

April Child Abuse Awareness Month

Editor's note: the following was submitted by Brown Co Sheriff John Merchant

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the public that April is National Child Abuse Awareness month and provide information on what steps need to be taken in the event abuse or neglect needs reported by members of the community.

INFORMATION ABOUT CHILD ABUSE::

Not all child abuse is physically violent; emotional abuse and neglect are not as obvious as physical abuse but can do severe damage to the emotional well being of a child. The signs of emotional abuse is much harder to recognize as the scarring and wounds are on the inside of the child, not on the outside.

By statistic over 90% of child victims are abused by someone they know or are related to.

By reporting those who abuse and identifying those who are being abused, help and counseling can enable the child victim to be able to deal with the effect of the abuse and are less likely to become abusers themselves. That is why it is so important to report suspected abuse or neglect as early as possible.

Most children who are abused will not report the abuse. Many times the abuser is a close family member or friend. Most times the child is threatened or pressured not to tell anyone of the ongoing abuse. Children need to be encouraged to tell a TRUSTED relative or friend if someone makes them feel uncomfortable or acts in an inappropriate way towards them.

Child abuse happens in families of every race, culture and income level. Sometimes loving parents can become frustrated and overreact. Unintentional harm is abuse if the injury is due to a punishment.

SOME WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE:

Unexplained or suspicious bruises, burns, fractures or marks.

Explanation of injuries that make no sense

Disturbed sleep

Pain during urination or during bowel movements

Unusual knowledge of body parts

Acting out sexually with toys or other children

Fear of certain people or places

Pain while walking or sitting

Malnourished

Unusual flinching when approached

Withdrawn, lack of energy or interest, poor school attendance, failing grades

Many people in many different professions are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse such as teachers, law enforcement, mental health professionals, medical professionals, etc. but It is the moral obligation of everyone to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect. We ask that instead of a Child Abuse Awareness month in Brown County we all practice Daily Child Abuse Awareness. I am asking everyone in Brown County to become more aware and proactive when it comes to keeping our kids safe.

Kansas has a Protection Report Center where concerned citizens may report suspected child abuse anonymously. That number is 1-800-922-5330---If there is an immediate concern over the safety of a child please report immediately to your local law enforcement at once. IF YOU THINK YOU SHOULD

REPORT A CONCERN--PLEASE DO SO!! Law enforcement would much rather

investigate a case that does not meet the criteria of child abuse than to let an abused child continue to be victimized. All of the law enforcement agencies in Brown County take child abuse very seriously and will use extra precaution to keep children safe and protected. At any time the immediate safety of a child is in question, dial 911 immediately.

A big THANK YOU to all the agencies that work together in Brown County that

take an active role in child safety. We are very fortunate to have a dedicated group of caring individuals who work closely together for the sake of our children.

Remember: THERE'S NO EXCUSE, FOR CHILD ABUSE!

Many Signals Communications