



Awareness & Prevention of Child Abuse

The Problem

In 1962, Dr. Henry C. Kempe published an article on what he called “the battered child syndrome.” As family services professionals addressed the prevalence of this problem, they expanded the terminology to “child abuse” and categorized such abuse into physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect.

In the United States, this marked the beginning of a public discussion of child abuse that has greatly increased the number of reported cases. In 1990, there were more than 2.5 million incidents of child abuse reported in the United States, an increase of more than 30% since 1985 and 100% since 1980. Some 27% of those abuse cases were due to physical abuse, 46% to neglect, 15% to sexual abuse, and 13% to emotional maltreatment or other (abandonment and dependency). An estimated 1,211 children from 39 states died from abuse or neglect, a 38% increase nationwide since 1985. Almost 90% of children who died as a result of child abuse or neglect were under age 5; 53% were infants under age one.

Child abuse may be differently defined, investigated in several ways, discussed publicly to varying degrees; but it occurs in every culture, in every country. The International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and

Neglect (ISPCAN) has expanded the investigation of abuse to the exploitation of working and street children, trafficking and sale of children, and the institutional abuse of children.

ISPCAN also has fostered the exchange of research on treatment and prevention of abuse, thus encouraging the development of strong national organizations. National organizations in Australia, Canada, France, Finland, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States have tried to make children a priority in society by educating the public and creating a climate in which it is easier to work for protection of children.

What Kiwanis Can Do

To eliminate child abuse, society must first understand that abuse occurs and that it is unacceptable. Clubs can initiate an awareness campaign to help people understand the different kinds of abuse and establish a clear public attitude. Materials in this bulletin can be used to start a campaign, and clubs can work with organizations that focus on public education.

There must also be education and support for parents to help them raise their children safely. On the public awareness level, clubs can encourage

positive parent-child activities by implementing some of the activities in this bulletin. Clubs can also develop more intensive support for parents by working with private or government agencies to improve or expand their programs that offer parenting education, drop-in care, and counseling. These projects are addressed in PO bulletin #13, “Parenting Education.”

Working with Other Organizations

As noted in many of the materials for *Young Children: Priority One*, the best way for a Kiwanis club to become involved is to work with organizations already addressing the problem. In many countries there is a group dedicated to preventing child abuse through public education, such as the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse in the United States or the Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse in Canada. In the following paragraphs are some of the activities developed by these organizations that Kiwanis clubs might help support.

Public Awareness

Most child abuse prevention organizations have public awareness materials that they will share with Kiwanis clubs. Rather than starting

from scratch, clubs should seek out these organizations and ask permission to use printed and video public service announcements, radio spots, or art for flyers and brochures. Some also offer “op ed” pieces that can be submitted to newspapers.

Pamphlets aimed at parents and the general public about parenting and various forms of abuse are available from the organizations listed on the back of this bulletin.

Child Abuse Prevention

Month

In the United States, the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse has declared April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and similar organizations in other countries have adopted this effort—though the month has sometimes changed. Government departments of child and family services have also become involved. A Kiwanis club could assist local events for Child Abuse Prevention Month in a variety of ways:

- *Recognition Event*—Hold a luncheon, dinner, award ceremony or other event to publicly thank child protection workers, foster parents, a media personality, or others who have made a significant contribution to preventing child abuse.
- *Publicity*—Send press releases or “media alerts” to local radio and television stations.
- *Proclamation*—Work with the sponsoring organization to have government leaders issue proclamations supporting Child Abuse Prevention Month.
- *Sabbath Events*—Contact places of worship and propose that they set aside a Sabbath to celebrate children and families. Suggest a sermon or discussion on disciplining without shouting or spanking, reaching out to parents having difficulty with their children, or the importance of positive parenting for physical,

emotional, and spiritual good health.

- *Blue Ribbon Campaign*—Urge everyone in the community to wear to a blue ribbon during April, to show that they know child abuse is an important problem. It may be effective to make the wearing of the blue ribbon a reminder of a child in the community who died from child abuse during the past year.
- *Kids Day*—Organize a “Kids for Kids” parade dedicated to children, featuring children. Explain in all publicity that this event is meant to show children that their parents love them and to remind parents how special their children are. Request the Kiwanis Kids’ Day kit from the International Office for additional ideas on child-centered events.

Developing New Contacts

Any organization that addresses child abuse, whether it is a government-supported agency or a fully independent non-profit, needs support in the community. Kiwanis clubs can furnish some of that support, but just as important, Kiwanis can be the link to other parts of the community. A club or group of clubs could help develop a network of support through any of the following efforts:

- *Advisory Council*—Assist the local committee against child abuse in creating an advisory council. Make use of the contacts the club has to invite community leaders onto the advisory council. Involve other service clubs, business leaders, government officials, and school administrators.
- *Business Breakfast*—Invite owners and managers of local businesses to a breakfast to meet with local leaders of the fight against child abuse. This informational meeting should

address issues that the attendees will have interest in, such as the benefits of employee assistance programs concerning family support issues and counseling services.

- *Parenting Presentation*—Invite leaders of parent-teacher organizations, child care centers, and churches to attend a presentation on how to encourage positive parenting, presented by a local child abuse prevention organization.

Fund Raising

Fighting child abuse also requires money, and clubs may be asked to help support a fund-raising activity. Here are some of the possible activities:

- *Corporate Challenge*—Assist the local committee for the prevention of child abuse in soliciting support from local corporations and businesses. Assemble lists of the current supporters and those who are not supporting the child abuse prevention committee. Send contact letters to non-supporters that urge them to be good corporate citizens like the corporations that do contribute. Follow up with teams that visit each corporation.
- *Life Saver Collection*—Contact your local NCPCA chapter and work with them to sell Life Savers candies to help save the lives of children.
- *Athletic Contests*—Some chapters have held a “Battle of the Badges” in which law enforcement officers from various jurisdictions have competed. A Kiwanis club could help organize such an event—or it could field its own team.

Educating the Public

There are three steps a club can take to increase public awareness about child abuse. The first step is for the club to learn about the problem in the community. The two questionnaires on page 5 and 6 show the kinds of information the club should collect: statistics on abuse and the level of services available. The questionnaires can be used to interview doctors, the family court judge, social workers, agencies that provide services to families, hospitals, and the police.

Second, the club can publicize the local facts about child abuse—putting them in a national context. The sample news release on page 8 is an example of the kind of article and the club could send out to newspapers and radio stations. This can be followed by posters or radio/television public service announcements that communicate the simple message that abuse does occur—and it shouldn't.

Finally, the club can investigate child abuse issues in the community—such as the regulations involved in referring families for counseling—to see how they are being addressed by local government. This type of effort should involve careful research and discussion with city council members or state legislators.

Parent Support

The public awareness campaign can expand into suggesting ways parents can cope and others can lend support. The radio script on page 9 can be offered to local stations. Possible print materials appear on the next several pages.

Parent-Child Activities

The more time parents spend in positive activities with their children, the stronger the family becomes, and the better it can withstand stresses. So, clubs can help prevent child abuse with a variety of positive activities.

- Distribute a calendar page that has an activity on each day for parents to do with their children. Adapt the sample on the next page of this bulletin.
 - Organize a series of “Parent-Child Special Expeditions” to encourage parents to spend “special time” with their children. In each expedition, work in a message that encourages positive family relationships. For example, sponsor a day at the zoo that incorporates a lesson that all animals—and people—deserve kindness. Other possible expeditions include tours of a museum (lesson: parents want their children to learn about the world), a park or nature preserve (lesson: we need to take care of nature, just as parents take care of children), an airport (lesson: sometimes parents have to go away on business, but they love their children), or fast food restaurant (lesson: sometimes parents are too busy to cook, but they want you to eat a healthy meal).
 - Sponsor a “Messy Fun Day” where children and parents are required to wear old clothes that can be stained. Then, offer all the arts and crafts that parents don't want their children to try at home because they are too messy. Activities can include finger paints (or pudding paints), putting on make-up, mud pies, building dams, creating working volcanoes, and throwing water balloons. The typical child can probably name ten other messy activities that are strictly forbidden at home.
- bulletin on parenting fairs, PO#5, from the International Office. Or download a copy from the website at www.kiwanis.org.
- Organize monthly parenting forums. Have one speaker each month on a topic that help parents cope. Deal with positive steps (how to build your child's self-esteem) and preventive measures (what to do when you're ready to blow up). Be sure to offer babysitting services.
 - Print and distribute a parenting resource list. Identify all the sources of help for parents, from hotlines to therapists. Put this information in a brochure and leave copies at high traffic stores (supermarkets, pharmacies, toy stores), child care centers, schools, and doctors' offices.
 - Work with your library to develop a special “Parenting Resource” section in the library. A list of suggested books for the section is available from the Program Development Department at the International Office. The club may want to offer to purchase some of the suggested titles. Help the library set up the parenting section in a location where parents with young children will be able to reach it quickly and easily. Then, publicize the section so that parents learn about it.
 - Develop a campaign on shaken baby syndrome. Many people do not realize that shaking a baby can cause permanent brain damage or death. Request PO bulletin #11 from the International Office. Or download a copy from the Kiwanis web site.
 - Create flyers for use as shopping bag stuffers. Eventually, every parent seems to face a control problem at the supermarket or grocery store. For many, it's a weekly challenge. The flyer can

Parent Support Activities

- Organize a parenting fair. Invite experts on children and parenting to make presentations. Have support organizations run booths. Offer entertainment and babysitting services for the children. To learn more, request the

help parents feel less self-conscious and may encourage other customers to feel more comfortable offering to help. A sample flyer appears on page 11.

- Work with a local radio station to create a weekly parenting

program that features experts on parenting, child development, and psychology. Have each expert prepare a five to ten minute discussion of a given topic and then answer questions from the host or the listeners.

- Help set up a parenting phone line. Everyone who answers the phone needs training, and there must be a system to refer callers who need help beyond the support offered on the phone.

***Build a Better Relationship with Your Children!
Do a Fun Activity with Your Children Each Day This Month!***

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Play "follow the leader".	Make paper boats & sail them in the bathtub.	Buy and read a new book.	Walk around the block backwards, holding hands.	Cook some pudding together.	Make a bubble bath.	Reverse roles. Child becomes the parent.
Finger paint.	Make frozen fruit juice treats.	Draw pictures of the weather.	Make a necklace out of macaroni.	Play "hide and seek".	Learn a new song.	Make puppets and put on a show.
Go to the park and feed the ducks.	Plant seeds or buy a flower.	Visit the library.	Shop for groceries together.	Blow bubbles.	Bake some cookies.	Go to the zoo or pet store.
Make a tent with a table and blankets.	Try cartwheels, somersaults, or crab walking.	Make a memories or photo album.	Make a bird house from a milk carton.	Pick out 3 songs and dance.	Rent a video and make popcorn.	Go to a museum.
Wash the car.	Take silly photos of one another.	Build a city out of blocks.	Take apart something that doesn't work.	Make a giant ice cream sundae to share.	Visit the biggest toy store in the area.	Go for a picnic.

Sample calendar to distribute to parents.

The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA) was formed in 1967 to educate the public about the little-known problem of child abuse and to find ways of preventing it. It has been instrumental in awakening the public to this problem and it has identified ten components to a comprehensive approach to child abuse prevention. A good first step toward developing a club project on child abuse is to identify the needs in your community. Use the ten guidelines from the NCPCA to evaluate your community.

Survey of Existing Child Abuse Prevention Resources

(Based on the NCPCA's Ten Components of a Comprehensive Child Abuse Prevention Program)

1. Does your community offer support programs for new parents, to prepare them for the job of parenting and to enhance parent-child bonding?
 - a. Yes, all new parents receive support.
 - b. Yes, all new parents who seek support can receive it.
 - c. Yes, but support programs aren't available to all who need them.
 - d. No.
2. Does your community offer continuing education/support for parents, to provide parents with information about child development and teach child care skills?
 - a. Yes, continuing education is provided to all parents.
 - b. Yes, continuing education is available to all parents who want it.
 - c. Yes, but continuing education is not available to all who need it.
 - d. No.
3. Does your community provide early and periodic childhood screening, diagnosis, and treatment, to identify and deal with physical, psychological, and developmental problems in children at an early age?
 - a. Yes, early and periodic screening is provided to all children.
 - b. Yes, screening is provided to any child whose parent requests it.
 - c. Some screening is available to some children.
 - d. No.
4. Is child care available, to furnish parents regular or occasional respite from caring for their children?
 - a. Yes, respite care is available to all parents at all times.
 - b. Yes, respite care is available but times or the number of users is limited.
 - c. Respite care is limited or unavailable, but child care services and baby-sitters are available.
 - d. Availability of child care service and baby-sitting is limited.
 - e. No.
5. Are there programs for abused children, to minimize the long-term effects of abuse on children and to reduce the likelihood of their becoming abusive adults?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
6. Does the community offer life skills training for children and young adults, to equip young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in adulthood and improve family relationships?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
7. Does the community offer family support services, to provide immediate assistance to parents in times of stress on a 24-hour basis? Circle all that are available:
 - a. Telephone hotline/warmline/answer line.
 - b. Crisis caretakers/baby-sitters/nurseries.
 - c. Crisis counseling.
 - d. None.
8. Are there self-help groups and other neighborhood supports, to reduce the social isolation often associated with abuse?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
9. Are social service, health, and education resources community-based, coordinated, and fully available?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. They are available but not community-based or coordinated.
 - c. No.
10. Is there public education on child abuse prevention, to inform the public of the magnitude of the problem of child abuse in the community and tell them where to turn for help?
 - a. Yes, and awareness is high.
 - b. Yes, but more needs to be done.
 - c. No.

The best way to persuade people that child abuse is a problem in their own community is to gather information about the problem and publicize it. The questions below can be directed toward the police department, local government's department of family services, family court judge, counseling agency, health department, hospital, coroner, clergy, and the local arm of the Association for Protecting Children or Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse or similar groups. No one source will have all the answers—indeed, some questions may never be answered—and other sources may be suggested.

Once this survey process is completed, there will be material for a news release similar to the example on page 8. The survey may also prompt the club to convene a public meeting or discussion among community leaders about a more comprehensive plan to address the child abuse problem.

Survey on Child Abuse and Neglect

1. How many reports of child abuse and neglect have been made over the past year? How does this compare to other years?
2. How many adults are in counseling because of their abusive behavior?
3. How many children have been separated from their parents to ensure the safety of the children?
4. How many foster parents (or other temporary care givers) have been reported for abusive behavior?
5. How many cases related to child abuse or neglect are currently being handled by social workers? How many total cases does the average social worker juggle?
6. What is the cost to local government for each abuse-related custody hearing? Each trial for child abuse or neglect? How many of these court proceedings occurred in the last year?
7. What is the cost to local government for each child in foster care? How many children are in foster care because of abuse or neglect?
8. What is the cost to local government for each family in court-ordered therapy? How many families are now in such therapy?
9. What is the cost for a home-visitation system for families at risk? How many families are judged to be at risk of child abuse?
10. How many families have requested help and are not receiving it?
11. How severe a case of abuse/neglect or how many times must a family be reported for someone to actually investigate?
12. How many children have been hospitalized because of abuse or neglect over the past year? How many children have died?
13. A best guess or opinion question: What percentage of cases of child abuse and neglect are never identified? How many of the injuries to children might be unidentified cases of child abuse?
14. How would these answers have differed five years ago? Ten? Twenty?

Sample needs survey—statistics on abuse.

Sample letter to survey recipient

April 1, 1999

Dolly Parton, M.D.
Amityville Healthcare Center
666 Fallen Valley Drive
Amityville, NY 20637

Dear Dr. Parton:

The Kiwanis Club of Baytown is gathering information on the problem of child abuse in this area. As the head of the Child Abuse Comprehensive Treatment Unit at Bayshore County Hospital, you can help us understand the extent of the problem in our community and what we can do to address it.

We have enclosed two questionnaires that we ask you to review and answer as fully as you are able. We would also appreciate other information you feel we should know, suggestions of additional questions to ask, names and addresses of other people we should survey, and suggestions for ways our Kiwanis club can address the problem of child abuse and neglect.

We hope to use the information we gather to start educating our own club, and, from there, to start educating the community. We would appreciate your advice on specific directions our public awareness campaign should take and other projects we should consider.

Please send the questionnaires and any other comments you wish to write to me, at the address above, by the end of this month. If you would prefer to call me, I am available from 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. each weekday at 222-5522 and each evening after 6:00 p.m. at 475-2893.

We appreciate your assistance in our research and planning. We want to create projects that will have a true impact on the children and families in our community.

Sincerely,

Robert Hardymon
Chairman
Young Children: Priority One

Sample press release

NEWS FROM KIWANIS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information, Contact:
The Kiwanis Club of Baytown
Elliot Sebastini
857-1253

Children Need Our Help: Child Abuse Increasing in Baytown

Child abuse is a bigger problem in Baytown today than it has ever been before, according to the statistics compiled by the Kiwanis Club of Baytown. "We believe it's time for this community to wake up and address this problem," says Kiwanis club president Travis Sloan. "There are more children at risk than ever before."

Over the last ten years, reports of child abuse in Baytown have tripled, based on records of the police department and the Shore County Family Services Department. In 1981, 211 reports of child abuse and neglect were received, but by 1991, police and family services records show 684 reports in the county.

Counseling services for these families have not kept pace with the need, according to the Kiwanis club's research. The staff of three counselors has not been increased in seven years, confirms Shore County Human Services spokesperson Stacey Haskins.

"The result is that parents who need help get put on a waiting list," claims an outraged Sloan. "The people waiting for counseling are tragedies waiting to happen."

The Baytown Kiwanis club also discovered that the number of children taken away from their parents is up 65 percent from the level five years ago, according to Family Court records. The number of injuries related to child abuse recorded at Bayshore County Hospital is at its highest level ever, up 14 percent from last year.

"The closing of the Barnard tire factory and related layoffs have had a severe impact in our community" explains Family Court Judge Nicholas Sears. The economic problems in families increase tension that can result in more family violence. "Children are being hurt because some parents feel overwhelmed," concludes Judge Sears.

The Baytown Kiwanis club is now organizing a meeting to discuss what new steps can be taken to address these increasing problems. The club has invited community and government leaders, family service providers, and the organizations that address child abuse. The club hopes a coalition will form that can develop and implement a comprehensive plan for child abuse prevention.

Sample radio scripts

SCRIPT #1—40 seconds

When children try your soul, as they will; when they cause you grief, as they do; when they rouse your anger and provoke you to wrath, as is their way; when they reduce you to tears and prayers, as often happens; love them.

Don't bother about anything at all until you have first made clear to yourself that your love for the child in question is holding firmly, swelling warmly in your heart. Then, whatever you do will be as nearly right as it is possible for human judgement to be.

That's advice from Angelo Patti, a 19th century educator. Brought to you by the Kiwanis Club of _____ and radio station _____.

SCRIPT #2—30 seconds

When children try your soul, as they will; when they cause you grief, as they do; when they rouse your anger, as is their way; when they reduce you to tears, as often happens; love them.

Don't bother about anything at all until your love for the child in question is holding firmly, swelling warmly in your heart. Then, whatever you do will be as nearly right as it is possible for human judgement to be.

That's advice from Angelo Patti, a 19th century educator. Brought to you by the Kiwanis Club of _____ and radio station _____.

SCRIPT #3—15 seconds

When children try your soul; when they cause you grief; when they rouse your anger, as is their way; love them.

Don't bother about anything until your love for the child is swelling warmly in your heart.

That's advice from Angelo Patti, a 19th century educator. Brought to you by the Kiwanis Club of _____ and radio station _____.

Sample flyer

Kiwanis Club of Bedford Falls
Third Annual

MESSY FUN DAY

Children deserve a chance to create the messes they can't make at home, so dress your kids in their worst clothes and bring them to **MESSY FUN DAY**.

The chance for your children to:

- Finger paint
- Make mud pies
- Make play dough
- Put on clown make up
- Build dams in Laurel Creek
- Build working models of volcanoes
- Throw water balloons
- Draw chalk pavement pictures
- Slide down a mud track
- Wash off in lawn sprinklers

11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, August 15
Bedford Falls High School

The Kiwanis Club of Bedford Falls is not responsible for permanent stains on clothing. The club is responsible for providing fun to messy children of all ages

Winning Ways with Children When Eating Out

Eating out with young children can be a stressful experience. Restaurant employees get nervous, and parents are on edge, never knowing quite what to expect. Is staying home the answer?

Here are some tips from experienced parents to make your eating out experience more enjoyable for all.

1. **Choose a “child-friendly” location.** Some restaurants are simply more suitable for young guests—fast food places, family-style restaurants, “coffee shops” or sidewalk cafes, for example. You will feel more relaxed about dining and you’ll often get more help keeping your child(ren) happy.
2. **Phone first.** If you are going to a restaurant for the first time, call ahead to make sure children are welcome. Ask if they have high chairs or booster seats; if not, you can take a clip-on seat that fits most tables or improvise a booster seat by wrapping a couple of old telephone books with contact paper. Find out if you can place your order before you arrive to cut down on waiting time once you are there.
3. **Bring your own. . .**You know your child best. If he needs special equipment, like a bottle or cup with a spout, bring it along. Diversions in the form of snacks or toys can keep your little one occupied until your meal comes.
4. **Keep it as familiar as possible.** If your child eats little or is not used to a variety of foods, order a small portion of a food he does know, split dinners between two or more children, or bring along peanut butter and jelly. It will cost you less, waste less, and in all likelihood, your child will be happier (and so will you)!
5. **Arrive early.** Try to get to the restaurant at an off-peak time. This way you can avoid long waits and crowded conditions.
6. **Try to sit by a window.** The activity outside can provide novelty for your child while you are waiting to be served.
7. **The quick fix.** If you could not order ahead of time, ask if there are foods that can be prepared quickly. If you must wait for your food, one parent can take a restless child for a short walk to the lobby or parking lot.

Every time you eat out at a restaurant, it is a learning experience for your young child and you. What does not work one time may work the next. Rest assured, as you both get better at it, there will be better days and better restaurant experiences ahead.

Adapted and excerpted in part from “Side Orders,” *American Baby Magazine*, June 1990.

Sample flyers for distribution

What One Person Can Do To Prevent Child Abuse

First, ask yourself how you are doing as a parent. ***Hug your child every day.***

Arrange to have a speaker on child abuse come to your PTA or adult Sunday school class.

Call your local Department of Social Services and ask for the current child abuse statistics. Share that information with your General Assembly representative and/or local council member.

Learn to recognize the signs of child maltreatment and know your local child abuse hot lines.

Reach out to neighbors or relatives with children. Offer to babysit or invite them over for coffee.

Volunteer time in a child crisis emergency shelter, parenting support program, drug abuse prevention/treatment program, or shelter for the homeless.

Talk to your employer about sponsoring a parenting workshop for employees during lunch time.

Consider joining a child abuse prevention organization in your community.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month: Join concerned citizens all over the country by displaying a blue ribbon on your lapel, front door, or car antenna.

Post this list on your refrigerator and share it with 5 friends.

Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention

What To Do In The Grocery Store To Help Kids Behave...

Plan Ahead

- **Check Attitudes**—Is your child too tired or hungry to shop? Are you? If yes, postpone your trip or find a sitter.
- **Agree on Rules**—Before entering the store: “Stay close to the cart.” “Use your quiet voice.”
- **Agree on Rewards**—For good behavior: Keep it simple—choice of one snack food or a stop at the park. Promise to read a book or play a game at home.

At The Store

- **Make a game of it**—Who can see the potatoes or soap first? Do you remember what animal milk comes from? Who is wearing red? What foods start with a “B”?
- **Involve the child in the shopping**—“Should we buy apples or oranges?” “Corn flakes or raisin bran?” “Popsicle or ice cream?”
- **Play**—“I see something” in the checkout lane; ask the child to guess what it is.
- **Praise your child**—“You are so helpful!” “You are making good choices today!”

If All Else Fails

- Ignore inappropriate behavior unless it becomes dangerous, destructive, embarrassing to you, or annoying to others.
- Remove a child who is out of control—take him to the restroom or out of the store. Tell him quietly, eyeball to eyeball, that his behavior is totally unacceptable.
- Wait, say nothing else, for the child to calm down. Then ask if he is ready to try again.
- Go home if the child cannot calm down. Find a sitter and return alone.

Remember: Kids will be kids—they are not perfect!

Sample flyer for distribution

Guidelines for Parents

The National Institute of Mental Health asked the following question of 50 parents whose children had become well-adjusted, productive adults:

Based on your personal experiences, what is the best advice you can give new parents about raising children?

Love Abundantly. The most important task is to love and really care about your child. This gives him or her a sense of security, belonging, and support. It smoothes out the rough edges of society.

Discipline Constructively. Give clear direction and enforce limits on your child's behavior. Emphasize "Do this" instead of "Don't do that."

Spend Time With Your Children. Play with them; talk to them; teach them to develop a family spirit and give them a sense of belonging.

Give The Needs Of Your Mate Priority. One parent put it this way: "A husband and wife are able to be successful parents when they put their marriage first. Don't worry about the children getting 'second best.' Child-centered households produce neither happy marriages nor happy children."

Be Realistic. Expect to make mistakes. Be aware that outside influences such as peer pressure will increase as children mature.

Develop Mutual Respect. Act in a respectful way toward your children. Say "please" and "thank you," and apologize when you are wrong. Children who are treated with respect will know how to treat you and others respectfully.

Really Listen. This means giving your children undivided attention, putting aside your beliefs and trying to understand your children.

Offer Guidance. Be brief. Don't give speeches. And don't force your opinions on your children.

Foster Independence. Gradually allow children more freedom and control over their lives. One parent said, "once your children are old enough, phase yourself out of the picture, but always be near when they need you."

Teach Your Children Right From Wrong. They need to be taught basic values and manners so they will get along well in society. Insist they treat others with kindness, respect, and honesty. Set personal examples of moral courage and integrity.

I Commit To Be The Best Parent I Can Be

I will use one of the following communication tips every day for the next ten days.

Signature

Communication Tips for Parents and Kids

“You never listen to me” is a complaint heard as often from children as parents. Good communication helps children and parents to develop confidence, feelings of self-worth, and good relationships with others. Try these tips:

- ☐ Teach children to listen...gently touch a child before you talk...say their name.
- ☐ Speak in a quiet voice...whisper sometimes so children have to listen—they like this.
- ☐ Look a child in the eyes so you can tell when they understand...Bend or sit down...Become the child's size.
- ☐ Practice listening and talking...Talk with your family about what you see on TV, hear on the radio or see at the park or store. Talk with your children about school and their friends.
- ☐ Respect children and use a courteous tone of voice. If we talk to our children as we would our friends, our youngsters may be more likely to seek us out as confidants.
- ☐ children for cooperating with you or their siblings, for doing those little things that are so easy to take for granted.
- ☐ Use Door Openers that invite children to say more about an incident or their feelings: “I see.” “Tell me more.” “No kidding.” “Really.”
- ☐ Praise builds a child's confidence and reinforces communication. Unkind words tear children down and teach them that they just aren't good enough.
- ☐ Children are never too old to be told they are loved. Saying “I love you” is important. Writing it in a note provides the child with a reminder that he can hold on to.
- ☐ Give your undivided attention when your children want to talk to you. Don't read, watch TV, fall asleep, or make yourself busy with other tasks.

Sample flyer for distribution.

**What To Say (or do) When Parents Abuse
Their Children in Public**

1. "He seems to be trying your patience."
2. "Is he tired? Does he need a nap?"
3. "She has beautiful (eyes)." Get the parent in a more positive mood.
4. "My child used to get upset like that."
5. "Children can wear you out, can't they? Is there anything I can do to help?"
6. Strike up a conversation with the adult. See if you can re-direct his/her attention away from the child.
7. Sympathize with the parent, i.e. "Isn't it amazing how children think they can get what they want by kicking and screaming?"
8. "My son behaves like that sometimes, and I. . ."
9. If you are concerned about the physical safety of the child, alert the store manager.
10. Divert the child's attention (if he is misbehaving), by talking to him, engaging him in conversation.
11. Praise child and parent at first opportunity.
12. If the child is in danger, offer assistance. For example, if the child was left unattended in a grocery cart, go stand by the child until the parent returns.
13. Find something positive to say about the child to the parent. "Your child is beautiful, or "What pretty hair she has."
14. "Looks like you're having a rough day. Is there anything I can do to help?"
15. "Looks like your little boy is giving you a hard time." Try to relieve tension and perhaps open up some communication.
16. If you know the parent, offer to watch the child while she/he takes a break, gets a drink, etc.

Virginia Child Abuse Prevention Month Coalition

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Contact the organizations listed below for advice, information on state/provincial/local contacts, or catalogs of other materials available for purchase.

Prevent Child Abuse America

200 S Michigan Avenue, 17th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604-2404
Phone: (312) 663-3520
Fax: (312) 939-8962
E-mail: mailbox@preventchildabuse.org
Web: www.preventchildabuse.org

The Child Safety Institute Child Abuse Prevention Services

PO Box 176
Roslyn, NY 11576
Phone: (516) 621-0552
E-mail: caps4kids@aol.com
Web: www.kidsafe-caps.org

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information

330 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20447
Phone: (800) 394-3366
(703) 385-7565
Fax: (703) 385-3206
E-mail: nccanch@caliber.com
Web: nccanch.acf.hhs.gov

International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)

25 W 560 Geneva Road, Ste L2C
Carol Stream, IL 60188
Phone: (630) 221-1311
Fax: (630) 221-1311
E-mail: ispcan@ispcan.org
exec@ispcan.org
Web: www.childabuse.com

Child Abuse Prevention Month is in April. For child abuse prevention resources:

Web: www.cyfernet.org/hottopic/childabuse.html



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