

Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana Talking Points

1. The organization

Since 1986, Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana has served as a statewide, private non-profit organization dedicated to preventing the abuse and neglect of our state's children. We are the state chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, and we provide parent support programs and training for professionals, as well as public education and advocacy efforts.

The organization has an operating budget of roughly \$1 million, with 79 percent of income spent on our programs.

2. What is child abuse?

Child abuse is an act which seriously endangers the physical, mental or emotional health of a child. Typically, child abuse is a pattern of behavior, not an isolated incident.

3. Why is it important to focus on child abuse prevention?

The effects of child maltreatment last a lifetime. Decreased self-esteem, relationship problems, depression and a repeated pattern of abuse can plague an adult survivor. In addition, children who have adverse childhood experiences are at increased risk for the leading causes of death in America. Every child deserves a happy, healthy childhood. Positive social and parental interactions help provide a child's brain with the social, emotional and intellectual "tools" needed in adulthood.

Child abuse and neglect is not a family problem, or an individual's problem; it is a societal problem. The cost of child abuse and neglect in America is estimated to be \$104 billion annually.

When families have what they need to create healthy, safe and nurtured children, our society experiences more stable, less violent communities and a more productive workforce.

4. PCA Louisiana's Programs

Internet Safety for Children and Parents is a program through which presentations are provided to parents, middle and high school students outlining the dangers children face online and how to best communicate around and protect against these potential hazards. Internet Safety for Children and Parents, offered in partnership with the Louisiana Attorney General's Office, directly reached over 1500 individuals last year.

KIDLINE, 1-800-CHILDREN is a toll free parenting hotline that offers parenting information, support and referrals to community resources. KIDLINE is available to Louisiana's families from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days per week and receives an average of 500 calls per year.

Nurturing the Families of Louisiana is an intensive sixteen week parenting education course designed to reduce dysfunction and help families develop positive, healthy relationships. This program is offered in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services and is active in ten Child Welfare Family Resource Centers across the state.

Mandatory Reporter Trainings are workshops designed to reach professionals whom are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. These workshops cover the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, legal obligations to report, reporting protocol and dealing with emotional reactions related to reporting. Mandatory Reporter Trainings were provided to 908 professionals last year.

Additionally, PCA Louisiana offers outreach through a Baby's First Year Calendar, monthly e-newsletters, bi-monthly publications and public awareness campaigns. We also conduct an annual statewide conference on prevention and numerous other research-based workshops.

5. How can you help prevent child abuse and neglect?

- Make a donation to Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana, to further their prevention efforts in your area
- Volunteer for one of PCA Louisiana's programs
- Learn more about the issue and share with your family and friends
- Offer to babysit for a friend who could use a break
- Nurture your child in a new way today
- Donate clothing and school supplies during community drives
- Offer to check in on a latch-key child
- Become a mentor
- Become a foster parent
- Start a Mother's Day Out program at your church
- Form a buddy system with your friends- one adult keeps the children while the others shop, have a night out or run errands; then switch roles the next week

These are just a few suggestions. There are many ways you can make a difference in the lives of children and families around you.

6. How do I get more information?

Visit Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana's website at www.pcal.org or call the PCA Louisiana office at (225) 925-9520.

7. If you remember only one thing about child abuse in Louisiana, remember...

That prevention is all about supporting families and there is something each of us can do.