

2009 CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH TOOLKIT

Media Packet



It only takes a minute


It only takes a minute to kick off child abuse prevention efforts. It only takes a minute to get involved.

Do you have a minute?





Child Abuse Prevention Month
Media Packet
⌘ Table of Contents ⌘

| | Content | Page |
|--|---|-------------|
| Section I | Table of Contents | 2 |
| | How to use Media Packet | 2 |
| Section II Media Components  | General Media Tips | 3 |
| | Press Release (statewide) | 4 |
| | Press Release (local version- can be adapted to local events) | 7 |
| | Radio P.S.A.'s | 8 |
| | Framing Essentials | 9 |
| | Preparing for Media Questions | 10 |

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month


"It Only Takes a Minute... to make a difference in the life of a child!"



How to use the Media Packet

Use these resources freely in planning your campaign for a successful Child Abuse Prevention Month - 2009. You have permission to copy or reprint anything included within this packet. The packet includes a statewide media release (which OSDH will be releasing at the end of March) as well as a local release that can be customized with any community event. There are also public service announcements and media tips included. Please see other attachments in this series for community involvement ideas and information on how to order CAP supplies for your community - **FREE!**

CAP Month ToolKit: Other Packets Available

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|---|
| Packet 1 | Introduction |  |
| Packet 2 | Community Involvement | |
| Packet 3 | Media and Publicity | |
| Packet 4 | CAP Supply Order Form | |
| Packet 5 | ATTACHMENTS! | |

Mark your calendar for CAP Day at the Capitol: Tuesday, April 14, 2009

COMING SOON: The **CAP Day at the Capitol** packet will be available in the next few weeks. Find out all of the important details related to the day... registration information, speakers, events and activities, legislative breakfast and lunch, and everything you want to know about advocacy.

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 1000 NE 10th Street, Oklahoma City, Ok 73117, Phone: 405.271.7611 Fax: 405.271.1011

Section II: *Media*

General Media Tips

Stay on message. Narrow your message to one or two central points that you want to get across and stick to them. You do not have to explicitly answer every question a reporter poses. Answer every question in such a way that it reflects your key message.

Emphasize that April is about solutions to child abuse. It's about prevention, but don't leave the word "prevention" unexplained. Describe the solutions. Keep in mind that reporters will usually try to move you back to drama and tragedy, but you can stress that child abuse is a problem with "solutions" that don't receive the attention they should. Explain that the American public cares deeply about child abuse, but don't know what can be done to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Reporters will want statistics. Instead of supplying them with traditional child abuse statistics on reports, substantiations and deaths, give them statistics on efficacy. What works? How many people do you reach with services? What has been the impact of such services?

Do not repeat something a reporter says that is not part of your point or frame. Even to disagree with it. For example, by saying "child abuse is not just dramatic cases of parents killing their children," you remind your audience of parents killing children. Instead start with the main point being that "all of us can make a difference in children's lives that better protect them and enable them to be productive, happy, and healthy adults."

Letters to the editor are a great way to reach a general audience. Keep them short and focused and be sure to include 'a call to action' whether it is to support legislation or to learn more about a program. Be sure to speak with those who may send letters for you to ensure they do not personalize the letter in ways that are counter effective to the 'prevention' messages for April. For example, be sure they know not to add things to the letter, such as, asking readers to report child abusers.

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Statewide Press Release

For Release: March 24, 2009
Contact: Pamela Williams
Office of Communications
405/271-5601

Child Abuse Prevention Month Seeks Community Involvement ***“It Only Takes a Minute to Make a Difference in the Life of a Child”***

Small, positive actions can make a difference in the life of a child. The focus this year for April, Child Abuse Prevention Month, is to highlight those actions that each of us can take to help raise safe, healthy, resilient children. The theme ***“It Only Takes a Minute to Make a Difference in the Life of a Child,”*** brings hope that all children can get a good start in life if the adults around them take small actions that add up to a pattern of supportive community and family environments in which children can grow and develop into productive citizens.

According to statistics from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, in 2007 in Oklahoma, there were more than 13,100 confirmations of child abuse and/or neglect. In 2006, the latest data available indicates 32 Oklahoma children died as a result of child abuse and neglect.

“Even one victim of child abuse and neglect is still one victim too many,” said Interim Commissioner of Health Rocky McElvany. “Survivors need counseling, social and health services for the rest of their lives in order to recover and to try to break the vicious cycle of abuse and neglect. This affects the health of families and entire communities for generations.”

“There are lots of small, positive things we can all do to help protect and nurture our children as well as caregivers that only take a minute,” said Sherie Trice, community-based child abuse prevention grant coordinator with the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH). “A few words of praise and encouragement to a child or the caregiver, listening carefully to what a child has to say, showing a child you care, saying ‘I love you’ – all are simple actions that added together have been shown to have a profound impact on a child’s life. In these very real ways, we can all support children and strengthen families,” Trice said.

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The OSDH Family Support and Prevention Service offers the following parenting tips to help build healthy families:

- Help your children feel loved and secure. Make sure your children know you love them, even when they do something wrong.
- Encourage your children by praising their achievements, talents, and efforts. Recognize the skills they are developing.
- Spend time with your children doing things that you both enjoy. Listen to them.
- Learn how to use nonphysical options for discipline that are appropriate for your child's age and development or redirect your child's attention by offering choices, and/or use "time out" appropriately as a way to discipline.
- Seek help if you need it. Sometimes special circumstances like unemployment, or a child with special needs, can add stress to the family. If you need additional support, try to talk to a friend, health care provider, faith leader or counselor or join a support group for parents.

Finally, the FSP Service encourages you to get involved with some of the local activities being planned in your area related to Child Abuse Prevention Month, including the following:

- Buy a "Child Abuse Prevention" specialty license plate. Applications for the specialty license tag called "Start Right" are available at your local tag agency. The tag costs \$35.00 and if by mail a \$2.00 shipping charged is added for a total cost of \$37.00, which will take a couple of weeks to ship. Money will go into the child abuse prevention fund to support prevention programs across the state.
- Participate in "Build a Blue Ribbon Tree for Kids" in your neighborhood. Find a highly visible spot to place your blue ribbon tree and add a blue ribbon for the number of children abused and neglected in your county; or the number of new babies born in your community; or to represent something important in your community to show your support for children.
- The University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) college students in Edmond are "ribboning" the trees around the lake for April while the UCO Child Study Center class of 3-year-olds will host a very special "Blue Ribbon Tree Parade" with instruments and decorated vehicles on Wednesday, April 8, at 11 a.m. For information about the tree decorating and parade, contact Dr. Kaye Sears at (405) 974-5786.

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- Participate in “Child Abuse Prevention Day” at the State Capitol on Tuesday, April 14. There will be speakers, display and information booths, and the winners of the statewide poster contest will be recognized. For information about the poster contest or the “Child Abuse Prevention Day”, call the Child Abuse Prevention Service at (405) 271-7611.
- Visit the art poster contest display at the State Capitol on Tuesday, April 14, to see the winners from posters from all across the state. The Arts Council of Oklahoma City will select an impartial panel of judges to select the winners, and award the certificates and prizes to 13 talented children.
- Call your local library to see what types of materials and videos are available for parents and childcare professionals on ways to prevent child abuse and neglect and on learning good parenting skills.
- Volunteer to serve on the statewide Child Abuse Prevention Month Action Committee during this year for next year and plan to help with future activities.
- To get involved in Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer efforts to assist children through the legal system, contact Jennifer Hunter at 1-800-742-2272.
- To get involved with Prevent Child Abuse Oklahoma, call Micah Stirling at (800) CHILDREN.

For general information about child abuse prevention month activities, to request materials for your community, and to discover ways to get involved, call the county health department in your area or contact Sherie Trice, OSDH Family Support and Prevention Service at (405) 271-7611.

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Local Press Release Template

Fill-in-the-Blank News Release for Local Task Forces or CHDs *“It Only Takes a Minute to Make a Difference in the Life of a Child”*

For Release: _____, 2009

Contact: (Administrator’s Name, title)
(Telephone #)

(_____ County Health Department/Task Force) Launches Local Child Abuse Prevention Campaign

“It Only Takes a Minute to Make a Difference in the Life of a Child”!

(_____ County Health Department/CAP Committee) has launched a community public awareness campaign in observance of April being Child Abuse Prevention Month. This year’s theme repeats last year’s theme “It Only Takes a Minute to Make a Difference in the Life of a Child.” Child Abuse Prevention Month has been observed each April since the first presidential proclamation in 1985.

(Organization) wants to focus on the small positive actions that each of us can take to help raise safe, healthy, resilient children. Statewide, local Child Abuse Prevention Committees will gather for “Child Abuse Prevention Day” at the State Capitol on Tuesday, April 14, which will feature speakers, booths, a blue ribbon tree, and an art poster contest recognizing winners grades K-12 from around Oklahoma.

Local Child Abuse Prevention Month activities during April include the following:

(List date, time, location of local activities and a brief description.) _____

_____.

(Include a description about your organization or committee, its mission, history and contact information to recruit volunteers etc.)

_____.

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Child Abuse Prevention Month Radio Public Service Announcements

#1 - :30

Announcer Voice:

“It Only Takes a Minute to Make a Difference in the Life of a Child,” is the theme for this year’s Child Abuse Prevention Month. The _____ County Health Department, (organization), and this station encourage you to join the fight against child abuse and neglect. To learn more about how you can become involved, call 405-271-7611, or get in touch with a child abuse prevention committee in your neighborhood.

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#2 - :30

Announcer Voice:

What are some ways you can prevent child abuse? You can have patience. Take time out; don’t take it out on your child. Be a nurturing parent, get involved and volunteer to help out at a local child abuse prevention program. For more information, call 405-271-7611 or the _____ County Health Department. Remember, *“It Only Takes a Minute to Make a Difference in the Life of a Child.”*

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Framing Essentials

Following are essential points to keep in mind when speaking about child abuse prevention.

- *Stay positive.* When dealing with child abuse and neglect it's hard to focus on the positive but make sure your audience knows that they can make a *positive* difference in their communities.
- *Solutions must be spelled out early and often, and must match the problem.* Don't talk about a problem like child deaths from abuse and offer a simple solution of preventative actions for individuals to follow.
- *Emphasize that we all play a role in helping children thrive and be healthy adults.*
- *Choose messengers carefully.* Use unexpected messengers to broaden the discussion to the community and give people a new angle from which to view the issue. For example, use teachers or pediatricians to explain child development.
- *Tell stories.* Choose stories that explain the bigger picture and demonstrate how programs have worked for the benefit of children by addressing abusive situations *before* they happen.
- *Be clear and consistent in your calls to action.* For example, don't ask people to reach out and support parents and families in their community and also ask them to report suspected abuse, in other words "turn their neighbors in." These messages are confusingly contradictory. Put these two messages into separate campaigns if you decide to have both as part of your overall strategy.
- *Use images that portray a positive, engaged community.* Choose visuals that illustrate positive community interaction with children and families.
- *Talk about parenting as a learned skill for everyone,* not a natural or inborn ability that only some (deficient, defective) parents need to work to acquire.

Q&A

Preparing for IOTAM Media Questions Using Framing

Easy Questions You May be Asked

Q. *What evidence is there that small, intentional acts of kindness will prevent child maltreatment?*

A. Families who are open to, and receive support from, friends and neighbors, and local community groups are less isolated and stressed, which can reduce their likelihood of experiencing the types of risky and stressful situations in which maltreatment often happens.

A. Children who are exposed to caring adults become more resilient and healthy adults, even if exposed to abuse.

"One of the major findings from resilience research is the power of informal mentors - neighbors, friends' parents, teachers, or anyone who takes the time to care -- as protective factors in youth's lives. (Benard, B. "Resiliency: What We Have Learned" 2004, p. 93)

Q. *What are examples of things we can do that are small acts of kindness towards children?*

A. Yes, there are many small acts that can make a difference in child's life: IOTAM

- ...to put on a child's bike helmet
- ...to fasten a child's car seat
- ...to hug a child
- ...to learn a child's name
- ...to listen to a child
- ...to talk to a child, and not yell
- ...to write a child a kind note
- ...to tell a child you believe in them
- ...to tell a child you are proud of them
- ...to send a child a loving text message
- ...to tell a child a joke

Q. *What else can we do to help?*

A. While the campaign this year focuses on giving small acts of kindness to children, you can support their parents and caregivers with similar small acts of kindness aimed at helping them cope with the demanding job of parenting. For example, It Only Takes A Minute...

- ...to remind caregivers that getting or asking for help is okay
- ... to offer encouragement to a hassled/frenzied parent
- ...to speak calmly with an upset caregiver
- ...to listen when a parent needs to talk
- ...to encourage a caregiver who is feeling overwhelmed

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We can all help by letting our elected representatives and community leaders know that supporting children and parents is important to us, and to our community and that we favor supportive community and family environments in which our children will grow and develop into our productive citizens of tomorrow.

Harder Questions About Child Abuse Prevention In General

Q. *Shouldn't we be concentrating on being watchdogs? Shouldn't we all take a minute to report abuse when we suspect it?*

A. It Only Takes a Minute...focuses on the *prevention of child maltreatment*, on the actions that everyone can take to protect children *before any harm occurs*. This campaign is an important addition to, not a substitute for, all the other strategies and programs in place for helping children grow up safe and healthy. Of course, when abuse is suspected, by law you have to make a report.

Q *There were a number of recent child abuse incidents in the news. What failures happened to allow those children to be hurt and some to die?*

A. The aim of prevention programs is to help prevent situations from ever reaching the point of serious harm. There are always many opportunities for others to become involved in a child's life before harm occurs. If communities and parents work together to raise healthy and happy children, fewer maltreatment cases will occur.

Q *Shouldn't protecting children in danger be the priority?*

A. Protecting children from maltreatment is not an either or option. The IOTAM campaign is about supporting families in the difficult task of parenting to prevent maltreatment before children are harmed, by helping to break the isolation families sometimes face, showing empathy for their difficulties in raising healthy and secure children, and supporting their efforts to seek information and assistance.

We already have a system and dedicated people responding to children in danger. This danger response system is well developed and responds to cases on a daily basis. People should definitely report concerns to these agencies

The most powerful "tool" for parents is to show, through their ongoing actions, a deep unconditional commitment, acceptance, and love for their children. Another concrete "tool" is to seek to praise children for their good behaviors, and whenever it is possible, to avoid focusing on their bad behaviors.

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