



# CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

APRIL 2022 CAMPAIGN: RESILIENCE IS WHAT MAKES YOUR FAMILY STRONG!

## HISTORY

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, an opportunity to share the importance of individuals and communities working together to keep families safe and healthy. Everyone has a role to play in making sure that our community is a great place for children and families to thrive.

## CAPC

Preventing child abuse and neglect is important all year long. The Santa Barbara County Child Abuse Prevention Council is a collaborative group of committed individuals who come together each month to coordinate prevention and early intervention efforts on behalf of children, youth, and families in our community.

All of us belong to families of one sort or another, and we recognize that the strengths and challenges of our own experiences often inform and complement our professional expertise. Our primary child abuse prevention strategy centers on strengthening families and building awareness about the dangers of toxic stress.

The Santa Barbara County Child Abuse Prevention Council:

- Raises community awareness about child abuse and neglect;
- Provides resources and education to assist parents and generate public support for family strengthening;
- Educates service providers who work with families about the Mandated Reporting Law, risk and protective factors, and best practices for child abuse and neglect prevention;
- Supports agencies that provide prevention or early intervention services to the community; and
- Engages parents as leaders in child abuse and neglect prevention.

Each of us has a role to play in ensuring the safety of our children. We all have various capacities to engage, whether we are a concerned neighbor, a family member, a parent, an elected official or work with a community-based organization.

You can help prevent child abuse by helping parents be the best moms and dads they can be. Sometimes parents need a little encouragement and guidance. You can be their bright spot in the darker times.

Preventing child abuse is everyone's responsibility. Even though California is comprised of many different families, we are all part of one community. Together we can stop child abuse and neglect.

Protecting children is a community responsibility. You can help by showing your support for a parent you know. It can be as simple as just offering a helping hand.

There are simple steps we can take every day to help reduce the risk factors for child abuse and neglect. With the help of a supportive community and the Five Protective Factors, children can be resilient even in the face of adversity.

The Protective Factors have been shown to strengthen families, reduce the likelihood that abuse and neglect will occur, and mitigate long-term consequences of experiencing childhood abuse and neglect.

## FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The Five Protective Factors are parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need and social and emotional development of children.

Parents strengthen **Resilience** by exercising flexibility & developing inner strength to be there for their children even when times are tough.

**Social Connections** provide a support system of family and friends that can help caregivers feel valued, connected, and understood.

With **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development**, parents know what to expect and can be their child's expert through all the ages and stages of childhood.

All families have strengths and all families need support from time to time. **Concrete Support** is knowing how and where to ask for help when needed.

Supporting the **Social and Emotional Development of Children** gives them words to express how they feel and teaches them to communicate effectively, reducing stress within the family.

## STRESS, WELLNESS, AND RESILIENCE

Being a parent or caregiver can be stressful—everyone struggles.

There are seven wellness practices shown to reduce stress and strengthen resilience. Each week this month, we'll look at one of these, with tips on our social media page and an interview with a community agency working in that domain.

Resilience is what makes your family strong: connected to your community and willing to ask for help, able to learn from experience and try new things, ready to protect and support one another, able to find joy even in hard times, able to stay calm and focused on what's important, and so on. It's important to care for yourself so you can be strong for others.

See our "Messaging for Wellness" document for more information.

**Invitation to focus on Parental Resilience:**

Resilience is an idea that includes both strength and flexibility.

Parenting can be hard, and parents must be flexible and strong to meet the needs of their families, which can change from moment to moment and day to day.

Many things can cause stress in families, and stress can make it harder to be a patient and supportive parent.

Including wellness activities in your daily routine can reduce stress and help to keep your family strong.

These activities can help parents as well as children – doing activities together strengthens the whole family!

Balanced nutrition, physical activity, and quality sleep are important ways to care for your body and improve health and wellbeing. Set some goals and see what you can do!

Mindfulness practices can help you stay calm and think more clearly when life becomes stressful.

Experiencing nature can be calming. It connects us to the miracle of life and reminds us that we are part of the great wide world.

Mental healthcare starts with noticing your thoughts and feelings and recognizing when you feel stressed or overwhelmed. It is doing things that make you feel better and reaching out to others for help when you need it. Sometimes what helps the most is finding supportive services in your community.

Supportive relationships are important for people of all ages and abilities, and they can include family members, friends, neighbors, teachers, doctors, spiritual counselors, and community leaders – anybody who shares an interest in you and your family. Supportive relationships are based on trust and mutual respect.

## **Resilience is what makes your family strong**

Resilience is ...

- Being connected to your community
- Balancing hard times with things that bring you joy
- Staying calm and managing stress
- Learning from your children
- Protecting and supporting each other
- Asking for help
- Learning from experiences – especially the challenging ones
- Focusing on what is most important when there is a crisis
- Responding rather than reacting to unexpected changes
- Caring for yourself so you can be strong for others
- Being open to new things