

How you can help:

REPORT, REPORT, REPORT

BY REPORTING, YOU'RE NOT DECIDING IF IT'S CHILD ABUSE, YOU'RE JUST RAISING A FLAG. Professionals will make that decision, but they need your help in calling attention to a potential problem.

Report suspected child abuse or neglect in New Mexico by calling #SAFE (#7233) from a cell phone or 1-855-333-SAFE.

- Try to get as much info as you can; names, address, license plate number, etc.
- You don't have to give your name.
- NEVER report someone to get revenge or get them in trouble. It will not work, and it can hurt other children who really need help.
- Try not to worry about children being sent to foster care. If they are in an unsafe situation with their parents, foster care is a better, safer place for them. Their parents will have an opportunity to regain custody after getting help.

EARLY INTERVENTION:

One way to prevent child abuse and neglect is for parents to be READY to be parents: emotionally, financially and with supports in place. Encourage people who are sexually active to talk to a health professional about their situation and ways to prevent pregnancy if they're not ready to be a parent.

For people you are concerned about who already have children or are pregnant, help connect them to a program that does home visiting, parenting education, or helps families with needed services ([Click here for link to Home Visiting Programs on this website](#)).

KNOW THE RISK FACTORS:

Here are some potential risk factors:
(From Center's for Disease Control and Prevention)

Risk Factors for Victimization

Individual Risk Factors

- Children younger than 4 years of age
- Special needs that may increase caregiver burden (e.g., disabilities, mental retardation, mental health issues, and chronic physical illnesses)

Risk Factors for Perpetration

Individual Risk Factors

- Parents' lack of understanding of children's needs, child development and parenting skills
- Parents' history of child maltreatment in family of origin
- Substance abuse and/or mental health issues including depression in the family
- Parental characteristics such as young age, low education, single parenthood, large number of dependent children, and low income
- Nonbiological, transient caregivers in the home (e.g., mother's male partner)
- Parental thoughts and emotions that tend to support or justify maltreatment behaviors

Family Risk Factors

- Social isolation
- Family disorganization, dissolution, and violence, including intimate partner violence
- Parenting stress, poor parent-child relationships, and negative interactions

Community Risk Factors

- Community violence

Concentrated neighborhood disadvantage (e.g., high poverty and residential instability, high unemployment rates, and high density of alcohol outlets), and poor social connections.

(For more

info: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/riskprotectivefactors.html>)

NEVER leave your child with someone who has the above risk factors and who you don't absolutely trust. Many parents need someone to babysit their child so they can go to work, but finding a safe caregiver is the first priority. **ESPECIALLY FIND OUT IF THE CAREGIVER HAS EVER SEXUALLY ABUSED A CHILD.**

People with an alcohol or drug problem are usually very dangerous caregivers. Help these people get treatment and report them for possible maltreatment. The professionals will decide if their children are in danger.

Always be involved with your child's activity on the internet and warn other parents to know what their children are doing online. Many children have online relationships with strangers that can be very dangerous, whether they meet in

person or not. Regularly check their phone and computer for inappropriate texts and photos.

See links for information

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/workforce/tools/socialmedia/safety/>

See "Netiquette" <http://www.safeteen.net/issues.php>

Additional Resources

- [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE\) Study](#)
- The ACE Study examines the links between adverse childhood experiences including maltreatment, and adult health.
- [National Scientific Council on the Developing Child](#)
- The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child is a multidisciplinary collaboration comprising leading scholars in neuroscience, early childhood development, pediatrics, and economics.
- [Preventing Child Maltreatment Through the Promotion of Safe, Stable, and Nurturing Relationships Between Children and Caregivers](#)[PDF 164KB]

This document describes a five-year vision for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's work in child maltreatment (CM) prevention. The overall strategy in preventing CM is to promote safe, stable, and nurturing relationships between children and their caregivers.

KNOW the Myths and Facts

MYTH: Parents need to nip bad behavior in the bud and discipline babies from day one.

FACT: **Never punish a baby**; it is ineffective and cruel. They are too young to "learn lessons." Caregivers' main job is to keep a baby safe, and sometimes that means removing him or her from harm and redirecting to something safe. The same is true for toddlers, although by age 2-3 time outs can start to be an effective tool.

MYTH: Children are resilient and can overcome child abuse and neglect.

FACT: It is impossible to erase all of the damage done from maltreatment. Many people don't realize that **any kind of abuse or neglect causes biological changes in a child's brain** that can harm their intellectual abilities. In other

words, harming a child will permanently damage her brain making it near impossible to reach her true potential in life.

<http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/toolkits/canp/rr.html>

- [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE\) Study](#)

MYTH: Physical, sexual and emotional abuse are the most common types of maltreatment.

FACT: About 80% of victims suffer neglect, 18% are victims of physical abuse and many endure multiple forms of maltreatment.

MYTH: "That's how I was raised and I turned out fine."

FACT: Many people justify harsh parenting and a non-nurturing home because that was their childhood experience or because their relatives and friends say it's okay. However, their upbringing and culture has shaped who they are and they likely have psychological and biological damage of which they are not aware.

MYTH: This is really someone else's problem and there isn't anything I can do about it.

FACT: If you, or someone you love is ever killed by a drunk driver or becomes a victim of a crime, you might want to rethink that. Perpetrators and victims of maltreatment are highly at risk for drunk driving and crime, and they are members of our community. **You are paying for child abuse and neglect** in more ways than you realize, so that's why it is everyone's problem.