

# News Release

**Date: April 7, 2022**

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## **Help Strengthen Families and Prevent Child Abuse, April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month**

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(Salem, Ore.) – April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

This month and throughout the year, the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Child Welfare Division encourages all individuals and organizations to play a role in making our state a better place for children and families.

We can all help prevent child maltreatment by ensuring parents and communities have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to keep all children safe.

Research shows that when parents possess protective factors, the risk for neglect and abuse diminish and positive outcomes for children, young people, and families increase. Protective factors are the strengths and resources families draw on during difficult times to shield them from life's stresses. Some major protective factors include knowledge of parenting and child development, parental resilience, social connections and concrete supports, such as housing and food security.

Children and families are stronger when communities come together to support them before they are in crisis. Helping families in your community meet their basic needs is a critical way to prevent child abuse. Sharing information about food banks, unemployment benefits, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) availability, and educational resources can be extremely helpful.

“Everyone can play a part in strengthening and supporting families,” said Rebecca Jones Gaston, ODHS Child Welfare Director. “While the Child Welfare Division plays a specific role, I want to honor the work that is being done in the larger system of child and family well-being and encourage all Oregonians to be active in preventing child abuse.”

For example, Oregon’s Relief Nurseries help families access support before they are in crisis, Prevent Child Abuse Oregon and Child Abuse Solutions provide outreach and awareness to encourage community connection for prevention, and

family-serving organizations, such as Morrison Youth and Family Services, offer opportunities for parent mentorship and increased resilience.

In support of these efforts, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, together with Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention developed the [2021/2022 Prevention Resource Guide](#). The guide provides more information about [protective factors](#) and highlights examples of innovative prevention approaches being implemented by communities across the country.

If you suspect a child is being abused, please contact the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-855-503-(SAFE)7233.

More information for resources and support for families:

- 211info.org (also by dialing 211) offers connection to local and regional resources for food banks, housing assistance, and mental health services
- Lines for Life, a nonprofit dedicated to substance abuse and suicide prevention: 1-800-273-8255 or text '273Talk' to 839863
- Oregon CASA Network: <https://oregoncasanetwork.org/>
- Oregon Child Abuse Solutions (formerly Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers): <https://oregoncas.org/>
- Prevent Child Abuse Oregon: <https://preventchildabuseoregon.org/>
- Oregon Assoc. of Relief Nurseries: <https://www.oregonreliefnurseries.org/>

About the ODHS Child Welfare Division

The Oregon Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Division is committed to transforming itself to better support the individual needs of families and to best serve Oregon's children and young people. [Learn more about the Child Welfare Division Vision for Transformation.](#)

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