CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION— TALKING POINTS

» Critical brain development happens before age five. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) like child abuse and neglect often have lifetime consequences for a child. By making a commitment to strengthen families during the years from birth - five, we help children during a critical period in their development.

» Programs and strategies like home visiting, parent education, mutual self-help support, mental health services, respite care, expanding the availability of affordable child care, and substance abuse treatment all play a role in strengthening families.

» Strengthening families is the best investment the state and communities can make for the future. Every one dollar Kansas invests on the front end, saves $7 in services on the back end. (High/Scope Perry Pre-School Project)

» By ensuring that parents have the knowledge, skills and resources they need to care for their children, we can strengthen families and the communities they live in.

» All children deserve great childhoods
  o Children who are raised in loving and supportive environments are more likely to grow up and help create secure, healthy communities and be more productive, prosperous workers.
  o Children who are raised in stable families do better academically, are shown to be more financially successful and contribute more to society.

» We all have a role to play in making sure that our community is the best place for children and families to thrive
  o There are simple actions each of us can take every day to help reduce family isolation and stress, which are two of the major risk factors of child abuse and neglect.
  o Such actions include making yourself known to new neighbors and families, volunteering your time at pre- or post-school programs, or providing time for parents to have an occasional break from the rigors of parenthood.

» Great childhoods, and healthy, productive futures, are undermined by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
  o ACEs include things like child abuse (including physical, sexual, and emotional), neglect, parental stress, divorce, parental unemployment, parental mental illness or addiction.
  o Greater than one in four people have experienced at least one ACE, and one in eight have experienced at least four or more ACEs during their childhood. The greater number of ACEs increases the risk of long term adverse consequences.
Reducing ACEs leads to positive long-term outcomes for children and communities including lowering risk for serious health complications and helping children grow into more prosperous and productive adults.

Implementing effective policies and strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect can save taxpayers $80 billion annually. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

WHAT WORKS IN THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

- Prevention strategies are most effective when collaboration occurs between public and private agencies. (US Dept. of Health and Human Services)
- When families are supported, children are less likely to be at risk for child maltreatment and more likely to grow up happy and healthy. (PCAA)
- Children do well when their parents do well. Supporting families and ensuring parents have the knowledge, skills and resources they need are effective ways to protect children from the risk of child abuse and neglect (PCAA)
- Programs that work increase protective factors of families and safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments. These are conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families (US Dept. of Health and Human Services)
  - Strengthening parental resilience to stress
  - Building social connections
  - Enhancing knowledge of parenting and of child development
  - Concrete support in times of need
  - Promoting nurturing and parent-child attachment
- Programs and strategies like quality early education, home visiting, parent education, and mental health services, all play a role in strengthening families.

EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT WORK ARE:

- Early home visitation programs such as Healthy Families, Parents As Teachers and Early Head Start
- Hospital-based Shaken Baby Syndrome prevention programs such as the Period of PURPLE Crying
- Quality child care and early education
- Services and centers providing family support such as parent education and parent support groups
- Media and public education campaigns
- Specialized services for families involved with substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues
- Efforts to strengthen supportive neighborhoods and neighbors such as the work of the Wichita Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention
Pinwheels for Prevention is the Prevent Child Abuse America campaign that is based around the message that all children should be raised in healthy, nurturing homes, free from abuse and neglect. The pinwheel represents the need to prioritize child abuse prevention right from the start.

Kansas is celebrating 40 years of child abuse prevention. In 1976, the national organization suggested state’s should be represented by state chapters. Kansas became the first state to have a chapter.