



*In Loving Hands  
Kids Blossom*



# Dear Friends and Colleagues

As you know, April is officially designated Child Abuse Prevention Month, giving prevention advocates a chance to combine their efforts to educate America's public. Beyond an understanding of the complexity of child abuse and neglect, its causes and consequences, has to be an awareness of the similarly myriad ways in which it can be prevented.

To this end, Prevent Child Abuse America and Foresters, a financial services organization inspired by helping children, have joined forces to bring you a selection of topics crucial to child and parent well-being and community building, all of which contribute to the prevention we ultimately seek.

We hope you'll share this packet with as many people as possible—not just in April, but year round—by reaching out to the parents and other caregivers, organizations and agencies in your community. We are delighted that you are joining us in this effort!

Sincerely,



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*And look for the inserted at-a-glance  
information card and stickers*

# For Parents

This section provides useful information for anyone in a parenting role.

Preparing those caring for children for this challenging and vital job increases confidence and reduces stress, thereby reducing the likelihood of maltreatment.

These pages cover some common parenting issues such as communicating with children, dealing with the issue of bullying, building character and teaching values. Parents will find useful, time-tested strategies, as well as general information about each topic. Community members and organizations can reproduce this information to provide to other parents.



# Communicating Well with Your Child

*Good communication is a gift between parent and child.*

## **It's the key to building a strong, loving relationship.**

As your child gets older, the ways you communicate with each other change, too. Learning to talk and listen to each other effectively will help you stay close now—and in the future.

## **It also helps your child grow.**

Good communication skills help in the development of your child's:

- Self-esteem
- Emotional and physical health
- Academic success.

As a parent, you play the leading role in helping your child develop good communications skills!

## *What gets in the way of good communication?*

### **A few common roadblocks:**

#### **Too much information**

If you talk too long or about many topics at once, your child can get confused or overwhelmed. Try to focus on one topic at a time. Be sure to let your child respond and ask questions.

#### **Too many distractions**

It's hard to talk—and listen—if you are busy doing something else. When you want to talk, make a point to stop what you're doing—and ask your child to do the same.

#### **Too many demands**

Try to avoid phrases such as, "Don't do that!" Instead, try: "Please be careful with that—it could break." When you explain the reason for a rule or request, your child is more likely to respond.

Remember, communication is a two way street. It means talking and listening.

# Communication with your child changes over time.

## **Babies (birth to 1 year)**

Babies “talk” through facial expressions, coos, grunts and body movements. You can communicate back by talking, singing, touching and making lots of eye contact.

## **Toddlers (1 to 3 years)**

Children at these ages communicate with gestures, facial expressions, single words and two-word sentences. Help your child build language skills by expanding on his or her expressions and words. For example:

- “I see you smiling. Do you like the doggy?”
- “Cold. This ice cream is cold to eat.”

## **Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)**

At this age, children can speak in full sentences. They like to describe past experiences, explore fantasies and talk to themselves. They can:

- Ask questions that require detailed answers. For example: “What did you and Ana do at preschool today?”
- Help make connections between spoken and written words. For example, point to a stop sign and say “stop” out loud.

**6- to 12-year-olds are skilled communicators. They can understand complex ideas, ask thoughtful questions and see other people’s points of view. To build on these skills:**

## **Help your child express thoughts and feelings.**

For example:

- Ask your child to talk about his or her likes and dislikes.
- Discuss any problems and possible solutions.
- Talk about feelings and possible reasons for them.

## **Make conversation part of your daily routine.**

Make a point to:

- Ask about your child’s friends, classmates, teachers and current activities.
- Go to school events and talk about them afterward.

Building positive communication with your child is the key to having a strong relationship now and in the future.

## Three keys to being a good listener:

### 1. Pay attention.

If you're not focused on what your child is saying, you're not really listening. Instead, remember to:

- Stop what you're doing.
- Make your child comfortable. For a younger child, that means getting down to his or her eye level. For an older child or teenager, it might be better to talk on a car or bus ride as you sit side by side.

- Concentrate on his or her words.
- Try to notice how your child is feeling (That is, "look" for the feelings behind his or her words.)

### 2. Don't interrupt.

Let your child finish his or her thoughts.

- Encourage your child to use his or her own words.
- Repeat what your child has said to make sure you understand.

### 3. Show respect.

Even if you disagree, listen to everything your child has to say.

- Don't finish your child's sentences.
- Don't twist your child's words to fit your own point of view.

Remember to show your love, too. Sometimes words are less important than a reassuring hug or smile.

## Help your child be a good listener, too.

### Ask your child to repeat what he or she hears.

For example:

- When reading to a younger child, stop mid-story and ask questions. For example: "What do you think is going to happen next?"
- Older children can write things out—phone messages, journals, to-do lists, etc. This helps them practice writing down what they hear. It also helps them learn how to summarize.

### Make time for family conversation.

Avoid watching TV or listening to the radio while having meals. Instead, talk to each other! Car and bus rides are a good time to talk, too. Take turns sharing what you did that day.

### **Teach your child the keys to listening.**

Your child learns by watching you. When you pay attention, avoid interrupting and show respect, your child will follow your lead.

## *What are “I” statements?*

They’re honest statements that say how you feel.

“I” messages explain, “you” messages blame.

Here are some examples:

- Instead of saying, “You never clean your room,” you could say, “I get upset when I ask you to clean your room and it doesn’t get done.”
- Instead of saying, “You’re so loud,” you could say, “I can’t understand you when you raise your voice.”
- Instead of saying, “You’re getting crumbs everywhere,” you could say, “I’d like you to pay attention when you’re eating.”

### **Use “I” statements to praise your child, too.**

Remember to be specific. For example, you could say:

- “I’m so proud of you for helping me clean up.”
- “I think you did a great job waiting quietly.”

## *Keeping communication lines open*

Sometimes it can be hard to get your child talking. Here are a few openers you can try:

- “How did you feel when that happened?”
- “Tell me more.”
- “Go ahead, I’m listening.”
- “What do you think about (topic)?”
- “This sounds really important.”
- “Let’s talk about it.”
- “You seem really worried.”
- “Sure, explain it to me.”

Remember: always be open to what your child is saying. A warm or calm tone of voice invites conversation.

## Communicating during conflicts

**When you and your child don't see eye to eye, don't let your differences get in the way of solving the problem. Be sure to:**

### **Avoid unkind words.**

Words that blame or shame discourage your child from talking with you. If you ever feel like insulting your child, stop. Wait until you calm down before you speak. Then, use "I" statements to share your feelings.

### **Rely on the "DOs," not the "DON'Ts."**

It may seem easier to say, "Don't slam the door" or "Don't get your jacket dirty." But it may be more effective to say:

- "Please close the door gently so it doesn't slam."
- "Try to keep your jacket from dragging on the ground so it doesn't get dirty."

### **Tackle one problem at a time.**

Avoid bringing up several issues at once. Don't dwell on past mistakes. Instead, focus on one issue at a time.

### **Be aware of your tone of voice.**

You can be firm without raising your voice or shouting. Your child is more likely to listen and to respect you if you remain calm.

### **Choose the right time and place.**

Find a private place to work out differences or discuss strong feelings. This will show your child that you respect his or her privacy, and that you think the issue is important.

### **Teach forgiveness.**

Your child will learn to forgive others by being forgiven. You can also ask for your child's forgiveness by admitting when you're cranky, distracted or mistaken about something.

Working out your differences is worth the effort. It can also be a great learning experience—for both of you!

## Questions and answers

### **What else can I do to build my child's communications skills?**

Read books and get involved in creative projects such as music, art, dance and writing. Reading and the arts are good ways to enhance communication. They're fun, too!

**Should I correct my child's grammar while he or she is talking?**

No. Instead of focusing on mistakes, follow through with the proper response. For example, if your child says, "Grandpa gived me cookie," you could say, "Grandpa gave you a cookie? What kind was it?"

**What about family meetings?**

Regular meetings can be a great way to improve family communication. Use them to discuss successes, current challenges, weekend plans, etc. Remember, you can also use mealtimes and car and bus rides as times to catch up with each other.

**When should I start a conversation about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and early sex?**

There's no right or wrong time. In general, the sooner you talk about these things, the better. The key is to give the information in a way that is right for your child's age. For example, even young children can understand basic messages about how to stay healthy and how their bodies belong to them.

For more advice, ask a school counselor or teacher. You may also find it valuable to borrow books on talking about difficult topics from your local library.

Remember to keep up these talks even when your child is a teen. It's important for these talks to be two-way conversations. You should do as much listening as talking.

*Good communication is priceless!*

Talk and listen to your child every day. Make it a family routine. You'll be glad you did!

Remember, good communication takes practice. Keep at it—and your child will follow your lead.

Reach out if you or your child needs help with communication. Know that lots of qualified people are ready and willing to help.

Good communication with your child can help you build a loving and lasting relationship!

# What Parents should know about Bullying

*Bullying\* hurts everyone.*

**It can have lasting effects on the victim, the bully, the school and the community.**

## **Bullying isn't "just part of growing up."**

Bullying means repeatedly picking on or hurting another person:

- Physically—hitting, tripping, kicking, etc.
- Verbally—name-calling, making threats, spreading rumors, etc.
- Emotionally—purposefully excluding someone, manipulating friendships, etc.

No child deserves to be treated in these ways.

## **Parents play a key role in preventing bullying.**

Your efforts are well worth it! Research has shown that reducing bullying in schools can lead to:

- Less school violence overall
- Increased school morale
- Improved overall academic performance.

Preventing bullying helps everyone – you can make a difference!

*Bullying can have lasting effects.*

**These can include:**

### **Fear**

When a known bully is hurting others, no one knows who will be bullied next.

### **Shame**

Victims often feel worthless—and powerless. Others may feel ashamed for not helping to stop it; even the bully may feel badly about his or her behavior, but not know how to stop.

\*Bullying may also be called "peer abuse."

### **More violence**

Some people may respond to fear of bullies by carrying weapons or taking other violent measures. Violence can quickly spread.

### **Loss of freedom**

People may avoid certain places or activities out of fear. Some may even stop going to school.

## *Is your child being bullied?*

### **Many children who are bullied keep it a secret.**

They may be scared or ashamed to tell. They may think telling will make matters worse.

Know the warning signs.

A victim may:

- Seem quiet or depressed
- Have bruises or other injuries
- Have headaches, stomachaches or trouble sleeping
- Come home missing or with damaged belongings
- Ask for more lunch money
- Lose interest in school, or do poorly in school
- Avoid school or certain places

These signs don't prove your child is being bullied. But they could be a warning sign that something is wrong.

Studies show that victims are often:

- Shy or have low self-esteem
- Submissive (don't defend themselves)
- Physically weak or small
- Unpopular

Any child can be a victim of bullying.

## *How to help*

### **If you learn that your child is being bullied:**

#### **Stay calm.**

Tell your child:

- Nobody deserves to be bullied.
- It's OK to feel angry, sad or afraid.

Reassure your child that you will help him or her.

**Ask questions.**

Ask why your child thinks he or she is being bullied. Discuss whether this is something your child can or wants to change and how.

**Think of peaceful solutions together.**

Brainstorming ways to solve the problem nonviolently can help your child gain the confidence he or she needs to face the bully by him- or herself.

*Note:* Confronting a bully is important, but not when the child is in physical danger. Report any physical incidents or threats to the proper authorities, such as school officials.

## *Is your child bullying others?*

**Many parents sense if their child is bullying others.**

They may receive reports from school, other authorities or parents of other children.

**Know the warning signs.**

Children who bully others may:

- Enjoy putting others down and/or not care about others' feelings
- Need to have power over others
- Use others to get what they want
- Disrespect authority and people who are different from them
- Make jokes about violent acts or enjoy violence (on TV, for example)
- Disregard rules
- Have an attitude of superiority.

Studies show that children who bully are more likely to have been:

- Taught that physical fighting is an accepted way to resolve conflicts
- Disciplined physically (spanked, slapped, etc.)
- Victims or witnesses to physical or verbal abuse
- Unsupervised or neglected.

## *How to help*

**If you learn that your child is bullying others:****Stay calm.**

It's normal to feel angry or ashamed—or even want to deny that your child could hurt others. But children who bully need help. It's important to stay calm. Focus on how you can help your child learn positive behavior.

**Talk about it.**

Ask your child why he or she is bullying others. Help him or her find healthy ways to deal with strong feelings, like anger.

Make it clear that you think bullying is wrong. Set clear, nonviolent consequences for future bullying behavior.

**Consider your own behavior.**

Children often learn by watching their parents. If you need help with a situation at home, seek help.

## *Tips to help prevent bullying*

**These tips can help victims and children who bully.**

**Spend quality time with your child.**

All children need to feel loved. Talk—and listen—to your child. Spend family time doing something you all enjoy.

**Be a positive role model.**

Your child learns by watching you. Respect others—and stand up for yourself when people don't respect you.

**Use positive discipline.**

Set clear rules and fair consequences for breaking them. Always follow through. Never use physical punishment—this teaches that violence is a way to get what you want.

**Teach your child not to be a bystander.**

When no one speaks up, the bully learns he or she can get away with it. Encourage your child to tell the bully to stop, or to walk away and get help from an adult. This is not tattling!

**Challenge violence in the media.**

Talk with your child about how unrealistic media violence is. Together, think of nonviolent ways the conflicts shown could have been solved.

**Help your child feel good about him- or herself in a healthy way.**

Encourage your child to set and reach goals, such as doing well in school or making new friends. Celebrate together when your child reaches them.

**Teach nonviolence.**

Teach that using violence to solve problems or deal with anger only makes things worse for everyone. (Remember, a victim who uses violence will get in trouble, too.)

**Encourage healthy relationships.**

Get to know your child's friends. Encourage your child to get involved with school activities. This is a good way to make new friends who share the same interests.

## *Help your child stay safe.*

**Teach these tips:****Stick with a group.**

Avoid being alone in "target" areas, such as locker rooms, restrooms or empty classrooms. Also avoid going to places off school grounds where the bully hangs out.

**Don't fight back or seek "revenge."**

It takes more guts to walk away from a fight. Don't trade insults, either. Remember: Revenge won't solve the problem. It could make it worse.

Agree with the bully.

Say, "You're right." Then walk away. You can also:

- Use humor—as long as it doesn't offend or embarrass the person.
- Choose not to react—just walk away.

**Report all bullying incidents.**

Whether you are a victim or a witness, reporting can help stop the bully and protect others. It's not tattling!

**Be assertive—and confident.**

- Tell the person to stop. If that doesn't work, walk away.
- Use body language (stand up straight, walk proud and make eye contact) to show you are not afraid.

**Role-play together.**

Practice how you'd respond to different bullying situations.

Remember: Be confident!

**Build self-esteem.**

When in doubt, focus on the things you like about yourself. Set goals and reward yourself when you reach them. Remind yourself: NO ONE deserves to be bullied.

**Get involved in school activities.**

It's a great way to make new friends and feel good about yourself. Physical activities, such as sports, are also a good way to improve physical coordination and overall health. (Be sure to consult a healthcare provider before starting an exercise program.)

# Building Good Character by Teaching Your Child Positive Values

## **What is good character?**

Having good character means having positive values and acting on those values. (Values are principles—for example, honesty and fairness.) A person with good character wants to do the right thing!

## **Why is it important?**

Teaching your child good values is a wonderful gift for the future. Children with good character tend to be happier and friendlier and do better in school. And, a child with good character becomes an adult with good character.

Children with good character make the world a better place!

*Good character starts at home.*

**YOU are your child's leading role model for positive behavior.**

## **Children are not born knowing good values.**

Your child learns good character as he or she grows up. As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. If you value good character, your child learns to value it, too.

## **Parents have a special job.**

Children watch their parents and learn from their example. Try to be the kind of person you want your child to be. You can show your child how to do the right thing by doing the right thing yourself.

*Steps toward character*

**You and your child might already be working on good values.  
You can build on them as a family.**

## **Make a promise.**

Deciding to help your child build good character is an important step for both of you. First, think about how your family already shows good character. You might ask yourself:

- How do we try to be caring, fair, honest, respectful and responsible?
- How do we try to be good citizens and helpful members of our community?

### **Agree on family goals.**

Next, make a plan for building good character in your family. For example, post a list of family goals in a special place. Your goals may be simple, such as:

- Be quiet when someone is using the phone.
- Be honest if you make a mistake.
- Ask “How was your day?” every day.

### **Talk about good character often.**

Point out examples of good character and talk about it whenever you see it—in yourself, in your child or in others. Explain why you care about doing the right thing.

### **Share decision making.**

Discuss some of your decisions with your child. (“I decided to take a class so I can do even better at my job.”) This way, you teach your child how to make good decisions. He or she learns to make the right choices—even if a decision is tough.

### **Make good character a habit.**

Building good character takes time. But it can become a good habit if you keep working on it together. Look for opportunities to teach about good character every day.

Let’s take a closer look at some important steps to good character...

## *Caring*

Caring means thinking about other people besides yourself.

Caring means you pay attention to other people’s:

- Likes or dislikes
- Feelings
- Special qualities
- Words or actions

Try to think what life is like from another person’s point of view.

### **Teach your child the Golden Rule: “Treat others the same way you would like to be treated.”**

#### **You and your child can practice caring.**

For example, do a caring activity together. Think about somebody who might like a special gift or need a helping hand. You and your child could:

- Do a helpful chore for a grandparent or neighbor.
- Surprise somebody in the hospital with flowers or cookies.
- Send a distant friend or relative a homemade card with a kind message.

Ask your child how it feels to do something nice for somebody else. Talk about caring often—and make caring a daily habit. He or she will learn why caring matters!

# Fairness

**Fairness means everybody gets an equal chance.**

Being fair means you:

- Play by the rules
- Take turns
- Share
- Keep an open mind
- Consider all sides of a story

**Use common activities to teach fairness.**

For example:

- Include your child in simple family decisions. (“If you want tacos for dinner, raise your hand!”)
- Encourage your child to share a special toy with a friend. (For example, suggest the children take turns.)
- Play a board or computer game together and make a special point to follow all of the rules.

Compliment your child whenever he or she is fair.

Fairness is as easy as listening to each other’s ideas.

# Honesty

**An honest person tells the truth.**

If people believe you are an honest person, they will grow to trust you.

People will count on you to:

- Tell the whole truth
- Be loyal
- Keep your word

**Honesty between you and your child is important.**

Your child trusts you to help with his or her problems or needs. And you trust your child to tell you the truth and to behave well.

**Give your child examples of honesty.**

Talk about ways that you are honest. For example, explain why you:

- Take only what you pay for
- Return things that are borrowed
- Follow through on promises

Praise your child for being honest—even if he or she is telling you about something that went wrong. It is important to reward honesty!

An honest child learns trust—and earns trust, too!

# Respect

## **Respect means accepting people for who they are.**

Some ways to show respect are:

- Being polite and courteous
- Letting others speak for themselves
- Appreciating every person as an individual

Respecting each other helps make a family strong. You are each unique!

## **Show respect every day.**

A good way to teach respect is through good manners. Teach your child about:

- Saying “Please,” “Thank you” and “Excuse me” when appropriate
- Offering to hold a door for someone who is elderly, pregnant or disabled
- Showing respect according to traditions in your family, community or religion

Teach that everybody deserves respect. If you respect others, they will respect you, too.

# Responsibility

## **Responsibility means you do what you say you will do.**

You get things done and you stand behind your actions. People can count on you to:

- Make promises that you can keep—and then keep them
- Be reliable and help out however you can
- Admit your mistakes and take steps to correct them

## **Your child may already have some responsibilities.**

You can also plan special responsibilities to match your child’s abilities.

For example:

- Give your child a plant to care for by him- or herself. (“It’s up to you to water your fern.”)
- Ask your child to do some basic chores. (“I’d like you to dust the bookcase every week, please.”)
- Find a simple activity for your child to do responsibly. (“Thank you for putting away your toys today. You did a great job!”)

Thinking ahead also shows responsibility. Teach your child to “look before you leap.”

# Citizenship

**Citizenship means being an active member of your community.**

Your community can be your:

- World
- Country
- State
- Town
- School
- Neighborhood

**Practice citizenship with your child.**

We are each free and equal members of our community. Support your community together! Here are some ideas:

- Volunteer for a community service project together (such as collecting food or clothes for a shelter).
- Stay informed about current events. Read the local newspaper and share your opinions with each other.
- Attend community events together (such as a parade or a concert).

Help your child learn to give something back to the community where you live.

# Rules with character

**Having rules for your child also helps build good character.**

**Explain the rules.**

Make sure your child knows the rules you expect him or her to follow. If your child does not understand a rule, talk about it in a way that shows good character. (“Keeping your clothes drawer tidy shows you are responsible.”) That way your child learns how rules help him or her do the right thing.

**Praise your child often.**

Be sure to reward positive behavior. You could:

- Give specific praise. (“You showed respect by offering your seat to Mrs. Aziz today. Good work!”)
- Make time for a favorite activity. (“Let’s finish the story now.”)
- Allow special privileges. (“You may play in my room until lunch. I know I can trust you.”)

## *If a rule is broken, stay calm.*

Be patient and explain the problem. That way your child can decide to do better next time. For example:

- Talk about what happened so your child knows it is not OK.
- Explain again why you made the rule and the consequences of breaking it.
- Ask your child to take a short "time-out."

## *Good character is everywhere!*

You can find examples in friends, stories and daily life. Other people might inspire you. Perhaps you and your child already know people with good values. They might be:

- Relatives
- Other parents
- Other well-behaved children

Or your child might have a personal hero, such as a cartoon character. Ask your child about good character in these friends and heroes. How do they show caring, fairness, honesty, respect, responsibility and citizenship?

### **Familiar stories tell us a lot.**

Children learn from TV, movies, stories and daily events. Point out examples of good or bad character whenever you can. Ask your child about:

- The characters in a story ("Did Jack do the right thing when he sold the cow?")
- Shows on TV ("Why do you think the king lost his kingdom?")
- Recent events ("Why did Grandpa share his homemade jelly with us?")

Remember, building good character takes practice. Keep working on it together!

## *Good character for life*

### **Our character shapes our lives.**

It is never too early (or late) to help your child build positive values. Take time to talk with him or her about caring, fairness, honesty, respect, responsibility and citizenship. Make good character a daily habit!

# Community Action and Prevention

This section addresses what community members can do to prevent child abuse and neglect. Everyone can play a role—even if you don't work directly with children or families, or if you aren't a parent. Creating communities that truly support families and value children is everyone's responsibility because the children of today are the citizens of tomorrow and the better start they have, the better future for all of us!

In these pages, community members can learn about child abuse and its causes, as well as a range of prevention strategies for all levels of involvement.

Together, we can make sure that children are nurtured to grow up healthy and strong.



# Understanding Abuse

## **What is child abuse?**

Abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional, or it can be any form of neglect. The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) defines abuse as “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.” Most states define a “child” as any person under the age of 18.

Even though each state has its own laws regarding different circumstances of abuse—who is obligated to report abuse and which types of abuse are criminally punishable—the basic definition of abuse is the same everywhere.

## **Risk factors for abuse**

We may not ever fully understand all of the reasons why an adult may become abusive—and it may be hard to think that a child under our guidance could be harmed by someone else. There is no specific profile for an adult that makes him or her likely to abuse, but there are some risk factors that may contribute. Often, parents and caregivers have no intention of harming a child, but they may be unable to cope with life’s stresses. They may then take their anger and frustration out on children. Other times, adults are simply unaware that their form of discipline is too harsh or excessive for the child’s age or behavior. Adults who abuse children may also face one or more of these challenges:

- Living at or below the poverty level
- Social isolation
- Frequent family crises
- Abuse during their childhood
- Substance abuse
- Lack of parenting skills
- Unrealistic expectations of children
- Poor impulse control
- Past unplanned or premarital pregnancy
- Abuse from their partner
- Unemployment.

## **Long-term effects of child abuse**

While we are most concerned with the immediate future of an abused child, there are also long-term effects that can harm the

child and community. Children who suffer any kind of abuse can have lifelong problems, including:

- Learning disorders
- Dropping out of school
- Crime and violence
- Prostitution
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Teenage pregnancy
- Substance abuse
- Unemployment
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying event) or other personality disorders
- Depression or low self-esteem
- Speech defects
- Brain damage
- Suicide.

Perhaps the most troubling result is that adults who were abused as children are also more likely to abuse their own children or partners.

There are steps that we can all take to stop the cycle of child abuse!

# 1. For Community Members

**Build a support network by getting involved in your community.**

**Get to know your neighbors.**

Develop friendly relationships with your neighbors and their children. Problems often seem less overwhelming when you have support nearby.

**Get involved in your child's school.**

Join the parent-teacher organization and attend school events.

**Be an active community member.**

Attend town meetings and community events. Join groups that are working to improve your community.

**Know where to get help.**

Many schools and communities offer programs and support parents and children. Find out what services are available for you and your neighbors. Check your yellow pages under "human services."

Taking these steps helps strengthen your family—and your community.

## *Be a good neighbor*

**Reach out to families and children in your community.**

### **Help families under stress.**

If a family you know seems to be in crisis or under stress, offer to help.

For example, you could:

- Offer to baby-sit
- Help with chores and errands
- Suggest resources in the community that can help the family.

### **Be kind to children.**

Get to know the children in your neighborhood. Be kind and supportive to any child—especially if his or her family is under stress.

When neighbors can rely on each other, everyone benefits.

## *Learn how your community supports children and families*

**A range of programs and services may be available.**

### **Parent education programs**

Teach parents about child development and parenting skills.

### **Family support centers**

Provide services such as parenting education, social networking, self-help groups or child-care relief.

### **Home-visiting programs**

Provide social support, education and crisis intervention to families at risk for abuse.

### **Substance abuse treatment programs**

Can help parents overcome problems with alcohol or other drugs.

### **Well-baby programs**

Provide health and education services to new parents.

### **Child-care programs**

Offer affordable child-care services. This may allow parents to maintain full-time jobs or stay in school while keeping their children safe.

**Respite care**

Provides relief to families with a child or other family member who is ill or has a disability.

**Parent mentor programs**

Match experienced, stable parents with parents at risk for abuse. Mentors provide support and model positive parenting skills.

Providing support and education to parents helps prevent child abuse.

## *How you can take part in prevention efforts*

**Volunteer to support children and families.**

For example:

- Become a parent mentor and serve as a role model for a new parent.
- Get trained as a respite care provider and help families with special-needs children.
- Volunteer at a parent resource center and help families get the support they need.
- Help a community organization with office work, newsletters, mailings, fundraising, events planning, etc.

**Make a donation.**

Most charitable contributions are tax deductible—and they support efforts to help families.

- If you can, donate money to an organization that works to prevent child abuse.
- Donate clothing, food or toys to a social service agency that helps families in your community.

**Become an advocate.**

Speak out against child abuse. Contact your elected officials. Ask them to support funding for prevention efforts and policies that support children and families.

**Raise awareness.**

Talk to your friends and neighbors about child abuse and how to prevent it. Help local organizations distribute educational materials on parenting and child abuse.

**Join a coalition to prevent child abuse.**

Help guide your community's efforts to prevent child abuse. Team up with individuals and organizations that are working to prevent child abuse, and strengthen your efforts. Help strengthen your community. Get involved in child abuse prevention.

## 2. For Those Working with Families and Children

### **Promote community awareness.**

- Develop information on parenting, child safety, child abuse and community resources—post it in schools, health-care facilities, law enforcement agencies, business and places of worship, and include it in community and corporate newsletters.
- Ensure that printed materials are available for everyone (provide if you can materials in languages other than English).

### **Educate parents.**

- Volunteer or organize volunteers to visit at-risk families and pregnant women.
- Prepare or distribute parenting information kits for new parents, including teen parents.
- Counsel parents about effective parenting skills, proper discipline and child abuse.
- Encourage parents to be involved with their children, spend time with them and take part in their activities.
- Get involved in local parent support groups. Help create other forums for parents to meet and share their concerns. Make sure that there are support groups for both mothers and fathers.

### **Educate children.**

- Provide resources for children that will help them cope with family problems and adjust to changes at home.
- Know how to talk to children about child abuse awareness and the importance of getting help from a trusted adult if they ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe with anyone.
- Encourage parents to talk to their children about child abuse and safety.
- Know about community resources for abused children.

### **Provide role models and dependable child care.**

- Volunteer to mentor a child.
- Encourage employers to provide flextime and family-friendly policies for parents.
- Organize or volunteer at after-school programs and activities for “latchkey” children.

### **Work with other community leaders.**

- Coordinate fund-raisers for children and family and child services in your community.
- Participate in training sessions with other professionals to learn more about child abuse.
- Learn about child development—knowing what health, behavioral and educational stages are normal for children can help you recognize signs of child abuse.
- Invite someone from CPS to talk to professionals in your community.
- Work with your community to strengthen your local CPS—meet with CPS caseworkers to find out how you can help make their job easier.
- Arrange opportunities for everyone in the community to meet and talk about concerns and learn how to build on strengths.

### **Support special programs.**

- Support community programs for substance abuse awareness and treatment, children with special needs, early education and mental health.

### **Support children's legal rights.**

- Support your community in efforts to create child advocacy centers—central, friendly locations where abused children can talk to lawyers, advocates, law enforcement officers and therapists. These centers can serve as a familiar place for children to receive help and eliminate the need for children to be shuffled to and from various locations.

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*Please let us know what you think*

Your views on what we're doing and how we could make things even better are important to us. If there's anything you want to say, please email us at [cturner@preventchildabuse.org](mailto:cturner@preventchildabuse.org), or write to:

Prevent Child Abuse America  
Attn: Marketing & Communications  
200 South Michigan Avenue  
17th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60604.2404

# List of Resources

The following national organizations and programs have local chapters in states and communities across the country. Please call the national office or go to the Web site listing to identify a local office near you.

## **Alliance for Children and Families**

The Alliance for Children and Families, an international membership association, represents more than 350 private, nonprofit child- and family-serving organizations providing a vast array of services ranging from residential care to abuse prevention and intervention.

*Phone:* 414.359.1040

*Web site:* [www.alliance1.org](http://www.alliance1.org)

## **AVANCE Family Support and Education Program**

AVANCE provides support and education services to low-income families to strengthen their family, enhance parenting skills to nurture the optimal development of children, promote educational success, and foster the personal and economic success of parents.

*Phone:* 210.270.4630

*Web site:* [www.avance.org](http://www.avance.org)

*Local contacts:* [www.avance.org](http://www.avance.org) (See link for "Contact.")

## **Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)**

CWLA is an association of more than 1,100 public and private nonprofit agencies that coordinate national and local child abuse prevention efforts and assist over 3.5 million abused and neglected children and their families each year with a wide range of services.

*Phone:* 202.638.2954

*Web site:* [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)

*Local contacts:* [www.cwla.org/members/members.htm](http://www.cwla.org/members/members.htm)

## **Circle of Parents™**

Circle of Parents™ is a national network of organizations that provide parent self-help support groups to anyone in a parenting role. These groups offer parents a place to discuss the challenges of raising kids, exchange ideas, and offer support. Circle of Parents™ is a collaborative project of Prevent Child Abuse America and the National Family Support Roundtable, and is sponsored by OCAN and OJJDP.

*Phone:* 312.663.3520

*Web site:* [www.circleofparents.org](http://www.circleofparents.org)

*Local contacts:* [www.circleofparents.org/locator/index.html](http://www.circleofparents.org/locator/index.html)

## **Family Support America (FSA)**

Family Support America promotes family support for ensuring the well-being of our children. FSA advocates on behalf of families and provides technical assistance, training and education, conferences, and publications.

*Phone:* 312.338.0900

*Web site:* [www.familysupportamerica.org](http://www.familysupportamerica.org)

*Local contacts:*

[www.familysupportamerica.org/content/mapping\\_dir/find.asp](http://www.familysupportamerica.org/content/mapping_dir/find.asp)

## **FRIENDS (Family Resource Information, Education and Network Services) National Resource Center for Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect**

FRIENDS provides technical assistance and information to State leads of Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect to help States in their efforts of reducing the incidence of child abuse and neglect and strengthening families.

*Phone:* 312.338.0900

*Web site:* [www.friendsnrc.org](http://www.friendsnrc.org)

*Local contacts:* [www.friendsnrc.org](http://www.friendsnrc.org)

## **Healthy Families America®**

Healthy Families America®, a program of Prevent Child Abuse America, promotes positive parenting and child health and development through voluntary home visits by trained staff.

*Phone:* 312.663.3520

*Web site:* [www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org](http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org)

*Local contacts:* [www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/state\\_system\\_locator/index.shtml](http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/state_system_locator/index.shtml)

## **Meld**

Meld offers educational and support services for parents, trains family service providers to apply best practices, and publishes resource materials for parents and service providers.

*Phone:* 612.332.7563

*Web site:* [www.meld.org](http://www.meld.org)

*Local contacts:* [www.meld.org/sitemaplist.cfm](http://www.meld.org/sitemaplist.cfm)

## **National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds**

The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds initiates and engages in national efforts that assist State Children's Trust and Prevention Funds in strengthening families to prevent child abuse and neglect. Children's Trust and Prevention Funds annually provide more than \$100 million for community-based child abuse and neglect prevention programs that serve 2 million families.

*Phone:* 517.432.5096

*Web site:* [www.ctfalliance.org](http://www.ctfalliance.org)

*Local contacts:* [www.ctfalliance.org](http://www.ctfalliance.org)

(See link for "Participating States.")

## **National Exchange Club Foundation for the Prevention of Child Abuse (NECF)**

The NECF coordinates a nationwide network of community-based Exchange Club Child Abuse Prevention Centers, which offer a professionally supervised parent aide program – based on Erikson's stages of development – to at-risk parents, with the goal of replacing traditional patterns of abusive behavior with effective skills for nonviolent parenting.

*Phone:* 800.924.2643

*Web site:* [www.preventchildabuse.com](http://www.preventchildabuse.com)

*Local contacts:* [www.preventchildabuse.com/usamap.htm](http://www.preventchildabuse.com/usamap.htm)

## **Parents Anonymous® Inc.**

Parents Anonymous® Inc. leads a dynamic international network of accredited organizations that implement weekly, ongoing Parents Anonymous® Adult and Children's Groups that are free of charge to participants and based on a shared leadership model.

*Phone:* 909.621.6184

*Web site:* [www.parentsanonymous.org](http://www.parentsanonymous.org)

## **Prevent Child Abuse America**

With chapters in nearly 40 States and the District of Columbia Prevent Child Abuse America provides leadership to promote and implement child abuse prevention efforts at both the national and local levels.

*Phone:* 312.663.3520

*Web site:* [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

*Local contacts:*

[www.preventchildabuse.org/get\\_local/index.html](http://www.preventchildabuse.org/get_local/index.html)

### **Prevent Child Abuse America**

Listed in 2002 as one of Worth Magazine's top 100 charities for the second year in a row, Prevent Child Abuse America is the leading organization working at the national, state and local levels to prevent the abuse and neglect of our nation's children. By valuing children, strengthening families and engaging communities, Prevent Child Abuse America works to prevent child abuse and neglect before it starts. Headquartered in Chicago, Prevent Child Abuse America has a network of chapters in 39 states and the District of Columbia. The organization is widely known for its public awareness campaigns, prevention programs, advocacy efforts and research. For more information about child abuse and neglect prevention call 1-800-CHILDREN or visit [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org).

### **Foresters**

A financial services organization inspired by helping children, Foresters™ offers products, such as life insurance and investments\*. For 130 years, Foresters has operated on the principle that the growth and prosperity of individual families is linked to the communities in which they live. Foresters invests time, money and resources to raise funds and strengthen non-profit children's organizations, such as Children's Miracle Network and Prevent Child Abuse America, while Foresters members and staff volunteer locally. [www.foresters.biz](http://www.foresters.biz)

Foresters™ is a trademark of The Independent Order of Foresters, a fraternal benefit society. \*In the U.S., investments offered through Foresters Equity Services Inc. (FESCO) – Member NASD, SIPC, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Independent Order of Foresters. 402610 US (02/04)

**Prevent Child Abuse America**

200 South Michigan Avenue  
17th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

[www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

**Foresters**

789 Don Mills Road  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
M3C 1T9  
1.800.828.1540  
[www.foresters.biz](http://www.foresters.biz)



A financial services organization  
inspired by helping children.