



Child Abuse Prevention Month ♦ April 2005

Sample Press Release

Contact:

Name

Organization

Phone Number

For Release: Date

Child Abuse Prevention Month Set for April

April is national Child Abuse Prevention Month, and individuals and organizations throughout Virginia will be raising public awareness about what each of us can do to prevent child abuse and neglect. This year's theme in Virginia is "Keys to Success for Children and Families," which focuses on the positive actions parents, children and community members can take to promote safe and healthy child development.

The Blue Ribbon Campaign has become a visible national symbol for April's Child Abuse Prevention Month. Organizations that advocate for child abuse prevention distribute thousands of blue ribbons in April to raise awareness.

The latest research on public awareness of child abuse and neglect suggests that the public is greatly concerned about the issue. Research also suggests that the public would like to know more about how children develop mentally, emotionally and physically. Public service organizations can assist parents and other community members to learn more about these topics.

Last year, **6,876 children** were found to have suffered abuse or neglect, most often by their biological parents. An additional **8,597 children** were at high or moderate risk for abuse.

- **29 children** died as a result of child abuse in fiscal year 2004 — 21 were aged 4 or under.
- **54%** of all victims were white, **34%** were black, less than **1%** was Asian and **4%** were multi-racial.

Children are our future. If we want them to grow into capable adults, we must provide them with resources to grow up healthy and strong. Their well-being is developed best in the shelter of nurturing families and the security of safe communities. If families are resource poor, constantly under stress, or challenged by abilities, children may be at risk.

Community services can assist families through literacy or parenting classes, job placement programs or group counseling services. Often the public hears about the most horrific cases of child abuse. It seldom hears about the assistance, for example, that a parent received in getting her GED which led to a better job and less stress for her family. Or about a father who joined a parent support group and learned for the first time about positive parenting skills.

You can be a part of prevention. You can support community efforts which benefit families and children. You can contribute time and other resources to such programs and services. You can support public officials who are concerned about the well-being of children and families.



Media Tips

Excerpts from

A Guide to Media for Community Groups and Other Nonprofits

"The role media plays in helping legitimize an organization in the eyes of its community reflects a basic change from organizing's earliest days."

"The fact that people's primary relation is with the TV instead of their neighbors is significant for organizers in and of itself."

How to bring attention to your group's work or issue

Make communications part of your overall work plan.

When you develop your five-year strategic plan, make media a part of it, not an afterthought.

Instead of planning one media opportunity, plan a series of opportunities.

You increase the impact of your work if you plan a series of events.

Plan a string of "hooks" or "pegs."

A key to getting continuous coverage is to constantly have a hook that reporters can use to make their stories timely.

Have lots of potential stories to offer a variety of media.

Study the media.

Note the names of reporters who write favorable articles. Listen to a variety of radio stations and talk shows. Study what makes stories newsworthy.

Follow up.

Call reporters who have done favorable stories and thank them. Write letters to the editor to clarify stories or add something.

Repeat, repeat, repeat.

Keep repeating the key points you want to make about your story.

Piggyback off an event or an issue.

