

# 8 Ways to Help Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

Helping children can be easy and doesn't require significant changes to your routine. Below are several ways you can help prevent child abuse in your community:

**Volunteer your time.** Look for ways to get involved with organizations that support families in your community. 1-800-CHILDREN is a helpline that offers support, encouragement, and information regarding resources and volunteer opportunities in local communities. Seven Counties Services also offers opportunities for individuals to get involved in our mission and help improve the lives of families in our communities.

**Educate yourself and others.** One of the most effective ways to prevent child abuse is to educate both yourself and others. Supporting parents and children through after-school activities, mentoring programs, parent education classes, and temporary relief programs for caregivers can greatly reduce the chances of harm. You can also make a difference by advocating for programs and services like these in your community.

**Examine your behavior.** Abuse can be more than physical. Words can also be harmful. It's important to be a nurturing parent or caregiver and show that problems can be resolved without yelling or hitting.

**Know the signs.** Unexplained injuries are not the only signs of abuse. Other signs that a child may be experiencing neglect or physical, sexual, or emotional abuse include depression, fear of a particular adult, difficulty trusting others or building friendships, sudden changes in eating or sleeping patterns, inappropriate sexual behavior, poor hygiene, secrecy, and aggression. These symptoms could suggest family problems.

**Invest in kids.** Encourage community leaders to support families and ask employers and lawmakers to create family-friendly policies that protect and improve children's lives.

**Discipline your children thoughtfully.** When disciplining your child, it's important to remain calm and remember that it's a way of teaching. Use positive motivation to encourage good behavior, such as doing an activity they enjoy, and time-outs to help your child regain control and reflect on their actions.

**Empower children.** Teaching children their rights can help them understand that they are special, and they have the right to be safe. This can help them recognize abuse and report it.

**Report abuse.** In Kentucky, concerned citizens have a legal obligation to make a report to the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) when there is reason to believe a child is being abused or neglected. Individuals can make a report by calling 1-877-595-2331. If a child appears to be in imminent danger or needs immediate protection, call 911 or the local police department immediately.

Remember that by taking action to prevent child abuse and neglect, you're not just intervening in a child's current situation – you're also protecting their future. Your efforts today have the power to save a child's life and instill hope for a brighter tomorrow. Let's continue to work together, advocate for change, and create communities where every child is valued, protected, and given the opportunity to thrive.



Seven Counties Services