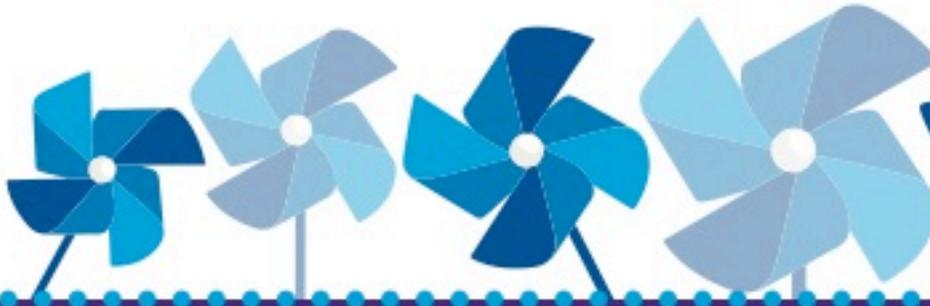


#PassThePinwheel

Child Abuse Prevention Month



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. In Mecklenburg County, a team of organizations and individuals have joined forces to build awareness around the issue of child abuse prevention. The **Mecklenburg Child Abuse Prevention Team** encourages parents to take an active role in their children's lives and in the lives of all children in the community.

Talking with adults: Physical and sexual abuse affects children of all ages in all kinds of communities. One of the best ways you can protect your children is to talk with the adults and older youth they spend time with or who care for them.

- Be clear about expectations and boundaries. Monitor activities and ask your children about the interactions.
- Ask about policies groups or organizations have for keeping kids safe and minimizing risks. These should include proper screening, guidelines about one-on-one interactions, and appropriate monitoring and supervision.

Talking with children: Encourage children to come to you with questions and to ask about things that confuse them.

- Teach the difference between secrets and surprises, and encourage them to tell you if asked to keep a secret.
- Teach the proper name for all body parts. Identify parts that are "private" and should not be touched by others.
- Empower children by allowing them to choose if they want to give or receive a hug or would prefer a handshake.

Prevention tips for parents

- During a child's tantrum, remain calm and wait it out. Do not let your child's behavior cause you to also lose control.
- Learn about your children's activities and people with whom they are involved. Stay alert for possible problems.
- Watch for "grooming" behaviors in adults who spend time with your child. Warning signs may include frequently finding ways to be alone with your child or ignoring your child's need for privacy (e.g., in the bathroom).
- Trust your instincts! If you feel uneasy about leaving your child with someone, don't do it.
- Join a playgroup or online support group of parents with children of similar ages. Develop a support network, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Did you know? North Carolina law requires that anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect must report the abuse. In Mecklenburg County, you can make a report by calling the 24-hour child abuse and neglect hotline:

980-31-HELPS (43577).

#PassThePinwheel The pinwheel is a national symbol of child abuse prevention. Shining in the sun, the pinwheel is reflective of the bright future all kids deserve. During April, the Mecklenburg Child Abuse Prevention Team invites you to show your support by using #PassThePinwheel on social media or displaying a garden of pinwheels from Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina!

Need more information? For additional resources from the Mecklenburg Child Abuse Prevention Team, visit www.Meck4Kids.org.

