



Pro Kinship for Kids

Kinship Link

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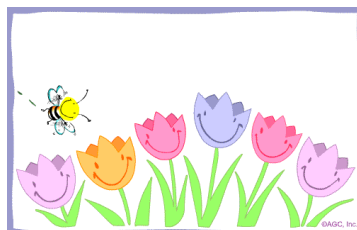
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Newsletter by



April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Child abuse can happen in any family and in any neighborhood. Studies have shown that child abuse crosses all boundaries of income, race, ethnic heritage, and religious faith. Child abuse and neglect are common. At least 1 in 7 children have experienced child abuse or neglect in the past year in the United States.

There are four common types of abuse and neglect:

1. **Physical abuse** is the intentional use of physical force that can result in physical injury. Examples include hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or other shows of force against a child.
2. **Sexual abuse** involves pressuring or forcing a child to engage in sexual acts. It includes behaviors such as fondling, penetration, and exposing a child to other sexual activities.
3. **Emotional abuse**

refers to behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being.

- Examples include name-calling, shaming, rejecting, withholding love, and threatening.
4. **Neglect** is the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. These needs include housing, food, clothing, education, access to medical care, and having feelings validated and appropriately responded to.

What are the consequences of child abuse?

Children who are abused and neglected may suffer immediate physical injuries such as cuts, bruises, or broken bones. They may also have emotional and psychological problems, such as anxiety or posttraumatic stress. Chronic abuse may result in toxic stress, which can change brain development and

increase the risk of problems like posttraumatic stress disorder and learning, attention, and memory difficulties.

The *good news* is child abuse and neglect are preventable. Everyone benefits when children have safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments.

The incidence of child abuse is higher in the following groups:

- Families in which the parents are in their mid 20s
- High school dropouts or those who lack a high school diploma
- Families living below the poverty level or financially stressed
- Families stressed because of a loss of job or home
- Families with a history of intergenerational abuse
- Families with alcohol, or substance abuse problems
- Families with a history of depression
- Families with spouse abuse

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month continued

Things You Can Do To Prevent Child Abuse

- * **Discipline your children thoughtfully.** Never discipline your child when you are upset. Get control of yourself before disciplining a child. Set clear rules, so the child knows what to expect. Avoid physical punishment. Give yourself time to calm down. Remember that discipline is a way to teach your child. Use privileges to encourage good behavior and time-outs to help your child regain control. Take a time-out yourself. Stop if you begin to act out frustration or other emotions physically. Find someone to talk with or watch your kids while you take a walk.
- * **Examine you behavior.** Abuse is not just physical. Both words and actions can inflict deep, lasting wounds. Be a nurturing parent. Use your actions to show children that conflicts can be settled without hitting or yelling.
- * **Educate yourself and others.** Simple support for children and parents can be the best way to prevent child abuse.
- * **Teach children their rights.**

When children are taught they are special and have the right to be safe, they are less likely to think abuse is their fault. When talking to a child about abuse, listen carefully, assure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling an adult, and affirm that he or she is not responsible for what happened.

- * **Know what child abuse is.** Physical and sexual abuse clearly constitute maltreatment, but so does neglect, or the failure of parents or other caregivers to provide a child with needed food, clothing, and care. Children can also be emotionally abuse when they are rejected, belittled, or continuously isolated.
- * **Know the signs.** Unexplained injuries aren't the only signs of abuse. Depression, fear of a certain adult, difficulty trusting others or making friends, sudden changes in eating or sleeping patterns, inappropriate sexual behavior, poor hygiene, secrecy, and hostility are often signs of family problems and may indicate a child is being neglected or physically, sexually, or

emotionally abused.

- * **Try to understand your children.** Learn how kids behave and what they can and can't do at different ages. Have realistic expectations and be reasonable if children fall short.
- * **Keep your children healthy.** Denying children food, sleep, or healthcare is abuse by neglect.
- * **Get help with alcohol or drug problems.** Keep children away from anyone who abuses those substances.
- * **Watch your words.** Angry or punishing language can leave emotional scars for a lifetime.
- * **Make your home a violence-free zone.** Turn off violent TV shows and don't let kids stay under the same roof with an abusive adult.
- * **Take regular breaks from your children.** This will give you a release from the stress of parenting full-time.

Remember, that child abuse often repeats itself in the next generation. By doing what you can to prevent it today, you can help save children's lives far into the future.

What Should Parents Do When a Child has a Temper Tantrum?

Many children go through a period of having temper tantrums at some point in their life. Here are some strategies to explore if your child is having a temper tantrum. Avoid physical punishment. Hitting or spanking a child for acting aggressive, or doing something wrong is guaranteed to backfire. Don't demonstrate behavior you don't want your child to imitate. Accept your child's anger. Let your child know his feelings of anger are appropriate. Make sure your child knows you are there to help him or her with the problem when they are ready. If the anger is being expressed in inappropriate ways, suggest other ways the child can express their feelings. Teach a child how to express anger

with words. Talking is a good way to get rid of feelings of anger and frustration. When your child becomes worked up, encourage them to use their words rather than hitting, grabbing, or using some other physical action. Respond to temper tantrums with care and concern. When your child resorts to a tantrum to express his needs, your response is critical. This is the time your child need you most. They need you to remain calm (not an easy thing to do), they need to be comforted, and they need your help to regain control. Some keys include:

- * Ignore the tantrum if you can.
- * Use a time out to give your child a chance to calm down.
- * Take a time out yourself.

- * Remove your child from the situation.
- * Hold your child closely.
- * Talk softly to your child.
- * Try to figure out what your child wants and needs.

Tantrums are powerful tools for children to use to get their needs met. Parents need to help children find other ways of expressing their needs. If you give in to tantrums, whining, and other negative methods of expressing anger your child will find it hard to understand other points of view, to develop assertive ways of dealing with anger, and to relate well to other people.