



Welcome Spring!!!

CA/N Opening News



SPRING ALPENA/PRESQUE ISLE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (CA/N) TEAM

CA/N Team Mission: “To assist and support programs that promote the prevention of child abuse and neglect.”

Visit us online at www.alpenapicanteam.com!

CA/N Team Board

- **Tom Woizeschke**
President
- **Sienna Suszek**
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- **Celeste Phillips**
Baby Pantry Coordinator
- **Robin Benson-Clark**
CA/N Team Coordinator

Alpena Baby Pantry Has New Home!!

The Alpena Baby Pantry, after being housed on the corner of 9th and Chisholm Streets for over 5 years, is in a new location. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul has been a very generous supporter of the Alpena Baby Pantry by housing them in that location. “We are grateful for the support from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul! They went above and beyond in assisting the Baby Pantry over the past several years,” says CA/N Team President Tom Woizeschke. Recently, the building was sold, and the Baby Pantry went out searching for a new location. There were concerns that a location would be hard to find with local property owners feeling the pinch of the

economy’s struggle. Since the Alpena Baby Pantry is run by volunteers and through donations, it has



Exchange Club member Lee Szyzanskiak (center) and volunteer Mike Clark (right) assist in assembling shelving at the new Baby Pantry location.

building. The Exchange Club and other volunteers were on hand on March 21st for the big move, and Baby Pantry Coordinator Celeste Phillips found volunteers to help sort and arrange clothing and baby supplies. Celeste is pleased with the new location. “The greater floor space in our new baby pantry location allows our customers a better view of items and easier movement in all areas. We love the bright rooms, accessibility, and room to grow,” she stated. The Alpena Baby Pantry is open the second and forth Thursdays of every month. Donations of gently used clothing and equipment are always welcome, as well as diapers, wipes, formula, other baby essentials and cash donations. Contact the Alpena Baby Pantry Coordinator Celeste Phillips for more information at 989-356-9516, or call Robin Benson-Clark at 989-354-8089.

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Mandated Reporter Workshop!



The CA/N Team will be offering a workshop for professionals that are mandated reporters on **Wednesday, May 27th at 7:00—8:30 pm at the Alpena County Library. Registration ends May 20th. Reserve your space now!**

According to the Department of Human Services, the Michigan Child Protection Law requires certain people to report their suspicions of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services at the Department of Human Services. These people are mandated reporters and have established relationships with children based on their profession. Mandated Reporters include:

- Physician
- Dentist
- Physician's assistant
- Registered dental hygienist
- Medical examiner
- Nurse
- Licensed emergency medical care provider
- Audiologist
- Psychologist
- Marriage and family therapist
- Licensed professional counselor
- Social worker
- Licensed master's social worker
- Licensed bachelor's social worker
- Registered social service technician
- Social service technician
- School administrator

- School counselor
- Teacher
- Law enforcement officer
- Member of the clergy
- Regulated child care providers

Specific staff members of the Department of Human Services also have a legal mandate to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

These staff members include:

- Eligibility specialist
- Family independence manager or specialist
- Social services specialist
- Social work specialist
- Social work specialist manager
- Welfare services specialist

The workshop will cover the following topics:

1. Learn the legal definition of Child Abuse and Neglect (CA/N)
2. Define a Mandated Reporter
3. Recognizing Abuse and Neglect
4. How Abuse and Neglect affects Child Development
5. Child Abuse Prevention
6. Resources for Mandated Reporters

The Alpena/Presque Isle Child Abuse and Neglect Team is offering scholarships to the first 10 registrants who call Robin Benson-Clark at 989-354-8089. Registration is

limited to 50 people.

If you would like to attend, please complete the following information and include the \$5 registration fee.

Name

Agency

Address

Phone

Email

Please include your registration fee of \$5 and send this registration to:

Alpena/Presque Isle CA/N Team

Attn: Robin Benson-Clark

1044 US 23 North

Alpena, MI 49707

989-354-8089

Strengthening Nurturing and Attachment in Families

In this newsletter, we will review one protective factor for child abuse prevention according to the Child Welfare Information Gateway—**strengthening nurturing and attachment.**

Parents today have a lot on their plates. Juggling the demands of work, home, and other responsibilities leaves many parents feeling like they do not have nearly enough time with their children. But even small acts of kindness, protection, and caring—a hug, a smile, or loving words—make a big difference to children.

Research consistently shows that babies who receive affection and nurturing from their parents have the best chance of developing into children, teens, and adults who are happy, healthy, and competent. Research also shows that a relationship with a consistent, stable, and caring adult in the early years is associated in later life with better academic grades, healthier behaviors, more positive peer interactions, and an increased ability to cope with stress.

Infant brains develop best when a few stable caregivers work to understand and meet their needs for love, affection, and stimulation, or provide comfort when they are hungry, bored, tired, wet, or cold. Conversely, neglectful and abusive parenting can have a negative effect on brain development. Research shows that a lack of contact or interaction with a caregiver can change the infant's body chemistry, resulting in a reduction in the growth hormones essential for brain and heart development. Furthermore, the ability to feel remorse and empathy are built on experience. Children who lack early emotional attachments or who grow up fearful and expecting to be hurt will have a difficult time relating to peers.

As children grow, nurturing by parents and other caregivers remains important for healthy physical and emotional development. While physical contact may

become less important, listening and talking are always vital to the relationship. Parents nurture their older children by making time to listen to them, being involved and interested in the child's school and other activities, staying aware of the child or teen's interests and friends, and being willing to advocate for the child when necessary.

When parents spend time and energy discovering and paying attention to their children's needs, they are rewarded with positive, open, and trusting relationships



with their children. Parents who develop the ability to respond sensitively to the needs of their child, no matter what age, will find parenting easier and more enjoyable.

You can share resources available from your agency and throughout the community on how parents can connect with their children, listen to them, and become more involved in their lives. It is important to note that bonding is a two-way street. As children grow and develop the ability to socialize, relate, and communicate, it is easier for parents to respond positively to them. When a child does not show a positive response to the parent (due to age, a disability, or other factors), the parent may need additional support.

Parenting strategies that promote nurturing

- Infant care and strategies that promote bonding and attachment (e.g., breastfeeding, rocking, using a baby carrier, responding to crying, talking lovingly, consistency within and across caregivers, and stability of primary caregivers)
- Cultural differences in how parents and children show affection
- What to do when your child has an emotional or behavioral disability that limits his or her ability to respond to parental nurturing
- Ways to nurture children at every age
- How fathers nurture children
- Ways to engage other important adults as part of a child's "nurturing network"
- Ways to create and sustain healthy marriages that better support a nurturing home environment for children
- Ways to create quality time to play with children in the context of daily activities
- Communicating effectively with older children and resolving conflicts
- Using positive discipline

Encourage these behaviors in your family and with those families with whom you work. This information taken from the TheChild Welfare Information Gateway, www.childwelfare.gov. More information on how to strengthen nurturing and attachment can be found there.

FAMILY

Abusive Head Trauma

Abusive head trauma/inflicted traumatic brain injury or AHT (also called shaken baby/shaken impact syndrome or SBS) is a form of inflicted head trauma.

AHT can be caused by direct blows to the head, dropping or throwing a child, or shaking a child. Head trauma is the leading cause of death in child abuse cases in the United States.

How These Injuries Happen

Unlike other forms of inflicted head trauma, abusive head trauma results from injuries caused by someone vigorously shaking a child. Because the anatomy of infants puts them at particular risk for injury from this kind of action, the vast majority of victims are infants younger than 1 year old. The average age of victims is between 3 and 8 months, although these injuries are occasionally seen in children up to 4 years old.

The perpetrators in these cases are most often parents or caregivers. Common triggers are frustration or stress when the child is crying. Unfortunately, the shaking may have the desired effect: although at first the baby cries more, he or she may stop crying as the brain is damaged.

Approximately 60% of identified victims of shaking injury are male, and children of families who live at or below the poverty level are at an increased risk for these injuries, as well as any type of child abuse. It is estimated that the perpetrators in 65% to 90% of cases are males — usually either the baby's father or the mother's boyfriend, often someone in his early twenties.

When someone forcefully shakes a baby, the child's head rotates about

the neck uncontrollably because infants' neck muscles aren't well developed and provide little support for their heads. This violent movement pitches the infant's brain back and forth within the skull, sometimes rupturing blood vessels and nerves throughout the brain and tearing the brain tissue. The brain may strike the inside of the skull, causing bruising and bleeding to the brain.

The damage can be even greater when a shaking episode ends with an impact (hitting a wall or a crib mattress, for example), because the forces of acceleration and deceleration associated with an impact are so strong. After the shaking, swelling in the brain can cause enormous pressure within the skull, compressing blood vessels and increasing overall injury to its delicate structure.

Normal interaction with a child, like bouncing the baby on a knee, will **not** cause these injuries, although it's important to **never** shake a baby under **any** circumstances because gentle shaking can rapidly escalate.

Signs and Symptoms

In any abusive head trauma case, the duration and force of the shaking, the number of episodes, and whether impact is involved all affect the severity of the infant's injuries. In the most violent cases, children may arrive at the emergency room unconscious, suffering seizures, or in shock. But in many cases, infants may *never* be brought to medical attention if they don't exhibit such severe symptoms.

In less severe cases, a child who has been shaken may experience:

- lethargy
- irritability
- vomiting

- poor sucking or swallowing
- decreased appetite
- lack of smiling or vocalizing
- rigidity
- seizures
- difficulty breathing
- altered consciousness
- unequal pupil size
- an inability to lift the head
- an inability to focus the eyes or track movement

How You Can Help It Not to Happen

- Educate families on the stress of having a baby. Help them understand crying is many times a normal act babies do.
- Help families devise a plan for when they become too stressed. Encourage a back-up person to step in and help. Let them know it is ok to lay the baby in their bed and walk away, if needed, in order to gain composure.
- Educate parents on the importance of educating ALL people involved with the baby on the topic.
- If you see a family that is stressed with outside factors, offer to help them come up with a plan to get a break.

Need resources to help educate families? We have brochures, videos to loan out, and other information for you! Contact Robin Benson-Clark at 989-354-8089 or bensonr@cfsnemi.org.



April is Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Month!

The CA/N Team has many great activities planned for Child Abuse Prevention Month! Below is information on upcoming events!

- Pinwheel Garden**—We will be joining communities all over Michigan in planting blue and silver pinwheels at Duck Park on Wednesday, April 1 at noon in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention month. Families are welcome to join us in this event!
- CA/N Team Concert** featuring the local talents of Greg Altman, Diane Bartz, Kevin Ballmer, Julie Wood, Joanne Root, Joe Brisson, Patrick Altman, Ryan Nowak and Josh Bisanz, among others. Come and enjoy a wide range of music genres with the entire family. Tickets are available now and at the door, \$5 per person or \$15 per family. The event is at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Alpena from 7:00 –9:00 pm., Friday, April 17th.
- Power of Parenting Event** will take place on Thursday, April 16th at Thunder Bay Junior High Schl from 5:00-

8:30 pm. Speaker Jennifer Strauss will speak on saying “no” to our children. See insert in this newsletter or call 989-356-2880 for more information.

- Month of the Young Child** will be held as in past years at the Alpena Mall, Saturday, April 25th, from 10am to 2 pm. Agencies and programs that serve families with young children will have tables set up to distribute information and some will have family activities. Activities will include puppet and magic shows, storytelling, Discovery Zone, lunch specials at Grandma Beans Sweet Shop, snow cones, popcorn and MI-CHIP CHILD IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM. The MOYC committee is also pleased to announce that veteran performer Eugene Clark will be this year’s Center Stage Performer during our MOYC event held on April 25, 2009 at the Alpena Mall. Mr. Clark will be performing two 30 minute puppet and magic shows. Show times are 12:00pm and 1:30pm. Mr. Clark is an educator, puppeteer, magician and comedian. He has performed for corporations, trade shows, performing arts theaters, community organizations and special events. Mr. Clark is one of the premier entertainers in the magic circuit and has also studied puppetry with Jim Henson’s Muppets in New York City. This event will certainly enlighten and entertain all who attend.

Promoting Healthy Families Resource Packet

This annual resource from the Child Welfare Information Gateway describes strategies and activities that not only reduce risk, but also promote protective factors associated with the prevention of child maltreatment. You can download the PDF version by going to http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/res_guide_2009/guide.pdf.

(clip and save)

CAP Month Local Activities

- Planting of the “Pinwheels for Prevention” Garden at Duck Park, Wednesday, April 1st at Noon**
- Concert for the CA/N Team Cause (St. Paul Lutheran Church in Alpena) Family Fun and Local Talent, April 17th, contact Deb Werner, 989-358-4644 or Robin Benson, 989-354-8089 for ticket information. \$5 per person, \$15 per family**
- Power of Parenting Event, Thursday, April 16th, contact Jim Bland for information, 989-356-2880.**
- Month of the Young Child Event at the Alpena Mall, Saturday, April 25th. Contact Genny Domke for more information, 989-354-8089.**



Need information about how to safely sleep a baby? Many resources are available including brochures, videos and other resources. Contact Robin Benson-Clark at 989-354-8089 or bensonr@cfsnemi.org.

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CA/N Team Coordinator

15 Tips for Family Bonding

1. Whenever possible, eat meals together, especially dinner. Keep the TV off and do not answer the phone while dining.

2. Help them with homework (or review homework schedules).

3. Attend their sports event or activity (give positive feedback no matter the outcome).

4. Play card or board games of their choosing.

5. Watch a TV program that your kids like.

6. Have a family night out and go to a movie, concert, or play.

7. Exercise together (biking, swimming, tennis, hiking).

8. Volunteer together (serving meals at homeless shelters, building homes for Habitat for Humanity).

9. Do chores together (cooking, dishes, grocery shopping, housework, gardening).

10. Drive them whenever possible and let them listen to their radio station.

11. Have bedtime talks where you just sit and listen and let your children speak.

12. Read together. If there is a book everyone wants to read, each person can take turns reading aloud.

13. Share a hobby together or take an active interest in your child's hobby.

14. Go on a family vacation and let the kids get involved in the planning.

15. Every day, tell them you love them. Also, give a compliment or



Circle of Parent Groups

Alpena - Thursdays 10:00 a.m. - noon Alpena County DHS Conference Room, 711 W. Chisholm. Contact Jim Bland at the number below.

Alpena - Sunrise Centre for Parents in Recovery - Tuesdays 3:30 - 5:00, 630 Walnut Street. Contact Ruth Fleck at the number below.

Alpena - Alpena County Senior Citizens Center for Kinship Caregivers Thursdays 1:30 - 3:00, 501 River Street Contact Ruth Fleck.

Alcona - Michigan Works Center Lincoln - Wednesdays 1:00 - 2:30, 202 N. 2nd St., Lincoln. Contact Ruth Fleck.

We have a new group beginning April 7 in Alpena for parents of **Thunder Bay Junior High School** Students in the Media Center at Thunder Bay Junior High School, 3500 Third Avenue. Contact Jim Bland.

If you are interested in joining, call 989-356-2880 or 800-354-2880.