



Prevent Child Abuse
America

500 North Michigan Avenue
Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60611
312.663.3520 *tel*
312.939.8962 *fax*
mailto:mailbox@preventchildabuse.org
www.preventchildabuse.org

Dear Editor:

Communities nationwide recognize that healthy childhood experiences are not just good for children, but good for their communities as well. It's simple really. The actions we take to promote healthy child development are the very actions that help to prevent child abuse and neglect, like parent-child interaction, reading and constructive play. And healthy child development starts a chain of events that follow a child into adulthood. It leads to a more educated and productive workforce, which is good for community and economic development. At a time when we all care about the economy, it makes "cents" to spend more time learning how stable, nurturing relationships influence a child's developing brain and provide a foundation for all future development.

Unfortunately, children are sometimes exposed to intensive stress like child abuse and neglect. Too much stress is bad for anyone and can be devastating to child development. This is where prevention comes into play, however, and this is where Prevent Child Abuse (PCA) America is focusing its efforts.

Our hope is to change the way our nation thinks about prevention, focusing on community activities and public policies that prioritize prevention right from the start to make sure child abuse and neglect never occur. This shift represents our efforts to ensure the healthy development of children nationwide, while seeking to highlight the fact that we all play a role in raising children whether we are neighbors, teachers, police officers, librarians, mentors, coaches or family members.

PCA America's new signature campaign, "Pinwheels for Prevention™," is based on the belief that while the public understands that child abuse and neglect is a serious problem, it doesn't necessarily understand what it means to prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs, or that what the public cares about – the economy, rising health care costs, and animal abuse among other things – are related to preventing abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect often have lifelong consequences for a child, including a greater chance of delinquency, criminal involvement, drug addiction, chronic health problems, mental health issues and an overall drop-off in productivity of the individual as a functioning member of our communities.

Programs and strategies like home visiting, parent education, mutual self-help support, mental health services for new mothers, expanding the availability of affordable daycare programming and substance abuse treatment all play a role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect, and we all play a role in ensuring these programs exist in our communities.

As our nation recognizes April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, please take note of the nearly 500,000 pinwheels that have been distributed across the country as part of Pinwheels for Prevention. The pinwheels represent the changes that are occurring in the belief we know child abuse and neglect can be prevented.

Through its chapters in 47 states and Healthy Families America sites in over 400 communities, PCA America works to provide healthy, stable, and stimulating experiences for children in communities across the country. To make prevention a priority though, the public needs to ask themselves the following questions:

- What are the things I can do to foster good, healthy child development in my community?
- Am I knowledgeable about the legislation that supports prevention on the local and federal levels?
- How can I support prevention at the local and federal levels?

To learn more please visit www.pinwheelsforprevention.org.

Signed,

Jim Hmurovich, President & CEO
Prevent Child Abuse America
(312) 334-6810
jhmurovich@preventchildabuse.org

