
MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH
**FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES JOINS NATIONWIDE
CALL TO ACTION TO RAISE AWARENESS, BUILD STRONGER
COMMUNITIES TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE**

April once again marks Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Franklin County Children Services is joining a nationwide call to action to raise awareness and build stronger community partnerships to keep children safe from abuse and neglect.

This year, we embrace the theme “Building A Hopeful Future Together” from our partners at Prevent Child Abuse America, focusing on creating a nurturing and supportive environment for all families.

“Just as we know that strong families are the first foundation to protecting children, we also know that families do better when they live in communities that are committed to helping them succeed,” said FCCS Executive Director Chip Spinning.

Nearly 28,000 reports were made to the Franklin County Child Abuse Hotline in 2023, with more than half of the referrals raising concerns about a child being physically abused, one in six calls alleging sexual abuse, and one in eight reporting children in a home where domestic violence between parents had shattered the sense of safety every child deserves.

“Family structures have changed so much since the pandemic, and the challenges parents face are far different,” Spinning said. “Add in the mental health crisis gripping so many young people, the stressors of neighborhood violence, and the uncertainties of our economy. We

Franklin County Children Services

The agency receives more than 30,000 calls for service annually on our 24-hour child abuse hotline, (614) 229-7000. Callers with general information questions can reach us on our non-emergency phone line (614) 229-7100. *For more information visit www.fccs.us.*



recognize that keeping young people safer today requires an integrated strategy that emphasizes protecting the whole child - body, mind, and heart.”

And data shows that Black girls and young women are disproportionately represented in the statistics. That’s why FCCS continues its strong collaboration with The Center for Healthy Families - one of our key prevention partners - to leverage their expertise in providing supports to the families they work with and educating others about ways to better support underserved neighborhoods.

Also partnering with FCCS on raising awareness for Child Abuse Prevention Month is the Franklin County Board of Commissioners and the City of Columbus.

To boost community awareness and foster stronger partnerships on the critical issue of child safety in our community, FCCS is sponsoring a series of activities throughout the month, including:

- Starting April 1, FCCS is partnering with the Ohio Children’s Trust Fund on Child Abuse Prevention billboards across the state. We designed six special billboards just for Franklin County which feature the national theme, our local partners, and a reminder to visit our website for information.
- From April 5-11, a special prevention message will be featured on the digital billboard downtown by our partners at Lamar Advertising to encourage people to Wear Blue on April 10 as part of the national Wear Blue Day for Child Abuse Prevention.
- On April 6, as a visual reminder of the world we want for all children to grow up happy, healthy, and prepared to succeed, our partners at The Center for Healthy Families will host a pinwheel planting event at Columbus City Hall.
- From April 7 - 11, for the first time, the FCCS building at 855 West Mound will “Glow Blue” with blue lights illuminating from our windows during the overnight hours and raising awareness with some of the nearly 85,000 drivers who pass by our building each day on I-70 (according to our partners at the Ohio Dept of Transportation).
- Our partners in prevention at Columbus City Hall and the Franklin County Hall of Justice will also take part in this Glow Blue initiative, with blue lighting at each building - along with the Broad Street Bridge - during the second week of April.
- April 10 is Wear Blue Day, a statewide initiative championed by our partners at Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). Child welfare advocates across Ohio are encouraged to wear blue and post photos online with the hashtag #WearBlueDay2024.
- The annual FCCS Child Abuse Prevention Breakfast is also on April 10 at Columbus State’s Mitchell Hall. Former Ohio Department of Health Director Dr. Amy Acton will be the keynote speaker. The Breakfast will be streamed on Facebook Live (another first).

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“With our partners and friends, we are committed to engaging families throughout all of Franklin County - no matter their size, income, neighborhood, background, and diversity,” added Executive Director Spinning. “When all of our families are strong, all of our children are safe and protected.”

If you suspect that child in Franklin County is the victim of abuse or neglect, call our 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline at 614.229.7000.

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Through collaboration with families and their communities, we advocate for the safety, permanency, and well-being of each child we serve in a manner that honors family and culture.

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