



Protecting Our Children Heart of Illinois Safe From the Start

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month



Child Abuse Prevention Month has been observed each **April** since its first presidential proclamation in 1983. This year, our community will once again join hands to raise awareness about child abuse. I ask you to make a personal pledge to make child abuse prevention a priority all year long, but take an extra effort this April. Take a look at the ideas mentioned in this newsletter and reach out to families in need. No one can do everything.... no one parent, grandparent, teacher, neighbor, social service agency, or individual. But **everyone** can do **something**. **Together**, we can advocate for policies and programs which support healthy families and children.

In Peace,
Sara Dillefeld
Heart of Illinois Safe From the Start



FY'2010 Issue 2

Inside this issue:

Illinois Kids Count 2010 Major Findings	2
Community Calendar of Events	3
Month of the Young Child	3
<i>Warning Signs of Child Abuse</i>	4
Coalition Spotlight	5

Did You Know???

The pinwheel and blue ribbon are two symbols used to raise awareness of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The pinwheel represents the hope and promise that every child deserves to be raised in a healthy, safe, and nurturing environment. The pinwheel is a happy and uplifting symbol of childhood and allows us to celebrate children and families.

The blue ribbon is a symbol to remind us of the seriousness of child abuse and the need for prevention. The blue ribbon campaign began in 1989 when a grandmother tied a blue ribbon to the antenna of her car in response to the severe abuse of her grandchildren and killing of her grandson. Why blue? Blue is a reminder of the bruises.



Partnering to promote a safer, stronger Tri-County starting with ages 0-5.



ILLINOIS KIDS COUNT 2010
“CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN A
TIME OF ECONOMIC CRISIS”
MAJOR FINDINGS

- Children represent 1/4 of Illinois residents but more than 1/3 of the state's poverty population.
- At the end of 2009, 14% of all children nationwide lived in families with an unemployed parent. In Illinois, this figure would represent more than 400,000 children.
- Children who grow up in poverty are likely to have lower levels of educational attainment, diminished employment prospects, and greater health problems.
- In 2007-2008, ten counties (mostly southern Illinois) had child poverty rates above 25%. Among the ten largest cities, the highest poverty rates were in Rockford (34%), Chicago (31%), and **Peoria (27%)**.
- The poverty rate for Illinois children under age 6 is 20%— the highest for any age group. Poverty affects these children at a time when they are experiencing important milestones.
- In June 2009, 1.5 million Illinois residents (half of them children), received food stamps.
- In 2007-2008, there were more than 25,000 homeless students enrolled in Illinois public schools. This number is thought to be significantly worse since the full scale recession.
- Illinois has made substantial progress in health care coverage for children.
- Illinois has become a prominent leader in early childhood care and education. More than 90,000 young children participate in state-funded preschool programs. In 2008,
- Illinois was ranked first among the states in access to preschool for 3 year olds.
- The Illinois Child Care Assistance Program provides access to affordable child care for nearly 100,000 low- income working families.

Information provided by:
Voices For Illinois Children, Kids Count 2010.



WANT MORE INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT?
Visit www.voices4kids.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April

1st: Crisis Nursery 30th Anniversary Open House 3-5:30pm

6th: April LAUNCH; hosted by The Center for Prevention of Abuse, call Sara @ 691-0551 x 315 for details

8th: Peoria Drug Market Intervention Group Meeting, Neighborhood House 6pm

12th: Community Coalition for Alcohol Meeting, Hult Center, 6pm

13th: Parent Retreat; hosted by the Tri-County Child Abuse Prevention Council; call Michelle @ 682-4621 for details

14th : Keeping Kids Safe Expert Panel, hosted by The Center for Prevention of Abuse; call Jeanne @ 691-0551 x 294

16th: Hands Around the Courthouse, Peoria County 12:00pm

26th: Crittenton Center Spank Out Day

29th: The Center for Prevention of Abuse, Children's Garden at Luthy Botanical Gardens from 9:30-11:30am.

**Did You Know?
The Red Cross will
conduct 5 crash
Reenactments during
April's Prom Season.**

April, Month of the Young Child **By: Jeanne Mentgen, Program Coordinator** **Peoria County Bright Futures**

CELEBRATION IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS!

The Heart of Illinois AEYC in collaboration with Prevent Child Abuse, Illinois and the Early Childhood Forum of Illinois and all Pre-K programs are planning a calendar of activities that all agencies and providers of young children can use with their children. This year's theme is:

Early Years Are Learning Years®

The weekly themes include child abuse prevention, literacy, health & nutrition, public policy, and thanking all those who care and teach young children. Many activities will be planned by each agency. To support child abuse prevention, all programs will wear hand made blue ribbons. Blue pinwheels will be made by area children to be displayed at our local event, 'Hands Around the Courthouse' on April 16. The City of Peoria is Proclaiming April, Month of the Young Child on March 23 at the Peoria City Council meeting. Peoria County Bright Futures is having a WESTERN night for children and families on April 14. Our local AEYC is sponsoring a KIDS CONCERT on April 16 at Peoria Notre Dame. Many great events will be taking place throughout all the agencies to promote the importance of Young Children & Preventing Abuse! The month will be capped off with a Saturday, May 1, annual Spring AEYC Conference, which will be held at ICC. Look forward to attending this conference.

If you would like an APRIL calendar of events, please contact Jeanne Mentgen, Peoria County Bright Futures, jmentgen@phcusd325.net

Warning Signs of Child Abuse

Children who have been abused/neglected may be:

- Nervous around adults or afraid of certain adults
- Reluctant to go home
- Very passive/withdrawn—— or aggressive/disruptive
- Often tired, having nightmares, trouble sleeping
- Fearful and anxious
- Sudden changes in behavior or school performance



Possible signs of physical abuse:

- Unexplained injuries
- Apparent fear of parent/caretaker
- Faded bruises or healing injuries
- Injuries that do not match the explanation

Possible signs of sexual abuse:

- Difficulty walking or sitting, or other indication 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 food or money
- Lacking needed medical or dental care
- Being frequently dirty
- Using alcohol or other drugs

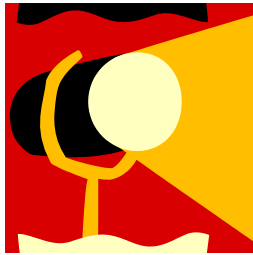
Possible signs of emotional abuse:

- 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

These signs don't prove that a child is being abused, but they could be a signal that his/her family may need help.
Supplied By: Prevent Child Abuse Illinois

Would you like to learn more?

The Center for Prevention of Abuse offers trainings on child abuse and mandated reporting. Contact the Prevention Dept. at 691-0551.



COALITION SPOTLIGHT

Beth Bernard
Victim Services Coordinator
Peoria County Sheriff's Office

Victim Services has been a program that the Peoria County Sheriff's Office has provided those we serve for the past 14 years, I have been the Victim Services Coordinator for going on 5 years. Victim Services makes sure the victims, families and witnesses of violent crimes (as determined by the Crime Victims Compensation program through the Illinois Attorney General's Office), are made aware of their rights, the services available to them, advocacy during court proceedings and hearings and have their questions answered about the legal process.

Making sure victims, families and witnesses of violent crimes are taken care of after the incident is an important part of the process, and we make sure this is taken care of by having not only myself, the Victim Services Coordinator that will follow up with all violent crime victims, but in the past few years have added a Victim Advocate with the Family Justice Center, that will follow up with Domestic Violence cases and assist them through the Order of Protection process if that is a step they wish to take. Together we make sure all the victims of violent crimes that our Deputies and Detectives see are contacted and given the opportunity for advocacy. I mentioned earlier that the crimes I cover are determined by those that are covered under Crime Victims Compensation, those crimes are: 1st and 2nd Degree Murder, Involuntary Manslaughter, Reckless Conduct, Child Pornography, Domestic Battery, Battery, Assault, Hate Crime, Stalking, Kidnapping, Arson, Criminal Sexual Assault or Abuse, Exploitation of a Child, Violation of Order of Protection, DUI and Hit and Run of Pedestrians. While following up with these victims is a huge part of what I do, another equally important part is getting involved in the community and social services boards. I have been an active member of the Heart of Illinois Safe From the Start program since I started my position here at the Sheriff's Office. I am also a very active member of the Peoria County Triad, working to reduce and prevent crime victimization of the elderly through education.

You can find more information on the Crime Victims Compensation program at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov as well as tremendous amount of information on victim rights, identity theft and the other services the Illinois Attorney General's Office provide. You can also get more information on the Peoria County Sheriff's Office at www.peoriacounty.org/sheriff.

Submitted by: Beth Bernard, BA, Victim Services Coordinator, Peoria County Sheriff's Office

Heart of Illinois Safe From the Start



P.O. Box 3855
Peoria, Illinois 61612
Phone: (309)686-5229
Fax: (309)686-6628
Website:
www.hoisafefromthestart.org

Providing Support, Education,
and Counseling to Children
Exposed to Violence ages 0-5



Referring a Family is Easy!

Do you know a child who is experiencing negative effects from exposure to violence? Refer them to our program for free counseling services. Call 686-5229 for more information or check out our website at www.hoisafefromthestart.org to download a referral form.

Current Coalition Members: Peoria Sheriff's Office, Tazewell County Health Dept/AOK, Peoria City/County Health Dept, Bradley University, Peoria County Bright Futures, the Center for Prevention of Abuse, Children's Home/Good Beginnings and Caregiver Connections, Family Violence Coordinating Council, Methodist, PCCEO, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Child Care Connection, Peoria Police Dept, Child Advocacy Centers of Peoria and Tazewell Counties, Boys and Girls Club, Child and Family Connections, Tazewell/Woodford County Head Start, Mental Health Assoc, DCFCS, Red Cross, CASA of Peoria County, Rogy's, Counseling and Family Services, Resource Link @ OSF Children's Hospital, Crittenton Center, District 150

