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National Child Abuse Prevention Month

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Increasing public awareness of the need to ensure the safety and welfare of children led to the passage of the first Federal child protection legislation, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), in 1974. While CAPTA has been amended many times over the years, most recently with the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, the purpose of the original legislation remains intact. Today, the Children's Bureau, within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the Federal agency charged with supporting States, Tribes, and communities in providing programs and services to protect children and strengthen families.

In the early 1980s, Congress made a further commitment to identifying and implementing solutions to end child abuse. Recognizing the alarming rate at which children continued to be abused and neglected and the need for innovative programs to prevent child abuse and assist parents and families affected by maltreatment, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives resolved that the week of June 6-12, 1982, should be designated as the first National Child Abuse Prevention Week. Members of Congress requested the President issue a proclamation calling upon Government agencies and the public to observe the week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities promoting the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

The following year, in 1983, April was proclaimed the first National Child Abuse Prevention Month. As a result, child abuse and neglect awareness activities are promoted across the country during April of each year. The Office on Child Abuse and Neglect (OCAN) within the Children's Bureau coordinates Child Abuse Prevention Month activities at the Federal level, providing information and releasing updated national statistics about child abuse and neglect. Many governors also issue proclamations to encourage initiatives and events in their States.

In 1989, the Blue Ribbon Campaign to Prevent Child Abuse began as a Virginia grandmother's tribute to her grandson who died as a result of abuse. She tied a blue ribbon to the antenna of her car as a way to remember him and to alert her community to the tragedy of child abuse. The Blue Ribbon Campaign has since expanded across the country; many people wear blue ribbons each April in memory of those who have died as a result of child abuse and in support of efforts to prevent abuse. Based on Prevent Child Abuse America's (PCAA) Pinwheels for Prevention® campaign, some communities distribute pinwheels and coordinate outdoor pinwheel displays representing children affected by abuse or neglect. Regardless of the type of activity, the focus has shifted to a positive message of supporting families and strengthening communities to prevent child abuse and neglect.

In Title II of the CAPTA amendments of 1996, the Children's Bureau was charged with identifying a lead agency in each State for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants. These grants support the development, operation, and expansion of initiatives to prevent child abuse and neglect, as well as the coordination of resources and activities to strengthen and support families to reduce the likelihood of child maltreatment. CBCAP grantees within each State often take leadership roles in coordinating special events and preparing materials to support Child Abuse Prevention Month, and they are required to report annually on their activities.

In 2003, as part of the 20th anniversary of the original Presidential Proclamation designating April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, OCAN launched the National Child Abuse Prevention Initiative as a year-long effort. The theme of the 14th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect was devoted to prevention; at that time, a press conference was held to launch the initiative and release the publication, [Emerging Practices in the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect](#). In addition, OCAN and Child Welfare Information Gateway partnered with PCAA and the child abuse prevention community to produce a variety of tools and resources to support national, State, and local public awareness activities.

As momentum grew among national organizations and Federal agencies, an emerging consensus determined that building public will for child abuse prevention required engaging the public in efforts to support families and enhance parenting skills. When the U.S. Surgeon General named 2005 the Year of the Healthy Child, there was renewed commitment to make child abuse prevention a national priority. As a result, OCAN focused on making safe children and healthy families a shared responsibility, a theme that was also incorporated into the 15th National Conference. The theme expanded in 2007 when OCAN's resource guide and the 16th National Conference encouraged communities to join the effort to promote healthy families and work collaboratively to provide responsive child abuse prevention and family support services. At the same time, OCAN invited 26 national organizations to be national child abuse prevention partners so the message could reach a wider audience.

Support for child abuse prevention efforts has expanded due in part to the growing body of evidence that suggests home visitation programs for pregnant mothers and families with young children can reduce the incidence of maltreatment and improve child and family outcomes. In 2007, the Children's Bureau funded three grantees to implement and evaluate nurse home visitation services, and in 2008, it funded 17 cooperative agreements to generate knowledge about the use of evidence-based home visiting programs to prevent child abuse and neglect, including obstacles and opportunities for their wider implementation. Recently, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 included a provision to create the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. The Health Resources and Services Administration has partnered with ACF to implement this program to fund States and Tribes as they provide evidence-based home visitation services to improve outcomes for children and families in at-risk communities.

The 18th National Conference theme "Celebrating the Past – Imagining the Future" highlighted our desire to embrace our past successes, to learn from our challenges, and to realize our dream of eliminating child abuse and neglect. Timing the National Conference with the centennial celebration provided us with a special opportunity to come together and reflect upon accomplishments and lessons learned, as well as a chance to collectively develop strategies to improved policies and services to ensure the safety, protection, and well-being of our nation's children.

Today, the Child Abuse Prevention Initiative continues to be an opportunity to create strong communities to support families and keep children safe. Visit the [National Child Abuse Prevention Month website](#) for more information on the most current resources and national efforts.

More from Information Gateway

- [Preventing child abuse & neglect: Related organizations](#)



A service of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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30 Ways for Programs to Promote Child Well-Being During National Child Abuse Prevention Month

April 2013

Community Awareness	Nurturing and Attachment	Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development	Parental Resilience	Concrete Supports for Parents	Social and Emotional Competence of Children	Social Connections
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	
Help a parent "catch their child being good."	Praise good parenting when you see it.	Invite someone in to help parents learn about managing stress.	Create a handout for families with community resources linked to each protective factor.	Add children's books about feelings to your program's library.	Organize "stroller walks" with new parents. Talk about their challenges as you walk.	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Put the protective factors on your outreach materials.	Create a board game library for families.	Have parenting tips handy for parents dealing with challenging issues.	Make "How are you?" phone calls to families in the program.	Invite a community partner to present a new resource for families.	Role play emotions with kids—what do you do when you're happy, sad, or frustrated?	Host a potluck or cultural celebration.
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Plant a pinwheel garden as a reminder of the bright futures all children deserve.	Arrange a kickball or soccer game for dads and kids.	Learn about parenting practices of a different culture. Share this information with families.	Recognize parent accomplishments.	Visit a program where you refer families, so you'll know what it's like.	Train your staff on how trauma and loss affect children.	Encourage parents to support each other through phone trees, car pools, or play groups.
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Invite community partners to think about how they can build protective factors.	Offer parents materials for a craft that they can make with their child.	Talk to parents in your program about discipline alternatives.	Help parents set goals and solve problems.	Let parents use the center's computers for personal business (e.g., writing resumes, email).	Teach kids to resolve conflicts peacefully.	Create a "positive parenting club" where parents can share their success stories.



<https://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing>

strengthening families
<http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net>



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Children's Bureau
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb>

* Daily activities submitted by Prevention Partners and local Strengthening Families sites.