



Cotton County Health Department

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Cotton County Health Department

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## **April Marks Child Abuse Prevention Month**

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Cotton County Health Department is working to raise awareness about the importance of child abuse prevention among Oklahoma children. Organizations across the state are working together to host events that demonstrate their commitment to preventing child abuse and promoting a brighter future for Oklahoma children.

Thousands of Oklahoma children suffer abuse and neglect each year, fiscal year 2015 saw a substantiated rise in child abuse and neglect cases when compared with the previous year. According to the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services, there were 15,252 substantiated child abuse and neglect victims compared with 14,159 in fiscal year 2014.

These statistics are a reminder that every possible effort needs to be made in preventing child abuse in Oklahoma. "Prevention needs to happen year round, but April is a great opportunity to get started, joining coalitions and prevention networks already in place," said Cotton County Administrative Director, Brandie O'Connor.

There are numerous events and activities across the state to support National Child Abuse Prevention Month:

- **Build a Blue Ribbon Tree for Kids Campaign.** Find a tree in a highly visible location and add 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 that shows your support for children.
- **Happiest Day Coloring Challenge.** Children are encouraged to simply draw or color their "happiest day". Children may work individually or in group with family or as a class, parents/teachers are encouraged to share on social media. Pictures uploaded to Twitter, Instagram use hashtag #PictureaBrighterFuture.
- **Wear Blue Selfie Day.** Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup> is designated as the day to wear blue to help promote and strengthen child abuse prevention efforts in communities. Share your best selfie with others or ask your co-workers to join you. Post your BLUE picture on social media or tweet and/or upload your picture on Instagram using #PictureaBrighterFuture.
- Visit your local library and check out the new **Raising of America** five-part documentary series that looks at early childhood and the future of our nation.
- **Outstanding Child Abuse Prevention Awards Ceremony.** Honoring excellence in prevention, Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. State Capitol Governor's Blue Room, with Ed Lake, director of the Oklahoma State Department of Health and Human Services, serving as Master of Ceremonies.



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- **“An Afternoon with Dr. Harvey Karp” and Raising of America Documentary Screening**, Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Metro Technology Center, OKC. The Raising of America documentary screening is sponsored by Smart Start Oklahoma.
- Get involved in **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer efforts** to assist children through the legal system, learn more by visiting this link:  
<http://www.oklahomacasa.org/Volunteering.html>.

For additional information about child abuse prevention in general or how to get involved with other activities in your community, contact Cotton County Health Department at (580) 875-6121.

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