

Child  
Abuse  
Prevention  
Month

April  
2011



**Prevent Child Abuse  
Indiana**

A Division of The Villages

Prevention Council  
Media Packet





Dear Prevention Council Members, Staff and Volunteers,

Thanks so much for being part of the 2011 Child Abuse Prevention Campaign in Indiana. This year's theme is

## **Cherishing Children...Affirming Families.**

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month and by participating you are joining thousands of other communities, organizations and individuals across our nation who are putting children first and are working to promote the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem with solutions that don't receive the attention they deserve. The common approach in the past has been to start with abuse that has already occurred, using stories and statistics to shock people into action. The downside of this strategy is that people feel they can't address the issue until a child has been hurt. Once that happens, our actions become about punishment and law enforcement instead of prevention.

It's important to hold abusers accountable. At the same time, it's better to prevent abuse from happening in the first place. Research tells us that toxic stress—such as abuse or neglect—causes damage to the developing brain architecture of young children. The cost of waiting until abuse or neglect happens is enormous.

It has been said that children are one-third of our population and 100% of our future. By focusing on the wider issue of the well-being of our communities and the future of our nation, we can see many more specific opportunities to **prevent abuse and neglect before it has a chance to develop**. We can prevent child abuse and neglect by building communities that are committed to all families. We can champion services and support they need to raise strong, healthy, and successful children. It begins with awareness, but it doesn't end there.

**Prevent Child Abuse Indiana** and **The Villages of Indiana** are so pleased to be part of this national effort. We are working with partner organizations and communities throughout Indiana to raise awareness, to build effective services, and to strengthen families. And we encourage every community in Indiana to be part of this effort.

As part of our ongoing campaign we are delighted to promote the national pinwheel symbol of prevention alongside the traditional blue ribbon. The pinwheel was chosen for its positive association with children and with happy images of childhood. It represents the hope and promise that every child be raised in a healthy, safe, and nurturing environment.

Again, thank you for participating in this year's campaign. We hope this resource packet is helpful and we encourage you to go to our website for additional information and links to other resources. Please feel free to contact us at anytime.

A cursive handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Armstrong-Smith".

Mary Armstrong-Smith  
Community Partners Director  
Prevent Child Abuse Indiana

# Prevention Month Packet Instructions

## *History*

**Child Abuse Prevention Month** has been observed each **April** since its first presidential proclamation in 1983. Since that time millions of Americans have participated in this exciting public awareness campaign. Individuals, organizations and communities across the country plant pinwheels, tie ribbons, organize trainings, host fundraisers, hold family events, and support a multitude of other activities celebrating childhood and raising awareness that all children deserve to grow up in happy, healthy environments.

## *Why this packet?*

This packet has been designed to give you information about child abuse prevention, ideas for observing Child Abuse Prevention Month, and resources to use with families, programs and communities. Use the ideas and templates presented here to raise local awareness about child maltreatment in Indiana and to foster community projects that make our state a healthier place for children and youth.

## *Organization*

This packet is organized into 8 sections. The sections are not divided by blank pages or section dividers to save on paper and printing costs. The **Table of Contents** highlights each section and lists what is located within that section. For example, in the **Prevention Basics** sections you will find topics that include Warning Signs of Abuse and What to do in a Public Place. In the section titled **Communicating the Message** you will find information about Talking Points and Tips for Pitching Story Ideas to the Media and in the **Blue Saturday & Sunday Campaign** section you will find tools to help your Council bring the message of prevention to your faith community.

## *Permission*

You are encouraged to use the packet materials as they are currently written or adapt them to fit your own needs. If you adapt any of the material please give credit to Prevent Child Abuse Indiana unless otherwise noted. The packet can be downloaded as a PDF file from our website and re-copied as a complete packet or page by page as needed.

## *Tell us what you think*

After using the packet, please take a moment to fill out the evaluation form located at the end. Your feedback will help us identify the most useful parts as well as those that may need revision. The form can be returned to us via fax, mail, or email. We welcome all comments and suggestions.

## *Thank you!*

Thank you for taking the time to use this packet and for celebrating April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Together we can raise awareness, educate our communities, and change our society by **Cherishing Children and Affirming Families!**

We would like to thank [Prevent Child Abuse America](#), [Prevent Child Abuse Illinois](#), and Kelly Young of [Baise Communications](#) for many of the items in this packet. In addition, [Prevent Child Abuse Lake County \(Indiana\)](#) designed the bulletin inserts.

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# Section 1: Prevention Basics

## Facts About Child Abuse & Neglect

### What is Child Abuse and Neglect?

- **Physical abuse** – an injury to a child that is not an accident, may include: beating, burning, biting, kicking, cutting, shaking, or punching a child.
- **Emotional abuse** – maltreatment of a child that may involve criticizing, insulting, yelling, swearing, manipulating, rejecting or withholding love.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual contact with a child, including exhibitionism, photographs or films, pornography, prostitution, rape, or fondling.
- **Neglect** – failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional, medical or educational needs.

### Who Abuses Children?

Most often the abuser is someone the child knows, such as a parent, relative, neighbor or friend of the family.

### Where Does Child Abuse Happen?

Wherever children are, where they live, sleep, learn or play.

### How Often Does Child Abuse Occur?

Each year, close to 3 million reports of suspected abuse are filed in the United States. Many more cases never get reported. One victim of child abuse is one too many!

### Where Are Indiana Statistics Available?

Indiana Department of Child Services

<http://www.in.gov/dcs/2329.htm>

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/StateLanding.aspx?state=IN>



# Warning Signs of Abuse

Children who are abused may show physical and behavioral signs. You may be a child's only lifeline to safety. Please pay attention to the treatment of children around you. **Child abuse is everyone's business.** If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected in Indiana, call **1-800-800-5556**.

**Children who have been abused or neglected may be:**

- Nervous around adults or afraid of certain adults
- Reluctant to go home
- Very passive and withdrawn—or aggressive and disruptive
- Often tired or complaining of nightmares, or not sleeping well
- Fearful and anxious
- Showing sudden changes in behavior or school performance

**Possible signs of physical abuse:**

- Unexplained burns, bruises, black eyes and other injuries
- Apparent fear of a parent or caretaker
- Faded bruises or healing injuries
- Injuries that do not match the explanation

**Possible signs of sexual abuse:**

- Difficulty walking or sitting, or other indications of injury to the genital area
- Sexual knowledge or behavior beyond what is normal for the child's age
- Running away from home

**Possible signs of neglect:**

- Missing school frequently
- Begging for or stealing money or food
- Lacking needed medical or dental care
- Being frequently dirty
- Using alcohol or other drugs
- Saying there is no one at home to take care of him or her

**Possible signs of emotional abuse:**

- Acting overly mature or immature for the child's age
- Extreme changes in behavior
- Delays in physical or emotional development
- Attempted suicide
- Lack of emotional attachment to the parent

*Many of these signs may also be present in children exposed to violence in their homes and communities, like domestic violence and gang violence. These signs don't prove that a child is being abused. But they could be a signal that the child and his or her family may need help.*

**Also know the signs of an abusive adult.**

**Consider the possibility of abuse if a parent or caretaker:**

- Seems unconcerned about the child's welfare at school or at home
- Denies problems at school or at home—or blames the child for the problem
- Sees the child as worthless or as a burden
- Avoids discussing the child's injuries or gives conflicting explanations for them
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- Seems isolated from other parents as well as school and community activities
- Uses harsh physical discipline or asks other caretakers to use it
- Depends on the child for emotional support
- Seems indifferent to the child
- Seems secretive or tries to isolate the child from other children
- Frequently blames, belittles, or insults the child

*These signs don't prove that an adult is abusive. But they could be a signal that the adult and his or her family may need help.*



**Prevent Child Abuse  
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**317-775-6439  
800-874-6880  
pcain.org**

# What To Do If You See Child Abuse in a Public Place

## **Start a conversation with the adult to direct attention away from the child.**

For Example:

- “She seems to be trying your patience. ”
- “My child sometimes gets upset like that, too. ”
- “Children can really wear you out sometimes. Is there anything I can do to help? ”

## **Divert the child’s attention (if misbehaving) by talking to the child.**

For Example:

- “That’s a great baseball cap. Are you a Cardinals fan? ”
- “I like your t-shirt. Did you get that on vacation?”

## **Look for an opportunity to praise the parent or child.**

For Example:

- “He has the most beautiful eyes.”
- “That’s a very pretty shirt on your little girl. Where did you get it?”

## **If the child is in danger, offer assistance.**

For Example:

- If the child is left unattended in a grocery cart, stand near the child until the parent returns.
- If the child is in immediate danger, call the police!

## **Avoid negative remarks or looks.**

Negative reactions are likely to increase the parent’s stress or anger, and could make matters worse for the child.

*Adapted from Prevent Child Abuse America by Prevent Child Abuse Illinois*



# What you and your community can do to help prevent child abuse and neglect

## Remember

*that children are the future*

Children are our future and their early years have an enormous impact on their future health and success. Child abuse prevention is one result of a firm community commitment to supporting children and the families raising them.

## Recognize

*prevention is a shared responsibility*

Parenting is the toughest job any of us will ever undertake, and our most important civic contribution. As parents we have enormous responsibility to raise our children to be productive members of society, and as citizens we are responsible for ensuring that all parents and families have access to the support, information and services they need to succeed.

## Raise

*the issue of prevention*

We all care about the issue of child abuse. But, we hear a lot more about the problem than we do about the solutions. Preventing child abuse means setting the stage for healthy, stable families who have the tools they need for nurturing their children. Help your community understand *prevention*. Ask your elected officials to support programs and services that help families and children. Contact your local school district and faith community to encourage them to sponsor classes and support programs for new parents.

## Reach out

*to kids & parents*

Anything you do to support kids and parents in your family and extended community helps to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

Be a good neighbor. Offer to baby-sit. Donate your used children's clothing, furniture and toys for use by another family. Be kind and supportive, particularly to new parents and children.

## Recommend

*ideas that your community can use*

There are many programs, services and actions that support families and prevent child abuse.\*

**Facilitate friendships and support.** Offer opportunities for parents in the neighborhood to get to know each other, develop support systems, and take leadership roles. Strategies may include sports teams, potlucks, classes, advisory groups, board leadership and volunteer opportunities.

**Strengthen parenting.** Develop ways for parents to get support on parenting issues when they need it. Possibilities include classes, support groups, home visits, tip sheets in pediatricians' offices and resource libraries.

**Respond to family crises.** Offer extra support to families when they need it, as in times of illness, job loss, housing problems and other stressors.

**Link families to services and opportunities.** Make sure families know where to go for job training, education, health care, mental health and other essential services.

\*Adapted from *Building on Strengths: Enhancing Protective Factors for Children and Families*, National Clearinghouse of Child Abuse and Neglect Information.

## Section 2: Communicating the Message

### Talking Points for PCAI Councils During Child Abuse Prevention Month

Supporting families by ensuring parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need is an effective way to protect children from the risk of child abuse and neglect. The following talking points provide ideas for PCAI Councils to share this important message in your community during Child Abuse Prevention Month.

These talking points can be used with community groups or the media. Each audience will have its own interests, questions, and needs, so tailor your presentation to fit the unique circumstances. Engage your audience by inviting them to contribute their own ideas about how to support families, and close your presentation by involving them in a call to action.

#### What do we know about protecting children?

- When a parent treats a child with respect, love, and understanding, it affects the child for a lifetime—making it easier to develop and keep friendships, succeed in school and work, sustain a happy relationship, and parent effectively.
- Unfortunately, many factors can limit parents' ability to protect and nurture their children. These can put families at risk for abuse and neglect.
- Certain factors have been shown to serve as buffers against these risks, enhancing parents' coping skills and helping them to raise happy, healthy children, even under stress.
- On average, children raised in households headed by two parents in a healthy relationship fare better than children who grow up in other family structures.



#### What are the protective factors that promote healthy families?

The best thing our community can do to protect children is to support healthy families by promoting the following five protective factors:

##### Nurturing and attachment

Parents and caregivers who bond with and respond to the basic needs of their babies and young children lay the foundation for a positive

and loving relationship. They also stimulate the growth of their child's brain and help their child learn how to interact in positive ways with others. Ways we can promote parental nurturing and attachment during Child Abuse Prevention Month:

- Sponsor a workshop on playing with infants and young children.
- Provide quiet, private places for mothers to breastfeed and tend to their babies' needs.
- Organize a weekend play group for dads.

- Recognize local businesses with family-friendly policies, such as flexible work schedules and maternity/paternity leave that give parents time to bond with their children.

### **Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development**

Helping parents learn about normal infant, childhood, and teen development will help them understand what to anticipate as their children grow and develop, and what types of support and discipline may work best at each stage. Ways we can enhance knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development:



- Suggest parents speak to their children's doctor about any concerns, frustrations, or questions regarding behavior or development.
- Ask your local school district or faith community to sponsor classes and support programs for new parents.
- Organize a parenting club to discuss parenting books, websites, and other resources.
- Educate childcare providers and teachers about key aspects of child development and the relationship between effective parenting and brain development.

### **Parental resilience**

Parenting can be stressful, especially when parents are also managing work demands or unemployment, financial worries, illness, or difficulties with a spouse or others. Parents who have support and skills for managing stress will be better able to cope with day-to-day challenges. Ways we can strengthen parental resilience:

- Organize a neighborhood group that will rotate cooking a meal or performing light housework for new parents and other families under stress.
- Start a neighborhood "work out" group, where families can exercise and have fun together.
- Teach a communication class for couples.
- Provide brochures and other resources for teachers and childcare providers to share with parents who are under significant stress.

### **Social connections**

For most of us, family, friends, and neighbors form a network that provides social interaction, recreation, advice, and help. When parents have the opportunity to interact with, learn from, and seek the support of other adults, their children benefit. Ways we can build social connections in our community:

- Sponsor multigenerational activities like picnics and street fairs that reflect the community's culture through music, food, and games. Involve parents in organizing these events.
- Help recruit volunteers for mentoring programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters.
- Provide venues for young families to meet and socialize, such as libraries, parks, and preschools.

### **Concrete supports for parents**

When parents are not employed or face other challenges, they may need assistance in order to provide adequate food, clothing, housing, and medical care for their children. These supports may reduce the stress parents feel in difficult circumstances, giving them more energy to nurture and support their children. Ways we can promote concrete supports:

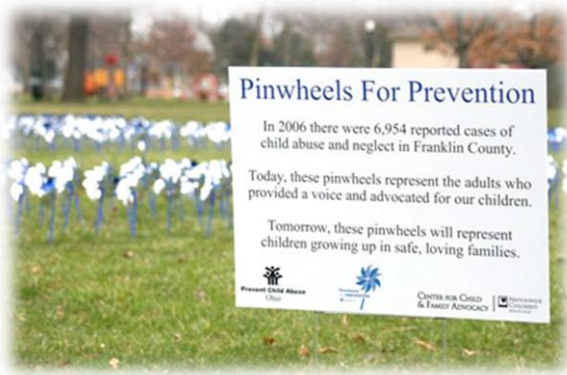
- Provide information on how to access housing, health care, or employment assistance.
- Educate candidates and elected officials about issues in your community and the need for services and programs that support healthy and safe children and families.
- Encourage service providers to collaborate, leverage funding, and share resources to address specific needs.

### **Call to action: How can we work together to strengthen our community?**

Anything you do to support kids and parents in your family and community helps reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. During Child Abuse Prevention Month focus your attention on prevention efforts that support parents and create healthier communities for children.



# Examples of Community Awareness Activities



The following ideas offer some starting points for planning local community awareness activities during Child Abuse Prevention Month. The year's campaign is built around the symbol of the pinwheel. Pinwheels are a happy and uplifting symbol of childhood. As a campaign symbol, a pinwheel conveys the message that every child deserves the chance be raised in a healthy, safe, and nurturing environment.

## Ideas for incorporating Pinwheels into your Child Abuse Prevention Month activities include:

- Choose a highly visible location and “plant” a pinwheel “garden.” Equate pinwheels with the number of children served by your agency or the number of births in your community. Use your pinwheels to promote the good you are doing in your community. **Pinwheels, however, do not represent deaths from child abuse or reported cases of child abuse.**
- Offer people in your community the chance to make a personal statement in support of your work by purchasing pinwheels.
- Let the media know about your pinwheel garden and its significance.
- Ask your local radio stations to run public service announcements in support of Child Abuse Prevention Month.
- Consider planting Pinwheels at childcare centers, schools, nursing homes, hospitals, courthouses, health departments, libraries, and other highly visible locations.
- Decorate your home, office, classroom or business with Pinwheels.
- Make your own Pinwheels as a group or class project using the template found in this packet. Pinwheel color sheets are also available.
- Carry Pinwheels in parades, give them as prizes or sell them as a fundraiser

Pinwheels will be distributed to Councils throughout the state. If you have any questions about pinwheels in your community please contact Mary Armstrong-Smith at 317.775.6439 or send an e-mail to [msmith.pcaain@villages.org](mailto:msmith.pcaain@villages.org).

On the next page are some suggested activities to bring **Child Abuse Prevention Month** to your community or organization during the month of **April**. With these activities, you can encourage parents, families, legislators, the media and groups of concerned citizens to participate in child abuse awareness and prevention. Contact Prevent Child Abuse Indiana at 317-775-6439 to report your event and have it listed on a statewide calendar.



## **Strategies for Child Abuse Prevention Month activities:**

Attend the Statewide Kick-Off Event – contact Prevent Child Abuse Indiana at 317-775-6439 or online to learn the details and attend the annual Child Abuse Prevention Month Kick Off event in Indianapolis on or around April 1.

### **Invite Local Officials:**

- Ask your mayor or other local officials to issue a formal proclamation and hold a media conference to announce April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.
- Host a breakfast, luncheon or reception honoring Child Abuse Prevention Month and the prevention work being done in your community. Invite local officials to speak.

### **Involve Local Faith Communities:**

- Organize a parenting fair to educate parents about support services available in their communities.
- Hold a Family Fun Day or Parents' Night Out.
- Host a parent education or self-help group at the facility.
- Establish a resource library focusing on parenting issues.
- Submit articles for bulletins and newsletters.
- Collecting donations for local charities.
- Display Pinwheels or Blue Ribbons.

### **Offer Local Businesses Ways to Get Involved:**

- Use store windows, business lobbies and bulletin boards to display posters, brochures and other material highlighting positive parenting and child abuse prevention.
- Partner with local businesses to host community workshops, health fairs, or fun events for families.
- Provide in-service education or a lunchtime workshop on child abuse prevention for your office.
- Organize a fundraiser for Prevent Child Abuse Indiana or other family support agency such as a golf outing, garage sale, 5 K run, trivia night, flower sale, movie night, etc.

### **Get Schools and Parent-Teacher Organizations Involved:**

- Sponsor an essay contest, poster contest, material distribution, Pinwheel display, or Blue Ribbon campaign.
- Develop a report card insert to show parents positive approaches to dealing with disappointing grades. Encourage your schools to offer after-school activities.
- Organize a Pinwheel planting or Blue Ribbon campaign that includes kids and parents.

### **Other Options:**

- Collaborate with your local women's club to host a baby shower or collect baby supplies for a local shelter or crisis nursery.
- Join or start a Child Abuse Prevention Council in your community.
- April is also National Library month, Alcohol Abuse Awareness month, Sexual Assault Awareness month, and features the Week of the Young Child and Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness week – contact these groups and others for a collaborative event.

*Adapted from Prevent Child Abuse Illinois*

## Tips for Working with the Media

**Spell out your preventive solutions at the top of the communication.** The public often believes the only solutions to child abuse lie within the legal system. To make a case for prevention – a vague word on its own:

- describe actual prevention activities that engage your community
- explain why the prevention activities are needed and are successful
- connect the dots for people so that prevention programs make sense to them
- avoid implying that fixing “bad” parents is the end-all solution
- bring in additional community players and use non-traditional “messengers” as advocates for prevention



**Avoid vivid, dramatic details and the focus on the worst cases** as these only serve to reinforce people’s current understanding of abuse as specifically a criminal issue. When exposed primarily to dramatic cases (which the media favor), people tend to conclude that abuse is inevitable because it involves bad people who are bad parents. The solution that makes sense to them, then, is to remove children from danger and punish those responsible.

**Wherever possible, tell stories of efficacy**

- demonstrate how programs and policies have worked for the benefit of children by predicting and addressing abusive situations before they happened
- increase examples of situations, not people or episodes

**Forget the numbers for explaining the prevalence of abuse.** People believe it is a big problem and they tend to overstate it numerically (as they do many social problems they deem important). Correcting their error is only likely to result in diminished concern for the problem. Therefore, it is not a good idea to pair prevention activities and announcements with the release of your state’s annual child abuse statistics. Also remember that if you give these numbers to the media, the story will almost certainly lead with them and a focus on the problem which takes the emphasis away from prevention.

**Stop fighting the fight we have won** by continuing to convince people of the prevalence and seriousness of child abuse. It is time to shift to deepening citizens’ understanding of the problem and its solutions. We believe child abuse prevention is not receiving adequate public support *not because people aren’t outraged by the issue, but because they stop at outrage and lack credible solutions beyond reporting episodes of abuse.*

**Try to get multiple actors into the picture** and broaden the discussion to the larger community.

**Avoid communications that imply that abuse is only a family issue to be solved by governmental agencies who “save” or “punish.”** Emphasize community responsibility and resources available for assisting parents and caregivers.

**There is no such thing as “off the record”** and you need to be comfortable with taking the risk that anything and everything you say may be printed or aired.

**Be sure that those identified as “contacts” for the media:**

- are easily accessible
- are informed and knowledgeable of the topics/issues
- will respond promptly to media calls and requests (even a 30 minute delay will likely cause a media contact to move on to someone else)
- understand that they are spokespersons for the organization and should not express their personal opinions or agendas
- will present a professional image
- know that it is okay to say, “I do not know but I will find out for you or you could contact \_\_\_\_\_ who should be able to answer that for you.”

**Stay on message.**

- Narrow your message to one to three central points that you want to get across and stick to them. A good example is: 1. Child abuse and neglect exists in every zip code. 2. It is a serious problem with solutions that don’t receive the attention they deserve.. 3. There is something every single one of us can do to prevent it.
- You do not have to explicitly answer every question a reporter poses.
- Answer every question in such a way that it reflects your key message.
- Do not repeat something a reporter says that is not part of your point, even to disagree with it. For instance, by saying “child abuse is not just dramatic cases of parents killing their children,” you remind your audience of parents killing children.

**Emphasize that prevention is about solutions to child abuse.**

- Do not leave the word “prevention” unexplained.
- Describe or suggest solutions.
- Keep in mind that reporters will usually try to move you back to drama and tragedy.
- Stress that child abuse is a problem with solutions that do not receive the attention they should.
- Explain that the public cares deeply about child abuse but does not know what can be done about it.

**Reporters will want data and statistics.** Instead of supplying the traditional child abuse statistics on reports, substantiations and deaths, give them stats on what works.

Provide examples of what prevention strategies are working in your community:

- mentoring
- after school programs
- parenting support groups

- parenting skills classes
- voluntary home visiting

Provide them with:

- Numbers of people reached with these services
- Impact of such services

**Letters to the editor are a great way to reach a general audience.**

- Keep them short.
- Be focused on one or two points.
- Include a call to action whether it is to support specific legislation, display pinwheels, or to learn more about a prevention program or service.
- Develop an articulate group of volunteers who can write letters so that the letters do not always come from one source.

**Become “experts” on the media in your community:**

- Know their deadlines for going to print or being aired
- Arrange your activities to coincide with their deadlines
- Know what kinds of stories or features they generally cover
- Get contact information for specific reporters or contacts and send your releases and advisories to the most appropriate person, not a general position
- Talk to them to learn how they like to receive information – email, hard copy, phone call
- Find out what they consider “newsworthy”
- Convene an annual Media Advisory Board to get their input and feedback on how your Council could improve its media relations

**Avoid using abbreviations, contractions, and the “alphabet soup”** in your printed and verbal communications.

**Be sure that you collaborate with other social and human service entities** in your community so that you are aware of the resources they offer and can refer media to the appropriate contacts at their agencies or organizations.

**Try to maintain consistency of the contact person(s)** over a two to three year period so that positive relationships can be established.

**Include reference to your Council’s affiliation with Prevent Child Abuse Indiana** as a way to enhance the breadth and credibility of your resources and information.

**When possible, give them “leads” or story ideas** that have no direct relationship to your Council. This will help to build their trust and confidence in your Council as a “connected leader” within the community.



## How to Provide Examples of Effective Prevention Strategies

When relating stories of successful prevention strategies, it is important to connect the dots from the program to the prevention of child abuse. Given the public's overwhelming tendency to think about child abuse in its worst forms, the term "child abuse prevention" holds little meaning to them outside of reporting. Thus, describing a parent support program as an example of child abuse prevention will not make sense to them without some explanation. The Children's Bureau connected these dots well in its *2005 Child Abuse Prevention Month Packet*. The following is adapted from it:

- Community leaders are increasingly thinking about the personal, family, and environmental matters that strengthen families and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect. Research shows that while some things have harmful effects on children and families, others can alleviate those effects and provide benefits to parents and children.
- Successful family support activities and child abuse prevention programs are designed to promote these protective factors, which include:
  - Parental confidence and knowledge
  - Strong bonds between parents and children
  - Family social connections - to decrease isolation
  - Family knowledge of child development
  - Effective problem solving and communication skills
  - Concrete support in times of need

Research has found that the following are effective strategies that family support and child abuse prevention programs can use to bolster these protective factors:

- **Facilitate friendships and support.** Offer opportunities for parents in the neighborhood to get to know each other, develop support systems, and take leadership roles. Strategies may include sports teams, potlucks, classes, advisory groups, board leadership and volunteer opportunities.
- **Strengthen parenting.** Develop ways for parents to get support on parenting issues when they need it. Possibilities include classes, support groups, home visits, tip sheets in pediatricians' offices, and resource libraries.
- **Respond to family crises.** Offer extra support to families when they need it, as in times of illness, job loss, housing problems and other stressors.
- **Link families to services and opportunities.** Provide referrals for job training, education, health care, mental health, and other essential services in the community.
- **Support children's social and emotional development.** Some programs specifically focus on helping children articulate their feelings and get along with others. When children bring home what they learn in the classroom, parents benefit as well.

Adapted from *Building on Strengths: Enhancing Protective Factors for Children and Families*, National Clearinghouse of Child Abuse and Neglect Information.

## Pitching Story Ideas to the Media

Media professionals want to know that their stories will have an impact on the entire community. When the topic of child abuse and neglect arises, their first question is often, "How many children have been abused in Indiana?" or "How many children have died this year from abuse?"



While these tragic numbers may garner momentary attention, they provide limited insight into the multiple dimensions of child maltreatment. They reveal little about the interactions among individuals, families, communities, and society that lead to such incidents. This complexity confounds our search for a simple answer to the question, "Why does child abuse occur?"

You can help the media understand that this same complexity offers great hope, because a problem with so many contributing factors offers multiple opportunities for intervention and change. The power of the story is in the healing that occurs when a community joins together, not only to identify and reduce known risk factors, but also to enhance protective factors that strengthen families, reduce the incidence of abuse and neglect, and protect children from its negative effects.

The following are some tips for successful media pitches.

- Anchor your story to a timely, local event. Use Child Abuse Prevention Month as a conversation starter with your local media.
- When you talk to the media about supporting parents and families to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, think about angles that make the story current and interesting to a local audience.
- Have a clear message.
- Communicate the idea that the five protective factors have been shown through research to promote healthy families and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

Sample messages:

- Supporting families and ensuring that parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need are effective ways to protect children from the risk of child abuse and neglect.
- Children do well when their parents do well. And parents do best when they live in communities that actively support families. We can all play a positive part.

Inform the media about successful ways your community is:

- Promoting nurturing and parent-child attachment.
- Enhancing knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development.
- Strengthening parental resilience to stress.

- Building social connections.
- Identifying concrete supports for parents.

Keep your message simple and direct. You might even pick just one protective factor and describe how it helps keep children safe and communities healthy by making families strong. For example:

- Celebrate community heroes.
- Suggest interviewees who can demonstrate the success of family strengthening programs and protective factors through their own lives. Some suggestions:
  - A local doctor who created a package of parenting tips appropriate for different developmental stages.
  - A place of worship that offers Wednesday night social activities for families.
  - An arts organization or entertainment venue that offers discounts for families.

### **Consider the Message**

The message itself is, of course, the most important element of all. When developing messages promoting safe children and healthy families, there is some evidence that positive motivations and emotions, rather than negative ones, may be more effective. For instance, a message about positive ways that communities can strengthen families is likely to be more readily accepted than one that emphasizes the civil and criminal consequences of child abuse and neglect. Likewise, acknowledging that parenting is difficult for everyone may help your audience identify with the need to support all parents.

The following are other strategies that can assist in developing an effective message:

- Use relevant, localized statistics and figures in addition to or instead of national ones.
- Aim to support and increase positive behaviors.
- Use “we” language when talking about social behaviors.
- Be culturally sensitive, including possibly developing the message in languages other than English.

***Always conclude media pitches with suggestions for where to go for more information or tips for how community members can participate in similar efforts.***

# Section 3: Press Releases

## General Press Release for April 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 1, 2011

CONTACT: Sandy Runkle, 317.775.6439 [education.pcain@villages.org](mailto:education.pcain@villages.org)

Mary Armstrong-Smith, 317.775.6424 [msmith.pcain@villages.org](mailto:msmith.pcain@villages.org)

### **April Is National Child Abuse Prevention Month**

Cherishing Children... Affirming Families

(Indianapolis, IN) – Today's children are Indiana's future leaders, parents and workers. Our state's future prosperity depends on their healthy development and growth. With the support of engaged communities and nurturing families, all of Indiana's children can thrive and have the opportunity to grow into caring, contributing and healthy adults. Throughout the month of April, Prevent Child Abuse Indiana reminds Hoosiers that helping our communities and families create healthy, nurturing environments for children is one of the best investments Indiana can make.

Scientists who study the brain tell us that providing all of our children — from infants to adolescents — with nurturing relationships in safe, stable environments builds healthy brain architecture and lays a foundation for future success and well-being. Nevertheless, too many Hoosier children are living in environments that undermine healthy brain development. Children who are abused or neglected, living in homes with domestic violence or substance abuse or living in chronic poverty, experience unhealthy levels of stress that are toxic to the brain and impair its growth. These children are more likely to experience life-long problems in learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.

Preventing child abuse and neglect will take effort from every one of us — from policy-makers to parents — to ensure our children have the foundation to become tomorrow's leaders.

Prevent Child Abuse Indiana is the only statewide organization dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect in all its forms. We are a state chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, with statewide councils representing thousands of professionals and volunteers working to engage communities, strengthen families and promote healthy child development across the state.

Prevent Child Abuse Indiana acts as *educators* working to heighten public awareness of the need for caring communities to promote healthy child development and what Hoosiers can do for our next generation; *coalition-builders* organizing concerned citizens and groups to join forces and leverage resources to prevent child maltreatment; *catalysts* advocating for important programs and policies that help communities support parents and help parents raise healthy children; and *trainers* providing professionals and volunteers with the essential skills and knowledge to help parents and communities prevent child abuse and neglect.

Prevent Child Abuse Indiana, a Division of The Villages continues to be the state's leading voice for preventing child abuse and neglect. Together with the support of Indiana citizens, professionals and decision-makers, we are working to ensure Indiana's youngest citizens grow up in nurturing homes and responsive communities. For more information visit [www.pcain.org](http://www.pcain.org) or call 317.775.6439.

# Sample Press Release (Local Councils)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 1, 2011

CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name**

**Phone/Email**

## **April Is National Child Abuse Prevention Month**

*Cherishing Children... Affirming Families*

Today's children are Indiana's future leaders, parents and workers. Our state's future prosperity depends on their healthy development and growth. With the support of engaged communities and nurturing families, all of Indiana's children can thrive and have the opportunity to grow into caring, contributing and healthy adults. Throughout the month of April, Prevent Child Abuse Indiana and **(COUNCIL NAME)** remind Hoosiers that helping our communities and families create healthy, nurturing environments for children is one of the best investments Indiana can make.

Scientists who study the brain tell us that providing all of our children — from infants to adolescents — with nurturing relationships in safe, stable environments builds healthy brain architecture and lays a foundation for future success and well-being. Nevertheless, too many Hoosier children are living in environments that undermine healthy brain development. Children who are abused or neglected, living in homes with domestic violence or substance abuse or living in chronic poverty, experience unhealthy levels of stress that are toxic to the brain and impair its growth. *These children are more likely to experience life-long problems in learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.*

Preventing child abuse and neglect will take effort from every one of us — from policy-makers to parents — to ensure our children have the foundation to become tomorrow's leaders.

Prevent Child Abuse Indiana is the only statewide organization dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect in all its forms. As a state chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, PCA Indiana supports statewide Prevention Councils representing thousands of professionals and volunteers working to engage communities, strengthen families and promote healthy child development across the state.

Prevent Child Abuse Indiana and its Prevention Councils act as *educators* working to heighten public awareness of the need for caring communities to promote healthy child development and what Hoosiers can do for our next generation; *coalition-builders* organizing concerned citizens and groups to join forces and leverage resources to prevent child maltreatment; *catalysts* advocating for important programs and policies that help communities support parents and help parents raise healthy children; and *trainers* providing professionals and volunteers with the essential skills and knowledge to help parents and communities prevent child abuse and neglect.

**(COUNCIL NAME)** has been a part of **(NAME)** County since **(YEAR COUNCIL ESTABLISHED)**. We continue to work on behalf of **(NAME)** County's children and families, striving to make **(NAME)** County a place where all children flourish, free from abuse and neglect. For more information on **(COUNCIL NAME)**, contact: **(CONTACT NAME)** at **(PHONE AND/OR EMAIL)**.

###

## Press Release Tips for Local Prevention Councils

This sample press release is specifically written for local Prevention Councils to use for April Awareness activities for 2011. The emphasis is on the fact that children hold the future, and it is in our best interest to make sure they are safe and well cared for.

The contact information at the top of the press release has been left blank. Please insert your Council's contact person's name and contact information. If possible, have two contact people in case one isn't available.

Be sure that those identified as "contacts" for the media:

- are easily accessible
- are informed and knowledgeable of the topics/issues
- will respond promptly to media calls and requests (even a 30 minute delay will likely cause a media contact to move on to someone else)
- understand that they are spokespersons for the organization and should not express their personal opinions or agendas
- understand that Prevent Child Abuse Indiana and its Prevention Councils do not comment on individual child abuse/neglect cases
- will present a professional image
- know that it is okay to say, "I do not know but I will find out for you or you could contact \_\_\_\_\_ who should be able to answer that for you."

### **REMEMBER:**

There is no such thing as "off the record" and you need to be comfortable with taking the risk that anything and everything you say may be printed or aired.

The first and last paragraphs have numerous places for you to insert your Council name, county name and contact information. Be sure to complete this before sending this release to the media!

## Section 4: Other Media Tools

### Sample Public Service Announcements 2011

-1-

Today's children are Indiana's future leaders, parents and workers. Our state's future prosperity depends on their healthy development and growth. With the support of engaged communities and nurturing families, all of Indiana's children can thrive and have the opportunity to grow into caring, contributing and healthy adults. Call 317.775.6439 for more information.

-2-

Indiana's future prosperity depends on our ability to produce strong, caring children who can lead tomorrow's communities. If we expect solid outputs we have to invest in solid inputs. The latest science says that nurturing relationships early in life literally build the architecture of maturing brains and establish the foundation for all future development. Unfortunately, for many kids, exposure to "toxic stress" can undermine that development. We can work together to nurture healthy children and thriving communities. Call 317.775.6439 to find out more about what you can do to help.

-3-

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. This month find new ways to Cherish Children. Get involved. Support community programs and services that work with families. Contribute time and resources. One person - YOU - can make a difference in the life of a child or a family. For more information on what you can do, visit [www.pcain.org](http://www.pcain.org) or call **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana, 317.775.6439.

-4-

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana wants to help you Cherish Indiana's Children. Be a friend to the kids and parents you know. Get involved. Advocate. Volunteer. Take time to be kind. Child abuse is preventable. For more information on what you can do, visit [www.pcain.org](http://www.pcain.org) or call **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana, 317.775.6439.

-5-

If we don't invest in our children, we don't invest in our future. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana encourages you to find ways to Cherish the Children in your life. Laugh, love and have fun together. For information about child abuse prevention call 317.775.6439.

## Sample Proclamation 2011

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WHEREAS, we all have a responsibility, as individuals, neighbors, community members and citizens of the (YOUR CITY/TOWN) to help create healthy, safe and nurturing experiences for children; and

WHEREAS, safe and healthy childhoods help produce confident and successful adults; and

WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect often occurs when people find themselves in stressful situations, without community resources, and don't know how to cope; and

WHEREAS, the majority of child abuse cases stem from situations and conditions that are preventable in an engaged and supportive community; and

WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect can be reduced by making sure every family has the support they need and deserve to raise their children in a healthy environment; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that no one person can do everything, but that everyone can do something, and together we can create change for the better; and

WHEREAS, effective prevention programs succeed because of partnerships among agencies, schools, faith communities, civic organizations, law enforcement agencies, and the business community; and

WHEREAS, displaying a pinwheel or planting a pinwheel garden in April will serve as a positive reminder that together we can prevent child abuse and keep children safe;

Now, therefore, I, (TITLE AND NAME) do hereby proclaim April 2010 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in (YOUR COMMUNITY), and I urge all citizens to engage in activities that strengthen families and communities to provide the optimal environment for children to learn, grow and thrive so that all children have the benefit of happy, healthy and safe childhoods.

Signed this X day of X, 2011

OFFICIAL'S NAME AND TITLE

Today we have a very special opportunity to consider the best path to a prosperous future for our community, by giving all children the experiences they need to become leaders tomorrow. This is what Child Abuse Awareness Month is all about. For the past \_\_\_\_\_ years, our Prevention Council has been engaged in understanding, and then sharing with others, what it means to create a community that enables all of its children to develop — socially, emotionally and cognitively.

What does development, and specifically, brain development, have to do with ending child abuse? Plenty. Science tells us that the experiences children have early in life actually build the architecture of their developing brains. Brains are built over time, just like houses. And just as a well-built house requires a strong foundation, our children's brains also need a strong foundation for all of the development that comes after. Experiences of abuse and neglect damage this foundation, harm brain development, and diminish our community's future.

Science also tells us that certain environments produce “toxic stress” — or chronic conditions such as extreme poverty and abusive situations — that can compromise the brain's architecture and destabilize that foundation, derailing later development. Fortunately, the research also tells us what types of environments ensure healthy brain development, what types of environments produce toxic stress, and what communities, health practitioners, teachers and ordinary citizens can do to ensure that all of our children have the solid foundations they need for healthy development.

First, while it's vitally important to provide children with opportunities to develop their cognitive abilities, we must pay equal attention to their social and emotional abilities. That's because all of the developmental domains work together, each affecting and affected by the other. This development happens in an environment of relationships, where children have the opportunity to develop interactions with caregivers in a “serve and return” fashion, much like in a game of tennis or volleyball. When an infant or child reaches out for interaction with a caregiver, and that caregiver responds consistently and appropriately, critical neural pathways in children's brains are built.

Healthy pathways are not built in the brains of children who are living in environments of abuse and neglect, which has a negative impact on children's development — in the short and long term.

Secondly, children need environments free of toxic stress, or the kind of chronic, serious stress caused by experiences such as violence, abuse or neglect. This toxic stress literally damages children's brains by releasing chemicals in the brain that stunt cell growth. This even impairs their physical health because children develop an exaggerated stress response that weakens their defense system against later illness, from heart disease to diabetes and depression.

In order to support healthy brain development in all children, we need to maintain a comprehensive set of programs to protect children from exposure to toxic stress, and encourage strong “serve and return” interactions with their caregivers.

One way to do this is by supporting our Healthy Families Program, which provides free home visits from trained staff to all newborns in our community. These voluntary visits allow staff to identify which families are experiencing the conditions that can cause toxic stress, such as extreme poverty, maternal depression and other mental health concerns, and family violence. Once identified, the program can connect these families to the community supports they need to buffer this toxic stress, increasing the likelihood of healthy outcomes.

The program we have currently reaches some, but not all, of the families in our county who need it. It’s as if we had a vaccine that prevents a serious childhood disease, but not all children were protected.

Our Council’s goal is to ensure that more children have the opportunity they deserve to thrive by bringing this effective program to every family in the county who could benefit. Certainly, trying to change behavior or build new skills on a foundation of brain circuits that were not wired properly in the first place is more difficult than getting it right the first time. Home visits to newborns offer an opportunity to lay a strong foundation right from the very start of life.

On the \_\_\_\_\_th anniversary of Child Abuse Awareness Month, let us celebrate that many parts of our community are coming together to create positive, healthy environments that support children’s development. With additional private and public funds, we can continue working together to support this cause by extending our effective nurse home visiting program. Please join us in supporting this vital initiative to end child abuse in our community, and create a more prosperous, positive future for all of us.



## Sample Editorial #2

The majority of child abuse cases in Indiana stem from situations and conditions that are entirely preventable in an engaged and supportive community. A community that cares about early childhood development, parent support and maternal mental health, for instance, is more likely to see families nurturing children who are born healthy and enter school ready to learn. Cities and towns that work to create good school systems and who come together to ensure that affordable housing is available in good, safe neighborhoods are less likely to see stressed, isolated families who don't know where to turn.

Approximately 80% of the substantiated acts of child abuse and neglect in Indiana are committed by parents or family members. Perpetrators constantly cite lack of parenting skills and support as the primary reason for their abusive behaviors. Yet, we continue to ignore the overwhelming need to prepare parents and caregivers better. We must make policy and systemic changes that value children and strengthen families -- we cannot wait for someone else to do it.

If we work together to change the way society values and supports the well-being of children and families and if we can change the cultural attitude to ensure that healthy, safe and nurturing experiences are supported by the actions of *every* individual and *every* community, then "preventing child abuse" no longer describes simply the 'cause' we each support; but rather, it begins to describe the 'effect' of all that we do together.

April's observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month reminds us all of our collective responsibility to make positive choices that will impact the safety and well-being of our children. Beyond the choices we make every day to assure our own children and the children we know receive nurturing, loving experiences every day, we can make choices that will affect change at the governmental and community level on the systems that support healthy community and family development.

Child abuse and neglect robs so many of our society's children of their childhood and their sense of security and well-being. And while no one can do everything, everyone can do something. And together, we can do anything. Together, we can advocate for policies and programs which support healthy families and children. Together, we can live in a prosperous society that understands and genuinely values the well-being of children. Together, we can prevent child abuse.

It is, however, up to each of us – not someone else – to make a difference in the life of a child. We must hold policy-makers, elected officials, and ourselves accountable for being informed, being involved, and being dedicated to preventing child abuse before any pain is inflicted on another child. And while April is recognized nationally as Child Abuse Prevention Month, every day should be about preventing child abuse. Preventing child abuse is possible if, collectively and individually, we make the right choices and changes for our children – Indiana's future.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title or position \_\_\_\_\_  
Prevent Child Abuse \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Letters to the Editor

*The following examples are written in support of a fictitious early childhood advocacy coalition. They are examples of how to use the media to advance a new frame about early childhood development and policy.*

To The Editor:

The Tribune's recent coverage of the latest child abuse case ("Investigation Continues into Abuse of Siblings") caused me to reflect on how a sound investment in our community's future requires that all children have the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially and emotionally. Science now tells us that toxic stressors in a child's environment (the kind of stress caused by long-term, persistent factors such as maternal depression, extreme poverty and abuse or neglect) can affect the architecture of the developing brain. This means that interventions in the lives of children who are experiencing toxic stress should not be delayed.

Partnerships for Parents has high-quality programs that offer supportive structures and relationships to families experiencing toxic stress. If all children and families had access to these effective programs, we would lay solid foundations for children's development and prevent more serious problems from developing later — and that would be beneficial for all of us.

Nancy Smith, M.D.  
Three Oaks Pediatric Clinic

To The Editor:

As a family court judge, I believe it is important to attend to new findings about child development that should be used to improve systems that serve children. We now know that early adversity has life-long effects on learning, behavior and health. Science tells us that "toxic stress" — like exposure to family violence — literally damages the brain's architecture. We don't have to worry about tolerable stress (falling off your bike, or getting a shot at the doctor's office). But toxic stress lasts longer, is more severe, and leads to lifelong problems in learning, behavior and health. I have seen this in my courtroom, but it doesn't have to be that way.

We need to provide better prevention and intervention resources throughout our state, so that judges are able to refer families to supportive programs as early as possible. We can turn that toxic stress into tolerable stress. Our future depends on it.

The Hon. Joseph J. Jones  
Family Court Judge, District 4

To The Editor:

As a teacher, I feel honored to do my part in stewarding our next generation of citizens and community leaders. I also see the results in children's learning and behavior for those who have been in early care programs that are responsive to what is essential for healthy development — stable, nurturing interactions with caring adults literally build the architecture of the maturing brain!

Every day, I see the differences in learning and behavior of children who have not had that stability. Trying to build new skills on a shaky foundation of brain circuits that were not wired properly when they were first formed requires more work and is less effective than providing stable, protective relationships early in life. If we take seriously our responsibility to nurture our next generation of leaders, we need to improve the systems that serve kids by minimizing multiple placements and disruptions of relationships early in life.

Ana Rodrigues  
Eastview Elementary School

# Section 5: Blue Saturday & Sunday Campaign

## Sample Blue Saturday and Sunday News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (DATE)  
CONTACT: (INSERT NAME, PHONE AND E-MAIL)

### Indiana Blue Saturday and Sunday Faith Initiative Celebrated During Child Abuse Prevention Month: April 23 & 24, 2011

(City), Indiana — In April 2011 **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana, a division of The Villages, asks Indiana's faith community to work "Hand-In-Hand" with prevention efforts to raise awareness of child abuse and the importance of preventing the pain of abuse before it occurs.

"**Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana is including Indiana Blue Saturday and Sunday in our statewide program for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April," explains Mary Armstrong-Smith, Community Partners Director, **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana. "We are encouraging places of worship to join the millions already committed to participating in the National Blue Sunday Initiative."

National Blue Sunday began over 15 years ago when 20 places of worship took time in during their worship services on the last Sunday of April (Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month) to pray for the victims of child abuse, and for those who serve and protect them. The international effort, founded and directed by the nonprofit, volunteer organization, Blue Sunday Child Abuse Prevention Initiative, has grown to include more than 2 million participants.

It is imperative for the faith community to be leaders in child abuse prevention, and to be a resource and support system for all families. In addition to Blue Sunday, services held on Saturday will be added to the national effort.

Places of worship are encouraged to do one or all of the following –

- Take time during a service on April 23 or April 24 to pray for:
  - ....children in Indiana who have died from abuse or neglect
  - ....children in Indiana who have been abused and neglected
  - ....parents and caregivers who are doing their very best to protect and love their children
  - ....the professionals who help children and families every day.
- Display or wear royal blue ribbons and/or pinwheels.
- Honor members who go "above and beyond" to value children

Register your participation in National Blue Saturday/Sunday by sending an e-mail to **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana, [msmith.pcain@villages.org](mailto:msmith.pcain@villages.org).

**Prevent Child Abuse Indiana**, a division of The Villages, is a statewide entity dedicated to serving as a catalyst for preventing child abuse in all its forms and thereby enhancing the quality of life for children and families in Indiana. By working with diverse national, state and local groups, and volunteers to facilitate child abuse prevention programs across the state, **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana advocates for policies, programs and practices that value children and families. For more information call (317) 775-6439 or visit [www.pcain.org](http://www.pcain.org).

***Prevention Councils: add your information below:***

Prevent Child Abuse \_\_\_\_\_ County is a chartered Council of Prevent Child Abuse Indiana. The Council has worked in \_\_\_\_\_ County since \_\_\_\_\_. A total of \_\_\_\_\_ volunteers give their time and talents to helping prevent child abuse and neglect in \_\_\_\_\_ County. For more information about Prevent Child Abuse \_\_ County, contact \_\_\_\_\_ (name) at 555-555-1212 or at [email@server.com](mailto:email@server.com).

###

# Sample Letter to Pastors, Priests and Other Faith Community Leaders

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

In April 2011 (**NAME OF COUNCIL**), a chartered Prevention Council of Prevent Child Abuse Indiana, is asking \_\_\_\_\_ County's faith community to work "Hand-In-Hand" with prevention efforts to raise awareness of child abuse and the importance of preventing the pain of abuse before it occurs.

We are encouraging places of worship to join the millions already committed to participating in the **National Blue Sunday Initiative**.

National Blue Sunday began over 15 years ago when 20 places of worship took time in during their worship services on the last Sunday of April (Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month) to pray for the victims of child abuse, and for those who serve and protect them. The international effort, founded and directed by the nonprofit, volunteer organization, Blue Sunday Child Abuse Prevention Initiative, has grown to include more than 2 million participants.

It is imperative for the faith community to be leaders in child abuse prevention, and to be a resource and support system for all families. In addition to Blue Sunday, services held on Saturday will be added to the national effort.

Places of worship are encouraged to do one or all of the following –

## **Take time during a service on April 23 or April 24 to pray for:**

- children in Indiana who have died from abuse or neglect
- children in Indiana who have been abused and neglected
- parents and caregivers who are doing their very best to protect and love their children
- the professionals who help children and families every day.

## **Display or wear royal blue ribbons and/or pinwheels.**

## **Honor members who go "above and beyond" to value children**

Included are bulletin inserts that can be used for the month of April, along with a prayer for children that can be used during worship services.

We also have brochures available about ways to prevent abuse and neglect. If you would like to order some, please contact me at (PHONE NUMBER) and I will be happy to get them to you.

It is our hope that you and your congregation will join us in this effort to make Indiana a place where all children flourish, free from abuse and neglect. If you decide to participate, please contact me to let me know and I will add your church's name to the growing list of participating congregations.

Sincerely,

## Sample Bulletin Inserts



### April is Child Abuse Prevention Month Shaken Infant Syndrome

Shaken Infant Syndrome happens when a person caring for a baby or young child becomes frustrated and shakes the baby forcefully. Even mild shaking can cause serious injury. Usually the damage that occurs cannot be seen. Severe injury is most common in very young children, but even four- and five-year old children can be injured or killed.

Of all the children who are shaken, approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  die,  $\frac{1}{3}$  are severely injured, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  recover but with health, development, or learning problems in the future. Shaken Infant Syndrome can cause death, brain damage, spinal injury or paralysis, seizures, broken bones, blindness, mental retardation, and delay in development.

Studies show that babies are shaken when a caregiver becomes frustrated by the baby's crying. Here are some ideas on how to handle frustration with a crying baby. To calm the baby: see if the baby is hungry or needs changing, see if the baby is ill, take the baby for a walk or a ride in the car, help the baby suck a pacifier or thumb, gently rock the baby in your arms, talk or sing to the baby, play soothing music, or wrap baby in a blanket and hold baby close to your chest.

If the child won't stop crying and you feel yourself getting angry or tense, it is okay to put the baby in a safe place for a short period of time. Make sure you are nearby in case there is an emergency. Then calm yourself with deep breaths, music, television, puzzles, exercise, etc. If you still feel out of control, call a friend or relative and ask for help. Never shake a baby!

Sponsored by  
**Prevent Child Abuse \_\_\_\_\_ County, Inc.**  
A chartered council of Prevent Child Abuse Indiana



### April is Child Abuse Prevention Month What Can You Do?

You can reach out to parents and children. Anything you can do to support children and parents can help reduce the stress that often leads to abuse and neglect of children. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Be a friend to a parent you know. If a parent seems to be struggling, offer to baby-sit or run errands, or just lend a friendly ear.
2. Be a friend to a child or children you know. Remember their names; smile when you talk with them; ask about their day at school; send them a card in the mail.
3. Talk to your neighbors about looking out for one another's children. Encourage a supportive spirit among parents in your neighborhood.
4. Give your used clothing, furniture and toys to organizations that help families.
5. Give your time and money for activities that support and serve the needs of children and families in your community.
6. Encourage adults who are struggling to seek assistance. Tell them about 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373), our toll-free phone line for parenting concerns.

Sponsored by  
**Prevent Child Abuse \_\_\_\_\_ County, Inc.**  
A chartered council of Prevent Child Abuse Indiana



## Indiana “Blue Saturday/Sunday Faith Initiative Day

**Prevent Child Abuse \_\_\_\_\_ County** asks our church to join them to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect and to do whatever we can to prevent the pain of abuse and neglect of children **before** it occurs.

It is imperative that our church be leaders in child abuse and neglect prevention and to be a resource and support system to all families. Our church wants to be a part of the “**Blue Saturday/Sunday**” **Faith Initiative Day**. It is simple and important. We’re asked to do three things:

1. Take time during our services on April 23/24 to:
  - **Pray** for children and adults in our county who have been affected by child abuse and neglect.
  - **Pray** for parents and caregivers who are doing their very best to protect and love their children.
  - **Pray** for professionals who help children and families every day.
2. Honor members of our congregation who go above and beyond to value children.
3. Include information about preventing child abuse and neglect in our bulletin.

Sponsored by  
**Prevent Child Abuse \_\_\_\_\_ County, Inc.**  
A chartered council of Prevent Child Abuse Indiana



## April is Child Abuse Prevention Month Love with Words

Prevent Child Abuse \_\_\_\_\_ County is a not-for-profit corporation. Our mission is to prevent child neglect and abuse through education, increased awareness, and advocacy. Anything you can do to support children and parents can help reduce the stress that often leads to abuse and neglect of children. You can help by loving with words.

You are terrific!  
You are special.  
What do you think?  
You brighten my day.  
I love you.  
You are outstanding.  
You are beautiful.  
You are unique.  
You are a winner.  
Tell me more.  
Super!  
You can do it.  
Well done.  
Let’s talk about it.  
I like how you share.  
You make me happy.

Sponsored by  
**Prevent Child Abuse \_\_\_\_\_ County, Inc.**  
A chartered council of Prevent Child Abuse Indiana

## Blue Sunday Prayer

Lord,  
Thank You for our children,  
For them we kneel and pray  
Help us teach them of Your kindness,  
Of Your mercy and, Your way

Help us show them of Your love,  
your strength and safety, too.  
Help us show them who You are.  
Help us treat them like You do.

Let's pray,  
Educate ourselves, and  
volunteer for the children  
of our nation until black and blue  
are just colors in their crayon box.



# Section 6: Pinwheel Resources

## Clip Art Samples

**The Berenstain Bears** are demonstrating their commitment to children and families across the country by serving as 'Spokesbears' for Prevent Child Abuse America.



The partnership is an innovative decision by the Berenstain Bears to use their popularity to highlight the type of parenting, activities and lessons that promote healthy, stable and stimulating environments that decrease the chances of child abuse and neglect from occurring. The Berenstain Bears have provided important lessons to millions of readers for over 40 years and are one of the most recognizable children's characters in the country.

*"It's important for us to contribute to healthier and safer environments for children. Preventing abuse is something we want to actively support," said **Mike Berenstain**, co-author and illustrator of the books. "We hope this contributes to a more open conversation about preventing abuse and that other companies will follow suit."*

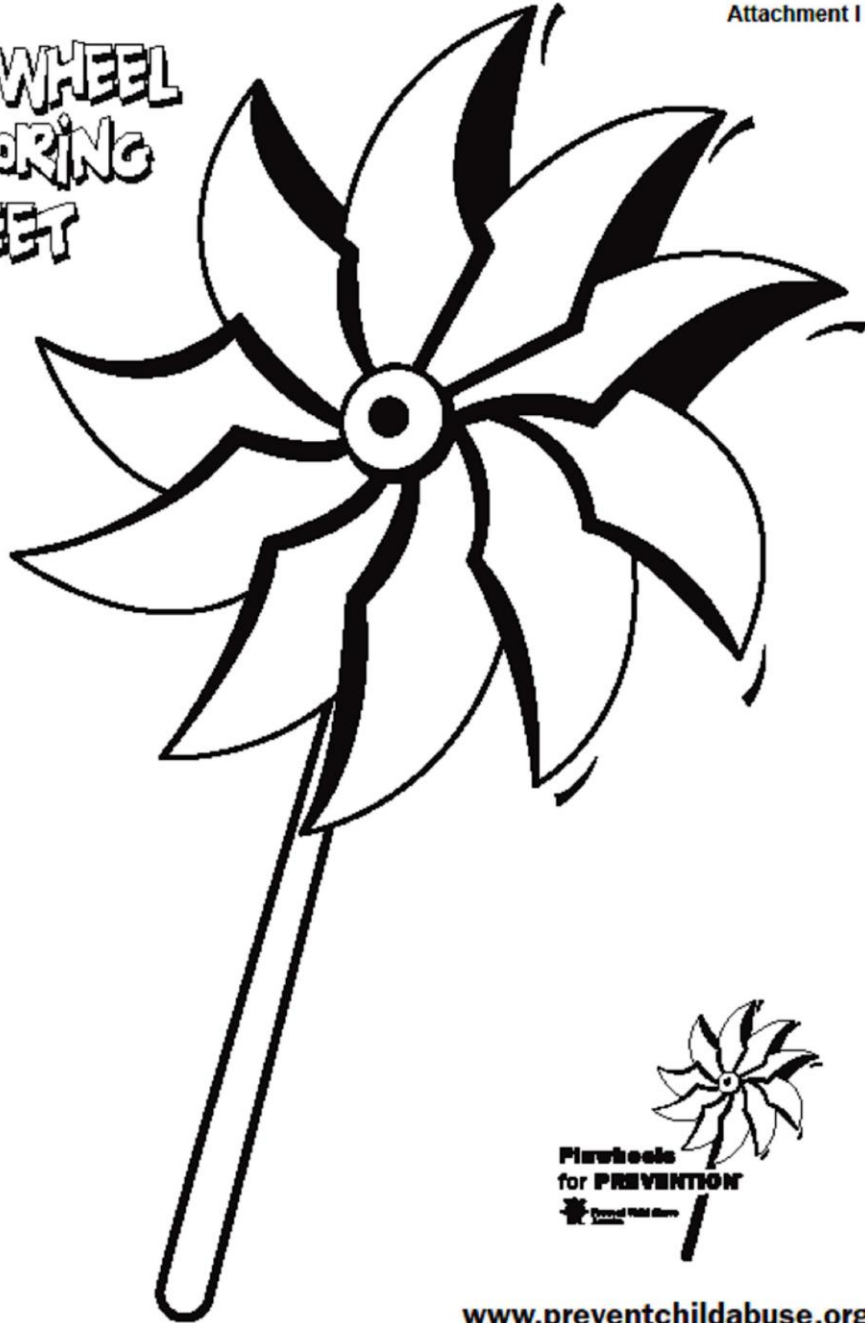
This year Prevent Child Abuse Indiana is providing online access to clip art and logos for Prevention Councils. Items can be found in the Council Documents section of our website at [www.pcain.org](http://www.pcain.org).



# Pinwheel Coloring Sheet

Attachment I

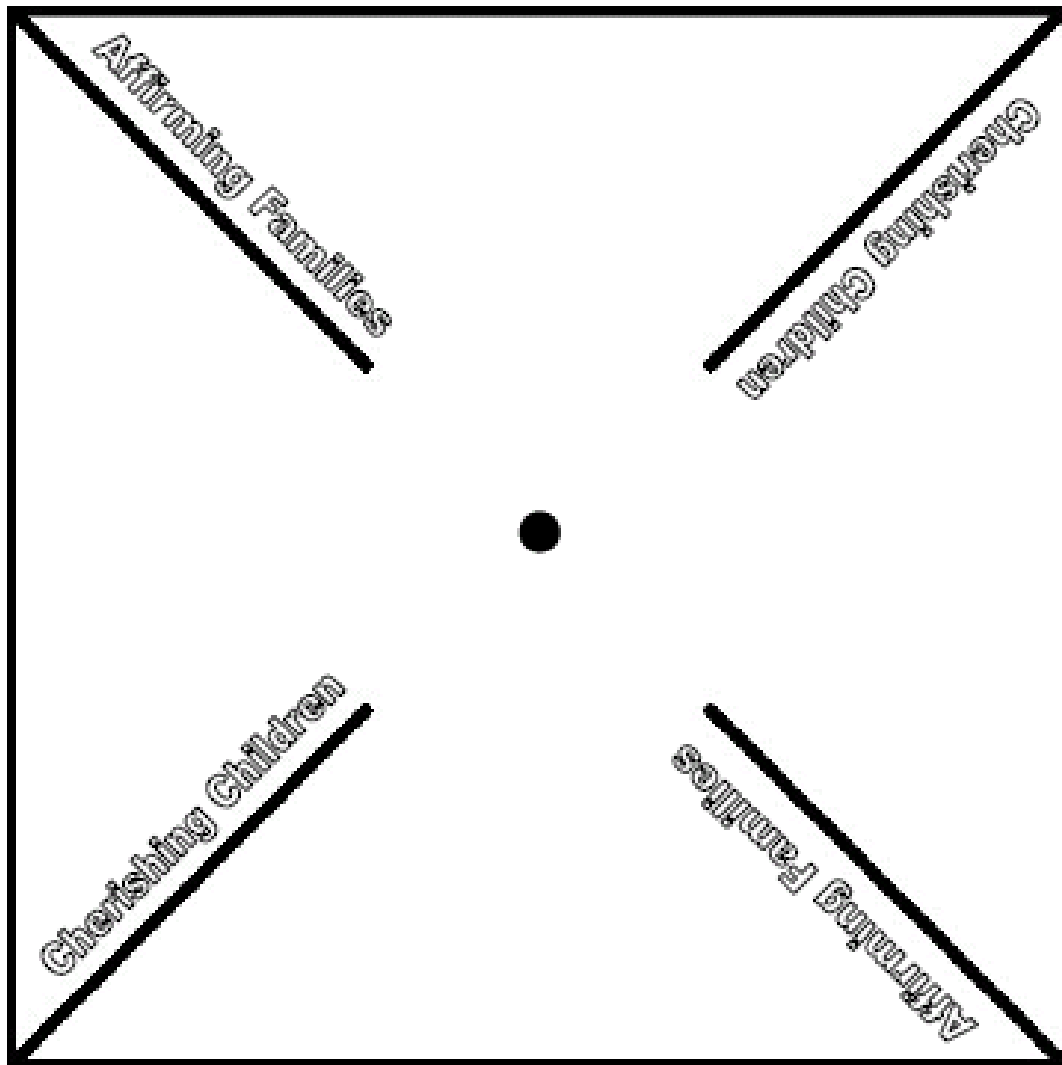
**PINWHEEL  
COLORING  
SHEET**



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



## Make Your Own Pinwheel !



**Directions:**

Decorate the pinwheel as you desire, cut along the solid black lines.

Fold the blank corner toward the center black dot.

Connect the center pieces, by poking a straight pin or fastener through the center.

Attach to a straw or pencil.

# Pinwheel Gardens

## Pinwheel Gardens Blooming Nationwide



Michigan



Ohio



Vermont



Virginia



Nevada

# Section 7: Prevention Councils

## The Role of Prevention Councils

**Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana believes the most effective approach to reducing child abuse and neglect is to maintain a statewide network of volunteers to work on behalf of child abuse prevention in communities throughout Indiana. Chartered Councils can ensure that there is a unified and continuous voice advocating for child abuse prevention services and programs throughout Indiana. Working partnerships between **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana and local Councils involve information sharing, technical assistance, resource development, program implementation, advocacy, and decision making.

Often Councils begin by assessing their community to see what services are available related to children and what services are lacking. They also form around the development of activities for the month of April -- the designated month pertaining to child abuse and neglect as declared by the Governor.

Many Councils are involved in educating their communities and their school-age children about child abuse and neglect. They provide programs, join with other community organizations as advocates for children, host activities at their county fairs, host candidate debates for public offices overseeing children, do media campaigns to educate their communities, and fundraising.

Councils choose one of two organizational structures; either they obtain their own corporate and tax exempt status, or they operate as a part of another nonprofit organization. Either of these options allow a Council to apply for grant funding and to do fundraising activities to support their activities.

As projects are determined through the Council's Annual Plan, additional people in the community are asked to assist in the success of specific projects. This allows a more diversified base to accomplish activities to protect children and strengthen families and continues to expand the message to all levels in the local community.

Prevent Child Abuse Indiana  
3833 N. Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46208  
(317) 775-6439  
Toll Free: 800-874-6880  
[www.pcain.org](http://www.pcain.org)

## Section 8: Evaluation

### Child Abuse Prevention Month Activities & Media Packet

We would like your feedback about how you used this packet and whether it was helpful to you. Please complete the following and return to Prevent Child Abuse Indiana.

Here is what our Council did for Child Abuse Prevention Month 2011 (check all that apply):

Implemented a Child Abuse Prevention Month campaign or held special activities. Please describe:

This was a  first-time  repeat event.

Sent press releases announcing our activities. Please describe:

Printed newsletter articles about Child Abuse Prevention Month. Please describe:

Distributed material in our community. Please describe:

Other events or activities (please describe):

The packet of materials received from Prevent Child Abuse Indiana was:

Very helpful  Somewhat helpful  Not helpful Please explain:

Other comments or suggestions:

**Council name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail or fax both pages of this form to:**

**Prevent Child Abuse Indiana  
3833 N. Meridian  
Indianapolis IN 46208**

**FAX: 317-775-6420**