

It's your turn to
make a difference.

Building a Family Friendly Community *pg. 1*

April is child abuse and neglect prevention month. This is a perfect time for your community to discuss what can be done to make sure that our children grow up healthy, safe and loved.

Child abuse and neglect is a symptom of a larger problem - the lack of resources and support for families in a community. To keep children safe, we have to fix the problem instead of only treating the symptom.

When the well-being of children and families becomes the priority of everyone in a community, the number of child abuse and neglect incidences will decrease. Other good things will also happen, including better health outcomes, improved school performance and family economic self sufficiency.

It is important that every member of our community consider what they can do to improve our collective well-being. Whether it is volunteering, making donations, or advocating for family-friendly policies, everyone can take their turn in making a difference.

Connecting with Kids Makes a Difference

A little time spent positively supporting kids can make a big difference for our community. Take a look at the facts:

- Youth who have positive mentors are more likely to stay in school and earn high grades and less likely to smoke, use drugs or carry a weapon. (Public/Private Ventures)
- Children who are read to at least three times a week start school ready to learn and are able to master reading and language skills more quickly. (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study)
- An adult's attitude is key to a child's successful learning. A recent study shows that when adults approach children in a spirit of equal partnership and respect, the child learns more quickly, is more involved in learning and is more creative about problem solving. (National Teacher Research Panel)
- Youth who have positive family role models and good family communication are 2.5 times less likely to use alcohol than youth without these assets. (Oman, Vesely, et.al.)
- Singing, talking and playing with young children activates the construction of their developing brain and has a positive impact on their future learning and career success. (Carnegie Foundation)
- Kids who regularly eat dinner with their family are healthier, better adjusted emotionally, and have high self-esteem. (Nemours Health and Prevention Services)

- **Reach out to families and kids.**
- **Contribute to programs that support children.**
- **Speak out in support of a family-friendly community and state.**

Speak Out

Your voice is needed to support laws and policies that strengthen families and keep children safe.

- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper.
- Send an e-mail to your elected officials.
- Learn about important decisions being made that impact your children, family and community.

Go to www.number1question.org for more information about how to advocate for the children and families in your community.

Give

It is important to support effective programs with your donations. You can also give to the West Virginia Children's Trust Fund, which supports local programs that build family-friendly communities.

There are three easy ways to give:

- Check the CTF box on your state income tax return.
- Donate on-line at www.wvctf.org
- Mail your contribution to:
WV Children's Trust Fund
P.O. Box 3192
Charleston, WV 25332

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Ways to Show Kids You Care

It just takes one caring person to help a child grow up healthy, safe and loved.

- Notice them.
- Ask them about themselves.
- Cheer their accomplishments.
- Introduce them to new experiences.
- Expect their best, don't expect perfection.
- Praise them for doing something right.
- Laugh at their jokes.
- Create a safe environment.
- Make decisions together.
- Build something together.
- Inspire their creativity.
- Invite them over for juice.
- Listen to their favorite music with them.
- Love them, no matter what.



Excerpted from Roehlkepartain, Jolene. 150 Ways to Show Kids You Care. Search Institute (Minneapolis, MN) copyright 1998. www.search-institute.org

Family-Friendly Communities

Here's what some West Virginia communities are doing to strengthen families and keep children safe.

- Community baby showers can provide expectant mothers with an opportunity to receive helpful advice, useful baby items and connect with other moms-to-be for emotional support.
- Churches can provide congregations with information about child development and the importance of reaching out to youth in the community.
- Parenting classes provide parents and other family members the opportunity to learn more about child development and share good ideas for supporting and nurturing the children in their lives.
- Youth leadership programs inspire young people to think about the difference they can make in their community.

For More Information

www.preventchildabusewv.org

To learn more about the great things happening in West Virginia communities, go to: www.preventchildabusewv.org and click on "Partners in Prevention."

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Pinwheels for
PREVENTION
 Prevent Child Abuse
West Virginia