

Every child deserves to feel safe, wanted and loved.



child parent institute

"THANK YOU" TO OUR YEAR-ROUND  
COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS!



LOOK INSIDE TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN

# Prevent Child Abuse - Sonoma County



SPECIAL PROMOTIONAL SECTION | APRIL 2015

PRODUCED IN COLLABORATION WITH CHILD PARENT INSTITUTE, FIRST 5,  
SONOMA COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND NORTH BAY BUSINESS JOURNAL



# When Home Isn't Safe – Build Wide Circle of Support



Jerry Dunn, Director  
Sonoma County Human Services  
Department

**Imagine, through a child's eyes,** what life is like when home isn't a safe place. Where you're not sure which adults you can trust. Where your needs aren't met for safety, food, shelter, educational stability or medical care. Even your parents don't know where to find help for your family.

**You'd want to protect that child. You'd want that child to be safe and secure.**

By taking action, you play a vital role in preventing neglect or abuse, in keeping children healthy, nourished and secure. As individuals in community, we are members of a wide circle with children at the center that embraces family members, local groups, child welfare professionals, neighbors and friends.

The Sonoma County Human Services Department's Family, Youth and Children's Services FY&C is a key member of that circle of support. We work with local partners to develop safe, stable environments for children, and support systems and community resources for struggling families. We strive to keep children in their homes when it's safe to do so. I'm proud that our work leads to better lives.

In 2014, FY&C investigated more than 1400 reports. More than half concerned neglect — families struggling because the adults needed help in meeting children's basic needs. We provided support and resources for the health of the whole family, while focusing on the child's welfare.

By making a circle of support, we make

home safer for our youngest neighbors. Read on about actions you can take, including:

**Learn to spot abuse signs, and call our 24-hour-hotline,** (707) 565-4304 or (800) 870-7064.

**Support local families in any way you can** — offer to child care while the parent takes a break, or suggest community resources that can meet their needs.

**Make a charitable donation** to groups such as The Children's Trust Fund (see *spotlight page 8*) or the Valley of the Moon Foundation, (707) 565-8380.

**Give a child a home** — become a temporary foster parent, or enrich your life by adopting. I adopted a child, and cannot imagine my life without him. Find out how at (707)-565-4274, or [sonomafostercare.org](http://sonomafostercare.org).

## With Knowledge, Comes Hope



Robin Bowen  
Executive Director  
Child Parent Institute

Several years ago, science handed us proof of something critically important to our work in fighting child abuse: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) cast a long, dark shadow across the entire lifespan. What are these dangerous ACEs? The first major study on ACEs identified 10 traumatic events for children and adolescents:

- Physical, sexual or verbal abuse.
- Physical or emotional neglect.
- A family member who is:
  - depressed or diagnosed with other mental illness;
  - addicted to alcohol or another substance;
  - in prison.
- Witnessing a mother being abused.
- Losing a parent to separation, divorce or other reason.

ACEs are causally linked to serious health problems later in life and even premature death. The more ACEs a person has, the more likely they are to suffer from a serious disease and have a shorter life expectancy — up to 20 years shorter.

More recently, science has been able to observe brain development and has seen that ACEs and other forms of trauma and “toxic stress” in childhood actually cause changes in brain structures. These changes, in turn, can lower the individual's ability to learn, have healthy relationships, and be productive and happy.

According to recent data, 1 in 5 children in Sonoma County have 2 or more ACEs.

**But there is hope.**

Science also confirms that treatment and resilience can reverse the effects of

ACEs. Resilience is built through social connections, concrete help in times of need, and through practicing mindful self-care. Resilience can be developed at any point along one's lifespan.

Scientists also show us how to prevent ACEs: help parents be better parents and treat children who experience ACEs as early as possible.

Prevent Child Abuse-Sonoma County believes this is the year to raise awareness about ACEs and deliver the message of hope that resilience trumps ACEs. Armed with the knowledge about ACEs, how to build resilience, and how to prevent future ACEs, we can move the needle on ACEs and reduce their significant personal and community costs. Please join us in this effort.

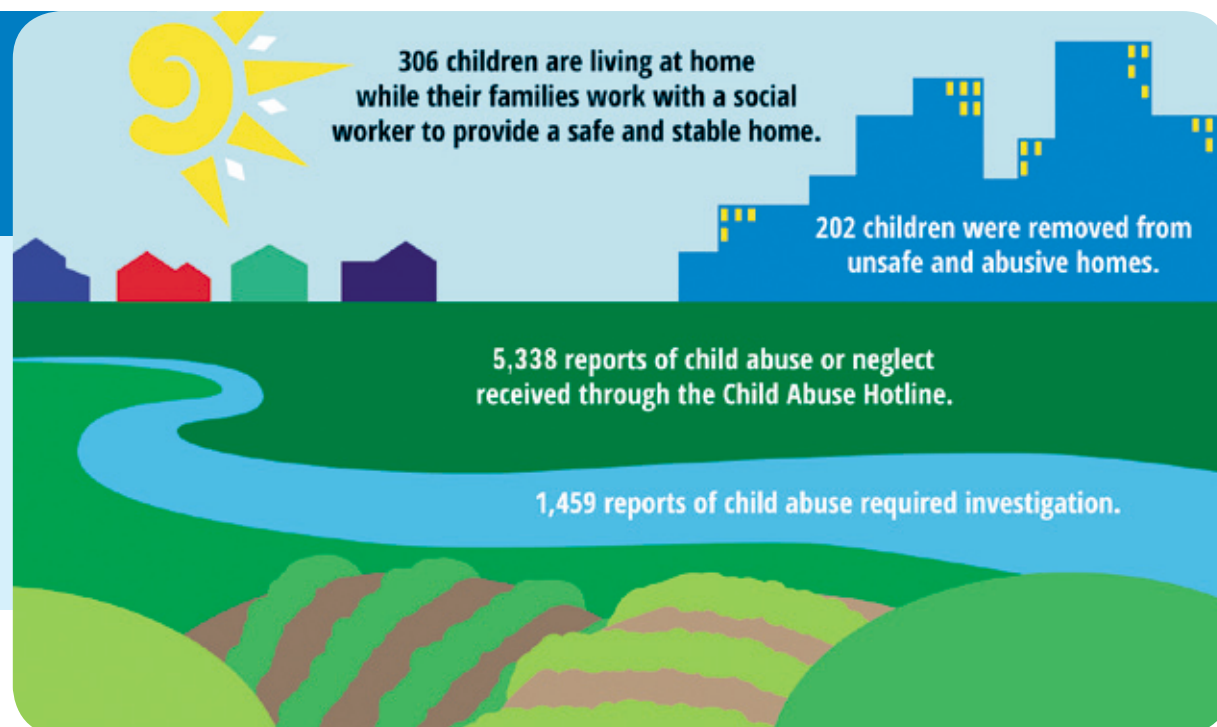


# Prevent Child Abuse-Sonoma County

## ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

### A Picture of Child Abuse in Sonoma County

All reports of child abuse are received by Sonoma County Child Protective Services. Social workers are available 24 hours a day to provide risk assessment and support to callers who are reporting suspected child abuse and to make immediate in-person response if necessary. If a child's safety cannot be assured, social workers coordinate with Law Enforcement to have the child(ren) removed from the home and placed, ideally with siblings, in a safe relative home or in foster care.

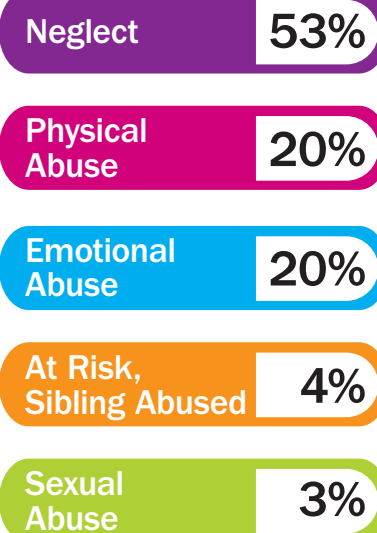


### Today in Sonoma County, there are:

- **797** active child welfare cases
- **491** children in foster care living with a safe relative, in a foster home or a group home
  - **131** children living in safe relative/extended family homes
  - **185** children living in licensed foster homes
  - **59** children living in group homes
  - **35** young adults living in transitional housing
  - **23** children temporarily at Valley of the Moon Children's Home
  - **58** children in other types of placements including guardianship homes, tribally-approved homes, court-designated homes, etc.
- **63%** foster children with siblings are living with at least one sibling
- **47%** of parents with an Emergency Response investigation had an active substance abuse problem

### Types of Child Abuse Allegations

Child abuse allegations fall into 5 general categories: *physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and at-risk (sibling abused).*



\* Data reflect point in time caseload data as reported on February 22, 2015. For more information, contact Katie Greaves at 565-4261.



# What Are ACEs and What Can Employers Do?

Adapted with permission from Jane Stevens Founder and Editor of ACEsTooHigh.com and ACEsConnection.com

**Employee absenteeism due to poor health costs US businesses a total of \$84 billion each year.** Absenteeism related to workers with a history of chronic health conditions results in lost productivity ranging in costs from \$160 million among agricultural workers to \$24.2 billion among professionals (Gallup, 2013). To get to the root of these costly health conditions, employers need to look back much earlier than they might think.

**A profound link has been discovered between childhood trauma and later health and well-being.** Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, are traumatic experiences that harm children’s developing brains so profoundly that the effects are life-long. Californians who have experienced 4 or more ACEs are nearly twice as likely to have asthma, and 2.4 times as likely to have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease than people with 0 ACEs. They are five times more likely to be depressed and four times more likely to develop Alzheimer’s. Those with 4 or more ACEs are approximately three times more likely to smoke, binge drink and engage in risky sexual behavior.

But those aren’t your employees? Yes, they are. In Sonoma and Napa counties 64.5% of residents have at least one ACE, 22% have 4 or more.

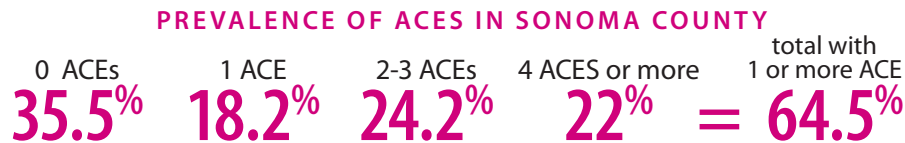
The term “ACEs” comes from a groundbreaking public health study, called the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente’s Health Appraisal Clinic in San Diego from 1995-97. More than 17,000 Kaiser members — most of them middle- or upper-middle class, and college-educated, and all with jobs — participated in a comprehensive health examination. They were asked detailed questions about their childhood experience of abuse, neglect, and family dysfunction.

The ACE Study researchers measured 10 ACEs:

- 1-3. Physical, sexual and verbal abuse.
- 4-5. Physical and emotional neglect.
- 6-8. Having a family member who was:
  - depressed or diagnosed with other mental illness;
  - addicted to alcohol or another substance;
  - in prison.
- 9. Witnessing a mother being abused.
- 10. Losing a parent to separation, divorce or other reason.

People in the study were given an ACE score of 0 to 10, based on their experiences. Each type of trauma counts as one ACE no matter how many times it occurs.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



## What Happened to You as a Child?

### Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Screening Tool

Place a check next to each that apply. Add check boxes up at the end to determine your ACE score.

Prior to your 18th birthday:

- ☐ 1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
- ☐ 2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
- ☐ 3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
- ☐ 4. Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
- ☐ 5. Did you often or very often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
- ☐ 6. Was a biological parent ever lost to you through divorce, abandonment, or other reason ?
- ☐ 7. Was your mother or stepmother: Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
- ☐ 8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?
- ☐ 9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
- ☐ 10. Did a household member go to prison?

Now add up your check boxes: \_\_\_\_\_

This is your ACE Score.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

**What did we learn from the ACE Study?** Findings from the ACE Study are astounding:

- **ACEs are common.** Nearly two-thirds (64%) of adults have at least one.
- **ACEs don't often occur alone;** 87% of those who have one ACE have two or more.
- **ACEs lead to the adult onset of chronic disease,** such as cancer and heart disease; to risky health behaviors, such as drug and alcohol abuse; to depression and other mental illness; and to work issues, such as absenteeism and reduced productivity.
- **More ACEs mean a greater risk** of medical, mental, and social problems as an adult. People with an ACE score of 6 or higher are at risk of a lifespan shortened by 20 years.

**What does chronic adversity do to children?** The medical, mental, and social problems experienced by adults with high ACE scores are rooted in the body's response to toxic stress. Brain science shows that, in the absence of protective factors, toxic stress damages children's developing brains. Stress is the body's normal response to challenging events or environments. Positive stress—a baby's momentary hunger, the first day of school—is part of growing up. Parents or caregivers help children prepare for and learn how to handle brief positive stress. Even more intense, but isolated, types of stress, such as stumbling across a bear in the woods, can be overcome with time and support.

Too much stress — toxic stress — occurs when stress is prolonged. Having a raging father come home from the bar every night, for example, or living for months or years with a severely depressed and neglectful mother. Then a child's brain and body will produce an overload of stress hormones — such as cortisol and adrenaline — that harm the function and structure of the brain. This can be particularly devastating in very young children, whose brains should attain 80% of adult size by age three.

Children with toxic stress respond to the world as a place of constant danger. With their brains overloaded with stress hormones, they can't focus on learning. They fall behind in school, fail to develop healthy relationships with peers, or create problems with teachers and principals because they are unable to trust adults. As they grow up, they often find solace in food, alcohol or drugs, risky sex, and/or work and over-achievement. Consciously or unconsciously, they see these coping mechanisms as solutions, ways to escape from depression, anxiety, anger, fear and shame.

**What can employers do?**  
**Throughout California, communities are recognizing the need to pull together across sectors to:**

- **Increase awareness about ACEs and their impact on health and wellness**
- **Support efforts to screen for ACEs and to intervene early to prevent and lessen the impact**
- **Increase access to services to mitigate ACEs, through access to health care and workplace programs**

The good news is that the brain and the body can heal. If the toxic stress stops and is replaced by practices that build resilience, the brain can slowly undo many of the stress-induced changes.

Well-documented research shows that adults' brains and bodies become healthier through mindfulness practices, exercise, good nutrition, adequate sleep, and healthy social interactions.

Children need the support of positive, caring parents or caregivers to build resilience. Evidence-based interventions, such as Nurse-Family Partnership and Triple P—Positive Parenting Program, can prevent ACEs for children and mitigate ACEs for their parents. Both programs are available in Sonoma County, call 2-1-1 for referrals, or visit [www.triplep-parenting.net](http://www.triplep-parenting.net)

For more information about ACEs and how you can help, visit [ACEsTooHigh.com](http://ACEsTooHigh.com) and [ACEsConnection.com](http://ACEsConnection.com).

## Resilience **Trumps** ACEs!

A high number of adverse childhood experiences in your past does not predetermine your future. The following survey looks at the strengths you have developed through your life, that sustain you in adversity. These strengths are protective factors that help you return to health and hopefulness after bad things happen. These are also things you can encourage to help your children develop resilience.

### Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS)

by Mary Mackrain

Take time to reflect and complete each item on the survey below.

There are no right answers. Once you have finished, reflect on your strengths and then start small and plan for one or two things that you feel are important to improve.

For each question below answer:

**Yes / Sometimes / Not yet**

#### Relationships

1. I have good friends who support me.
2. I have a mentor or someone who shows me the way.
3. I provide support to others.
4. I am empathetic to others.
5. I trust my close friends.

#### Internal Beliefs

1. My role as a caregiver is important.
2. I have personal strengths.
3. I am creative.
4. I have strong beliefs.
5. I am hopeful about the future.
6. I am lovable.

#### Initiative

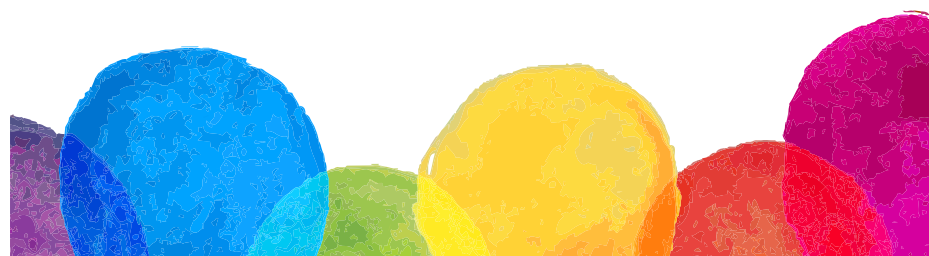
1. I communicate effectively with those around me.
2. I try many different ways to solve a problem.
3. I have a hobby that I engage in.
4. I seek out new knowledge.
5. I am open to new ideas.
6. I laugh often.
7. I am able to say no.
8. I can ask for help.

#### Self-Control

1. I express my emotions.
2. I set limits for myself.
3. I am flexible.
4. I can calm myself down.

For engaging and practical ideas on how to strengthen your protective factors, look for a booklet called *Building your Bounce: Simple Strategies for a Resilient You* at

[www.centerforresilientchildren.org](http://www.centerforresilientchildren.org)







***"I believe that the most effective way to protect children is when their whole community is engaged in ensuring their safety and supporting their well-being."***

Nick Honey, Division Director  
Family, Youth and Children  
Division

# Family, Youth and Children's Services Engages Families and Communities

Ensuring the safety, stability and well-being of children and families are the goals of Sonoma County's Family, Youth, and Children's Services (FY&C), a division of the Human Services Department. Our mission is to form collaborative relationships that empower all community members to support the prevention of child abuse and neglect, toward a vision where 1) families and community members understand and embrace their shared responsibility to ensure that children are safe, and 2) that family members have the tools needed to keep children safe.

The study described in *Reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) by Building Community Capacity: A Summary of Washington Family Policy Council Research Findings* shows that successful child abuse prevention programs that do just that — empower communities to share responsibility for alleviating crises, improve services and build healthy environments for all families and children — have a positive impact in reducing multiple child and family problems, which decreases incidences of ACE (Hall et al, 2012).

FY&C's programs with community engagement and outreach as their main objective educate families and community partners about the goals of the child welfare system and how to navigate it. These programs include

the Mandated Reporter/Community Outreach Program, Team Decision Making (TDM), and Together to Engage, Act & Motivate (TEAM).

## **Mandated Reporter/Community Outreach Program**

Our Community Outreach Child Abuse Prevention Specialist in the Mandated Reporter/Community Outreach Program strategically and proactively works with community partners to increase awareness about how to identify and report child abuse, while informing organizations about their roles in preventing abuse. Training demystifies what happens after receiving a report of suspected child abuse, how FY&C engages with families toward solutions, and how community involvement is part of the child welfare decision making process. To increase our outreach, we attend community events to offer information and support. (For details or to schedule a presentation, see the story on page 7.)

## **Team Decision Making and Together to Engage, Act, & Motivate Programs**

To promote a transparent partnership with the community, FY&C has social workers who facilitate meetings on behalf of children and families. Though they accomplish different tasks, the Team Decision Making and Together to

Engage, Act & Motivate meetings both empower families and communities to share the responsibility and accountability for child protection and well-being.

TDM meetings strive to reach, with the family and family's community, a consensus-based decision about the least-restrictive living arrangement possible for a child, with the goal of keeping the child safe. The high level of community and family participation helps build a wider network of safety for the child and support for the caregivers.

The TEAM meeting goal is to establish, with the family and youth, clear safety goals and behavioral objectives to ensure that children are not at risk of abuse or neglect. By acting on these goals and objectives, parents learn protective behaviors and can look for help from a natural support network, one that will assist the parent in protecting the child long after FY&C leaves the family's life.

**FY&C programs truly aim to empower, support and protect families and children — goals all of us can embrace as a community .**



# What is Prevent Child Abuse-Sonoma County?

Locally, Prevent Child Abuse-Sonoma County (PCA-SC) is authorized by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors under the authority of the Welfare and Institutions Code Section 18980, Chapter 12.5, Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council Act, which mandates the establishment of a council whose primary purpose is to coordinate the community's efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse. Since 2005, Child Parent Institute (CPI) has served as the lead in coordinating the countywide efforts of our local child abuse prevention council. PCA-SC provides a consistent forum for inter-agency cooperation and coordination in the prevention, detection, and treatment of child abuse cases.

## How does PCA-SC **support family strengthening organizations** in Sonoma County?

**EDUCATION:** Prevent Child Abuse-Sonoma County (PCA-SC) convenes meetings of the membership and the community to provide networking, education and professional trainings for those involved in child abuse prevention and intervention services. The topics are developed by the Steering Committee Members with community input. Continuing education units are given free of charge to those who attend the PCA-SC trainings.

**OUTREACH:** PCA-SC works to increase public awareness about issues relating to child abuse and neglect in the community. This includes: building a community that protects and promotes healthy families; raising community awareness and education to parents, professionals and community members through promoting social marketing campaigns around the prevention of child abuse and neglect; and championing the local "Blue Ribbon" child abuse prevention campaign each April.

## How does PCA-SC **provide leadership for child abuse prevention** in Sonoma County?

**ADVOCACY:** In order to help create results locally, communities are aware and therefore more involved in protecting children and strengthening families. Prevent Child Abuse-Sonoma County helps contribute to that outcome by coordinating the community's efforts around child abuse prevention, coordination and awareness. We advocate for policies that support families and protect children.

*Interested in becoming a member of our council or participating in our free trainings?*

Email Robin Bowen at [robinb@calparents.org](mailto:robinb@calparents.org)

## Community Training: Key to Child Neglect and Abuse Prevention

Professionals in our community who work with children are one level of protection and support for our youngest citizens. For all mandated reporters to fully understand how to keep children safe, education is key.

Family, Youth, and Children's Services and Child Parent Institute, with support from the Board of Supervisors, created the Mandated Reporter / Community Outreach Program to help our community partners identify and report suspected child abuse and neglect. Additionally, the training helps participants understand the tools and resources needed to prevent child maltreatment.

In 2014, this program provided nearly 100 presentations to

schools, law enforcement, clinics, hospitals and non-profits. **More than 1800 mandated reporters were trained, tripling the number from 2013.** FY&C also attended 13 community events, including wellness fairs, back-to-school nights and career days.

Offered in English or Spanish, the training teaches participants how to identify and report suspected child abuse and neglect. Presenters explain what happens after a report is made, describing the statewide, evidence-based tools and criteria FY&C uses to investigate and determine best next steps for each family. They describe FY&C's strategies to engage families and the community, who play an important

role in decision-making regarding plans for a child's safety and well-being. Mandated reporters are also informed of local child abuse prevention efforts and resources that are helpful to families in need.

The prevention of child maltreatment is a shared responsibility of all community partners and child welfare agencies. Through training, we hope to develop an integrated team of law enforcement, educators, faith-based organizations, family advocates, medical personnel, and other stakeholders who work together to keep children safe at home with their families.



**To schedule a training tailored to your group or organization's needs, contact Teresa Baldassari at FY&C, (707) 565-4325 or [tbaldassari@schsd.org](mailto:tbaldassari@schsd.org).**

**To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call (707) 565-4304 or (800) 870-7064.**



## Give a Gift — Change a Child's Life



### Protect Sonoma County's children from abuse

Your charitable donation to The Children's Fund is the best gift you can give our County's children. You support caring, experienced non-profits that offer vital abuse prevention, intervention and treatment programs and services.

*Don't let abuse or neglect keep kids from becoming strong, successful adults. Give generously.*

The Children's Fund is a special giving campaign by the Family, Youth and Children's Division. Beneficiary agencies are chosen based on Human Services Dept. recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.



Make your tax-deductible check to: The Children's Fund, Tax ID: 94-6000539  
Mail to: Sonoma County Tax Collector, P.O. Box 1539, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

*For more about The Children's Fund: Regina de Melo, FY&C, (707) 565-4346*



## Triple P—Positive Parenting Program

Gives parents the skills they need to:

- ✓ Build strong family relationships
- ✓ Manage misbehavior
- ✓ Prevent behavior problems

Triple P is available on a sliding scale in Sonoma County at:

**Child Parent Institute**

585-6108 x1218

**Jewish Family and Children's Services**

707-571-2048

**Petaluma People Services Center**

707-765-8488



**Support Sonoma County's  
only 24-hour emergency shelter  
for abandoned, abused or neglected children**

**Your charitable donations help fund:**

- needed dental care for children in emergency foster care
- education and employment training scholarships for former foster children

**Donate online: [www.vomchildrensfoundation.org](http://www.vomchildrensfoundation.org)**

The Valley of the Moon Children's Foundation is a private nonprofit organization established to provide supportive and educational services to abandoned, neglected, and abused children in Sonoma County. Federal Tax I.D.: 68-0343720.



*Building brighter futures for our  
children and families.*

### Does your child or teen need counseling?

No-cost counseling services for children ages 0-18, funded by Cal OES CHAT Program and Medi-Cal.

Call 707.284.1500 or email [intake@calparents.org](mailto:intake@calparents.org)





## Give a Child a Home

Opening your heart to adopt a child is an act of compassion, and a life-long gift of love to yourself. In Sonoma County, many wonderful foster children, from infants to teens, are ready to join a caring family, whether you're single, married or a same-sex couple.

As an adoptive parent, you have our support. The Family, Youth and Children's team will answer your questions, assist you through the adoption process and be there once your new family member comes home. They'll help you with the challenges of being a new parent, or caring for a child who may have faced neglect or abuse or has special medical or learning needs.

Adopt a child like 10-year-old Serena\* — a bright and inquisitive child, who likes hiking, biking, basketball and swimming. Serena has a learning disability and uses her iPad as a learning and communication tool. She prefers one-on-one time with adults and peers.

**Enrich your life by adopting a child.**

**Visit [sonomafostercare.org](http://sonomafostercare.org), or contact Danielle Brizzolara at FY&C, (707) 565-3268 or [dbrizzolara@schsd.org](mailto:dbrizzolara@schsd.org).**

\*For confidentiality, Serena's image, name and age have been changed.

# Open Your Heart and Home to a Child You Know

## **We know children heal and thrive while in foster care.**

We also know their chances of strengthening resiliency and feeling secure increase when they maintain connections in their community, including friends, school, church and extracurricular activities.

That's why Family, Youth & Children's Services encourages teachers, coaches, family friends and extended family members to become temporary foster parents for children they know and care for. Please read Karen and Roberto's story, and consider becoming a foster parent.

*Karen and Roberto recently became foster parents for their daughter Cynthia's best friend, Carolina. The children met in kindergarten, and Karen enjoyed watching the girls play and laugh as their friendship blossomed. Carolina often visited Karen's house after school and stayed overnight for slumber parties. Karen had met Carolina's hard-working parents, Hilda and Manuel. Karen knew that they appreciated her help with school transportation and keeping Carolina at her home if they were running late to pick her up.*

*One day after school, Cynthia came to the car alone, saying Carolina had been called to the office and hadn't come back to class. A few days later, a Family, Youth & Children's Services social worker called: there were safety issues in Carolina's home. Would Karen consider having the child stay with her family while in foster care?*

*Karen knew little about foster care, but she wanted to help the family during a tough time. The social worker suggested she and her husband come to a TEAM meeting at the FY&C offices, where everyone who cared about Carolina could have a voice in creating the best plan for her.*

*When the couple arrived for the meeting, they met Hilda and Manuel in the lobby. Hilda was happy and relieved to see Karen. She had been embarrassed to share her family's struggles and was relieved that Karen and Roberto wanted to help. Hilda said she felt so much better knowing Carolina might get to stay with a family she loved until they could bring her home again.*

*During the TEAM meeting, social workers, family members, Karen and Roberto shared what they felt might be the best next steps for the family. The couple learned that, because*

*they had a relationship with Carolina's family, they qualified as Non-Related Extended Family Members and didn't need to go through licensing or certification to become foster parents; that prior to Carolina moving in, FY&C would complete a background check and a social worker would visit their home; and that they'd receive reimbursement for food, clothing and things the child would need while with them.*

*Carolina moved in with Karen, Roberto and Cynthia. The girls were excited to share a room, and Carolina was happy to return to many of her stable routines. While she lived with her best friend's family, she visited frequently with her parents.*

*After about a year in foster care, the safety issues were resolved, and Carolina returned to her parents. The relationship between the families remained strong. Karen still offered childcare to help support the family.*

This is just one example of FY&C's successful reunification of families and children that happened because another family opened their heart and home. You too can make a difference in the life of a child and family by becoming a temporary foster parent for a child you know.

For information, visit [www.sonomafostercare.org](http://www.sonomafostercare.org), or contact Myrna Ramirez, (707) 565-4274, [mramirez@schsd.org](mailto:mramirez@schsd.org), about foster parenting. If you're thinking about adopting a child, contact Danielle Brizzolara, (707) 565-3268.

**51 children were adopted from foster care in 2014.**

**26 were over the age of 5.**



# HOW TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

**LOVE** Children thrive when they know they are loved and cared for. Look for little ways to give your children affection during the day. A hug, a smile, a pat on the back, a compliment – all of this says you notice and you care.

**LEARN** Take time to learn about positive parenting. You can take classes in the community and share your experiences with other parents. You can read books and get tips on-line. Look for ideas that work with your own family values.



**PASS IT ON** Other children and families benefit when you take time to share your positive attention and encouragement. You can make a difference in the life of a child.

**ADVOCATE** You can make your opinions known about inappropriate content in the media. You can encourage schools, churches, libraries to develop services to meet the needs of families.

**REPORT** If you suspect Child Abuse or Neglect do not hesitate to report it. This is often a good way for families to get the help and support they need. In Sonoma County the number to call is 707-565-4304.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SEE A STRUGGLING PARENT

We've all been there. Take your lovely, sweet child to the store and then you discover he is a tyrant in disguise. There are several strategies to deal with this situation and these strategies are something we can learn along the way. But, what do you do when it's another parent and it looks like things are getting out of control?



### How can you help?

- 1. Be empathetic.** Everyone has a bad day now and then. We are often forced to shop sometime in between our work hours and home hours and there is little allowance for snacks or naps (for us or the kids). This means no disapproving looks to either the parent or others in the vicinity. Perceived disapproval just makes a bad day worse.
- 2. Be realistic.** Children are not adults so don't expect them to act like one. Parents are human and not always on their best behavior.
- 3. Be encouraging.** Can you intervene by saying something positive to the parent? "It looks like you have your hands full at the end of the day, but you're dealing with it." Or, can you say something distracting to the child? "That's a pretty big dinosaur on your shirt. Is it a Tyrannosaurus?"
- 4. Be helpful.** Stores are designed to be overstimulating with impulse items at eye level for adults and children so it isn't unusual to have a whiney kid or a stressed adult. Say something sympathetic. "It's so hard to shop when kids are tired and hungry at the end of the day." "I always have a hard time staying calm at the end of the day."
- 5. Be brave.** If you think the child is in danger, say something directly. "Your child is standing in the cart and it could fall over and injure him." If necessary call the police immediately. (For example, if the parent is noticeably intoxicated, don't let them put the child in the car and drive away without reporting this to the police.)



*Building brighter futures for our children and families.*

### Parenting Support Services

Parenting Classes  
Co-parenting Workshops  
In Home Parent Support  
Autism Support

Individual Consultations  
Supervised Visits  
Resource Assistance  
Community Classes

For more information or to sign up for classes: [www.calparents.org](http://www.calparents.org) or 707.585.6108





## Five steps to positive parenting



With so much conflicting information about parenting, how do you know what's best and what works? Triple P - Positive Parenting Program has 30 years' research to back it up. These are the five proven steps to a better family life.

### 1. Create a safe, interesting environment

Children need to play, explore and investigate their world, so remove potential dangers from your home, teach basic safety and provide lots of interesting things to keep kids busy.

### 2. Have a positive learning environment

When your child comes to you for help or to talk, they're ready to learn. Give them positive attention, even if only for a minute or so.

### 3. Use assertive discipline

Children do best in a predictable, stable environment, so set clear rules and boundaries and follow through with appropriate consequences. Encourage behavior you like with lots of praise.

### 4. Have realistic expectations

Nobody's perfect - children or adults - so don't expect your child to do more than they're capable of. And remember, *all* parents struggle from time to time.

### 5. Take care of yourself as a parent

It's all about balance. You've got to look after your own needs too, so make sure you're getting some support, time with friends, fun and maybe even a little time to yourself!

Find out more:  
[www.triplep-staypositive.net](http://www.triplep-staypositive.net)



WEAR  
**BLUE**  
RIBBON  
FOR THE  
**LOVE** OF A  
A CHILD



PARTNERS IN PREVENTION

We are a group of individuals united by the benefits of increasing awareness of the effects of child abuse and neglect. We promote solutions and support prevention services within our communities.

We are a diverse group of people from all walks of life — business, government and civil society.

We are individuals that believe in protecting childhood for children today so they can fulfill their potential as adults tomorrow.

Find out more about child abuse prevention:  
[PartnersInPrevention.org](http://PartnersInPrevention.org)

Partners in Prevention is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



child parent institute  
[calparents.org](http://calparents.org)

## THE LAST WORD

### April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

and this insert has been made available to remind us that we all are responsible for keeping children safe. However, it's good to remember that many children are raised in loving and nurturing environments. Child raising is hard work. No one can be a "perfect" parent. We know a lot about what helps children grow into confident, responsible adults, but, still, a little bit of parenting is trial and error. It helps to keep a sense of humor.

One of my favorite analogies describing the job of parenting compares the job to that of teaching your child to drive. It is important for the car to stay on the road. The white lines and yellow and dotted lines are limits that are set about where the car can travel. Traffic signs and signals tell you whether is safe to stop, go or proceed with caution. Similarly, it is important to set consistent boundaries with your children — some, like the dotted lines, can be a little flexible. Others, like red lights, signify rules which are unacceptable to break. Your job as a parent is to teach your children the guidelines for life. We are here to help when the road gets bumpy.

During the month of April, Child Parent Institute will be offering FREE parenting workshops! To register for workshops please visit [www.calparents.org/classes](http://www.calparents.org/classes). If you are interested in hosting workshops at your school or business please contact Grace Harris at [graceh@calparents.org](mailto:graceh@calparents.org) or 707-585-6108 ext. 1103

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## Building brighter futures for our children and families.

*“our mission is to end child abuse and strengthen the health of children, parents, and families.”*

Child Parent Institute is a parent education and children’s mental health agency, serving families throughout Sonoma County since 1978. Our continuum of care includes children’s counseling services, parenting education and support, family resource assistance, support services for families with children on the autism spectrum, divorce education and support, a non-public school (New Directions) offering trauma informed educational services.

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