

Better Futures

SPRING 2019 PUBLICATION OF



casa de los niños



Why is Child Abuse Prevention Month Important?

National Child Abuse Prevention Month recognizes the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect and promotes the social and emotional well-being of children and families. During the month of April and throughout the year, communities are encouraged to

increase awareness and provide education and support to families through resources and strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect. Unfortunately, there are still terrible cases of abuse happening, and they get wide-spread media coverage.

This is not to say that those stories should not be covered – they should. Not only to recognize the suffering that has occurred, but to uncover systemic problems that offer opportunities for improvement. **But, it is crucial for us all to recognize that – by far – the most common problem is neglect rather than abuse.** And most parents don't make a conscious choice to neglect their child. It can be a result of

inadequate housing, not enough food, lack of medical or dental care... and all of these things add stress to a family's life. And stress often translates directly to a parent being unable to demonstrate affection or nurturing behavior toward their children. The answer in these neglectful situations

“...the most common problem is neglect rather than abuse.”

is not to remove the child from their home (unless there are clear safety or health concerns), but the answer is to help the whole family. Casa de los Niños helps thousands of kids every year in their own homes and with their parents, to give whole families resources and skills to be safe and healthy together.



Message from Susie Huhn, CEO



April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is a time to come together and collectively look at the opportunities we have every day to help create the kind of community we want to live in. We also recognize that when all children don't have equal opportunity for healthy growth and development, we put our future as a society at risk.

This past year we are excited to be doing our part in preventing child abuse through expansion of our Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting program that allows us to serve an additional 100 families in Pima County. Home visiting has long been recognized as a great tool to ensure all families have the skills and resources they need to create a nurturing home and to raise healthy children.

Later this spring, we will open our doors to the Kelly Early Education Center. This center will be one of two high quality early education centers in our zip code zone that serve low income families and accepting DES Child Care Subsidy. We want to increase the ability of all children to succeed and improve school readiness at Kindergarten no matter where they live.

We always aim to keep doing better, because a focus on innovative and needed services lays the foundation for children's growth and development that reduces the later possibility of more serious problems from occurring. Our vision is a community in which no child is ever abused or neglected, and we believe that with help from the public, policy-makers, and partners, this vision can be made a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susie Huhn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature, the name "Susie Huhn" is printed in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

Susie Huhn

What is Child Abuse?

Any intentional harm or mistreatment to a child under 18 years old is considered child abuse. Child abuse takes many forms, which often occur at the same time.

PHYSICAL ABUSE Physical child abuse occurs when a child is purposely physically injured or put at risk of harm by another person.

SEXUAL ABUSE Sexual child abuse is any sexual activity with a child, such as fondling, oral-genital contact, intercourse, exploitation or exposure to child pornography.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE Emotional child abuse means injuring a child's self-esteem or emotional well-being. It includes verbal and emotional assault — such as continually belittling or berating a child — as well as isolating, ignoring or rejecting a child.

MEDICAL ABUSE Medical child abuse occurs when someone gives false information about illness in a child that requires medical attention, putting the child at risk of injury and unnecessary medical care.

NEGLECT Child neglect is failure to provide adequate food, shelter, affection, supervision, education, or dental or medical care. This is by far the most common situation.

In many cases, child abuse is done by someone the child knows and trusts — often a parent or other relative. If you suspect child abuse, report the abuse to the proper authorities.



When Does Trauma Happen, and What Are Its Effects?

Trauma is an emotional response that happens after a person experiences one or more stressful or scary events. Traumatic stress occurs when that trauma leads to harmful effects on physical and emotional health and well-being. The stressful or scary events can be real or perceived (felt to be real). Trauma may affect the person who experienced the event or someone else who cares about that person. Trauma in the lives of children and youth involved with child welfare often results from the following:

- Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Chaotic and unpredictable parenting
- Parents with mental health, physical health, or substance abuse challenges
- Seeing or being around violence in the home or community
- Separation from or loss of a parent, caregiver, and/or other important relationships
- Placement in foster care and multiple changes in foster homes

These experiences can have negative effects on how children and youth develop physically, how they feel, how they learn, and how they relate to others. Sometimes, the symptoms of trauma may not appear right away but show up later, such as during adolescence.

Managing Stress with Your Child

Everyone has stress, whether it's having a bad day at work, car trouble, or simply too many things to do. However, too much stress can make it hard to parent effectively. After a while, your children may show signs of being stressed out too!

SOME SIGNS THAT YOU ARE STRESSED INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Feeling angry or irritable a lot of the time
- Feeling hopeless
- Having trouble making decisions
- Crying easily
- Worrying all the time
- Arguing with friends or your partner
 - Overeating or not eating enough
 - Being unable to sleep or wanting to sleep all the time

A build-up of stress also can contribute to health problems, including allergies, a sore neck or back, headaches, upset stomach, and high blood pressure.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

It is important to learn how to manage your stress—for your own sake and for your children. The following suggestions may help:

- **Identify what's making you stressed.** Everyone's stressors are different. Yours might be related to money, work, your surroundings (traffic, crime), your partner, your children's behavior, or health issues.
- **Accept what you cannot change.** Ask yourself, "Can I do anything about it?" If the answer is "no," try to focus on something else. If there is something you can do (look for a new job, for example), break it into smaller steps so it doesn't feel overwhelming.
- Look back at previous times when you have overcome challenges.
Think "This too shall pass."
- **Relax!** Try deep breathing, meditation, yoga, or listening to music. Take 30 minutes to play a board game and laugh with your kids.
- **Take care of your health.** Getting enough sleep can make a big difference in your stress level. So can eating healthy foods and getting some exercise.
- **Take time for yourself.** Take a bath, read a book, or pick up a hobby. When you can, hire a babysitter (or trade time with a friend or neighbor) and get out for a few hours.
- **Develop a support network.** Don't be afraid to ask for help. Older children can set the table. Your spouse or partner could take over bedtime a few nights a week. Friends might pick up the kids from school to give you a break.

Ways You Can Help During Child Abuse Prevention Month

Help a parent to alleviate the stress that can lead to neglect or abuse by making a gift of some basic necessities:



Parents never want to see their children go hungry. You can help alleviate this stress for a parent by donating a **\$25 gift card for groceries** to Fry's or Safeway.



Help a first-time mom with a **new car seat** so that she can safely transport her baby to and from appointments.



It is important for families to strengthen their bonds with one another by encouraging them to read together and play board games – **donate a new book or game.**



A diary can allow a parent or a young adult to express their thoughts and is a reminder of the importance to make time for themselves each day.



Children outgrow their **backpacks and school uniforms**; help a family by providing a teen or tween with a full-size backpack and gift card to buy a school uniform that fits (from Target or Walmart).

These donations can be dropped off at the Davis Family Center at 1120 N. 5th Avenue.

For more information, contact Mikaela Ross at mross@casadelosninos.org or call 520-624-5600 ext. 10207.

“You are your child’s best advocate. Trust your feelings, be confident, and take action.”

“Being a parent is part natural and part learned.”



Tax Credit Changes: We’re now a **Qualified Charitable Organization**

In calendar year 2019, Casa de los Niños is a **Qualified Charitable Organization** rather than a Qualified Foster Care Organization.

The criteria for an organization to qualify for the foster care credit is that at least 50% of the organization’s budget must be applied to kids directly in the foster care system.

Casa de los Niños continues to serve hundreds of kids in the foster care system and in our own foster care homes. **We help thousands more children in their own homes and therapeutic settings**, working hard to keep kids out of the foster care system!

When you make a gift to Casa de los Niños in 2019, your gift can qualify for the Charitable Organization Tax Credit.

Thank you!



Staff Perspective **Mary Jeanne Chavez**

IN-HOME SERVICES PROGRAM SUPERVISOR

I joined the organization in August of 2017, and I have been working over a decade in the child welfare field, previously focusing on kinship, foster, adoptive and group homes caring for foster children. I am a native Tucsonan and attended the University of Arizona. As I reflect on April Child Abuse Prevention Month, I am forever reminded that the single most powerful influence in a child's life is that of their caregiver, biological parent, family member or other caregiver. I saw this in the many adoptive families I had the honor of helping to support over the years, helping to minimize the disruptions of a child with tough behaviors that challenged their caregiver's abilities... the acceptance or rejection of the child makes all the difference. In my current program, In-Home Services, my staff and I have the unique opportunity of helping families who are at risk of removal. It has been my experience that all parents love their children and want the best for them; it is never their intent to harm their child. However at times, the families face challenges that overwhelm their abilities – loss of job, housing instability, mental health struggles, substance use disorders and past trauma. My professional experience has led me to my mission now focused on helping caregivers manage the challenges in their lives, so that they can then provide a positive healing influence in their relationship to the children in their care.



Behavioral Health Services of Casa de los Niños

Do you have a child or young adult in your life who needs someone to talk to?

We have therapists with multiple specializations, including:

- 0-5
- Autism
- Special needs
- Transitioning youth
- Depression/anxiety
- Victims of domestic and/or family violence
- Justice-involved youth

We help kids and families to work through emotional and behavioral challenges, the effects of trauma, victims of violence...we are here to help!

For more information on how to access services, call 520-624-5600.

THE MISSION of Casa de los Niños is to promote **CHILD WELL-BEING** and **FAMILY STABILITY** in our community.

the.
voice
for change
advocacy
children



casa de los niños

CHANGING LIVES FOR GENERATIONS

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Tucson, AZ 85705

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520.624.5600

Parent Education Classes

Casa de los Niños has a wide array of Parent Education classes for Child Abuse Prevention Month. Come learn positive ways to manage behavioral challenges or communication techniques to have those difficult conversations with your teen. **All classes are FREE and open to the community.**

To register for a class, please contact Argelia Haynes at 520-624-9290 ext. 10309 or by email ahaynes@casadelosninos.org



Tue, April 2	3:30 – 5:30 PM	Communicating with Respect	VL*
Tue, April 2	5:30 – 7:30 PM	Communicating with Respect ^{ESPAÑOL}	CN4*
Wed, April 3	10 AM – Noon	Ways to Enhance Positive Brain Development	CN4*
Mon, April 8	10 AM – Noon	Ages and Stages of Growth for Infant and Toddlers	CN4*
Tue, April 9	3:30 – 5:30 PM	Building Self-Worth	VL*
Tue, April 9	5:30 – 7:30 PM	Building Self-Worth ^{ESPAÑOL}	VL*
Wed, April 10	10 AM – Noon	Communicating with Respect	CN4*
Fri, April 12	10 AM – Noon	Praising Children and Their Behavior	CN5*
Mon, April 15	10 AM – Noon	Positive Ways to Deal with Stress and Anger	CN4*
Wed, April 17	10 AM – Noon	Understanding Feelings	CN4*
Fri, April 19	10 AM – Noon	Developing Family Morals, Values and Rules	CN4*
Wed, April 24	10 AM – Noon	Praising Children and Their Behavior	CN4*
Fri, April 26	3 PM – 5:00 PM	Alternatives to Spanking	CN4*

*VL Valencia Library 202 W. Valencia Rd Tucson, AZ 85706
 *CN4 Casa de los Niños 1101 N. 4th Ave Tucson, AZ 85705
 *CN5 Casa de los Niños 1120 N. 5th Ave Tucson, AZ 85705