

News Release
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
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April is Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month
Efforts underway to draw attention to and prevent child abuse and neglect

This month, child welfare advocates across Ohio are coming together to shed light on the impact of abuse and neglect and encourage all Ohioans to do their part to prevent it. Efforts range from public displays representing the number of abuse and neglect cases in a given county to a two-day conference at the end of the month for child welfare professionals.

According to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), there were 73,156 reports of abuse and neglect in Ohio for 2006, up from 71,762 in 2005. Efforts to protect the children affected by these reports must go beyond those of government agencies to succeed.

“ODJFS and our county children services agency work hard each day building a shield around Ohio's children,” ODJFS Director Helen Jones-Kelley said. “But our efforts are just part of that shield. As human beings, each and every one of us bears a responsibility to become more aware of the well-being of children around us and take proactive steps to ensure our children have every opportunity to thrive.”

The Ohio Children's Trust Fund (OCTF), is an effective tool in furthering state and local abuse and neglect prevention efforts. This year, the OCTF will provide more than \$3.8 million to support local prevention efforts including parenting classes, family crisis stabilization, support groups, home visitation, and education and mentoring for young parents.

“I'm very pleased that the Ohio Children's Trust Fund will be able to provide significant financial assistance to local programs designed to prevent child abuse and neglect,” explained Ohio Children's Trust Fund Board Chairman Senator Kirk Schuring (R-Canton). “It is heartening to know that because of the good work of local advocates, child abuse will be prevented and young lives will be positively impacted.”

Many of the awareness efforts this year are the result of the partnership between OCTF and Prevent Child Abuse Ohio. The two agencies are sponsoring the 88 county “Pinwheels for Prevention” campaign as a stark visual representation of the number of children affected by abuse and neglect. Additionally, they will wrap up Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention month activities this year by co-hosting the 6th Annual Protecting Ohio's Children Conference April 24-25 in Columbus.

Additional information on community prevention resources or the Protecting Ohio's Children Conference is available by contacting OCTF Executive Director Candace Valach at (614) 466-7675.

