

## Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

April is Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Month.

**Child abuse is everyone's business.** If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected call 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)

### What is child abuse and neglect?

- **Physical abuse** – an injury to a child that is not an accident: including beating, biting, burning, biting, cutting, or shaking a child.
- **Emotional abuse** – maltreatment of a child that may involve criticizing, insulting, yelling, rejecting or withholding love.
- **Sexual abuse** – sexual contact with a child, including exhibitionism, photographs or films, pornography, prostitution, rape, or fondling.
- **Neglect** – failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional, medical or educational needs.

### Warning signs of abuse include children who....

- Are nervous around adults
- Avoid being at home
- Show sudden changes in behavior
- Have unexplained burns, cuts, or bruises
- Hurt themselves, other children, or animals
- Are frequently dirty or hungry

### Did You Know That ...?

- There are over 300 children in Vermilion County who are involved in current child abuse and neglect cases.
- The majority of child abuse and neglect deaths are children under 5 years old.
- One out of four girls and one out of five to seven boys will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18.

### How can you be involved?

- **Report Child Abuse.** If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected in Illinois, call 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)
- **Discipline your children thoughtfully.** Never discipline your child when you are upset. Remember that discipline is a way to teach your child. Use your actions to show children and that conflicts can be settled without hitting or yelling.
- **Support Parents.** Parenting is the toughest job any of us will ever undertake. Reach out to parents. Help them get the support and encouragement they need to succeed.
- **Become a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA).** CASA volunteers advocate for children who have been abused and neglected. Help a child have a better future and break the cycle of violence. Call Heather at 217-446-5975 to get involved.

For more information visit [www.preventchildabuseillinois.org](http://www.preventchildabuseillinois.org) or [www.casavermillion.org](http://www.casavermillion.org).