is important to emphasize in your remarks that everyone in the community can do something to help. Remember to tailor your presentation for the format of your program, the nature of your audience, and the length of your presentation. Below are specific talking points about supporting families and preventing child abuse and neglect.

Please refer to other factsheets in this packet and those available online from the Prevention section of the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information website (<http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention>) and the organizations listed in the resource directory on page 47 to supplement these talking points.



Be one of the STARS in your community working to enhance children's safety and support families. Here are some easy suggestions for being a star:

### **S**upport children and parents in your community.

There are many things you can do to support kids and parents in your community. Be a good neighbor. Offer to babysit. Donate your children's used clothing, furniture, and toys for use by another family. Be kind and supportive, particularly to new parents. Be involved with programs and activities in your community that support children and parents. Talk to others about getting involved with such activities.

### **T**ake a positive perspective.

Whether giving a speech, developing a flier, facilitating a class, or talking one-on-one with parents, make an effort to focus on what parents and families are doing right and how they can enhance that. Seek opportunities to build on and promote positive parent-child interactions through effective communication, consistent discipline, and setting limits.

### **A**ddress the issue.

Contact your local school district and faith community to encourage them to sponsor classes and support programs for new parents. Talk with neighbors and others in the community about what they think needs to be and can be done. Call or write your candidates and elected officials to help educate them about issues in your community and the need for programs that support healthy and safe children and families.





## **Recognize that parenting can be challenging.**

Most parents have a lot of responsibilities and experience numerous stressors in their everyday lives. Stress may come from work demands, money worries, responsibilities around the home, illness, or relationship difficulties with a spouse or others. Responding to the needs of one or more children in addition to these issues can be challenging or, at times, overwhelming. It is important to try to provide assistance to parents before those difficulties become too much for them to cope with in an appropriate and healthy way.

## **Strengthen coping skills.**

Certain individual, family, and community characteristics have been shown to enhance the coping skills of parents and children and help keep children safe from abuse and neglect. Strategies that help support and protect children and families include:

- ☆ Help parents develop friendships and mutual support systems.
- ☆ Provide ways for parents to learn more about parenting issues and how to build stable, positive, and nurturing parent-child relationships.
- ☆ Suggest parents speak to their child's doctor about any concerns, frustrations, or questions regarding their child's behavior or development.
- ☆ Offer extra support to families when they need it, by addressing housing, health, or employment issues.
- ☆ Help parents develop strong and healthy coping skills.
- ☆ Help children develop social skills, positive self-images, and appropriate peer relationships.

Other ways you can be one of the STARS supporting families during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April and throughout the year:

- ☆ Encourage schools, tribal communities, and other community organizations to provide classes in parenting education for students and parents.
- ☆ Request a speaker or inservice training through the child protective services hotline.
- ☆ Provide friendship and guidance to parents and children by volunteering for mentoring programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters or Befriend-a-Child.
- ☆ Start or join community efforts that support families and prevent child abuse and neglect.
- ☆ If you are in a store or other public place and a child is in danger, offer assistance. For example, if a child has been left unattended in a shopping cart, stand by the child until the parent returns.

***Remember, supporting families and children is a shared responsibility.  
We all have a role we can play.***



**Promoting Safe Children and Healthy Families:  
What Individuals Can Do**





## Activities for Individuals to Help Build a Shared Responsibility

We all have a role to play in building strong communities where individuals, families, and children are valued and supported. All families want the same things for their children—a safe home, a good education, and a chance to succeed. Here are some things you can do as both a concerned individual and an involved community member.

### **Build a support network by getting involved in your neighborhood.**

There are many ways to create, improve, and maintain a healthy and supportive community. This can be as simple as getting to know your neighbors or as considerable as working on a community enhancement project. Some examples include:

- ☆ **Get to know your neighbors.** Develop friendly relationships with your neighbors and their children and grandchildren. Make your neighborhood your extended family. People feel better and safer, and problems seem less overwhelming, when support is nearby. It is easier to share your joys and your worries if you know your neighbors.
- ☆ **Help a family under stress.** If a family you know seems to be in crisis or under stress, offer to help—offer to babysit, help with chores and errands, or suggest resources in the community that can help the family such as faith community leaders, teachers, and doctors.
- ☆ **Reach out to children in your community.** A smile or word of encouragement can mean a lot, whether it comes from a parent or a passing stranger.
- ☆ **Get involved in a local school.** Join the parent-teacher organization and attend school events. Even if you don't have school-aged children, you can mentor a child at your local school or become a Big Brother or Big Sister.
- ☆ **Keep your neighborhood safe.** Start a Neighborhood Watch and plan a local "National Night Out" community event that brings together neighbors, local businesses, firefighters, police, and others. You can get to know each other by holding special events, and help keep your neighborhood and children safe. Visit [www.nationaltownwatch.org/nno](http://www.nationaltownwatch.org/nno).

### **Learn how your community supports children and families, and be an active community member.**

Part of building a strong community is participating in the programs that support community members. Find ways to volunteer at local schools, tribal communities, community- or faith-based organizations, health-care clinics or children's hospitals, childcare centers, or social service agencies. You can help by starting one of the programs listed below, teaching children, or helping to publicize these and other community programs and activities:

- ☆ Education programs help teach employment, budgeting, or parenting skills.
- ☆ Seminars on strengthening marriages can help promote the importance of healthy marriages in the community.
- ☆ Fatherhood programs can strengthen the roles of fathers by helping them learn parenting skills and how to become more active in their children's lives.
- ☆ Substance abuse treatment programs can help parents overcome problems with alcohol or other drugs.



- ☆ Homeless shelters can provide not only meals and beds for children and their families, but also employment training, education, childcare, and mental health services.
- ☆ Local recreation centers give children a safe place to play, as well as provide sports, classes, after-school activities, and other activities for the whole community.
- ☆ Well-baby programs provide health and education services to new parents.
- ☆ Childcare programs provide a safe place for children so their parents can maintain jobs or stay in school.
- ☆ Respite care provides relief to families during stressful times or for those with a child or other family member who is ill or has a disability.
- ☆ Advocacy centers for victims of domestic violence raise public awareness of the issue and provide services and shelter to family members affected by violence.
- ☆ Parent support groups offer a place for parents to meet and discuss parenting issues, exchange ideas, and offer support. Parent support groups provide an opportunity for parents to support each other in managing the challenges of raising children and youth.
- ☆ Tribal communities often provide family support activities through cultural events and community gatherings. Please refer to your local tribe for inclusion on their events mailing list.
- ☆ Family resource centers provide an array of preventive support services, including many of those listed above, as well as referral to other community services.

### **Prevent child abuse and neglect.**

Remember that anything you do to support kids and parents in your family, neighborhood, and community helps strengthen families and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. You also can work in more specific ways to prevent child maltreatment.

- ☆ Help local organizations or tribal communities distribute educational materials on parenting and child abuse prevention.
- ☆ Mentor parents in programs that match experienced, stable parents with parents at risk for abuse. Mentors provide support and model positive parenting skills.
- ☆ Provide friendship and guidance to parents and children who need your help by volunteering for programs such as Befriend-a-Child or Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).
- ☆ Contact your elected officials and ask them to support funding for programs and policies that support children and families.
- ☆ Make a donation to an organization that works to prevent child abuse. You can donate money or give clothing, food, or toys to a social service agency that helps families in your community.
- ☆ Start or join a community coalition to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- ☆ Learn how to recognize and report signs of child maltreatment.



# Celebrate National Family Month

National Family Month is celebrated in June. This is a good time to reflect on your family and how to make it stronger. Strong families share many of the same qualities.

## **Build Trust**

Strong families build trusting relations by following through with promises.

## **Show Commitment**

Strong families feel like a team. They share traditions like having a family picnic on the Fourth of July or taking walks together after dinner. Family members show commitment to the family by making time for family events and making sacrifices for one another.

## **Communicate**

Members of strong families talk to one another about important decisions and daily plans. They discuss feelings as well as day-to-day activities at school or work. When there are conflicts, strong families take time to cool down before responding. They don't bottle up their anger or let it get out of hand. They talk about possible solutions to problems and work together to carry out the best solution.

## **Grow Through Crises**

All families experience crises. Strong families use these experiences to learn and grow. They know even bad experiences can bring about good changes and help them to become closer. They admit problems instead of hiding them. They seek help when needed.

## **Spend Time Together**

Strong families spend time together, talking, reading, playing games, taking walks, cooking. Some special times involve closeness, like reading a good-night story and tucking children into bed with a kiss.

## **Have Fun as a Family**

Strong families know that having fun is important and make plans to have fun together. They plan family trips or parties. Strong families know that laughter is important and use humor to help reduce stress. Family members laugh with one another, not at one another.

## **Show Love and Affection**

No matter what children say or do, they need to know that their parents love them. Strong families show caring in many ways. Family members say to each other, "I love you" or "I'm happy we're in this family together." They give hugs and show affection in other small ways. They may call each other nicknames and enjoy remembering family stories.

Adapted from *Single Parenting: Building Strong Families*, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension-Family Development Fact Sheet, 4/02 ceinfo.unh.edu



## 50 Ways Family Members Can Say "I Love You"

Say, "I trust you."

Meet eyes when you speak.

Say "please" with your requests.

Say "thank you."

Speak kindly to your child.

Cheer proudly for your kid.

Keep confidence.

Discipline in private.

Let your "no" mean no.

Let your "yes" mean yes.

Ask, "Do you want to talk?"

Listen. Listen. Listen.

Be ready to be there.

Make free time.

Allow mistakes.

Laugh out loud.

Ask, "How can I help you?"

Give and respect privacy.

Welcome your child's friends.

Say, "I'm proud of you."

Set boundaries.

Give clear expectations.

Set attainable goals.

Say, "I'm sorry," and ask forgiveness  
when wrong.

Tell the truth.

Say, "I don't know" when you don't.

Smile.

Ask, "How do you feel about . . .?"

Be home when they are home.

Give freedom.

Create rules together.

State limits and consequences clearly.

Implement consequences consistently.

Acknowledge feelings.

Ask for ideas and suggestions.

Celebrate success.

Laugh when you are happy.

Cry when you are sad.

Explain why you are angry.

Accept responsibility.

Use a soft voice.

Hug often.

Catch your child being good.

Make "I love you" the last thing you say  
every night.

Say, "Good morning!" cheerfully every  
morning.

Stop what you are doing and listen.

Accept no excuses, bargaining, or whining.

Wish your child a "great day" when off  
to school.

Keep your promises.

Say "I love you."

Adapted with permission from National Family Month, KidsPeace. [www.familymonth.net](http://www.familymonth.net). [www.KidsPeace.org](http://www.KidsPeace.org)



# Child Abuse Prevention Month Calendar of Activities

Everyone can do small things every day that help children to have healthy, safe lives. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. The calendar below suggests an activity you can do each day of the month to show a child how much you care. Every activity is not necessarily developmentally appropriate for every child. So, be creative!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> Compliment a child's accomplishment.
<b>2</b> Read a book with a child.	<b>3</b> Fly a kite together.	<b>4</b> Involve a child in preparing a special meal.	<b>5</b> Catch your child doing something good.	<b>6</b> Remind your child that your love is not dependent on schoolwork.	<b>7</b> Leave a love note in your child's lunch bag.	<b>8</b> Ask your child's opinion on an issue that affects the family.
<b>9</b> Go to a playground or a park together.	<b>10</b> Coordinate a scavenger hunt around your house.	<b>11</b> Tell a child about something funny that happened to you when you were a child.	<b>12</b> Take flowers home to your spouse with a note on why you value your marriage.	<b>13</b> Bake and decorate a cake or make cookies together.	<b>14</b> Work on an art project together.	<b>15</b> Talk with a child about what to do in an emergency.
<b>16</b> Look for figures in the clouds.	<b>17</b> Give a new responsibility—and a new privilege—to your child.	<b>18</b> Practice crossing the street safely.	<b>19</b> Visit neighbors together, particularly if they have children.	<b>20</b> Donate old clothes, toys, or household items to charity together.	<b>21</b> Watch a video together.	<b>22</b> Help a child write a letter to his or her grandmother, favorite TV star, or the President.
<b>23</b> Have a picnic in the yard or the park.	<b>24</b> Choose something to count (trucks, dogs). Take a walk and keep track of how many you see.	<b>25</b> Plan an outing to a free outdoor concert or exhibit.	<b>26</b> Give your child a hug.	<b>27</b> Plant a flower or some herbs together.	<b>28</b> Go to a ball game together.	<b>29</b> Do a puzzle together.
<b>30</b> Tell your child that you love him or her.						





## Tips for Being a Nurturing Parent

A healthy, nurturing relationship with your child is built through countless interactions over the course of time. It requires a lot of energy and work, but the rewards are well worth it. When it comes to parenting, there are few absolutes (one, of course, being that every child needs to be loved) and there is no one “right way.” Different parenting techniques work for different children under different circumstances. These tips provide suggestions as you discover what works best in your family. Do not expect to be perfect; parenting is a difficult job.

### Help Your Children Feel Loved and Secure

We can all take steps to strengthen our relationships with our children, including:

- ☆ Make sure your children know you love them, even when they do something wrong.
- ☆ Encourage your children. Praise their achievements and talents. Recognize the skills they are developing.
- ☆ Spend time with your children. Do things together that you both enjoy. Listen to your children.
- ☆ Learn how to use nonphysical options for discipline. Many alternatives exist. Depending on your child’s age and level of development, these may include simply redirecting your child’s attention, offering choices, or using “time out.”

### Realize that Community Resources Add Value

Children need direct and continuing access to people with whom they can develop healthy, supportive relationships. To assist this, parents may:

- ☆ Take children to libraries, museums, movies, and sporting events.
- ☆ Enroll children in youth enrichment programs, such as sports or music.
- ☆ Use community services for family needs, such as parent education classes or respite care.
- ☆ Communicate regularly with childcare or school staff.
- ☆ Participate in religious or youth groups.

### Seek Help If You Need It

Being a parent is difficult. No one expects you to know how to do it all. Challenges such as unemployment or a child with special needs can add to family tension. If you think stress may be affecting the way you treat your child, or if you just want the extra support that most parents need at some point, try the following:

- ☆ **Talk to someone.** Tell a friend, healthcare provider, or a leader in your faith community about what you are experiencing. Or, join a support group for parents. (See Circle of Parents™ and Parents Anonymous® Inc. in the resource directory on page 47 to locate a group near you.)
- ☆ **Seek respite care when you need a break.** Everyone needs time for themselves. Respite care or crisis care provides a safe place for your children so you can take care of yourself.
- ☆ **Call a helpline.** Most States have helplines for parents. Childhelp USA® offers a national 24-hour hotline (1-800-4-A-CHILD) for parents who need help or parenting advice.
- ☆ **Seek counseling.** Individual, couple, or family counseling can identify and reinforce healthy ways to communicate and parent.
- ☆ **Take a parenting class.** No one is born knowing how to be a good parent. It is an acquired skill. Parenting classes can give you the skills you need to raise a happy, healthy child.
- ☆ **Accept help. You do not have to do it all.** Accept offers of help from trusted family, friends, and neighbors. Do not be afraid to ask for help if you feel that you need it.



# Understanding Your Child's Behavior

All parents struggle with some of the things their children do. While there is no magic formula that will work in all situations, it is helpful to understand the kinds of issues that impact a child's behavior. If you understand these issues and know what to expect at different developmental stages, your reactions will be wiser and it will be easier to create an environment that supports and nurtures your child.

When your child's behavior is troubling, ask yourself:

## 1. Is this a growth or developmental stage?

Each new phase of growth or development brings challenges for the child and the child's caregivers. For example, growing independence in the child's second year is often accompanied by challenging behavior (such as the "No!" phase). Feeding and sleeping problems may occur during developmental transitions, and it helps if caregivers are extra patient and loving in their responses. It's best to give the child choices, use humor, and be firm but supportive.

## 2. Is this an individual or temperament difference?

Not all children of a certain age act the same way. Some progress developmentally at different rates, and all have their own temperaments that may account for differences in behavior. Being aware of a child's tendency to be shy, moody, adaptable, or inflexible will help you better understand the child's behavior in a specific situation and impact the way you approach the behavior.

## 3. Is the environment causing the behavior?

Sometimes the setting provokes a behavior that may seem inappropriate. An overcrowded living or childcare arrangement coupled with a lack of toys can increase aggression or spark jealousy. Look around your home to evaluate it in light of your child's behaviors and see the environment from a child's viewpoint.

## 4. Does the child know what is expected?

If a child is in a new or unfamiliar territory or is facing a new task or problem, he or she may not know what behavior is appropriate and expected. Perhaps this is the first time a two-year-old without siblings has been asked to share a toy. Developmentally he does not truly understand the concept of sharing, so it is up to the parent to explain calmly how other children will react. Patience and repeating the message over and over again are necessary as children rarely learn or master a new response on the first try.

## 5. Is the child expressing unmet emotional needs?

Emotional needs that are unmet are the most difficult cause of behavior to interpret. If a particular child needs extra love and attention, rather than withhold that from her, it will be helpful to find ways to validate and acknowledge the child more frequently.

Adapted from *Understanding Behavior: A Key to Discipline*, National Association for the Education of Young Children and Judy Reinsberg, July 1999.



## Soothing a Crying Infant

One of the most stressful experiences for new parents is dealing with a crying baby. Babies cry for all sorts of reasons, and it's sometimes difficult to figure out why your baby is crying and how to soothe your baby. It's important to remember that crying is one of the main ways that babies communicate, and their crying can mean lots of different things. With a new baby, it may be difficult to distinguish different types of crying; as babies get older, parents may be able to tell "wet-diaper" crying from "I'm hungry" crying.

### Here are some things to check for in a crying baby:

- ☆ Is the baby sick? Take the baby's temperature, and call a health care provider if there is a fever or if you're not sure about any other symptoms. If your baby cries for hours at a time, be sure to have him or her checked out by a pediatrician.
- ☆ Is the baby hungry? Try feeding the baby. Newborns like to eat frequently. Even if the baby isn't hungry, he or she may respond to sucking on a pacifier.
- ☆ Is the diaper wet or dirty? This is a common cause for crying.
- ☆ Is the room too hot or cold, or is the baby overdressed or underdressed?
- ☆ Is the baby lonely or afraid? Try holding the baby and comforting him or her.
- ☆ Is the baby overstimulated? Try turning down the lights and the noise level.

**Calming the baby.** Often, a parent has made sure that the problem is not hunger or sickness or a wet diaper—but the baby is still crying! What are some other ways to calm a crying baby?

- ☆ Swaddle the baby in a soft blanket and hold the baby next to you.
- ☆ Sing or hum to the baby.
- ☆ Rock the baby in a chair or swing, or gently sway your body while holding the baby close.
- ☆ Take the baby for a ride in the stroller or car. Motion often puts a baby to sleep.
- ☆ Distract the baby by making faces or quiet noises.
- ☆ Give the baby a warm bath to relax him or her.
- ☆ Use some "white noise" such as running a vacuum cleaner or hair dryer to help lull the baby to sleep.

**Calming yourself.** There are few things more stressful than a crying baby. It is normal for babies to cry—sometimes as much as 2 to 4 hours a day—and sometimes nothing parents try to soothe the baby will work. Coupled with a parent's own lack of sleep and the general adjustment to having a new baby in the house, a crying baby can seem overwhelming. There are some things parents can do to maintain control over the situation, even when the baby continues to cry.

- ☆ Take a break. Put the baby safely in a crib, and take a few minutes for yourself in another room.
- ☆ Call a friend or relative who will listen to your problem and be sympathetic.
- ☆ Ask a trusted friend or neighbor to watch your child while you take a short break or a brief nap.
- ☆ If you feel as though you are losing control and might hurt your child, call a hotline, such as the 24-hour National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-4-A-CHILD) offered by Childhelp USA®.

It's normal for babies to cry sometimes, and it's certainly normal for parents to feel frustrated by the crying. Different babies respond to different soothing techniques, and parents will eventually learn what works best with their baby. In the meantime, it's helpful for new parents to have some support in the form of friends, relatives, and neighbors who can lend a sympathetic ear or even some babysitting help!

For more information about soothing infant crying, visit the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome website at [www.dontshake.com](http://www.dontshake.com).



## Surviving Toilet Training

Most children are ready for toilet training sometime between their second and third birthdays. This is the same time that they are experiencing what many parents call “the terrible two’s”—a time when the children are having their first experiences with the word “No!” and with exerting their own will and making their own opinions known. As wonderful and funny as two-year-olds can be, their willfulness and independence can make toilet training a real trial for their parents.

What can parents do to survive toilet training? The first thing is to realize that everyone becomes toilet trained eventually! Your child will, too. The second thing to remember is that toilet training does not occur at the same time for every child. Your child will be ready when he or she is developmentally ready, and this may be different than the child next door or your child’s brother or sister. If you try to pressure your child into toilet training before he or she is ready, this could result in a stressful situation for both of you.

### What are some signs that a child is ready for toilet training?

- ☆ An interest in wearing underpants instead of diapers
- ☆ The ability to stay dry for several hours at a stretch
- ☆ An interest in being clean and dry
- ☆ The ability to undress and dress oneself

**What are some tips for making toilet training easier?** Remember that you are dealing with a two- or three-year-old who likes to believe that he or she is controlling the situation. It is better to let the child have some choices. Parents generally have better success when they are not forcing the toilet training. The following are some tips for easing the stress of toilet training:

- ☆ Let the child choose some of the equipment he or she will need, for instance, underpants, a potty seat, a book or video about toilet training.
- ☆ Make full use of those props—the books or videos or dolls that drink and wet.
- ☆ Make it easy for your child by having potties that are readily accessible.
- ☆ While you can suggest that your child may want to try the toilet, it is difficult to force the child to actually use it.
- ☆ Aim for consistency in toilet training among caregivers, for instance, with your daycare provider or babysitter.
- ☆ When you are out, be especially patient. You will soon learn where the closest restroom is in every grocery store, restaurant, and mall.

**Expect mistakes!** Toilet training generally takes several weeks or more for the child who is ready. If it is taking longer, maybe your child isn’t yet ready, and you should try again in a few weeks. Even for the child who is making progress, there will be plenty of mistakes. Be prepared to accept them with good humor and to appreciate that this is just part of normal toilet training. Reward your child with praise and congratulations when he or she uses the potty, and be sympathetic when there are mistakes. (Children who are punished for toileting mistakes may end up becoming more resistant to using the toilet altogether.) Finally, congratulate yourself on your patience, and celebrate with your child when you make it through the first “dry” day.

For more information about toilet training and other child development topics, visit the websites for the American Academy of Pediatrics ([www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)) or the National Association for the Education of Young Children ([www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)).



## “Healthy Dozen” List for Toddlers

As part of “The Year of the Healthy Child,” U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., outlined a dozen tips to help keep toddlers safe and healthy. Excerpts from these are below. For the full text, go to [www.surgeongeneral.gov/pressreleases/sg05192005.html](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/pressreleases/sg05192005.html).

1. **Teach healthy eating.** Provide three nutritious meals supplemented with two to three healthy snacks daily. Feed toddlers at the same time as other family members and allow them to grow into feeding themselves. Offer children nutritious foods and let them decide how much to eat. Avoid foods and drinks that are high in sugar.
2. **Begin a habit of good oral health.** Brush your child’s teeth twice a day with a soft toothbrush. Begin brushing for your child when his or her teeth first appear and continue until age 3 or 4 when you can start teaching your child how to brush.
3. **Don’t smoke.** And don’t allow anyone else to smoke around your child. Second-hand smoke can have a harmful effect on your child’s breathing and can have long-term respiratory consequences like impaired lung growth, chronic coughing, and wheezing. Diseases of the respiratory system (aggravated by second-hand smoke) are the leading causes of child hospitalization and one of the leading causes of toddler doctor visits.
4. **Give positive feedback.** Praise good behavior and accomplishments. This begins to ensure a healthy bond between parent and child. Also, make sure that your child’s caregiver agrees with your point of view.
5. **Always use a car safety seat.** Be sure your child rides in an age- and weight-appropriate child safety seat, correctly installed in the back seat, on every trip.
6. **Safety-proof your house.** To prevent accidental poisoning, move all medications and cleaning products to high shelves. To prevent burns, set the temperature of your hot water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. To prevent choking, be sure that any toys your child plays with do not have parts that are small enough to choke on. Do not give toddlers under age 2 foods that may cause choking, like hard candy, large pieces of raw vegetable or fruit, or tough meat. To prevent drowning, install a toilet lid lock on every toilet in the home.
7. **Never leave your toddler unattended.** As a child grows, so does his or her natural curiosity to explore. It takes a few seconds for a toddler to get into a dangerous situation.
8. **Make sure your child has a primary health provider.** Make sure that your child has a primary health provider, such as a pediatrician or family practitioner, who knows your child before your child has an illness, injury, or developmental delay that requires medical care.
9. **Fully immunize your child.** Make sure your child gets all immunizations on time.
10. **Learn child first aid and CPR.** Be prepared. Know how to call for help, including poison control. The national toll-free line for poison control is 1-800-222-1222.
11. **Practice prevention and safety.** Teach your child safety tips, including always swimming with a buddy and wearing a bicycle helmet. Be sure your older toddler knows his or her name, parents’ names, and phone number. Get your child’s fingerprints taken and keep a recent photograph.
12. **Have fun.** Hug, talk, read, explore, and play together. All parents sometimes feel overwhelmed as they tackle the challenges of parenting. If you feel so stressed that you feel unable to cope with the demands of parenting, get help.

For more information on “The Year of the Healthy Child” visit [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).



## Dealing with Temper Tantrums

Almost every parent of a toddler has experienced the frustration of dealing with a child throwing a floor-thumping, hair-pulling temper tantrum. Even though this can be embarrassing and challenging for parents, this is normal behavior for most young children.

**Why do they do it?** Toddlers are not yet able to use words to express their feelings and emotions. When they are tired, frustrated, or angry and unable to express themselves with words, they may throw a temper tantrum. Some children throw tantrums because their emotions run out of control, and they aren't yet old enough to know how to contain them. Finally, some children continue to throw tantrums if they are rewarded for doing so (that is, if they learn that parents will give them what they want to stop the tantrum).

**How can parents prevent tantrums?** It is often easier to prevent tantrums than to deal with them once they have begun. Parents may notice some signals that children give as a warning that a tantrum may be brewing. If a parent suspects that a tantrum is coming or if a child gets in the habit of having a tantrum after a particular experience or at a particular time of day, here are some prevention tips to keep in mind:

- ☆ Distract or redirect your child's attention to something else.
- ☆ Use a sense of humor to distract your child. This may help you cope, too.
- ☆ Give your child control over small things by giving him or her a choice.
- ☆ Take your child to a quiet place and speak softly to him or her.
- ☆ Encourage your child to express emotions and feelings with words.
- ☆ Stick to a daily routine that gives your child enough rest and enough activity.
- ☆ Reward your child when he or she requests something without having a tantrum.

**How can parents deal with tantrums, especially public temper tantrums?** Parents can be caught off guard when a child throws a tantrum in public. It can be embarrassing, and parents may be tempted to give in to the child just to stop the tantrum. But giving in just teaches the child that "tantrums work." Instead, try some of the following tips to deal with tantrums that happen in the home or in public:

- ☆ Remain calm. Don't lose control because your child has lost control. Instead, try to model behavior that is calm and controlled.
- ☆ Hugging or holding your child until the tantrum subsides may help a younger child through a tantrum.
- ☆ Put the child in "time out" or in a quiet place (even strapped in to a stroller) where he or she can calm down. Time out should be one minute for each year of the child's age.
- ☆ Older children who throw tantrums may be seeking attention. Try ignoring them until the tantrum is over.

**What can parents do after the tantrum?** As children get older, they will grow out of temper tantrums! In the meantime, try to take some time and talk over the experience with your child after it happens. Helping your child identify and talk about feelings will help your child to express feelings with words rather than with tantrums. Finally, congratulate yourself for getting through your child's tantrum while remaining calm. A calm parent provides a child with a great behavior model for the child to follow.

For more information about dealing with temper tantrums and other parenting resources, visit the Circle of Parents website ([www.circleofparents.org](http://www.circleofparents.org)).



# Time Out

## **“Time Out” can be a valuable tool in disciplining a child.**

As we go about the business of teaching our children proper behavior, there are times when emotions threaten to get out of control. When this happens, it’s wise to separate yourself from your child so that you can both cool off. Time Out can be used as an effective, positive tool. There are three different ways to use Time Out, each having a different purpose.

### **1. To give the child time and space to cool off and calm down.**

The key here is in the attitude of the parent. In advance, let your child know that when her behavior is out of control she’ll be asked to go to her room. Tell her that when she is calm and under control she may join the family. How she chooses to use the time is her business, as long as it’s respectful of people and property. Screaming or pounding on the door is not acceptable, but reading a book or other activities are fine. This is a valuable life skill that will prevent your child from “flying off the handle” and saying and doing things she might regret later.

Never drag a child to his Time Out. This robs you of the upper hand and makes you look foolish. Let him know in advance that when asked to remove himself he needs to do so immediately. If he does not, he’ll be choosing to give up a privilege (one you have specified in advance), in addition to Time Out.

### **2. To give the parent time and space to cool off and calm down.**

There are times when we get so angry at our children that we want to scream, hit, or ground them for life! This is the time to use a four-letter-word: E X I T. Make a brief statement, “I’m so angry, I need a minute to think.” Then go to your room or send the child to his room so that you can calm down and regroup. This will help you get yourself under control, and it provides good modeling for your children.

### **3. As a method for stopping a specific misbehavior.**

This can be an excellent way to put an immediate stop to a child’s action. It brings a strong message, “This behavior is unacceptable and it will stop now.” There are several keys:

- ☆ **Be quick.** Catch your child in the act. Delayed reactions dilute the effect.
- ☆ **Use selectively.** Use for hitting, talking back, and whining, or other specific problems. Don’t overuse.
- ☆ **Keep calm.** Your anger only adds fuel to the fire and changes the focus from the behavior of the child to your anger. This prevents you from being in control.
- ☆ **Stick with it.** Once you say, “Time Out,” don’t back down or be talked out of it. If you decide to use Time Out to control hitting, for example, use it every time your child hits, even if he spends most of the day in Time Out! Eventually, he’ll decide that it’s more fun to play without hitting than to sit alone in his room.

Time Out is one more effective discipline tool for parents. When used with other positive parenting methods it helps you feel good about the job you are doing with your kids.

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *Kid Cooperation and Perfect Parenting*. © 2002. Elizabeth Pantley, [www.pantley.com/elizabeth](http://www.pantley.com/elizabeth).



## The Power of Choice

Would you like to get your kids to cooperate willingly? Stop the daily battles? Teach your kids valuable life skills? If your answer is “Yes! Yes! Yes!” then read on...

There are so many things we must get our children to do and so many things we must stop them from doing! Get up. Get dressed. Don't dawdle. Do your homework. Eat. It goes on and on. We can get our kids to cooperate and at the same time allow them to learn self-discipline and develop good decision-making skills. How? By offering choices.

### **Giving a choice is a very powerful tool that can be used with children who are toddlers and children who are teenagers.**

This is one skill that every parent should have tattooed on the back of his or her hand as a constant reminder. Parents should use this skill every day, many times a day. Giving children choices is a very effective way to enlist their cooperation because children love having the privilege of choice. It takes the pressure out of your request and allows a child to feel in control. This makes a child more willing to comply.

Using choice is an effective way to achieve results, and when you get in the habit of offering choices you are doing your children a big favor. As children learn to make simple choices—Milk or juice?—they get the practice required to make bigger choices—Buy two class T-shirts or one sweatshirt?—which gives them the ability as they grow to make more important decisions—Save or spend? Drink beer or soda? Study or fail? Giving children choices allows them to learn to listen to their inner voice. It is a valuable skill that they will carry with them to adulthood.

### **You should offer choices based on your child's age and your intent.**

A toddler can handle two choices, a grade-school child three or four. A teenager can be given general guidelines. Only offer choices that will be acceptable to you. Otherwise, you are not being fair. For example, a parent might say, “Either eat your peas or go to your room,” but when the child gets up off his chair, the parent yells, “Sit down and eat your dinner, young man!” (So that wasn't really a choice, was it?) Here are some ways in which you can use choice:

- ☆ Do you want to wear your Big Bird pajamas or your Mickey Mouse pajamas?
- ☆ Do you want to do your homework at the kitchen table or the desk?
- ☆ Do you want to wear your coat, carry it, or put on a sweatshirt?
- ☆ Would you prefer to let the dog out in the yard or take him for a walk?
- ☆ Do you want to run up to bed or hop like a bunny?
- ☆ What do you want to do first, take out the trash or dry the dishes?
- ☆ Do you want to watch 5 more minutes of TV or 10?

### **A typical problem with choices is the child who makes up his own choice!**

For example, “Taylor, do you want to put on your pajamas first, or brush your teeth?” To which little Taylor answers, “I want to watch TV.” What to do? Just smile sweetly and say, “That wasn't one of the choices. What do you want to do first, put on your pajamas or brush your teeth?”

If your child is still reluctant to choose from the options that you offer, then simply ask, “Would you like to choose or shall I choose for you?” If an appropriate answer is not forthcoming then you can say, “I see that you want me to choose for you.” Then follow through. Make your choice and help your child—by leading or carrying him—so that he can cooperate.

Excerpted with permission by New Harbinger Publications, Inc. ([www.newharbinger.com](http://www.newharbinger.com)) from *Kid Cooperation: How to Stop Yelling, Nagging and Pleading and Get Kids to Cooperate* by Elizabeth Pantley ([www.pantley.com/elizabeth](http://www.pantley.com/elizabeth), copyright 1996).





# Winning the Chore War

"How many times do I have to remind you to take out the trash?" Sound familiar? Household jobs are a part of every family's daily life, yet they tend to create ongoing conflict. Give yourself a pat on the back if you assign your kids chores. It's an important way kids learn responsibility. Even children as young as two years can help out around the house. Here are a few pointers for making the process easier on everybody.

**Have a plan.** Kids thrive on routine. It's best if they have routine chores that they do at regular times. For instance, clearing the table is done right after eating. Trash is taken out immediately after the kitchen is cleaned up. The bed is made right after dressing. The more you develop these routines, the less reminding you will have to do. When you do have to remind your child, it can be a brief statement, such as "Trash Time." With more than one child you can rotate chores, but keep in mind it will take extra effort to develop new routines. Visual reminders help kids stay on track. A poster, chart, or job board can help kids stay focused.

**Train and encourage.** Use a four-step process when introducing a new job. First, you do the job, narrating as you work, while the child watches. Next, do the job together. Third, the child does the job while you watch, coach, and encourage. Fourth, the child is ready to go it alone. If you eliminate training then you open the door for battles since you will both be operating under different expectations.

**Follow through.** Once you decide on a plan, do your best to stick to it every day. If you allow excuses and delays then you'll find yourself fighting with your child. If you have a kid who fights the routine, establish a consequence for failure to complete chores and follow through without anger or threats.

**Who does what?** Here's a list of ideas to get you thinking about what your kids are capable of doing. Don't underestimate your children! The same child who runs a complicated computer game can certainly manage the washer and dryer!

## Ages 2-3

- ☆ *Put away toys*
- ☆ *Help set table*

## Ages 4-5

- ☆ *Get the mail*
- ☆ *Help with yard work*
- ☆ *Feed pets*

## Ages 6-7

- ☆ *Clear table after meals*
- ☆ *Pour own drinks and get snacks*
- ☆ *Empty wastebaskets*

## Ages 8-9

- ☆ *Sweep or mop floor*
- ☆ *Load and run dishwasher*
- ☆ *Run/take own bath*

## Ages 10-11

- ☆ *Help prepare dinner*
- ☆ *Mow lawn*
- ☆ *Clean kitchen*

## Ages 12-14

- ☆ *Grocery shop (small list)*
- ☆ *Prepare a dinner meal*
- ☆ *Clean bathrooms*

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *Kid Cooperation and Perfect Parenting* © 2002. Elizabeth Pantley, [www.pantley.com/elizabeth](http://www.pantley.com/elizabeth)



## Sibling Rivalry

The word "sibling" refers to brothers and sisters, and "sibling rivalry" means the competitive feelings and actions that often occur among children in a family. There are things that you can do to try to reduce sibling rivalry.

- ☆ Treat each child as an individual. Help children understand that they are treated differently by you and have different privileges and responsibilities because they are different individuals.
- ☆ Respect each child's space, toys, and time when he wants to be alone, away from his sibling.
- ☆ Avoid labeling or comparing one child to the other. This feeds into their competitiveness.
- ☆ When a new child comes into the family, prepare the older sibling for her new important role. Make her feel like it's her baby, too.
- ☆ Play detective. Watch and note when siblings are not getting along (before dinner, in the car, before bed) and plan separate quiet activities for those times.
- ☆ Watch how you treat each child to see if you are contributing to the rivalry. Make sure you are not playing favorites.
- ☆ Have realistic expectations of how they should get along, cooperate, share, and like each other.
- ☆ Positively reinforce them when they are getting along or when they solve their own conflicts.
- ☆ Make each child feel special and important. Try to spend one-on-one time with each child every day.
- ☆ Take time out for yourself to re-energize. Remember, sibling rivalry is a normal and expected part of family life.

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *Kid Cooperation and Perfect Parenting* © 2002. Elizabeth Pantley, [www.pantley.com/elizabeth](http://www.pantley.com/elizabeth).



## Setting Rules and Consequences with Teens

Rules and consequences are critical to negotiating your way through the teen years. Both the rules and the consequences may change as your teen's needs (and desires) develop. It helps to ask yourself some questions about your rules periodically.

### General questions to ask about rules:

- ☆ Are they reasonable?
- ☆ Have the reasons for the rules been explained thoroughly?
- ☆ Are there too many?
- ☆ Are they enforceable?
- ☆ Has my teen been involved in making any of the rules?
- ☆ Are they consistent with other parents' (you respect) rules?
- ☆ Whose needs are the rules designed to meet?

Depending on the answers to these questions and what you've decided is your bottom line, you may be able to negotiate a relaxation of these rules, as your teen is more able to make mature decisions. Or you may find that the rules are entirely unenforceable, meaning either that you need to make changes in your life in order to enforce them or you need to give them up. For example, you may decide that you should arrange your schedule to allow being home more of the time, or simply that you need to be more aware when you are at home. Remember, no matter how reasonable the rules are, it is normal for teens to challenge them. This means that you need to be prepared to impose consequences.

### Consequences need to meet certain conditions in order to be effective. They should:

- ☆ Be related to the behavior so they make sense. (Being grounded for every infraction doesn't allow connection to a specific behavior, but if your teen damages someone else's property, part of the consequence might be to help pay for the damage.)
- ☆ Teach your teen how to express feelings and desires in acceptable ways. (You don't damage other people's property just because you're angry; anger can be expressed with words.)
- ☆ Not be so severe or unenforceable that there is no hope of compliance. (Being grounded for six months will contribute to noncompliance.)
- ☆ Be useful in changing behavior. They need to be unpleasant enough that your teen doesn't want to repeat the consequence. They should not include things that you want your child to learn to enjoy, like going to Grandma's for a weekend.
- ☆ Teach self-control. (Help your teen see the benefits of more freedom, less control, or something tangible like driving.)

### What kinds of consequences might be useful with your teen?

The answer to this varies, depending on your values and the personality, intensity, and interests of your teen. Sometimes he or she can help you find workable consequences. However, be careful because children will sometimes be harsher on themselves than you might think necessary. The goal is to prevent unacceptable behavior and teach your teen to make mature decisions. Think through consequences in advance and take time to manage your own anger or frustration before talking to your teen.

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *Kid Cooperation and Perfect Parenting* ©2002.Elizabeth Pantley, [www.pantley.com/elizabeth](http://www.pantley.com/elizabeth).



## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Are you a grandparent who has given up your retirement or your own plans in order to take on the diapers, daycare, teacher conferences, driver's ed, and everything else that comes along with raising children? Many grandparents today are stepping in to raise their grandchildren when the children's own parents are not able or willing to do so. In fact, the U.S. Census of 2000 found that over 2.4 million grandparents have responsibility for their grandchildren.

If you are one of these grandparents, you have made numerous sacrifices in order to provide a better life for your grandchildren. What are some things you can do now to provide the best possible care for your grandchildren while still preserving your own health and well-being?

**Making the adjustment.** Often, grandparents take on this obligation when the grandchildren's own parents abandon them or when the children can no longer live with them because of the parent's mental disorder, substance abuse, or incarceration. Thus, you may have the added burden of caring for children who suffered from abuse or neglect from their own parents. These children may feel insecure and afraid; they may be angry at their situation and even embarrassed by it. It will take time for these children to feel safe and secure. You can encourage these good feelings and ease their adjustment to their new home in a number of ways:

- ☆ Set up a daily routine of mealtimes, bedtime, and other activities so that the children have some predictability in their lives.
- ☆ Help your grandchildren to feel that they are "home" by making room for them and their belongings. Your home needs to be welcoming, safe, and child-friendly.
- ☆ Work on communication skills. Talk to your grandchildren, and make sure that the children know that they can always talk to you.
- ☆ Practice positive discipline that emphasizes education, not punishment, and that rewards good behavior with praise.
- ☆ Set up a few rules, and explain the rules to the children. Then, enforce them consistently.

**Finding shared activities.** Building new relationships can be difficult. Sometimes, it helps to find things that you can do with your grandchildren to nurture your relationship and to make them feel secure and happy in their new home.

- ☆ Read. Children love to hear stories, and even older children may surprise you by sitting quietly as you read aloud. Children who see you read have a better chance of becoming readers themselves.
- ☆ Get computer savvy. If you don't have your own computer, use the one at the public library. The library may have classes or other free help for you. You'll find lots of things that you and your grandchildren can do on the computer, from games to school research.
- ☆ Join a group. There are many local support groups for grandparents raising grandchildren, and a number of these groups also provide activities for the children. You might also find welcoming groups at your place of worship or in the local schools or library.
- ☆ Take up a sport or other outdoor activity. Children of all ages need to be active. Physical activity may help your grandchildren feel better and develop a healthy lifestyle, and it can be an important stress reliever for you.



**Taking care of yourself.** If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, and unhappy, you are not going to be able to provide the best care for your grandchildren. It's important that you take care of yourself and not allow yourself to be overwhelmed by your parental responsibilities. Here are some suggestions:

- ☆ Find a support group—either a group specifically for grandparents raising grandchildren or some other support group where you can share your challenges with others who will understand.
- ☆ Talk to someone. This could be a friend or relative or a professional, such as a counselor, family doctor, or someone at your church or temple. Unburdening yourself can be a stress reliever.
- ☆ Take a break. A short time away from your grandchildren may give you some time to relax. Look for a trusted adult who can babysit or take over while you're out.
- ☆ Take a parenting class. A class may help you to feel more comfortable with your status as a caregiver for young children. It will also provide resources in the form of your teacher and the other students in the class.
- ☆ Learn to say "no." You don't have time to do everything. Learn to make priorities, and eliminate the unnecessary tasks in your life.

**Finding resources.** There is lots of useful free information for grandparents. Much of it is available on the Internet. If your computer skills are a little rusty, you can find help at your public library. Here are some places to start:

- ☆ **AARP** runs a Grandparent Information Center, where you can sign up for their newsletter, check their message board, and search for a local support group ([www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/gic](http://www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/gic)).
- ☆ **Generations United** runs their own National Center on Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children, which offers information and resources ([www.gu.org/projg&o.htm](http://www.gu.org/projg&o.htm)).
- ☆ **The University of Wisconsin Extension** produced a series of factsheets titled *Through the Eyes of a Child—Grandparents Raising Grandchildren* ([www.uwex.edu/relationships/](http://www.uwex.edu/relationships/)).
- ☆ **The University of Georgia College of Family and Consumer Sciences** has a website that carries links to all kinds of factsheets on child development, including easy-to-understand factsheets for grandparents raising grandchildren. Go to [www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/cyf\\_pubs.php](http://www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/cyf_pubs.php) and scroll down about halfway to find the grandparent factsheets.
- ☆ For help **in your particular State**, there is a series of factsheets that have been produced by a national partnership among the Children's Defense Fund, AARP, Casey Family Programs, National Center for Resource Family Support, Brookdale Foundation, Child Welfare League of America, Generations United, the Urban Institute, and Johnson & Hedgpeth Consultants. Go to [www.childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/kinshipcare/factsheets/default.aspx](http://www.childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/kinshipcare/factsheets/default.aspx).



## 10 Little Things That Can Make a Big Difference in Your Marriage

A strong, supportive relationship is built from a couple's words and actions. With work, children, and other responsibilities, sometimes it is easy to take your spouse for granted or forget to do the things that strengthen the marriage. Here are some little things to do that can have a big payoff for your marriage.

1. **Give your spouse a compliment.** Better yet, brag about your spouse to others when your spouse is in earshot. It will boost self-confidence, and your spouse will want to continue making you happy and proud.
2. **Find something to laugh about.** Laughter helps us cope with stress and the pressures of our busy lives. A sense of humor helps marriages survive problems, large and small.
3. **Have a shared activity both of you enjoy.** It can be anything from going out to dinner, dancing, or gardening. You may need to make time to do things together, but this is a great way of keeping intimacy alive and well.
4. **Treat your spouse the way you want to be treated.** Be respectful if you want to be respected. This approach helps establish the fact that both parties have a responsibility in the marriage.
5. **Take time to touch.** The value of human touch is amazing. Eight to ten meaningful touches a day help you maintain physical and emotional health.
6. **Be willing to compromise.** Give up some of your wants for the sake of what your spouse wants. Identify the situation as a compromise to avoid having unresolved anger or resentment later.
7. **Give a smile.** An easy but powerful way to value your spouse is to smile and tell your spouse how you feel.
8. **Discuss the things that bother you.** Letting things build up day after day without discussing and resolving them leads to anger and resentment that hurt your marriage. The more quickly something can be addressed and taken care of, the more time you will have for the enjoyable and healthy parts of your relationship.
9. **Communication is key.** Without communication, any team is in trouble. It is important to communicate your thoughts, plans, ideas, and opinions on a consistent basis. Equally important is communicating your feelings—the joys, sorrows, and frustrations we all experience.
10. **Chart your course.** Charting a course establishes a shared vision for your marriage. It also can be useful to establish some markers to ensure you are moving toward your goals.

For more information about strengthening marriages and families, visit the websites of the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education ([www.smartmarriages.com](http://www.smartmarriages.com)) or the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative ([www.okmarriage.org](http://www.okmarriage.org)).





**When Children Are Not Safe:  
Child Abuse and Neglect**







## An Issue Facing All Communities: The National Scope of the Problem

### How many children are abused and neglected in the United States?

Each week, child protective services (CPS) agencies throughout the United States receive more than 50,000 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. In Federal fiscal year 2003, an estimated 2.9 million reports concerning the welfare of approximately 5.5 million children were made.

In approximately two-thirds (68 percent) of these cases, the information provided in the report was sufficient to prompt an assessment or investigation. As a result of these investigations, approximately 906,000 children were found to have been victims of abuse or neglect.

More than 60 percent of victims were neglected, meaning a caretaker failed to provide for the child's basic needs. Fewer victims experienced physical abuse (nearly 20 percent) or sexual abuse (10 percent), though these cases are typically more likely to be publicized. The smallest number (5 percent) were found to be victims of emotional abuse, which includes criticizing, rejecting, or refusing to nurture a child.

An average of four children die every day as a result of child abuse or neglect (an estimated 1,500 children in 2003).

### Who is more likely to be abused or neglected?

No group of children is immune. In 2003, girls were slightly more likely to be victims (52 percent) than boys (48 percent).

Children of all races and ethnicities experience child abuse. However, Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, and African-American children had the highest rates of victimization when compared to their national population. While the rate of White victims of child abuse or neglect was 11 per 1,000 children of the same race, the rate for Pacific Islanders was 21 per 1,000 children, the rate for American Indian or Alaska Natives was 21 per 1,000 children, and the rate for African-Americans was 20 per 1,000 children.

Children of all ages experience abuse and neglect, but the youngest children are most vulnerable and are most likely to die from maltreatment. Children younger than 1 year old accounted for 44 percent of all abuse-related deaths reported in 2003; more than three-quarters (79 percent) of those killed were younger than 4.

### Who reports child abuse and neglect?

In 2003, more than one-half (57 percent) of all reports made to CPS agencies came from professionals who came in contact with the child. Teachers (16 percent of all reports); legal, law enforcement, and criminal justice personnel (16 percent); social services workers (12 percent); and medical personnel (8 percent) were the most frequent sources of reports in 2003. Many people in these professions are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect.

However, a significant proportion of reports (approximately 43 percent) came from nonprofessional sources, such as parents, other relatives, friends, and neighbors. Anonymous sources accounted for 9 percent of all reports in 2003. It is important for everyone to know the signs that may indicate maltreatment and how to report it. We all share a responsibility to help keep children safe as we take steps to prevent abuse from occurring in the first place. For more information about recognizing child abuse and neglect, see *Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect: Signs and Symptoms* on the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information website at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm>.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2005). *Child Maltreatment 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Available online at [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm03/index.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm03/index.htm) or by calling the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information at (800) 394-3366. Statistics in *Child Maltreatment 2003* primarily refer to cases of harm to a child caused by parents or other caretakers; they generally do not include harm caused by other people, such as acquaintances or strangers.



# Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect

The impact of child abuse and neglect is far greater than its immediate, visible effects. These experiences can shape child development and have consequences that last years, even lifetimes. Research now shows that the physical, psychological, and behavioral consequences of child abuse and neglect impact not just the child and family, but the community as a whole.

## Physical Consequences

The immediate physical effects of abuse can range from relatively minor, such as a bruise or cut, to severe, such as broken bones, internal bleeding, or even death. Longer-term consequences may include:

- ☆ Shaken Baby Syndrome (including blindness, learning disabilities, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, or paralysis)
- ☆ Impaired brain development
- ☆ Lifelong poor physical health

## Psychological Consequences

The immediate psychological effects of abuse and neglect— isolation, fear, and a lack of trust— can spiral into long-term mental health consequences including:

- ☆ Depression and anxiety
- ☆ Low self-esteem
- ☆ Difficulty establishing and maintaining relationships
- ☆ Eating disorders
- ☆ Suicide attempts

## Behavioral Consequences

Studies have found abused or neglected children to be at least 25 percent more likely to experience problems in adolescence, including:

- ☆ Delinquency
- ☆ Teen pregnancy
- ☆ Drug use
- ☆ Low academic achievement

As adults, children who experienced abuse or neglect have an increased likelihood of criminal behavior, involvement in violent crime, abuse of alcohol and other drugs, and abusive behavior.

For more information, read *Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect*, from the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, available at [http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/factsheets/long\\_term\\_consequences.cfm](http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/factsheets/long_term_consequences.cfm).



# Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse affects children of every age, race, and income level. It often takes place in the home and comes from a person the child knows and trusts—a parent, relative, babysitter, or friend of the family.

Often abusers are ordinary people caught in stressful situations: young mothers and fathers unprepared for the responsibilities of raising a child; overwhelmed single parents with no support system; families placed under great stress by poverty, divorce, or sickness; parents with alcohol or drug problems.

A first step in helping or getting help for an abused or neglected child is to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse. There are four major types of child maltreatment: neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse:

**Neglect** is failure to provide for a child's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or proper supervision.

Possible symptoms:

- ☆ The child shows signs of malnutrition or begs, steals, or hoards food.
- ☆ The child has poor hygiene: matted hair, dirty skin, or severe body odor.
- ☆ The child has unattended physical or medical problems.
- ☆ The child states that no one is home to provide care.
- ☆ The child or caretaker abuses drugs or alcohol.

**Physical Abuse** is intentional injury inflicted upon a child. It may include severe shaking, beating, kicking, punching, or burning that results in minor marks, bruising, or even death.

Possible symptoms:

- ☆ The child has broken bones or unexplained bruises, burns, or welts in various stages of healing.
- ☆ The child is unable to explain an injury, or explanations given by the child or caretaker are inconsistent with the injury.
- ☆ The child is unusually frightened of a parent or caretaker, or is afraid to go home.
- ☆ The child reports intentional injury by parent or caretaker.

**Sexual Abuse** refers to any sexual act with a child by an adult or older child. It includes fondling or rubbing the child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and using the child for prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

Possible symptoms:

- ☆ The child has pain or bleeding in anal or genital area with redness or swelling.
- ☆ The child displays age-inappropriate play with toys, self, or others.
- ☆ The child has inappropriate knowledge about sex.
- ☆ The child reports sexual abuse.



**Emotional Abuse** may occur when a parent fails to provide the understanding, warmth, attention, and supervision the child needs for healthy psychological growth.

Possible symptoms:

- ☆ The parent or caretaker constantly criticizes, threatens, belittles, insults, or rejects the child with no evidence of love, support, or guidance.
- ☆ The child exhibits extremes in behavior from overly aggressive to overly passive.
- ☆ The child displays delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development.



## Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

If you suspect abuse, reporting it can protect the child and get help for the family. Each State identifies mandatory reporters (groups of people who are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect). However, any concerned person can and should report suspected child abuse. A report is not an accusation; it is an expression of concern and a request for an investigation or evaluation of the child's situation. If you suspect a child is in a dangerous situation, take immediate action. Your suspicion of child abuse or neglect is enough to make a report. You are not required to provide proof. Investigators in your community will make the determination of whether abuse or neglect has occurred. Almost every State has a law to protect people who make good-faith reports of child abuse from prosecution or liability.

### How do I report child abuse or neglect?

If you suspect a child is being harmed, contact your State Child Abuse Hotline, local child protective services (CPS), or law enforcement agency so professionals can assess the situation. For more information about where and how to file a report, call Childhelp USA®, National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-4-A-CHILD®).

When calling to report child abuse, you will be asked for specific information, which may include:

- ☆ The child's name and location
- ☆ The suspected perpetrator's name and relationship to the child (if known)
- ☆ A description of what you have seen or heard regarding the abuse or neglect
- ☆ The names of any other people having knowledge of the abuse
- ☆ Your name and phone number

The names of reporters are not given out to families reported for child abuse or neglect; however, sometimes by the nature of the information reported, your identity may become evident to the family. You may request to make your report anonymously, but your report may be considered more credible and can be more helpful to CPS if you give your name.

### What will happen when I make a report?

Your report of possible child maltreatment will first be screened by hotline staff or a CPS worker. If the worker feels there is enough credible information to indicate that maltreatment may have occurred or is at risk of occurring, your report will be referred to staff who will conduct an investigation. Investigators respond within a particular time period (anywhere from a few hours to a few days), depending on the potential severity of the situation. They may speak with the child, the parents, and other people in contact with the child (such as doctors, teachers, or childcare providers). Their purpose is to determine if abuse or neglect has occurred and if it may happen again.

If the investigator finds that no abuse or neglect occurred, or what happened does not meet the State's definition of abuse or neglect, the case will be closed and the family may or may not be referred elsewhere for services. If the investigator feels the children are at risk of harm, the family may be referred to services to reduce the risk of future maltreatment. These may include mental health care, medical care, parenting skills classes, employment assistance, and concrete support such as financial or housing assistance. In rare cases where the child's safety cannot be ensured, the child may be removed from the home.





## Organizations and Programs That Promote Safe Children and Healthy Families

Below is a list of organizations and programs that are involved in promoting the well-being of children and families and preventing child abuse. Many provide information and services to support prevention activities. Inclusion on this list is for information purposes and does not constitute an endorsement.

### **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)**

AAP is committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. The Section on Child Abuse and Neglect (SOCAN) provides an educational forum for the discussion of problems and treatments relating to child abuse and neglect and its prevention.

(847) 434-4000

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

### **American Humane Association (AHA)**

AHA's mission is preventing cruelty, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children and animals. AHA information assists professionals and citizens in making informed decisions about how to help children and families in crisis. The association also develops resources and programs which help child welfare systems deliver quality services, and communities and citizens prevent child abuse.

(800) 227-4645

[www.americanhumane.org](http://www.americanhumane.org)

### **American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC)**

APSAC seeks to improve the quality of practice provided by professionals who work in child abuse and neglect through providing professional education and promoting research and practice guidelines in child maltreatment.

(843) 764-2905

[www.apsac.org](http://www.apsac.org)

### **Annie E. Casey Foundation**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation works to build better futures for disadvantaged children and their families in the United States. The Foundation's mission is to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families.

(410) 547-6600

[www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)

### **Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago**

Chapin Hall is a policy research center dedicated to bringing rigorous research and innovative ideas to policymakers, service providers, and funders working to improve the well-being of children. Our work provides a source of knowledge about the needs of children and the service systems designed to meet those needs.

(773) 256-5900

[www.chapinhall.org](http://www.chapinhall.org)

### **Childhelp USA®**

In addition to a 24-hour National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-4-A-CHILD), Childhelp USA directly serves abused children through residential treatment facilities, child advocacy centers, group homes, foster care, preschool programs, child abuse prevention programs, and community outreach.

(480) 922-8212

[www.childhelpusa.org](http://www.childhelpusa.org)

### **Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)**

The CWLA is an association of almost 1,200 public and private nonprofit agencies that assist over 3.5 million abused and neglected children and their families each year with a wide range of services.

(202) 638-2952

[www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)

### **Circle of Parents®**

Circle of Parents, a national network of parents and statewide and regional organizations, works to prevent child abuse and neglect, strengthen families, and promote parent leadership through mutual self-help parent support groups and children's programs.

(312) 334-6837

[www.circleofparents.org](http://www.circleofparents.org)





**Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, LLC (CMFCE)**

The Coalition serves as a clearinghouse to help people find the information they need to strengthen marriages and families—their own or those in their community.

(202) 362-3332

[www.smartmarriages.com](http://www.smartmarriages.com)

**Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**

The Foundation's Child Abuse Prevention Program works to improve parent-child interactions and to increase parents' access to information and services that help prevent child maltreatment before it occurs.

(212) 974-7000

[www.ddcf.org](http://www.ddcf.org)

**Family Support America (FSA)**

FSA is the national resource organization for the theory, policy, and practice of family support. FSA advocates on behalf of families and provides technical assistance, training and education, conferences, and publications.

(312) 338-0900

[www.familysupportamerica.org](http://www.familysupportamerica.org)

**First Things First (FTF)**

FTF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening families in Hamilton County, TN, through education, collaboration, and mobilization. FTF is a community resource that collaborates with and is supported by a broad cross-section of community organizations, groups, and individuals.

(423) 267-5383

[www.firstthings.org](http://www.firstthings.org)

**Freddie Mac Foundation**

The Freddie Mac Foundation opens doors to hope and opportunity for children, youth, and their families by helping them reach their full potential today so that they become participants in strong, vibrant communities tomorrow.

(703) 918-8888

[www.freddiemacfoundation.org](http://www.freddiemacfoundation.org)

**FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention**

The Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program (CBCAP) is a program authorized by Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act that provides Federal funds to a lead agency in each State designated by the Governor to provide leadership for and support child abuse prevention programs and activities in the State.

(919) 490-5577 x222

[www.friendsnrc.org](http://www.friendsnrc.org)

**Healthy Families America**

Healthy Families America is a national program model designed to help expectant and new parents get their children off to a healthy start.

(312) 663-3520

[www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org](http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org)

**National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds**

The mission of the Alliance is to build and maintain a system of services, laws, practices, and attitudes that prevent child abuse and neglect. This is achieved by assisting Children's Trust and Prevention Funds at a State and national level.

(517) 432-5096 or (206) 526-1221

[www.ctfalliance.org](http://www.ctfalliance.org)

**National Association of Children's Hospitals & Related Institutions (NACHRI)**

NACHRI promotes the health and well-being of all children and their families through support of children's hospitals and health systems that are committed to excellence in providing health care to children.

(703) 684-1355

[www.childrenshospitals.net](http://www.childrenshospitals.net)

**National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

NAEYC exists for the purpose of leading and consolidating the efforts of individuals and groups working to achieve healthy development and constructive education for all young children.

(800) 424-2460

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)



**National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome (NCSBS)**

The NCSBS prevents shaken baby syndrome through the development and implementation of education, programs, public policy, and research; to establish networks, support and train families, caregivers, and professionals. (888) 273-0071 or (801) 627-3399  
www.dontshake.com

**National Children’s Alliance (NCA)**

NCA (formerly the National Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to communities seeking to plan, establish, and improve Children’s Advocacy Centers. (800) 239-9950 or (202) 452-6001  
www.nca-online.org

**National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information**

The Clearinghouse collects, organizes, and disseminates information on all aspects of child maltreatment. (800) 394-3366  
<http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>

**National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)**

NCFR provides a forum for family researchers, educators, and practitioners to share in the development and dissemination of knowledge about families and family relationships, establishes professional standards, and works to promote family well-being. (888) 781-9331  
www.ncfr.org

**National Exchange Club Child Abuse Prevention Services**

The NEC Foundation is committed to making a difference in the lives of children, families, and communities through its national project, the prevention of child abuse. The NEC Foundation coordinates a nationwide network of nearly 100 Exchange Club Child Abuse Prevention Centers that utilize the parent aide program and provide support to families at risk for abuse. (800) 924-2643 or (419) 535-3232  
www.preventchildabuse.com

**National Healthy Marriage Resource Center (NHMRC)**

NHMRC is a national resource and clearinghouse for information and research relating to healthy marriages. (866) 450-3400  
www.healthymarriageinfo.org

**National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)**

NICWA is a membership organization of tribes, individuals, and private organizations that work to promote Indian child welfare and address child abuse and neglect through training, research, public policy, and grassroots community development. (503) 222-4044  
www.nicwa.org

**National Respite Coalition**

The mission of the National Respite Coalition is to secure quality, accessible, planned and crisis respite services for all families and caregivers in need of such services in order to strengthen and stabilize families, and enhance child and adult safety. Phone: (703) 256-9578  
Website: <http://www.archrespite.org/NRC.htm>

**Nurse-Family Partnership**

The Nurse-Family Partnership National Office supports communities in implementing a cost-effective, evidence-based nurse home visitation program to improve pregnancy outcomes, child health and development, and self sufficiency for eligible, first-time parents—benefiting multiple generations. (866) 864-5226  
www.nursefamilypartnership.org

**Oklahoma Marriage Initiative (OMI)**

The OMI has been the catalyst for program development related to marriage and family practices within organizations across Oklahoma. OMI’s Service Delivery System provides marriage and relationship education through skills-based workshops to couples and individuals. (405) 848-2171  
www.okmarriage.org



**Parents Anonymous® Inc.**

Parents Anonymous is a community of parents, organizations, and volunteers committed to strengthening families and building strong communities, achieving meaningful parent leadership and shared leadership, and leading the field of child abuse and neglect.

(909) 621-6184

[www.parentsanonymous.org](http://www.parentsanonymous.org)

**Parents as Teachers National Center**

Parents as Teachers helps all parents realize the important role they play in their child's development. The National Center is the backbone of the largest parent education program in the nation, supporting more than 3,000 local sites nationwide that provide Parents as Teachers services to families throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten.

(866) 728-4968

[www.ParentsAsTeachers.org](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org)

**Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America)**

PCA America provides leadership to promote and implement prevention efforts at both the national and local levels.

(312) 663-3520

[www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

**ZERO TO THREE**

ZERO TO THREE disseminates key developmental information, trains providers, promotes model approaches and standards of practice, and works to increase public awareness about the significance of the first three years of life.

(202) 638-1144

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)



# Evaluation Form

## Let us know what you think!

Please take a moment to answer these questions. You can fax or mail the form back to Chapel Hill Training-Outreach Project, Inc., Attention: Yvette Layden, 800 East Towne Drive, Suite 105, Chapel Hill, NC 27514; (919) 490-4905 fax

### Please indicate the type of organization you represent:

- Child Protective Services     Family/Community Services     Health Service     School  
 Child Care     Law Enforcement     Library     Parent  
 Tribal Organization     Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
...and your title within your organization

### Indicate how much you liked the content of the packet:

- Excellent     Very Good     Good     Fair     Poor

In the section **"Promoting Safe Children and Healthy Families: What Organizations Can Do"**

Which item was most useful? \_\_\_\_\_

Which item was least useful? \_\_\_\_\_

In the section **"Promoting Safe Children and Healthy Families: What Individuals Can Do"**

Which item was most useful? \_\_\_\_\_

Which item was least useful? \_\_\_\_\_

In the section **"When Children Are Not Safe: Child Abuse and Neglect"**

Which item was most useful? \_\_\_\_\_

Which item was least useful? \_\_\_\_\_

How useful was the listing of **"Organizations and Programs That Promote Safe Children and Healthy Families"**? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you use the Prevention Packet in your Child Abuse Prevention Month activities?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did you share the information with staff, families or clients, or the general public?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there other child abuse prevention materials you would like to see included in next year's packet?  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Thank you** for taking time to complete this evaluation.

We wish you continued success with your prevention activities!

For more information about preventing child abuse and supporting families, visit the Prevention section of the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information website at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention/index.cfm>. Or sign up to receive a free, monthly, e-mail alert about new publications at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/admin/subscribe.cfm>.

