



theNewsletter

Preventing Child Abuse In Mendocino County

First Encounter: 9
CHILD ABUSE



Children's Action Committee Issue No. 9 – December 2013

Preventing Child Abuse in Mendocino County

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PHOTO CREDITS

Kary Fernández, Ukiah Daily Journal,
Mendocino Rugby Football Team, Raise &
Shine

PARTNERS



MADE WITH PRIDE IN UKIAH, CALIFORNIA



EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the first volume of Children's Action Committee, a monthly newsletter that compiles a brief report of our efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect in Mendocino County. I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to read and share the issue – the outpouring of encouragement from readers across the county has been inspiring.

I am thrilled and privilege at having the honor of sharing another thoughtful issue. Please consider supporting the Children's Action Committee by volunteering or donating at <http://www.mendocinokids.org/>.

Thanks for reading, enjoy!

Kary Fernández
Editor

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Family Fun: Developing Your Child

Parents want their children to succeed in life. Beyond happiness, this means making sure their children have a good education to be able to solve problems, and eventually a well-paying job to help them avoid the stresses of financial disadvantages. However, in all this dreaming for the future, what often goes unnoticed or unrealized is the importance of the first five years of their children's lives. How people treat their infants and toddlers can greatly increase or decrease those children's ability to succeed as adults.

While this all might sound a bit hard to swallow, let's look at some facts. Infants and children under 5 years old are physically growing faster than older kids, teenagers, or adults. It isn't just their legs or faces changing, it's their brain, muscles, and ability to coordinate their body and their emotional development, including confidence and risk-taking abilities.

Genetics are fate, but spending quality time with your children is something you can control and something that is important. Your child's environment influences your child's culture, such as their tastes, their habits, and even their aspirations. So being a positive influence and ex-

posing young children to a healthy lifestyle in terms of education, communication, and physical play can set the precedent for a healthy, happy adult.

But what are the secrets to helping your children succeed? The lack of mandatory parenting classes in schools, combined with smaller family units that often lack grandparents in the home, translate to many people raising children with little first-hand experience or early childhood education. This is why FIRST 5 Mendocino, in collaboration with First 5 California and other 58 First 5 county programs, exists: to help those who might be pressed for experience and resources ensure they are following best practices for the cognitive and physical development of their child.

Sponsored through FIRST 5 Mendocino, the parenting resource "Raise & Shine" offers a help line (707-462-1233) to answer questions about parenting or guide families to other existing resources. In addition, in January they will be offering a special, free positive parenting program ("Triple P") series in English and Spanish. These groups are designed to empower parents, while teaching them new skills to build confidence

and decrease behaviors challenges.

Although these groups often have the stigma of being for "bad" parents or children, they are really for the everyday parent. From learning to potty training techniques to teaching a bedtime routine, Triple P classes are great for anyone who wants to learn more about being a parent. It's a wonderful, powerful tool for the parenting tool kit.

A less formal way to understand children's cognitive development is "Read, Talk, Play, Everyday," a First 5 Sonoma program. This catchy phrase and accompanying web page promotes three categories with activities and tips for each. The following is from their website:

Reading helps children learn to talk, concentrate, listen, and think. Even for babies who don't understand a word you're saying! They focus on your voice, hear new and different words, and eventually can follow along with a story. Plus it is more special time with you.

Talking helps children learn to speak, listen, express their feelings, and read. Your baby learns language just by listening to you talk. Hearing your



words over and over again helps your baby learn their meaning. Before your baby can even speak, she will know several dozen words.

Playing helps children think, solve problems, move their bodies, share, get along with others, communicate, and build self-confidence. It is one of the most important things parents can do to help children grow up smart and healthy. Playtime also creates a secure, loving attachment with your baby.

Families that take the time to learn about parenting and spend time with their children, increase the chances

of their children succeeding in whatever they choose to do one day. Research supporting the long-lasting value of early-childhood education and developmental benefits should not be ignored - mostly because having fun with your children is pretty awesome.

So be awesome, be rad, and call Raise & Shine today with any parenting questions you might have. While you're at it, don't forget to read, talk, and play with your child every day, for your happiness and for their future success.

Sean Telles is an AmeriCorps VISTA serving with FIRST 5 Mendocino as a Social Entre-

preneur. You can email him for comments or suggestions at development@mendochildren.org.

“ “Raise & Shine” offers a help line (707-462-1233) ”

<http://www.kidsdata.org/>

In Mendocino County **4,284** children were physically abused last year. In 2012, **more than 3 million** substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in California were due to **physical abuse.**

First Encounter: CHILD ABUSE

On a dark Friday night last month a teenage boy knocked on my door. We were not expecting friends. Halloween was a distant memory. He was not trick or treating for candy and he was not wearing a costume. He was frightened, shaking, crying, and could barely speak. It was a horrifying experience! I will never forget the look in his eyes. He had bruises, a swollen eye and red marks around his neck and arms. Quickly he gathered himself and uttered "please call the cops; my dad was trying to choke me!" Honestly, I did not know what to say because it was my first

encounter with physical child abuse; I just reached for my phone and called 911.

For months, I have been attending child abuse prevention meetings, researching and understanding staggering statistics, but things change when you are face to face with a real world experience like this one. My mom would say "no es lo mismo llamar al diablo que verlo venir." It is not the same to call on the devil as it is to see him coming. Within three minutes, Ukiah Police arrived. They interrogated the 13 year-old about the injuries on his upper

body and neck.

They learned that the boy's father had become angry and aggressive. The boy was able to escape after his father pushed him into the glass door, causing it to break. The father was uncooperative with police. I remember the horror scene: the drunken father screaming, confronting officers and resisting arrest. The man was arrested on suspicion of child abuse, public intoxication, and resisting arrest. He was locked in the Mendocino County Jail and his bail was set at \$25,000.



First Encounter: CHILD ABUSE

Physical abuse is very tangible, visible, but how can we measure the emotional and psychological trauma this child has been experiencing during his lifetime? That moment was an epiphany; it was a wakeup call that changed statics and numbers into actual lives. In Mendocino County 4,284 children were physically abused last year. In 2012 more than 3 million substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in California were due to physical abuse.

There was a safe haven for that boy at our house and at our neighbor's house, where he spent the night with a school friend. He did not have to spend the night at Child Protective Services, but we cannot stop wondering what happens next.

Thankfully, in our county we have a number of organizations, services, and individuals who provide safe havens for children and families who are constrained by varying unfortunate and debilitating circumstances. For example, the Arbor on Main offers a youth empowerment program which affords disadvantaged youth the opportunity to become directly involved in their local community and government in order to advance their economic and social circumstances.

Additionally, the Mendocino County Youth Project (MCYP)'s transitional living program serves various populations including; homeless youth ages 18-21, emancipated minors ages 16-17, pregnant and parenting teens, as well as youth aging out of foster care. The program utilizes a youth development approach in order to better assist these adolescents in making a successful transition to adulthood.

Let's not forget Redwood Children Services (RCS), which has provided more than foster care services in our county. By offering transitional housing programs, counseling services and the new Redwood Children Crisis Center (RC3) (a new service provided by RCS which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist the community with de-escalation resources over the phone, as well as mental health assessment at local ERs) RC3 has collaborated with Early Intervention Support Services and other programs in our community. For more information please contact Chandra Gonzales at RCS at **1-855-838-0404 (for crisis hotline information)**.

I am truly grateful and excited about the countless organizations and volunteers who unite on a daily basis to prevent

child abuse, and to strengthen our prevention efforts in this county. These organizations have included, but are not limited to:

- Project Sanctuary • Child Protective Services Agency (CPSA) • Policy Council on Children and Youth (PCCY) • Redwood Children Services (RCS) • Children's Action Committee (CAC) • FIRST 5 Mendocino • Raise & Shine • Performing Arts and Cultural Education (SPACE) • Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) • Mendocino 4-H Program • Tapestry Family Services • 211 Mendocino County • Mendocino Youth Project (MYP) • Public Health/Teen Futures (AFLP) • Child Development Services • Mental Health

During this holiday season we will be spending valuable time with family and friends, delighting in the warm spirit of Christmas, Hanukah, and Kwanzaa. However, others who are less fortunate should also be included in our warm spirit of giving. We must take the time to reflect, support, donate and/or volunteer at these local safe havens which support our county throughout the year.



If you can't remember the last time you took your child to a sporting event, have no fear, you could be remembering it by next week. Mendocino County is full of free local sporting events, found in the Ukiah Daily Journal, which create the perfect atmosphere for family bonding and gender doesn't matter.

Why bother? Studies show spending leisure time with your children or grandchildren can lead to better performance in school, fewer behavior problems, and even improved self-worth for the parent or guardian.

Spending time with your children can also increase their social development and decrease the likelihood of your children giving in to peer pressure. In addition, studies show everyday activities, such as going to the park, are much more important in building family relationships than one-time extravagant outings like an expensive family vacation.

In today's world, where busy schedules often keep children and parents apart, or where

families blend and suddenly change home dynamics, an opportunity to spend time together in an everyday setting, like a ballgame, is especially important and powerful.

Parents.com offers other practical reasons to spend time with your children at sporting events, such as: giving your children the message, "You are important," by making time for them; building a relationship to provide them with self-respect and self-acceptance; helping them continue to identify with you; and making you a better parent through practice.

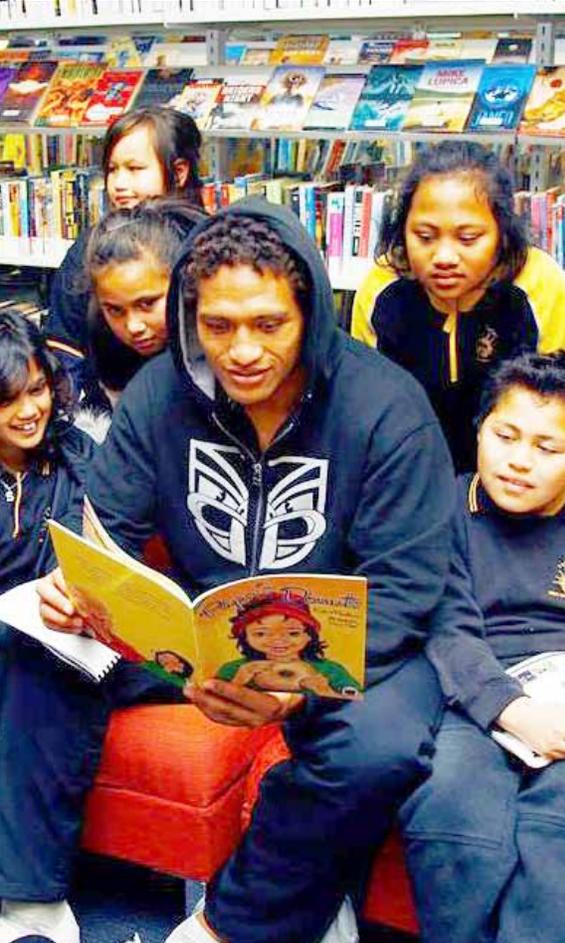
Taking a child to a local athletics competition might feel too easy to be important or significant. But remember, the simplest things are sometimes the most meaningful and unforgettable to your child. Your child loves you, trusts you, and believes in you more than you might notice day-to-day, so have the courage to accept that and enjoy some time together. Play ball!

[read more](#)

http://www.ukiahdailyjournal.com/ci_22825691/family-fun-bonding-over-local-sports

Come to the Ukiah Library with your kids to have your favorite rugby players read to them! There will also be a craft and a few songs!

**Sunday, December 8, 2013
1:00pm until 2:00pm
Ukiah Public Library, Ukiah, California 95482**



Holiday Events & Announcements

Festival of Lights at the Botanical Gardens

December 6th -- December 22 Children under the age of 15 are admitted FREE, adults are \$10

Holiday Party

December 18th, 3:30pm -- 5:30pm at The Arbor On Main

You are cordially invited to the match: Mendocino vs State Of Jefferson

Saturday, December 14, 2013 at 1:00pm

Senior Drop-In, Laytonville

December 17th, 11:30am Chair Yoga & 12:30pm Delicious Homemade Lunch

The Imagination Library of Mendocino County Announces The 4th Of...

Bee For Books

January 25th from 5:00pm to 7:00pm at The Boys and Girls Clubhouse

Play Group in Laytonville

Wednesdays 11:00am -- 1:00pm

Kids 5 and under are welcome!

Happy Holidays!!

MEMBERS OF CHILDREN'S ACTION COMMITTEE

- **Camille Schraeder**—Executive Director, Redwood Children's Services, Inc.
- **Anne Molgaard**—Executive Director, FIRST 5 Mendocino
- **Sheryn Hildebrand**—Executive Director, CASA of Mendocino and Lake Counties
- **Krissy Weiss**—Billing Coordinator, Redwood Children's Services Inc.
- **Willow Anderson**—Public Relation Coordinator, Redwood Children's Services Inc.
- **Susan McConnell**—Director of Child Development, Mendocino County Office of Education
- **Patti Williams**—Public Health Nurse, HHSA, Public Health
- **Ben Anderson**—Executive Director, Tapestry Family Services
- **Linda Edgington**—Program Representative, Mendocino County 4-H
- **Barbara Reber**—Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
- **Bryan Lowery**—Deputy Director, HHSA-Social Services Branch-CFS
- **Ana Madrigal-Duran**—HHSA, Child Welfare
- **Kathryn Dornhuber**—Head Start Coordinator
- **Kary Fernandez**—Children Action Committee's Coordinator, VISTA 2013-2014
- **Lia Holbrook**—Project Sanctuary
- **Melanie Wagner**—Project Sanctuary
- **Kate Gaston**—Executive Director, Mendocino County Youth Project
- **Laura Warren**—MCAH Director of HHSA
- **Corrina Avila**—Community Member

Partners and Collaborators

Ukiah

Arbor on Main
Ages 15-24
303 N. Main St.
468-5536

Ukiah

FIRST 5 Mendocino
166 Gobbi St.
462-4453

Ukiah

Nuestra Casa
487 N. State St.
463-8181

Potter Valley

PV Youth & Community Center
10270 Main St.
743-1789

Laytonville

Laytonville Healthy Start
44400 Willis Ave.
984-8089

Willits

Nuestra Alianza De Willits
291 School St. #1
456-9418

Covelo

Round Valley
Family Resource Center
76450 Airport Rd
983-6262

Gualala

Action Network
39144 Ocean Dr. #3
884-5413

CAC's monthly meeting will take place:
Thursday, December 12th at
9:30am - 12:30pm
780 S. Dora St., Conf. Room

CAC's next monthly meeting will take place:
Thursday, January 2nd at
10:30am - 12:30pm Public
Health on Dora, Room 102

