

April is
Child Abuse
Prevention Month



To best protect children in your community, it's important to recognize indicators of abuse or neglect, and be aware of preventative factors.

Did you know...

In Fresno, Merced, Stanislaus, Madera, Kings and Kern Counties
1 case of child abuse is reported every 9 minutes

Each year...

Approximately

800

patients visit Valley
Children's Guilds Child
Abuse Prevention and
Treatment Center

Approximately

100

patients are admitted to
Valley Children's Hospital
for non-accidental
trauma/child abuse

Blue-Ribbon Campaign

Blue ribbons and bows are used as the traditional symbol of child abuse awareness. This began in 1989 when a grandmother, Bonnie W. Finney, tied a blue ribbon to the antenna of her van "to make people wonder." With curious community members, Bonnie W. Finney shared the abuse her grandchildren endured which led to the brutal death of her grandson. Her effort demonstrates the impact just one person can have on raising public awareness

For more information about Child Abuse Prevention Month, visit
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth>.

Signs of Abuse

The first step to help children who have been a victim of abuse or neglect is to learn how to recognize the signs.

Signs of Physical Abuse might be if the child...

Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes

Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school

Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home

Signs of Neglect might be if the child...

Is frequently absent from school

Begs or steals food or money

Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses

Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor

Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather

Signs of Sexual Abuse might be if the child...

Has difficulty walking or sitting

Suddenly refuses to change for gym

Reports nightmares or bedwetting

Shows sudden change in behavior or school performance

Demonstrates unusual sexual knowledge or behavior

Signs of Emotional Abuse might be if the child...

Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression

Is delayed in physical or emotional development

Presents depressed, withdrawn, voices suicidal ideation or intent to self-harm

Non-Accidental Trauma: (n) 1. Non-Accidental Trauma is an injury that is purposefully inflicted upon a child—in other words, child abuse.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

According to the California Office of Child Abuse Prevention, 1 in 4 children have experienced abuse or neglect at some point in their lives. The ACEs study and research it has influenced, has broadened our understanding of the impacts of child abuse and childhood trauma on a person's physical and mental health.

ACEs are associated with

5 of the leading **10**

causes of death in the US including heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease, diabetes and suicide.¹



1 in **6**

adults have experienced 4 or more types of ACEs.²



ACEs are costly – the lifetime economic burden of child abuse and neglect in the US is estimated at nearly \$2 trillion.²

How is Valley Children's Guilds Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Center making a difference?

The Center provides outreach and education activities throughout the Central Valley, including trainings to community members, Law Enforcement, Child Protective Services, District Attorney's Offices and other professional groups on a variety of child abuse topics. In FY2022, the Center provided approximately 330 hours of education and outreach to the community. We also participate in various multi-disciplinary teams including Human Trafficking Task Forces, Sexual Assault Response Teams, Pediatric Death Review Teams.

The center reviews approximately

350 cases

of child abuse and neglect annually through their SCAN Team meetings held in five counties in the Central Valley.

Protective Factors

Protective factors refers to a set of characteristics that can help increase the health and well-being of children and families.

The five protective factors are:

Parental Resilience

The ability of parents to deal effectively with stress, adversity or trauma

Social Connections

Positive relationships with family, friends and neighbors

Concrete Support in Times of Need

Families can provide or find support within their communities to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, housing, and transportation – and they know how to access essential services such as child care, health care, and mental health services.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:

Family's understand the fundamentals of raising young children and practice appropriate expectations for their behavior at every age.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Helping children properly label and understand different emotions in themselves and others.

What Can You Do?

There are ways you can help build up protective factors in your community, ensuring children have positive environments and advocates.



Be a mentor to a child or parent

Help build social connections in your community while strengthening the social connections and knowledge of others



Advocate for policies or programs that can make a difference

By knowing the protective factors, you can identify the gaps in your community and use your voice to help fill them.



Report suspected child abuse

If you suspect child abuse, report it to your local child protective services



Increase your awareness.

Read a book about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) or visit www.acesconnection.com

For more information on resources in your community, visit www.valleychildrens.org/childadvocacy or contact the center's coordinator at JSecula@valleychildrens.org

Resources

¹ Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., ... Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14, 245–258

² Merrick M.T., Ford D.C., Ports K.A., Guinn, A.S., Chen, J., Klevens, J., ... Mercy, J.A. (2019) Vital Signs: Estimated Proportion of Adult Health Problems Attributable to Adverse Childhood Experiences and Implications for Prevention — 25 States, 2015–2017. *MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 68, 999-1005. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6844e1>.

<https://preventchildabuse.org/resources/knowning-protective-factors/>
Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect: Signs and Symptoms. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/signs.pdf>
The Economics Child Abuse Study, 2019 Study of Madera County
The Economics Child Abuse Study, 2019 Study of Fresno County