



# Parents Page

## APRIL 2015

### Pinwheels for Prevention

Pinwheels for Prevention® is a nationwide public awareness campaign, first launched by Prevent Child Abuse America in April 2008. Since that time, nearly 900,000 pinwheels have been displayed nationwide to promote a message of hope and the positive role evidence-based child abuse prevention practices play in promoting safe, healthy and nurturing environments in which children can develop and grow.

Each year, the Children's Trust Fund of Oregon Foundation, the state chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, leads the state's Pinwheels for Prevention® campaign to raise awareness related to the prevalence and prevention of abuse and neglect in Oregon as part of National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Last year, nearly 5,000 pinwheels were displayed across the state. The gardens that crop up during the month are one of PCA Oregon's efforts to highlight community activities and public policies at work to protect vulnerable children, strengthen families, and prioritize prevention.



### ALL KIDS DESERVE TO BE HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND SAFE!

#### Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect

When children are nurtured, they can grow up to be happy and healthy adults. But when they lack an attachment to a caring adult, receive inconsistent nurturing, or experience harsh discipline, the consequences can affect their lifelong health, well-being, and relationships with others. This chapter provides information to help service providers and others concerned about the health and well-being of children to understand child abuse and neglect, its effects, and what each of us can do to address it when it occurs.

#### What Is Child Abuse and Neglect?

Child abuse or neglect often takes place in the home at the hands of a person the child knows well—a parent, relative, babysitter, or friend of the family. There are four major types of child maltreatment. Although any of the forms may be found separately, they often occur together. Each State is responsible for establishing its own definitions of child abuse and neglect that meet Federal minimum standards. Most include the following:

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs.

Physical abuse is physical injury as a result of hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or otherwise harming a child.

Sexual abuse is any situation where a child is used for sexual gratification. This may include indecent exposure, fondling, rape, or commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

Emotional abuse is any pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth, including constant criticism, threats, and rejection.

#### Why Does Child Abuse Occur?

Child abuse and neglect affect children of every age, race, and income level. However, research has identified many factors relating to the child, family, community, and society that are associated with an increased risk of child abuse and neglect. Studies also have shown that when multiple risk factors are present, the risk is greater. Some of the most common risk factors include the following:

- Immaturity. Young parents may lack experience with children or be unprepared for the responsibility of raising a child.
- Unrealistic expectations. A lack of knowledge about normal child development or behavior may result in frustration and, ultimately, abusive discipline.
- Stress. Families struggling with poverty, unstable housing, divorce, or unemployment may be at greater risk.
- Substance abuse. The effects of substance use, as well as time, energy, and money spent obtaining drugs or alcohol, significantly impair parents' abilities to care for their children.

Intergenerational patterns of abuse. Parents' own experiences of childhood trauma impact their relationships with their children.

Isolation. Effective parenting is more difficult when parents lack a supportive partner, family, or community.

These circumstances, combined with the inherent challenges of raising children, can result in otherwise well-intentioned parents causing their children harm or neglecting their needs. On the other hand, evidence shows that the great majority of families who experience these circumstances will not abuse or neglect their children. Protective factors, such as the ones discussed in this guide, act as buffers to help many families who are under stress parent effectively.

#### Keeping Your Family Strong

Every family has strengths, and every family faces challenges. When you are under stress—the car breaks down, you or your partner lose a job, a child's behavior is difficult, or even when the family is experiencing a positive change, such as moving into a new home—sometimes it takes a little extra help to get through the day. Protective factors are the strengths and resources that families draw on when life gets difficult. Building on these strengths is a proven way to keep the family strong and prevent child abuse and neglect. This tip sheet describes six key protective factors and some simple ways you can build these factors in your own family.

**If you would like information on programs available to support parents and to get kids ready for kindergarten call: 541-575-1006**

#### Protective Factors and What You Can Do

Parental Resilience: I have courage during stress and the ability to bounce back from challenges.

- Take quiet time to reenergize: Take a bath, write, sing, laugh, play, drink a cup of tea.
- Do some physical exercise: Walk, stretch, do yoga, lift weights, dance.
- Share your feelings with someone you trust.
- Surround yourself with people who support you and make you feel good about yourself.

Social Connections: I have friends, family, and neighbors who help out and provide emotional support.

- Participate in neighborhood activities such as potluck dinners, street fairs, picnics, or block parties.
- Join a playgroup or online support group of parents with children at similar ages.
- Find a church, temple, or mosque that welcomes and supports parents.

Concrete Supports for Parents: Our family can meet our day-to-day needs, including housing, food, health care, education, and counseling. I know where to find help if I need it.

- Make a list of people or places to call for support.
- Ask the director of your child's school to host a Community Resource Night, so you (and other parents) can see what help your community offers.
- Call 541-575-1006 to find programs that support families in your area.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children: My children know they are loved, feel they belong, and are able to get along with others.

- Provide regular routines, especially for young children. Make sure everyone who cares for your child is aware of your routines around mealtimes, naps, and bedtime.
- Talk with your children about how important feelings are.
- Teach and encourage children to solve problems in age-appropriate ways.



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