



Comanche County  
Health Department

## For immediate release

**Contact:** Marquise Bishop, Health Educator  
Comanche County Health Department  
Phone: (580) 585-6743  
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## April Marks Child Abuse Prevention Month

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) along with various community organizations are working together to build a “Blue Ribbon Tree” state. Blue Ribbon Trees will be blossoming throughout Oklahoma communities in April, which is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Comanche County Health Department and the Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Action Committee invites every community to take action for children by participating in their eighth annual “Build a Blue Ribbon Tree for Kids” campaign.

Thousands of Oklahoma children suffer abuse and neglect each year. 2015 saw a substantiated rise in child abuse and neglect cases when compared with the previous year. This is 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 by joining coalitions and prevention networks that are already in place,” said Brandie O’Connor, Administrator for the Comanche County Health Department.

The blue ribbon is the international sign for child abuse prevention and serves as a constant reminder that all of us have a responsibility in helping to protect children. Communities are invited to participate by displaying blue ribbon trees during April.

To “Build a Blue Ribbon Tree,” select any materials you choose. If using a living tree, choose a highly visible location and secure needed permission. Decorate the tree with blue ribbons to represent any of the following:

- The number of new babies born in your community;
- The number of confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect in your county;
- Something significant to your agency, program or community
- Or use the ribbons to show your community support for children in general

April 12, 2016 will be the official CAP Day at the Capitol. To have a tree showcased in the blue ribbon tree slideshow, the trees must be completed and registered by April 6.

Tree photos will be highlighted in the Child Abuse Prevention Month “official” scrapbook, on the OSDH Family Support and Prevention Service web page, and on various social media sites. A “Tree Registry” form is provided for people and organizations





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to register their trees with the OSDH Office of Child Abuse Prevention. The registration form and submission instructions are available to print from the OSDH website at:

<http://go.usa.gov/c5Jad>

For more information, contact Marquise Bishop, Comanche County Health Department Health Educator, 1010 South Sheridan Road, Lawton, 580-585-6743, or e-mail [MarquiseB@health.ok.gov](mailto:MarquiseB@health.ok.gov)

