



Child Abuse Prevention Month

Promote Protective Factors to Prevent Child Abuse

Child Abuse Prevention Month is about *solutions*. Protective factors are solutions. Protective factors are conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families. They are attributes that serve as buffers, helping parents who might otherwise be at risk of abusing their children to find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress.

Foster nurturing and attached relationships.

When parents and children have strong, warm feelings for one another, children learn to trust that they will have what they need. Children need love, acceptance, positive guidance, and protection in order to thrive. Support parents in providing for their children.

Be knowledgeable of parenting and child development.

Discipline is more effective and more nurturing when appropriate limits are set based on the child's age and level of development. Provide timely mentoring, coaching, advice, and practices in addition to sharing information.

Support parental resilience.

Resilience is the ability to handle everyday stressors and recover from occasional crises. Support community services such as mental health and counseling services, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence programs, and concrete skill building in areas such as problem solving, goal setting, communication, and self-care.

Strengthen social connections.

Trusted and caring family and friends provide emotional support to parents by offering encouragement and assistance in facing the daily challenges of raising a family. Be a supportive adult in your family and community; model effective parenting styles; and serve as a resources for parents when they need help.

Provide concrete supports to parents.

Parents need basic resources such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, and access to essential services that address family-specific needs (such as child care and health care) to ensure the health and well-being of their children. Help connect families in your area to the concrete supports they might need.

Share strategies and resources to strengthen social and emotional competence.

Just like learning to walk, talk, or read children must also learn to identify and express emotions effectively. Help children understand their emotions by first giving their feelings names and then encouraging them to talk about how they are feeling.