

News Release

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Collaboration and Support Helps Strengthen Families and Prevent Child Abuse

(Salem, Ore.) – April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) wants to honor the important work being done across the state to prevent child abuse and offer local and national resources to help families before they reach crisis.

This month and throughout the year, ODHS encourages all individuals and organizations to play a role in making Oregon a better place for children and families. By ensuring that parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to care for their children, we can help promote the social and emotional well-being of children and youth and prevent child maltreatment within families and communities. Protective factors are the strengths and resources families draw on during difficult times to shield them from life's stresses. Research shows that when parents possess protective factors, the risk for neglect and abuse diminish and optimal outcomes for children, youth and families are promoted. Major protective factors include knowledge of parenting, knowledge of child development, parental resilience, social connections and concrete supports.

“We can all play a part in preventing child abuse, and all families need help sometimes. We encourage everyone to make a commitment this month to learn new ways to strengthen child and family well-being and we want to share some resources to make that possible,” ODHS Interim Child Welfare Director Aprille Flint-Gerner shared. “Together, we can make a difference for the better.”

Many organizations statewide do crucial work in our communities to support child safety and well-being. While this list is not exhaustive, some ODHS partners in this important work include: [Oregon Child Abuse Solutions](#), [the Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries](#) and [Prevent Child Abuse Oregon](#). These organizations, and others like them, create educational opportunities for communities on how to prevent abuse, provide tangible support for families in need, offer child-focused collaborative spaces for children who have experienced abuse and advocate for children who are in foster care. ODHS is grateful for their continued collaboration across the state, along with many other organizations and partners such as teachers, healthcare

professionals, and members of our community who are crucial parts of the wider child and family well-being system.

In support of prevention efforts at the national level, 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 [2023/2024 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.

Children and families are stronger when communities come together to support them before they reach crisis. Helping families in your community meet their basic needs is a critical way to provide prevent child abuse. Sharing information about food banks, unemployment benefits, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) availability, and educational resources can be extremely helpful. To learn more about food resources visit <https://NeedFood.Oregon.gov>.

If you suspect a child is being abused, please contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline by calling 1-855-503-SAFE (7233). The Oregon Child Abuse Hotline receives calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

More information for resources and support:

- [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: call or text 988
- Friends and neighbors can help break the social isolation some parents may experience or encourage parents to seek support when needed by calling the [Oregon parent helpline](#): 971-221-5180.
- Oregon Child Abuse Solutions: <https://oregoncas.org/>
- Prevent Child Abuse Oregon: <https://preventchildabuseoregon.org/>
- Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries: <https://www.oregonreliefnurseries.org/>

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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](#).