



A Program of Conley Outreach Community Services
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Community Care Team News

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In This Issue

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. This issue provides information and resources to help you recognize and combat child abuse and neglect. Please share this information with others in your community.

The Impact of Child Abuse

Each day in the United States an average of 3 children die as a result of child maltreatment. Thousands more are abused and neglected. The impact of abuse is far greater than its immediate, visible effects. Abuse and neglect are associated with short- and long-term consequences that may include brain damage, developmental delays, learning disorders, depression, problems forming relationships, and aggressive behavior.

Survivors of child abuse and neglect may be at greater risk for problems later in life—such as drug use, low academic achievement, teen pregnancy, and criminal behavior—that affect not just the child and family, but society as well.

In 2001, over 900,000 children were found to be victims of abuse or neglect.

Who is Involved?

Boys and girls are almost equally likely to experience neglect and physical abuse. Children of all races and ethnicity

experience child abuse. Children of all ages experience abuse, but the youngest children are most vulnerable. **Children younger than one accounted for 41% of child abuse and neglect deaths reported in 2001; 85% of the children who died were under the age of 6.**

Almost half of child victims (41%) were abused by just their mother, and one-fifth of victims (19%) were abused by both their mother and father. **At least 4 out of 5 victims are abused by at least one parent.**

What Exactly is Child 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.

Physical Abuse is physical injury as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, stabbing, choking, burning or otherwise harming a child.

Sexual Abuse includes activities by a parent or caretaker such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

Emotional Abuse includes constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support or guidance.

Risk Factors

Child abuse and neglect occur in all segments of our society, but the risk factors are greatest in families where parents:

- Abuse alcohol or drugs
- Are isolated from their families or communities
- Have difficulty controlling their anger or stress
- Appear uninterested in the care, nourishment or safety of their children
- Seem to be having serious economic, housing or personal problems.

Warning Signs

Some of the warning signs that a child might be abused or neglected include:

- Nervousness around adults
- Aggression toward adults or other children
- Inability to stay awake or to concentrate for extended periods
- Sudden, dramatic changes in personality or activities
- Acting out sexually/showing interest in sex that is not appropriate for his/her age
- Frequent or unexplained bruises or injuries
- Low self-esteem
- Poor hygiene

Preventing Child Abuse

The best way to prevent child abuse and neglect is to support families and provide parents with the skills and resources they need. Prevention efforts help parents develop their parenting skills, understand child developmental stages and reasonable expectations for behavior, and understand the benefit of nonviolent discipline techniques.

Family Support Resources

The following support groups can help with the stress of parenting:

Single Parent Support Group	232-1070
Parents of Pre/Teens Support	232-1070
Mothers First Support Group	208-3999
Postpartum Depression Group	208-3999
Family Connections	815/758-5237
Positive Parenting	815/748-2010
Single Parent Network	815/899-1062

Other support programs to prevent child abuse include:

Healthy Families America 978-2532
(support to first-time at risk parents)
Family Nurturing Program 897-1003
(school based program to promote nurturing)

Reporting Abuse

If you suspect abuse or neglect is occurring, contact the IL Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). Their **Abuse Line is 1-800-252-2873**. The Aurora Regional office can be reached at 630/801-3400. The DeKalb office phone number is 815/787-5300.

Resources for Victims

CASA is a non-profit organization that trains and supervises community volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children in Juvenile Court. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) see to it that no child falls between the cracks of an overburdened child welfare system. 630/232-4484

The Kane County Child Advocacy

Center investigates cases of child sexual abuse and severe physical abuse in a **victim sensitive** manner and when appropriate, takes court action. The Center also investigates/prosecutes cases involving child abduction, child pornography and the exploitation of children. 630/208-5160