

**CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION MONTH**
APRIL 2025 

**Kickoff Event
Virtual Folder**



**Prevent Child Abuse
Illinois™**

www.preventchildabuseillinois.org



FACTS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE



What is Child Abuse and Neglect?

Physical Abuse – an injury to a child that is not an accident, may include: hitting, punching, beating, burning, biting, kicking, cutting, shaking, or any action that physically harms a child.

Emotional Abuse – maltreatment of a child that may involve criticizing, insulting, yelling, swearing, manipulating, rejecting or withholding love.

Sexual Abuse – any sexual activity with a child, including exhibitionism, photographs or videos, pornography, prostitution, fondling, or rape.

Neglect – failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional, medical or educational needs.

Who Abuses Children?

Most often the abuser is someone the child knows, such as a parent, relative, neighbor, friend of the family, or trusted adult like a teacher, mentor or coach.

Where Does Child Abuse Happen?

Child abuse can happen wherever children are; where they live, sleep, learn, or play.

How Often Does Child Abuse Occur?

Each year, close to 3 million reports of suspected abuse are filed in the United States. Many more cases never get reported. One victim of child abuse is one too many!

Where Are Illinois Statistics Available?

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

<http://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/aboutus/newsandreports/reports/Pages/default.aspx>



WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

Children who are abused may show physical and behavioral signs. You may be a child's only lifeline to safety. Please pay attention to the treatment of children around you. Child abuse is everyone's business. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected in Illinois, call **1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)**.

Children who have been abused or neglected may be:

- Nervous around adults or afraid of certain adults
- Reluctant to go home
- Very passive and withdrawn—or aggressive and disruptive
- Often tired, complaining of nightmares, or not sleeping well
- Fearful and anxious
- Showing sudden changes in behavior or school performance



Possible signs of physical abuse:

- Unexplained burns, bruises, black eyes or other injuries
- Apparent fear of a parent or caretaker
- Faded bruises or healing injuries
- Injuries that do not match the explanation

Possible signs of sexual abuse:

- Difficulty walking or sitting, or other indications of injury to the genital area
- Sexual knowledge or behavior beyond what is normal for the child's age
- Running away from home

Possible signs of neglect:

- Frequently missing school
- Begging for or stealing food or money
- Lacking needed medical or dental care
- Being frequently dirty
- Using alcohol or other drugs
- Saying there is no one at home to take care of them

Possible signs of emotional abuse:

- Acting overly mature or immature for the child's age
- Extreme changes in behavior
- Delays in physical or emotional development
- Attempted suicide
- Lack of emotional attachment to the parent

Many of these signs may also be present in children exposed to violence in their homes and communities, like domestic violence and gang violence. These signs don't prove that a child is being abused, but they could be a signal that the child and his or her family may need help.

Also know the signs of an abusive adult. Consider the possibility of abuse if a parent or caretaker:

- Seems unconcerned about the child's welfare
- Denies problems at school or at home
- Blames the child for causing problems
- Sees the child as worthless or as a burden
- Avoids discussing the child's injuries or gives conflicting explanations for them
- Abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
- Seems isolated from other parents, relatives, or social supports
- Uses harsh physical discipline or asks other caretakers to use it
- Depends on the child for emotional support
- Seems indifferent to the child
- Seems secretive or tries to isolate the child from other children and adults
- Frequently blames, belittles, or insults the child

These signs don't prove that an adult is abusive. But they could be a signal that the adult may need help.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE CHILD ABUSE IN A PUBLIC PLACE

Start a conversation with the adult to direct attention away from the child.

FOR EXAMPLE:

"She seems to be trying your patience."

"My child sometimes gets upset like that, too."

"Children can really wear you out sometimes. Is there anything I can do to help?"

Divert the child's attention (if misbehaving) by talking to the child.

FOR EXAMPLE:

"That's a great baseball cap. Are you a Cardinals fan?"

"I like your t-shirt. Did you get that on vacation?"

Look for an opportunity to praise the parent or child.

FOR EXAMPLE:

"He has the most beautiful eyes."

"That's a very pretty shirt on your little girl. Where did you get it?"

If the child is in danger, offer assistance.

FOR EXAMPLE:

If the child is left unattended in a grocery cart, stand near the child until the parent returns.

If the child is in immediate danger, call the police!

Avoid negative remarks or looks.

Negative reactions are likely to increase the parent's stress or anger, and could make matters worse for the child.



CALL THE DCFS HOTLINE:

1-800-25ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)

Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services

Adapted from Prevent Child Abuse America



WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A NURTURING PARENT

Begin today by being a positive parent or caretaker and help other family members, friends, and neighbors be positive parents too

- Make children a priority.
- Show and tell your children that you love them every day.
- Let your children know you are happy to be with them.
- Give children a sense of security, belonging, and support.
- Catch your children being good and give them lots of praise.

Really listen to your children

- Give children your undivided attention when they are talking.
- Be patient and remember that children move at a different pace when they tell a story about their day.



Spend time with your children

- Make some special time for each of your children.
- Play with them, talk with them, and read with them.
- Keep your promises.
- Let your children help with household projects.
- Tell your children about your own childhood.
- Go to the zoo, museums, and ball games as a family.
- Play outside, play a board game, do an art project or other creative activity.

Set a good example

- Use good manners, like saying “please” and “thank you.”
- Set clear, consistent limits.
- Consider how your decisions will affect your children.
- Open a savings account for college education.
- Resolve conflict with care and respect.
- Allow yourself a time-out when needed. Taking care of yourself is as important as taking care of your family.

Reach out to other family members, friends and neighbors

- Talk to family, friends, and neighbors about parenting.
- Join a parent support group.
- Get involved in something where you can socialize with other parents.
- Seek help if you need it. If you feel out of control or like a bad parent, get help.

Need To Talk To Someone? Call:

Childhelp®
National Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-4-A-CHILD
(1-800-422-4453)

There are many great websites for parents. Below are just a few suggestions.
www.babycenter.com | www.zerotothree.org | www.parents.com
| www.aap.org | www.handinhandparenting.org | www.happychildhoods.info



HOW YOU CAN PREVENT CHILD ABUSE!



THE 6 PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The Center for the Study of Social Policy spent 2 years investigating protective factors and how to keep kids safe. They reviewed research in the field of child abuse and neglect, prevention, and family resiliency. They also interviewed hundreds of experts, practitioners, and parents. Below are the 6 Protective Factors and how you can help build healthy children and strong families. For more information visit: <http://friendsnrc.org/protective-factors>.

Parental Resilience

- 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.

Social Connections

- 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.

Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

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

Concrete Supports in Times of Need

- Link families to needed community services in a positive and respectful manner.
- Offer support to a parent who is under stress through babysitting, making a meal, or maybe just listening.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

- Teach children to recognize and express their feelings.
- Help children learn how to share, cooperate and take turns.

Parent-Child Relationship

- Provide opportunities for parents and children to spend fun time together.
- Support home visiting programs in your area such as Healthy Families, Early Head Start, and Parents as Teachers which provide families with early bonding experiences.

Prevent Child Abuse Illinois has developed several tools to help parents and caregivers cope with the everyday challenges and joys of raising strong, healthy children. These resources and many others can be found on our website at:

www.preventchildabuseillinois.org/20-ways

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Below are some suggested activities to bring [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) to your community or organization during the month of [April](#). With these activities, you can encourage parents, families, legislators, the media, and groups of concerned citizens to participate in child abuse awareness and prevention. [Contact Prevent Child Abuse Illinois](#) or visit our website to promote your event and have it listed on our [STATEWIDE CALENDAR](#).

Ideas For Child Abuse Prevention Month Activities

- [Attend a Statewide Media Event](#) – contact PCA Illinois at 217-522-1129 or online to learn about several annual [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) Media events held across Illinois.
- [Have local officials issue a formal proclamation](#) and hold a media conference to announce [April](#) as [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) in your community.
- [Host a breakfast, luncheon, or reception](#) honoring [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) and the work being done in your community.
- [Organize a Pinwheel planting or Blue Ribbon campaign](#) in your area. (Learn how on the following 3 pages of this packet.)
- [Participate in Wear Blue Day](#). (Learn how on PAGE 15 of this packet)
- [Use store windows, business lobbies and bulletin boards](#) to display posters, brochures and other material highlighting positive parenting and child abuse prevention. (See examples of brochures and posters at <https://www.preventchildabuseillinois.org/literature>.)



- [Get schools and parent-teacher organizations involved](#) by sponsoring an essay contest, poster contest, art display, material distribution, pinwheel display, [Wear Blue Day](#), or [Blue Ribbon campaign](#).
- [Mobilize faith communities](#) to be involved in [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) activities by submitting articles for bulletins and newsletters, collecting donations for local charities, displaying pinwheels or blue ribbons, and hosting trainings or parenting classes.
- [Partner with local businesses](#) to host community workshops, health fairs, or fun events for families.
- [Collaborate with your local women's clubs](#) or other clubs to host a baby shower or collect baby supplies for a local shelter or crisis nursery. (Find your local General Federation of Women's Club here: <http://gfwcillinois.org/page10.html>)
- [Provide in-service education](#) or a lunchtime workshop on child abuse prevention for your office.

- [Organize a fundraiser](#) such as a golf outing, garage sale, 5-K run, trivia night, flower sale, movie night, etc. for [Prevent Child Abuse Illinois](#) or other family support agencies.
- [Join or start a Child Abuse Prevention Coalition](#) in your community. (See PAGE 18 in this packet.)
- [Purchase Child Abuse Prevention items](#) available through PCA Illinois. Items can be used for fundraising efforts, appreciation or recognition awards for parents, staff, board members, and volunteers. (To purchase pinwheels and other merchandise see the fliers at the end of this packet.)

[April](#) is also [National Library Month](#), [Alcohol Abuse Awareness Month](#), [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#), and features the [Week of the Young Child](#) and [Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week](#) – contact these groups and others for a collaborative event.



**Remember to share lots of pictures of your activities with us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!
Use #GreatChildhoods #GoBlueIllinois**



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION COALITIONS

Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Coalitions are local groups of community members made up of parents, social service providers, law enforcement, health care professionals, business representatives and others working together to address and prevent child abuse and neglect within their community.



CAP Coalitions have the common focus of preventing child abuse in all its forms by:

- Identifying child abuse and neglect needs in their communities.
- Developing a comprehensive response to those needs.
- Enhancing and providing public awareness and education.
- Linking families and community members to resources.
- Networking with others to ensure a community wide response.
- Developing and promoting **Child Abuse Prevention Month** activities and events.

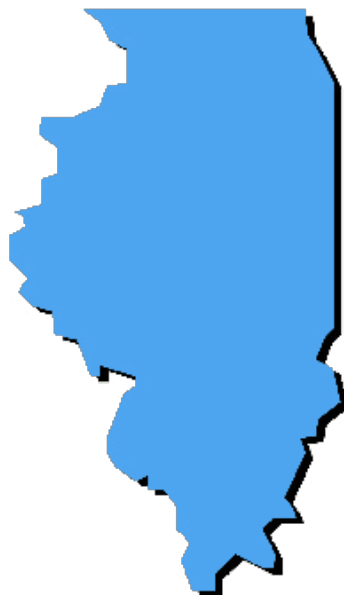
Benefits of Participating in a CAP Coalition

- Collective impact, being part of something bigger.
- Enhanced community relationships.
- Easier access to services and resources.
- Access to key members of the community.
- Increased opportunity to effect local policy.



Local CAP Coalitions can and do make a difference in the lives of children, families, and communities. Help great childhoods happen!

Want to join or start a CAP Coalition in your community? Find your contact below and get started today!



Cook County

Belinda Farr
bfarr@pcaillinois.org

Southern Illinois

Rachel Chruszczyk
rchruszczyk@pcaillinois.org

Northern Illinois

Jennifer Samartano
jsamartano@pcaillinois.org

Central Illinois

Kristin Kaufman
kkaufman@pcaillinois.org



PREVENTION TRAININGS

Prevention starts with education. All trainings are offered *at no cost* virtually or in-person and can be adapted to small or large groups. Reach out to us today to schedule your training. Together we can create and sustain #greatchildhoods for all children!

INFANT CARE AND SAFETY

- Shaken Baby Syndrome
- Happiest Baby on the Block
- Safe Sleep for Babies

CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

- Trauma 101: Understanding the Impact of Childhood Trauma
- Understanding ACEs: Why the Body Doesn't Forget
- Addressing Secondary Trauma: Prioritizing Our Well Being
- Effective Engagement
- Building a Road to Resilience
- Poverty: Cycles of Risk

SUBSTANCE USE

- Identifying Drug Endangered Children: A Collaborative Approach
- Moving from Awareness to Action

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

- Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
- Stewards of Children
- Child Abuse Prevention 101
- Childhood Neglect Basics
- Building Protective Factors

OTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- Parent Cafés
- Paper Tigers Documentary Screening
- Resilience Documentary Screening
- Perinatal Mood Disorder Support & Prevention



**CLICK HERE TO
LEARN MORE
ABOUT
TRAININGS**

Contact us to learn more or schedule a training:

Kristin Kaufman, Director of Programs
Belinda Farr, Cook County
Jennifer Samartano, Northern Region
Rachel Chruszczyk, Southern Region
Brittney Hale, Home Visiting Specialist

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MADISON COUNTY

Child Advocacy Center



2024 Annual Report

2024 was a year of change and growth for the Center. Executive Director Carrie Cohan grew professionally and is now the Chief Program Officer for CACI. We thank her for her years of service! We welcomed our new Executive Director Jennifer Wilkinson. Jennifer comes to us with well rounded experience and is excited to continue the growth of the center. We are grateful for the support of the community, our multidisciplinary team, our donors and funders, and everyone who has helped the Center grow. The Madison County CAC is committed to ensuring child victims of abuse are **heard, supported and connected.**

Forensic Interviews

491 children were provided a forensic interview and spoke to a trained professional about the abuse they may have experienced in a child focused environment.



Case Management

4056 children and family members were provided with information and support to navigate a child abuse investigation. Case Managers also provided connections to community resources and education to support children and keep them safe.



Therapy Services

384 children and their family members received specialized mental health services to help them heal from trauma and restore hope into their daily lives.



Prevention Education

9047 students received child sexual abuse prevention education to empower them with knowledge to keep themselves safe and create a safety network.



Community Connections

We are grateful for you...

- ▶ 68 children received backpacks filled with school supplies for returning to school.
- ▶ 64 families received laundry baskets filled with food items and toys during the holiday season.
- ▶ We expanded our prevention programming! This past year we did our first prevention education for educators and school professionals. Giving schools the education and resources to support youth after experiencing a traumatizing event.
- ▶ This year we continued to expand our programming and outreach attending new community events, adding new community partners. We are so excited for what 2025 will bring as we continue to change and grow.



Thank you to everyone who as attended center events, donating and advocated for us in 2024. Your continued deitcation to the Center makes sure all kids in Madison County are heard, supported, connected.

2024 Parent Survey Results

I appreciated the calm atmosphere and the feeling of safety.

They made my daughter feel comfortable in this uncomfortable situation.

The staff helped me to understand the process.

When you give to the Center you are making a difference in the lives of children in our community. We are grateful that our donors help to ensure children are HEARD, SUPPORTED, AND CONNECTED.

THE ABCs OF SAFE SLEEP



They sleep

ALONE

If you breastfeed in bed, soothe your baby back to sleep while standing and return to crib when she is asleep.



On their

BACK



In a safe

CRIB

Babies die every week in Illinois while sleeping on adult beds, couches, pillows, blankets and other soft surfaces as well as in car seats, bouncy seats and infant swings.



Silent killer: Sleep suffocation is the leading cause of reported child deaths in Illinois.

Your baby should not sleep in a bed, couch or chair with anyone, even other children.

If you breastfeed in bed, soothe your baby back to sleep while standing and return her to crib when she is asleep.

Always place your baby on his back to sleep.

Your baby should sleep in a crib with a firm mattress covered by a tightly fitted sheet.

Babies die every week in Illinois while sleeping on adult beds, couches, pillows, blankets and other soft surfaces as well as in car seats, bouncy seats and infant swings.

Additional sleep safety tips:

1. Keep stuffed animals, toys, pillows, blankets, quilts, crib bumpers and sleep positioners out of your baby's crib.
2. Don't smoke before or after your baby is born, and don't let others smoke around your baby.
3. Try using a pacifier when placing your baby to sleep, but don't force it. If you are breastfeeding your baby, wait until he is one month old or is used to breastfeeding before using a pacifier.
4. Don't let your baby overheat during sleep. Dress her lightly for sleeping, and keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult.
5. Your baby needs plenty of supervised "tummy time" when he is awake to help build strong neck and shoulder muscles. Don't let your baby spend too much time in car seats, carriers and bouncers.
6. If you are having difficulty getting your baby to sleep, contact your pediatrician or the Fussy Baby Network at 1-888-431-BABY (2229).
7. Visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Crib Safety Information Center at www.cpsc.gov for sleep safety tips and a list of recalled products.



DCFS.illinois.gov

Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois
DCFS #592 • Jun 2024 • 10,000 copies
CFS 1050-79 • rev 10/1/2024

Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services

FOR MANDATED REPORTERS ONLY

Who are mandated reporters?

Members of the general public are encouraged to report suspected child abuse and neglect. However, state law mandates that workers in certain professions **must** make reports if they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect. Mandated reporters include:

- Medical Personnel: Physicians, psychiatrists, surgeons, residents, interns, dentists, dentist hygienists, medical examiners, pathologists, osteopaths, coroners, Christian Science practitioners, chiropractors, podiatrists, registered and licensed practical nurses, emergency medical technicians, substance abuse treatment personnel, hospital administrators and other personnel involved in the examination, care or treatment of patients.
- School and Child Care Personnel: Teachers, administrators, certified and non-certified school employees, school board members, educational advocates assigned to a child pursuant to the School Code, truant officers, directors and staff assistants of day care centers and nursery schools, and child care workers.
- Law Enforcement: Truant officers, probation officers, law enforcement officers, and field personnel of the Department of Corrections.
- State Agencies: Field personnel from the Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Public Health, Department of Corrections, Department of Human Rights, Department of Healthcare and Family Services, and Department of Human Services. Supervisors and administrators of general assistance under the Illinois Public Aid Code are also included.
- Others: Social workers, counselors, social service administrators, substance abuse treatment personnel, domestic violence program personnel, crisis line or hotline personnel, foster parents, homemakers, recreational program or facility personnel, registered psychologists and assistants working under the direct supervision of a psychologist, funeral home directors and employees, and members of the clergy.

Mandated reporters who make good faith reports have the same immunity from liability under the law as non-mandated reporters. **However, a mandated reporter's willful failure to report suspected instances of child abuse or neglect to DCFS constitutes a Class A misdemeanor.** A second or subsequent violation is a Class 4 felony.

Does reporting my suspicions to a superior satisfy my mandated reporter requirement?

No. While you may also inform your superiors (such as the school principal or an administrator) of your suspicions, this does not satisfy your mandated reporter requirement that you call the hotline.

Am I still a mandated reporter if some-one who is now over 18 years old tells me he or she was abused as a child?

If the person reporting the abuse has reason to believe that the alleged perpetrator has had, or currently has, access to children under 18, you should call the hotline. In cases where the alleged perpetrator does not have access to children, contact your local law enforcement agency.

How should mandated reporters make reports?

Call the child abuse hotline as soon as possible. You must also send written confirmation to the appropriate DCFS field office within 48 hours. The department will provide a form to use when sending this confirmation. If you suspect a child's death may have been caused by abuse or neglect, you must also call your county's coroner or medical examiner.

NOTICE

Any person who knowingly transmits a false report to the department commits the offense of disorderly conduct under subsection (a)(7) of Section 26-1 of the Criminal Code of 2012. A violation of this subsection is a Class 4 felony." (Source: P.A. 97-189, eff. 7-22-11; 97-1150, eff. 1-25-13.)

How can I learn more?

To help mandated reporters understand their critical role in protecting children, DCFS administers a free online training course entitled Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters. To access the training visit www.dcfstraining.org. The *Mandated Reporter Manual*, available at DCFS.illinois.gov, offers more information about the guidelines for mandated reporters in Illinois.



DCFS.Illinois.gov

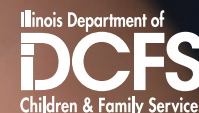
Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois
DCFS #268 • Dec 2023 • 2,000 copies
CFS 1050-14 • rev 2.29.24

Care Enough to Call

To Report Child Abuse and Neglect

1-800-25-ABUSE

TOLL-FREE • 24 HOURS





CARE ENOUGH TO CALL

Protecting children is a responsibility we all share. It is important for every person to take child abuse and neglect seriously, to be able to recognize when it happens, and to know what to do next. Care enough to call the state's child abuse hotline:

1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)

What are child abuse and neglect?

This year hotline workers will handle approximately 70,000 reports of child abuse and neglect. Child abuse is the mistreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caretaker, someone living in their home or someone who works with or around children. The mistreatment must cause injury or harm, or put the child at risk of injury or harm. Child abuse can be physical (such as bruises, burns or broken bones), sexual (such as fondling, penetration, exposure to pornography, or incest) or emotional.

Neglect happens when a parent or responsible caretaker fails to provide adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter, medical care or other basics for a child.

When should I call the hotline?

You should call the child abuse hotline whenever you believe that a person who is caring for the child, who lives with the child, or who works with or around children may have caused injury or harm or put the child at risk of injury or harm as defined in the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

Some examples of situations in which you should call the hotline include:

- If you see someone beating a child or hitting a child with an object.

- If you see marks on a child's body that do not appear to have been caused by accident.
- If a child tells you that he or she has been harmed by someone.
- If a child appears to be undernourished, is dressed inappropriately for the weather, or is young and has been left alone.

Use your own judgment and call the hotline whenever you think a child may have been abused or neglected.

When should I NOT call the hotline?

Some situations do not require calling the hotline. Use good judgment. Call only when you think a child may have been or will be injured or harmed as described above. Some examples of when you should **not** call the hotline include:

- Situations where a child is causing a problem that concerns you, but the problem is not related to abuse or neglect. In some cases you may wish to call law enforcement or talk to the child's parents or relatives.
- Domestic situations where family stress is evident, but the child has not been abused or put at risk of abuse. Community service agencies are often available to help.
- If you're seeking information about DCFS or its programs, the Office of Communications is available to answer questions. Call 312-814-6847, or you may call your local DCFS office.

What should I report?

Hotline staff are workers with special training in determining what constitutes child abuse and neglect under Illinois law. Details are important. Ideally, you

should be able to tell the hotline worker:

- The child's name, address and age.
- The nature of the suspected abuse or neglect, including when and where it occurred.
- The names of suspected perpetrators, if known, and their relationship to the child (parent, teacher, etc.).
- Any other information you think may help.

What happens when I call the hotline?

When you call, a hotline worker will listen to what you wish to report. The worker will then ask questions to help gather enough information to determine whether to take a formal report. If there is not enough information to make a report, the worker will tell you so and answer any questions you may have.

If a formal report is taken, an Investigation Specialist will begin the investigation within 24 hours—much sooner if the child is considered in immediate risk of harm.

How am I protected?

People who report alleged child abuse or neglect in good faith cannot be held liable for damages under criminal or civil law. In addition, their names are not given to the person they name as the abuser or to anyone else unless ordered by a hearing officer or judge. Members of the general public may make reports to the hotline without giving their names.

Should I call the police?

Always call the child abuse hotline to report suspected child abuse or neglect. However, you should also consider calling the police—especially in emergencies, when the child has been injured, or when the child is in immediate danger of being harmed.

- Be traveling in groups and selling merchandise.
- Be performing work inappropriate for his or her age and/or is not being compensated for work performed.
- No longer have control of his or her driver's license or other identification documents.

Who can be a pimp/trafficker?

- Mothers and fathers.
- Sisters and brothers.
- Other family members or family friends.
- Friends, classmates or peers.
- Strangers.
- Gang members.
- ANYBODY.

Why don't victims seek help?

People may be unwilling or unable to seek help due to:

- Frequent accompaniment by or being guarded by the pimp/trafficker.
- Fear of the pimp/trafficker.
- Being ashamed of their situation.
- A distrust of law enforcement and service providers.
- Isolation from family, friends or other sources of support.
- Dependency on his or her pimp/trafficker.

The Illinois Safe Children Act removed references to "juvenile prostitutes" in Illinois' criminal code and ensures that innocent children who are lured or coerced into prostitution are immune from criminal prosecution and will be placed in the child protection system instead of the criminal justice system.



You can help put an end to the buying and selling of our children.

If you suspect a child is a victim of human trafficking, call 911 and the DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 800.252.2873.



Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services

SAFETY FIRST SAFETY ALWAYS

REPORT ABUSE OR NEGLECT
1.800.25.ABUSE
(1.800.252.2873)

www2.illinois.gov/DCFS

NOTICE

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Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois
DCFS #370 • Jan 2023 • 100 copies
CFS 1050-13-3 • rev 11/28/2022

OUR CHILDREN ARE NOT FOR SALE

Buying or selling a child for sex or labor is human trafficking and child abuse. Turning a blind eye to the abuse is neglect.

Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. Every year, millions of men, women and children are trafficked worldwide – including right here in the United States. It can happen in any community and victims can be any age, race, gender or nationality. Traffickers might use violence, manipulation or false promises of well-paying jobs or romantic relationships to lure victims into trafficking situations. When the individual is under the age of 18, force, fraud or coercion does not have to be present for the act to be considered human trafficking.

Labor trafficking occurs when a person is exploited for labor or services through force, fraud or coercion. Labor trafficking victims are often forced into domestic servitude, agricultural work, restaurant work or factory work.

Sex trafficking occurs when a person (any gender) is involved in a commercial sex act, including prostitution, stripping, sexually explicit performance or production of pornography in exchange for something of value (love, money, food, clothing, shelter, drugs, alcohol, etc.).

Targeted

Any person may be vulnerable to an individual who promises to meet his or her emotional and physical needs. Pimps/traffickers are predators who seek out vulnerable victims, often intentionally targeting children who are



The average age of entry into prostitution is 15-17 years old.

1 in 3 teens will be recruited by a pimp within 48 to 72 hours of running away from home.

experiencing trouble at home and/or who have run away. Pimps find victims in places like social-networking websites, shopping malls, schools, group homes, shelters, bus or train stations and on the streets.

Tricked

Through a calculated grooming process, pimps/traffickers may create a seemingly loving and caring relationship with their victim to

establish trust and loyalty. Pimps/traffickers will invest time and effort in their victim, buying them gifts, providing a place to stay or promising a loving relationship. Victims often view the pimp as a caretaker or boyfriend/girlfriend.

Traumatized

A pimp's/trafficker's use of psychological manipulation (causing the child to truly believe the pimp loves and cares for their well-being) coupled with physical control (threats, violence, drug addiction, etc.) can make a victim feel trapped and powerless.

What are potential indicators of trafficking and exploitation of a child?

The child may:

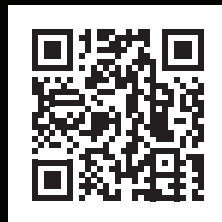
- Show signs of physical harm.
- Show shifts in behavior or mood, including becoming depressed, fearful or withdrawn.
- Have a history of running away or currently be on run.
- Return with expensive clothing, jewelry, manicures, pedicures, etc.
- Begin spending time with an older boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Be found in a hotel/motel.
- Have new tattoos or branding.
- Become isolated from family, friends or sources of support.
- Refer to having a “pimp” or “daddy.”

Don't panic

Pregnant? Scared?
You think you're alone.
You're not.



You can legally hand your unharmed baby up to
30 days old to staff at a hospital, police or fire station.
Walk away, no questions asked.



Anonymous Hotline
1-888-510-BABY
saveabandonedbabies.org



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS Child Abuse Prevention Month

☀️ 2025 ☀️

Tuesday, April 1st
**Southern Region CAP
Kickoff**
John A. Logan College
Carterville
1:00pm-2:30pm

Friday, April 4th
Metro East CAP Kickoff
Riverbend Family Ministries
Wood River
9:00am-10:30am

Friday, April 4th
**Union County
Proclamation Reading**
Union County Courthouse
Jonesboro
9:00am-10:30am

Saturday, April 5th
**Mt. Vernon Community
Collaborative**
205 N. 44th St
Mt. Vernon
12:00pm-2:00pm

Monday, April 7th
**Pope County Proclamation
Reading**
Pope County Courthouse
Golconda
11:30am-1:00pm

Tuesday, April 8th
**Saline County
Proclamation Reading**
Saline County Courthouse
Harrisburg
12:00pm-1:30pm

Monday, April 14th
**Johnson County
Proclamation Reading**
Rural Health Inc.
Goreville
10:00am-11:30am

Thursday, April 17th
**Gallatin County
Proclamation Reading**
Gallatin County Courthouse
Shawneetown
12:00pm-1:30pm

Tuesday, April 22nd
Marion County CAP Event
Marion County Courthouse
Salem
12:00pm-1:30pm

Thursday, April 24th
**Superheroes Stand Up for
Children**
Massac County Courthouse
Metropolis
3:30pm-5:30pm

Friday, April 25th
**Hardin County
Proclamation Reading**
Hardin County Courthouse
Elizabethtown
1:00pm-2:30pm

For more information contact
Rachel or Brittney at
rchruszczyk@pcaillinois.org
bhale@pcaillinois.org



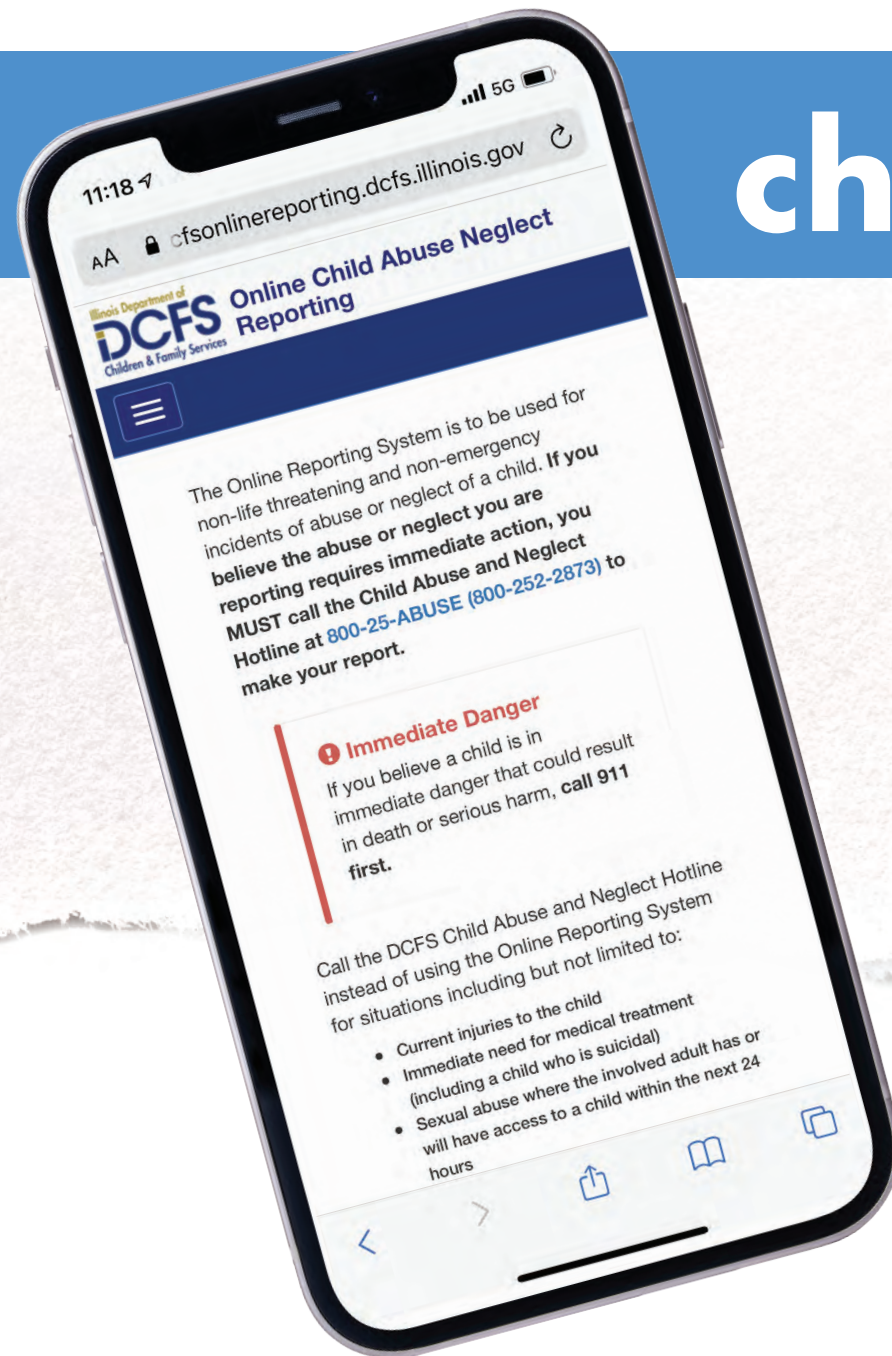


Southern Region Child Abuse Prevention Month Planning Committee

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Betti Mucha
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Anne Hargis
Julie Chambers
Angie Darden
Erika Peterson
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Kari Docherty**



Report Abuse or Neglect at childabuse.illinois.gov



Mobile Friendly

For emergencies call

**DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at
1-800-252-2873**



NOTICE

Any person who knowingly transmits a false report to the department commits the offense of disorderly conduct under subsection (a)(7) of Section 26-1 of the Criminal Code of 2012. A violation of this subsection is a Class 4 felony. (Source: P.A. 97-189, eff. 7-22-11; 97-1150, eff. 1-25-13.)

[DCFS.Illinois.gov](https://dcfs.illinois.gov)

Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois • rev 3/14/24

Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services

SAFETY  **SAFETY**
FIRST ALWAYS



Childhood Trauma

Trauma is something that happens in a child's life that hurts or scares them. It can include things like serious illness, abuse, neglect, or having an unstable home life. When a child experiences trauma over a long period of time it is even more harmful to their growing body and brain.

Children who have gone through traumatic events may have a hard time handling their feelings. They may act out, have odd behaviors, or be very quiet and shy. They may also have a hard time following directions, making friends, and learning new things. These effects can last their whole life.

Thanks to the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study* we have new information and a new way to talk about childhood trauma.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs) INCLUDE:



ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES HAVE BEEN LINKED TO:



*CDC Website: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention.childabuseandneglect/acestudy

ACEs Are Not Destiny

There is hope! Resilience is the ability to bounce back. A strong, positive relationship with a caring adult who provides safety and protection can build resilience in children.

You can build resilience by:



CHILDREN CAN BE HURT BUT THEY CAN ALSO HEAL

To learn more information about childhood trauma:

visit www.preventchildabuseillinois.org/childhood-trauma



Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is any sexual activity between an adult and a child. A child can be sexually abused by another child too.

Sexual abuse can be touching or non-touching. It may include sexual talk, pornography, fondling, oral sex, incest, and rape and can happen to any child of any age including infants. Child sexual abuse can also include internet crimes such as requests for sexual talk, contact or pictures, exposure to sexual images, and sexual bullying or harassment.

Child sex trafficking, known as commercial sexual exploitation of children, is also sexual abuse. It is when something of value is given or promised such as money, food, shelter, gifts or drugs in exchange for sexual activity with the child.

90% of abused children are abused by someone they or their caregivers know and trust. It can be someone like a parent, grandparent, neighbor, teacher, coach or friend.

SIGNS of CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MAY INCLUDE:

- Problems walking or sitting
- Redness, rashes, bleeding, or pain in the genital or anal areas
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy
- Changes in behavior
- Feeling sad or anxious
- Problems at school
- Withdrawing from family or friends
- Fear of certain people, places or activities
- Knowledge about sex inappropriate for the child's age



It is important to know that some children may show no signs at all.



**Prevent Child Abuse
Illinois**

www.preventchildabuseillinois.org

We all have an important role to play in keeping children safe!

Here Is What You Can Do:

- Talk with your children about child sexual abuse. Let them know they can talk to you about anything.
- Teach children the proper names for body parts.
- Tell your child that no one should touch them in a way that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable. If someone does, they should tell you or another trusted adult right away.
- Teach children not to keep secrets. If anyone tells them to keep a secret they should tell you immediately.
- Know where your children are and who they are with.
- Monitor your child's internet use including their laptop, tablet, phone and gaming system. Tell them to never meet anyone in person that they met online.
- Raise awareness. Ask your child's school, youth group or faith organization if they have a sexual abuse prevention policy.
- If a child tells you about abuse, **believe them**. Tell them they did the right thing by telling you. **Report it**.



It is an adult's responsibility to keep children safe!

To learn more about child sexual abuse visit:

www.D2I.org

www.stopitnow.org

www.rainn.org



Domestic Violence and Children

Domestic violence is abuse by a spouse or partner used to gain power and control over the other person. Domestic violence can be physical, verbal, emotional, financial, or sexual abuse.

Children are often aware of the abuse in the home and may show signs they are hurting. This may include:



INFANTS

- Frequent illnesses
- Sleeping problems
- Crying a lot
- Developmental delays
- Increased or decreased startle reflex



TODDLERS

- Shyness or withdrawn
- Aggressive behavior such as excessive biting
- Speech problems
- Loss of skills such as toilet training



SCHOOL-AGE

- Increased aches or pains such as stomach aches
- Depression
- Self-abusive behaviors
- Takes on parenting responsibilities
- Eating disorders
- Anger at others
- Drug or alcohol use



TEENAGERS

- Helplessness or hopelessness
- Sexual acting out
- Violent relationships with others
- Isolation
- Suicide thoughts or attempts
- Drug or alcohol use
- Running away from home

Every child's experience is different and the response to the violence may be different too.

It is important to know that domestic violence, child abuse, and animal abuse are connected and often happen in the same family.



**Prevent Child Abuse
Illinois**

www.preventchildabuseillinois.org

What Children Need To Know

VIOLENCE IN THE HOME IS NOT THEIR FAULT!



Talking about domestic violence is not easy. Children may feel confused, scared, guilty or helpless. Some things you can say to children who have experienced violence in the home are:

“It’s not your fault.”

“I care about you and want you to be safe.”

“I’m sorry you were hurt.”

“Violence is not okay.”

“It’s not your job to stop the fighting.”

“It’s okay to feel confused, angry, or scared.”

“I’m glad you told me what’s happening.”

“I believe you.”

The right time to talk to a child about violence in the home is whenever they are ready. Comfort and give space to the child and don’t make promises you can’t keep like “everything will be okay” or “this will never happen again.”

For more information about domestic violence or to get help:

www.ilcadv.org
www.thehotline.org

**ILLINOIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE
(877)-863-6338**

www.preventchildabuseillinois.org/domestic-violence



Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS)

Shaken Baby Syndrome occurs when an infant or young child is shaken forcefully. Shaking can cause serious brain injury and even death!

CRYING is the #1 trigger for shaking a baby or toddler

All babies cry. Some babies cry A LOT! Have a plan of what to do if you can't calm your crying baby. Keep a list of emergency numbers by or in your phone. Call a friend. Call your doctor if you fear something is wrong. If you feel yourself getting upset, gently put your baby in a safe place and walk away.

How To Help Your Crying Baby



Check to see if your baby needs to be fed, burped or changed.

Check to see if the baby has a fever or if they are too hot or too cold.

Hold your baby close to you. Gently walk, rock or sing to your baby.

Some babies can get fussy if there is too much noise, light or too many people. Find a quiet, safe place for baby to nap.

Make sure that EVERYONE who cares for your child knows about the dangers of shaking. Tell them to NEVER SHAKE your baby. You could save your baby's LIFE!

MORE RESOURCES FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

www.erikson.edu/fussy-baby-network

www.text4baby.org

www.dontshake.org



**Prevent Child Abuse
Illinois**

www.preventchildabuseillinois.org

Take the Safe Baby Pledge

My Pledge To

Baby's Name

I pledge to have a safe place for you to sleep, to learn all I can about what you need, to make sure NO ONE SHAKES YOU, and above all else I pledge to always love you with all my heart!

Love is having a plan.

Love is gently putting you down in a safe place if I'm feeling stressed.

Love is finding a way to calm myself when I can't calm you.

Love is calling a friend, relative, or neighbor to talk to or to take over for a little while when I need a break.

Love is providing a safe sleep environment for you every night and every nap.

Love is talking about Shaken Baby Syndrome to others who may take care of you.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Find more at: www.preventchildabuseillinois.org/sbs