

TEN WAYS TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Preventing child abuse should be everyone's concern. In your own community you can help to strengthen families who are responsible for the well-being of their children. Every small effort can bring big rewards and will make a difference in the quality of life in your community. Here are 10 ways to get started:

- 1 Support activities that raise public awareness during April, National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Contact a local agency for information on becoming involved.
- 2 Volunteer at a local child abuse program. Parent support groups, crisis centers, and hotlines are typical programs that often welcome volunteers. Check your telephone directory for names of agencies in your area.
- 3 Report suspected abuse or neglect. Keeping children safe means that each of us has an obligation to inform authorities if you have a reasonable suspicion that children are being harmed. Your concern may mean that children are protected from an abusive environment.
- 4 Advocate for services to help families. Communities need comprehensive services that address issues that affect families. Parenting programs, health care, and housing needs are all important to maintaining healthy children and families.
- 5 Speak up for non-violent television programming for children. Let local television stations and sponsors of network programs know that you consider excessive violence inappropriate for impressionable young viewers.
- 6 Make a contribution to a child abuse prevention organization. Your donations are put to good use in much-needed community programs. Prevention services are critical to preventing child abuse and to strengthening families.
- 7 Help a friend, neighbor, or relative. Someone you know may be struggling with his or her parenting responsibilities. Offer a sympathetic ear or a helping hand. Assisting occasionally with child care or offering to locate sources of community help can be a tremendous boost to someone under stress.
- 8 Help yourself. Recognize the signs that indicate outside help is needed. If you feel overwhelmed, constantly sad, angry, and out of control, get some help. Remember, it is a sign of strength, not weakness, to ask for help.
- 9 Support and suggest programs on child abuse prevention sponsored by local organizations. Kiwanis Clubs, Exchange Clubs, PTAs, church groups, and women's and men's clubs all offer excellent opportunities for raising public awareness in the community. In addition, several national organizations, including the National Black Child Development Institute and the National Indian Child Welfare Association, can assist communities in preventing child maltreatment.
- 10 Promote programs in schools. Teaching children prevention strategies can help to keep children safe from those who would perpetrate abuse on them.