

Every Adult is Essential to Creating Better Tomorrows for All Children

What's Inside?

→ What can YOU do?

- Learn the Facts
- Support Families
- Be a Safe Adult
- Respond Responsibly



→ What can your community do?

- Safe Policies and Practices
- School Based Prevention Ed.
- Connect with Child Advocacy Centers

→ Partner with Missouri KidsFirst

- Host a Prevention Training
- Bring Awareness- Wear Blue!
- Stand with Missouri's Children





Child Abuse Prevention Month Welcome

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Thank you for partnering with Missouri KidsFirst during Child Abuse Prevention Month to preventing child abuse and neglect.

In times of crisis and economic insecurity, rates of child abuse and neglect increase. COVID-19 has added stressors to the lives of parents and caregivers. We saw a drop in child abuse and neglect reporting last year as children were more isolated than normal. We are still working to understand the pandemic's repercussions for incidents of child abuse and neglect.

What we do know is that positive childhood experiences in nurturing environments provide a strong foundation for physical and mental health, learning, and social skills. We can build healthier, safer, and thriving communities if we work together to support families.

So join with us this month to support healthy childhoods and families! Please share the following information with families, schools, youth serving organizations, and all adults who care for children. Every adult is essential to creating better tomorrows for all children!

Sincerely,

David Chayer

What can you do?

Learn the Facts

SIGNS A CHILD IS NOT SAFE



→ Emotional Abuse

- Caregiver consistently belittles or berates the child and refuses to help the child when needed.
- Child shows extremes in behavior: overly aggressive or compliant.
- Appears emotionally unattached to caregiver and others.

→ Physical Abuse

- Child appears frightened of the caregiver.
- Child has burns, bites, broken bones, bruising, black eyes, or complains of pain.
- Caregiver offers no/odd explanation of a child's injury. Does the story match the injury?

→ Online Abuse

- Unexplained gifts, money, game subscriptions
- Child presents themselves as older online.
- Child sends revealing photos or videos of oneself.
- Child becomes secretive: minimizing screens or hiding devices.

Where To Report

Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline
1-800-392-3738 or 1-844-CAN-TELL
Online at dss.mo.gov/cd/can.htm
If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.



Children in need of help may:

- Take care of other children and/or have limited support systems.
- Require assistance due to physical, mental, behavioral or medical r delays.
- Live in a home with domestic violence.

→ Sexual Abuse

- Non-biological, transient caregivers in the home (a live in partner).
- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Child attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment.
- Witnessing an adult inappropriately touching or saying sexual things to/with a child; exposing a child to pornography.
- Demonstrates unusual sexual knowledge or behavior for their age.
- Nightmares and/or bed wetting

→ Neglect

- Child begs or steals food and/or has severe consistent poor hygiene.
- Caregiver is abusing alcohol or other drugs.
- Caregiver mental health concerns: unable to provide for child's basic needs.
- Highly stressful family situations
- Unlocked weapons or guns in the home



What can you do?

Support Families

PROTECTIVE FACTORS HELP FAMILIES THRIVE

For many years the child abuse prevention field focused primarily on risk—how likely abuse or neglect might occur when risk factors are present. Risks, such as poverty, trauma, and disabilities, among others, are known to contribute to the likelihood that a child might be abused or neglected.

Yet most families—even those in risk—do not abuse or neglect their children. Certain conditions, when present in families' lives, help them to overcome the odds that could otherwise lead to tragedy. Those conditions are protective factors. Support families in the following ways to create better tomorrows for all children! [Learn more at friendsnrc.org](https://www.friendsnrc.org).

1

Parental Resilience

Having adaptive skills and strategies to persevere in times of crisis

- Help parents and caregivers see their strengths and find solutions to their problems by building on those strengths.
- Focus on flexibility and help parents learn how to bounce back from difficult situations.



2

Social Connection

Connections with other adults reduces stress

- Give families a safe place to gather and make friends.
- Host or sponsor child and family events, such as health fairs, reading nights, and block parties.
- Encourage your place of worship, school, daycare, and work to do the same.

What can you do?

Support Families



PROTECTIVE FACTORS HELP FAMILIES THRIVE

3 Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Use positive parenting strategies with age-appropriate expectations

- Share information with parents and caregivers on child development and appropriate discipline strategies
- Start a lending library of books and toys that will help parents understand the ages and stages that their child is going through

4 Concrete Supports in Time of Need

Families have access to tangible goods and services to meet needs

- Link families to needed community services in a time of crises with a positive and respectful manner
- Offer support to a caregiver who is under stress through babysitting, making a meal or active listening

5 Social Emotional Competence

The ability of a child to self-regulate appropriately

- Teach children to recognize and express their feelings along with providing opportunities to practice
- Help children learn how to share, cooperate and take turns. Seek support for challenging behaviors to reduce stress for the family

6 Parent - Child Relationship

Strong bonds build resilience

- Provide opportunities for parents and children to spend fun time together. Emphasize the importance of connectedness for all adults in a child's life
- Support home visiting programs in your area such as Healthy Families, Head Start and Parents as Teachers which provide parents with early bonding experiences



What can you do? Respond Responsibly

BE A SAFE ADULT FOR A CHILD

We believe it is every adult's responsibility to keep kids safe

A safe adult is someone a child can go to if they ever feel unsafe, have ever been hurt, or if they're not sure if a situation is unsafe.

A safe adult should be someone who:

- Is an adult that can get the child help if they're ever hurt or unsafe.
- Doesn't break personal boundaries with a child or try to get the child to break them.
- The child feels comfortable with and can easily talk to about things that may be difficult to talk about.
- The child can trust to keep them safe.

Teach children...

- To have multiple safe adults
- If you have a safe adult now, and sometime in the future that safe adult doesn't make you feel safe, they you can always choose another safe adult.
- To keep telling safe adults they do not feel safe or have been hurt until someone LISTENS and DOES something to help them.

For more information on being a safe adult go to:

<https://www.d2l.org/how-to-be-a-safe-adult> or
<https://www.mbfpreventioneducation.org/learn-more/safe-adult-club/>

What can you do?

Respond Responsibly



Being a safe adult

Set and Maintain Clear, Protective Boundaries

This is a crucial step because boundaries help us to respect each other and feel respected. A child who knows that you will respect (and even protect!) their boundaries will have an easier time trusting you to take care of them.

Develop Protective Bonds

Really listen when the child talks to you. Show them that you're interested in their opinion; involve them in conversations and show them that their input is valuable.

Talk openly and honestly about difficult subjects, including child sexual abuse

When we talk to children in age-appropriate ways about our bodies, sex, and boundaries, children understand what healthy relationships look like. It also teaches them that they have the right to say "no." This conversation looks different depending on how old the child is, but by discussing tough topics together you become the go-to "expert" for your child. Be clear that your child's safety is of the utmost importance to you,

Taking action as a safe adult

If a child shares or you become aware a child is being harmed

Listen

Stay calm and listen with compassion. Tell the child, "I believe you." Only ask open ended questions, like "Tell me more." You do not need proof. You need reasonable suspicion. Avoid trying to dig for details or having different adults question the child's story. This can re-traumatize the child and damage the investigation and/or prosecution.

Get Help

Report suspicions of child abuse to the CA/N hotline 1-800-392-3738 or 1-844-CAN-TELL.. Reporting is not making an accusation, but asking for professional help, resources, and support for a child and their family. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

Legal responsibilities and protections

No business owner or supervisor may impede or inhibit any report. When you make a report in good faith, you are protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action.

You may be the only person to act

Don't assume someone else is making a report, you may be the only person to act.

Community Prevention

How can YOUR community keep kids safe?

Ask

Ask people who care for your children in youth serving organizations, schools, religious organizations about their child protection policies and practices and if they have a code of conduct.

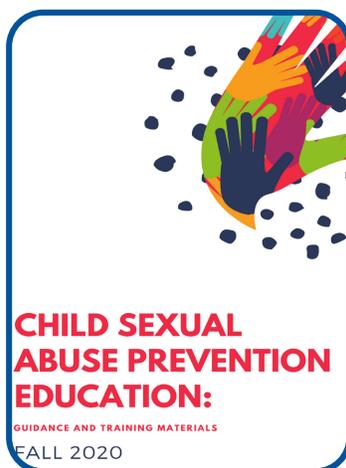
Resources for policies and codes of conduct



Learn

Did you know that starting this school year, all MO public schools are required to provide sexual abuse training to students in grades 6-12? Ask your school how they are implementing this new requirement.

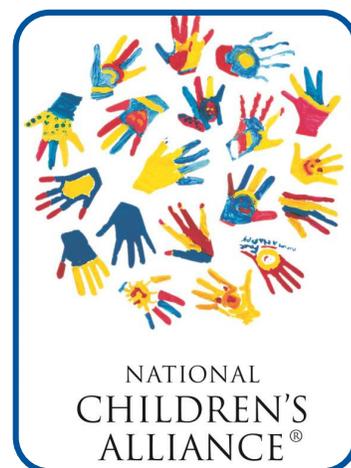
Learn more about the new law



Connect

Did you know MO has 25 Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) that provide services to children and families involved in child abuse and maltreatment cases. Connect with the CAC in your area!

Connect with your local CAC



Partner with Missouri KidsFirst

Every adult is essential in creating better tomorrows for all children.

Everyone can spread awareness and make an impact to prevent child abuse and neglect!
Partner with Missouri KidsFirst this April during Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Step One: Open a dialogue in your community

Two of the best ways to prevent child abuse and neglect include learning as much as you can about the issues and talking about it in your community.

- ➔ Missouri KidsFirst offers FREE mandated reporter training that is available to the public at protectmokids.com.
- ➔ Hold a Stewards of Children child sexual abuse prevention training in your community. Go to missourikidsfirst.org/soc/ to learn more!



Step Two: Bring Awareness to the Issue

One of the most visible ways you can show your support during Child Abuse Prevention Month is to participate in Wear Blue Day.

- ➔ On April 1, 2021, simply **WEAR BLUE** and snap a picture of it.
- ➔ Send that picture out on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram using the hashtags [#WearBlueDay2021](https://twitter.com/hashtag/WearBlueDay2021) or [#GoBlueMissouri](https://twitter.com/hashtag/GoBlueMissouri) or send them to us via email: mostwards@missourikidsfirst.org.



Step Three: Join us in Celebration

Missouri KidsFirst will be hosting our annual Standing with Children Awards VIRTUALLY on Monday, April 26, 2020 at 12:00 pm.

- ➔ Visit our [website](https://missourikidsfirst.org) for more information and to register for this free online event.
- ➔ Learn about the work of Missouri KidsFirst and hear from some of Missouri's most dedicated child advocates.

