

What Can You Do To Help Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect?

- ◆ Learn the names, addresses and phone numbers of your senators and representatives and your local and state officials.
- ◆ Find out where elected officials stand on children's issues.
- ◆ Contact to your elected representatives and let them know that you wish them to act to support parent education and child abuse prevention.
- ◆ Register to vote and use your vote to reflect your concern for families.
- ◆ Write letters to the editor of your local paper.
- ◆ Offer background information and story ideas about issues involving children and families.
- ◆ Organize fund-raising activities to benefit local organizations which help troubled children and families.



Working Together for Children

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Virginia Affiliate



An Agenda for Children 2014

"Child abuse and neglect is a serious social problem with complex causes and tragic results. Because of the suffering and loss of life it incurs, the costs of treating the resulting physical and psychological trauma, and the linkage of child maltreatment to other social problems such as substance abuse and criminal activity, a wide variety of efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect are urgently needed. . ."

National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect



Prevent Child Abuse

Virginia is a statewide private, non-profit organization with the mission to prevent the abuse and neglect of children. It is our goal to strengthen Virginia's families as the leader, educator, advocate and coordinator of initiatives addressing the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. Our partners are the thousands of statewide and regional nonprofits, professionals, businesses, community organizations and volunteers working in every Virginia community.



We believe that child abuse and neglect can be prevented by providing support and education to families and children. Children brought up in safe, nurturing families will become confident, caring and productive adults.

This document reflects our determination to make life better for children and families now and in the future.

Core Values

- * Valuing children
- * Strengthening families
- * Engaging communities

Continuum of Care for Families and Children

Because child maltreatment is a complex problem with a multitude of causes, we believe that an approach to prevention must encompass an array of services for families and children. We support the development of prevention and treatment programs to provide a continuum of care in every Virginia community for families at every level of need.

We encourage the continuation and enhancement of . . .

- ◆ support programs for new parents
- ◆ parent education programs
- ◆ family support programs and services
- ◆ treatment programs for abused children
- ◆ life skills training for children and young adults
- ◆ sexual abuse prevention programs
- ◆ wide-ranging public information and education initiatives
- ◆ programs and resources to support kinship care.
- ◆ initiatives that support child safety at home, in the community and on the Internet.
- ◆ adoption as an alternative

Voluntary Home Visiting Programs for New Families

We support the development of community-based, voluntary home visiting programs as effective ways to maximize parenting skills, promote child health and eliminate child abuse and neglect. We support universal contact and voluntary assessment of the needs of new parents and caregivers as a way to acquaint young families with the services available in their communities.

Child Care Services

Quality child care reduces child neglect and promotes healthy development. We support and endorse efforts to assist parents and caregivers in providing quality child care services.

Judicial Proceedings

We support court procedures which acknowledge the needs of child witnesses and prevent the victimization of children in the courtroom. This applies to criminal and civil cases, including divorce and custody cases.

Child Welfare System

Prevent Child Abuse Virginia supports and endorses any regulations which enhance the child welfare system, especially in the areas of. . .

- ◆ child abuse reporting laws
- ◆ investigation procedures for reports of child abuse, *including monitoring implementation of the Differential Response System*
- ◆ services for children in foster care and training and support for their caregivers
- ◆ treatment resources for children in the child welfare system
- ◆ data collection on children within the child welfare system
 - to create a federally-mandated national data system
 - to support and enhance the implementation of an effective data management system within the Commonwealth.

Funding for Prevention, Intervention and Treatment

We support funding for. . .

- ◆ child welfare employees to reach the best practice standard of 20 cases per caseworker
- ◆ early intervention services for 100% of new births
- ◆ development of innovative treatment services under the Comprehensive Services Act to increase the number of children served
- ◆ ongoing training of police and judges
- ◆ expansion of treatment resources for Community Services Boards to fully meet the needs of families and children.

We believe the state should take full advantage of federal funding available for family services.

Physical Punishment

Prevent Child Abuse Virginia affirms that all children need guidance and discipline, and supports parents as the primary decision-makers for their children. Prevent Child Abuse Virginia advocates the teaching of alternative forms of discipline to parents and caregivers in order to avoid physical punishment of children. We oppose the use of physical punishment by parents and caregivers because:



- ◆ *Other forms of discipline are more effective.*
- ◆ *Physical punishment teaches that physical force and violence are acceptable ways to settle disputes.*



- ◆ *Some physical punishment which is not intended to be severe escalates to abuse.*
 - ◆ *Severe physical punishment is child abuse.*
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Institutional Corporal Punishment

Prevent Child Abuse Virginia advocates the elimination of the physical punishment of children in Virginia's schools and other institutions. We support the teaching of alternative forms of discipline to teachers, school administrators, day care providers, foster parents and other child caregivers.

Sexual Exploitation of Children

Prevent Child Abuse Virginia supports the elimination of child pornography and the sexual exploitation of children in any medium, including information and communication technology.

Domestic Violence

We advocate for increased collaboration among child abuse and domestic violence organizations with the goal of eliminating violence in the home.

Violence in the Media

We support and encourage nonviolent programming for television, films, videocassettes, interactive video and computer games, radio, and audio recordings. We further support nonviolent advertising and graphics for all media.

Parental Use of Addictive Substances

In 60% of homes where child abuse and neglect was investigated, substance abuse was found. We recognize that serious damage to children may result from the parent's misuse of addictive substances. We advocate preventing child abuse and neglect through increases in programs and outreach efforts aimed at promoting substance abuse-free homes. To that end we promote the development of adequate treatment services for substance abusing parents/caregivers.

Children and Guns

Prevent Child Abuse Virginia supports gun safety measures and education to prevent death, injury and trauma to children.



All Forms of Child Abuse

Prevent Child Abuse Virginia supports legislation that is directly or indirectly aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect in any form, including child neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

Early Childhood

We support efforts to create a state level early childhood body to promote and coordinate statewide efforts addressing the needs of infants and young children, improve service quality and outcomes.