

APR 2024

# CASA CORNER



## UPCOMING COURT DATES

### IBERIA PARISH

April 09, 2024

April 29, 2024

### ST. MARTIN PARISH

April 03, 2024

April 26, 2024

### ST. MARY PARISH

April 10, 2024

## BLUE RIBBON WEEK

This year, Blue Ribbon week will be observed from April 1st-7th. This important week raises awareness about child abuse and the several detrimental effects it has on communities in the U.S. Even as adults, our childhood experiences leave lasting impressions on us. Therefore, it is extremely important to provide young ones with the best childhood experiences possible. Some practices to try during this week are to:

**Educate children** on the subject of child abuse and also encourage them to report it if they witness or are being subjected to it themselves. While it may seem obvious to us adults, children are often unfamiliar with what constitutes abuse and may be hesitant to speak up.

**Put a blue ribbon** on your clothes, car, door, or by sharing a picture on social media to show solidarity. Tying the ribbon in a noticeable place is also a great way to raise awareness among people who may not be familiar with the campaign.

**Donate** to a charity working towards eliminating child abuse in the U.S. and could use your support.

## CASA BIRTHDAYS

Dru Gros - Apr. 05

Michaela Davis - Apr. 28

Walter Thibodeaux, Jr. - Apr. 30

## CASA Children w April Birthdays

Lakondra Hines - 1 child (Apr 12th)

Athena Self - 1 child (Apr 19th)

Susan McFarland - 1 child (Apr 27th)

**PLEASE contact the office about your party in a bag.**



# CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

Even though child abuse is an ongoing epidemic constantly being fought against by community and professional service members, April is one month of the year dedicated to spreading awareness about child abuse to the general public. Increasing awareness about child and family well-being and working together as a community to implement effective strategies that support families are important in helping prevent child maltreatment. The more you know, the more able you are to help a child in an abusive or neglectful situation.

Each year, the Children's Bureau releases a **Child Maltreatment** report that explores data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, which provides details on cases of child abuse and neglect known to child protective services agencies in the United States. The Child Maltreatment reports are an important resource relied upon by researchers, practitioners, and advocates. The following are highlights recorded in the 2022 Child Maltreatment report:

- Approximately **1.9 million children** received prevention services.
- **More than half** (55 percent) of victims received post-response services.
- Fewer than one-quarter (19.6 percent) of confirmed maltreatment victims **were removed from their homes because of an investigation or alternative response.**

Knowledge and understanding of protective factors and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), as well as the social-ecological model, can inform efforts to reduce the risk of maltreatment and prevent the recurrence of abuse or neglect by drawing on family strengths and acknowledging the impact of traumatic events. **ACEs** are potentially traumatic events that occur before a child reaches the age of 18 and can include the following: all types of abuse/neglect, parental substance use or mental illness, parental incarceration, domestic violence, divorce, and more. **Protective factors** are conditions or attributes that, when present in families and communities, increase the well-being of children and families and reduce the likelihood of maltreatment. Identifying protective factors helps parents find resources, supports, or coping strategies to keep their family strong even when life is challenging: nurturing and attachment, parental resilience, social connections, and more.

A landmark study in the 1990s found a significant relationship between the number of ACEs a person experienced and a variety of negative outcomes in adulthood, including poor physical and mental health, substance use, and risky behaviors. The more ACEs experienced, the greater the risk for these outcomes. By definition, children served by child welfare have experienced at least one ACE. Understanding the impact of ACEs and how to build resilience in children and families can lead to more trauma-informed interventions that help mitigate negative outcomes.



# CHILD ABUSE

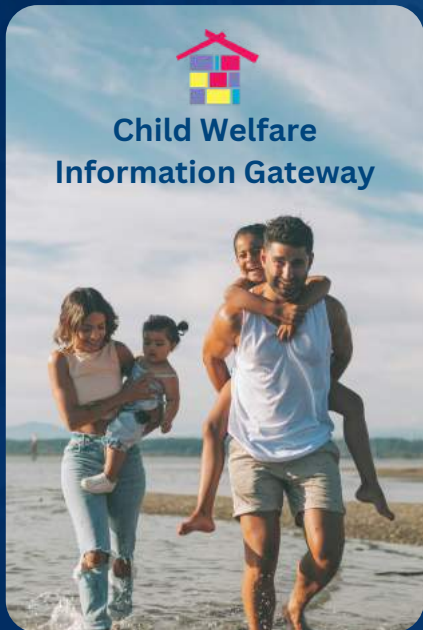
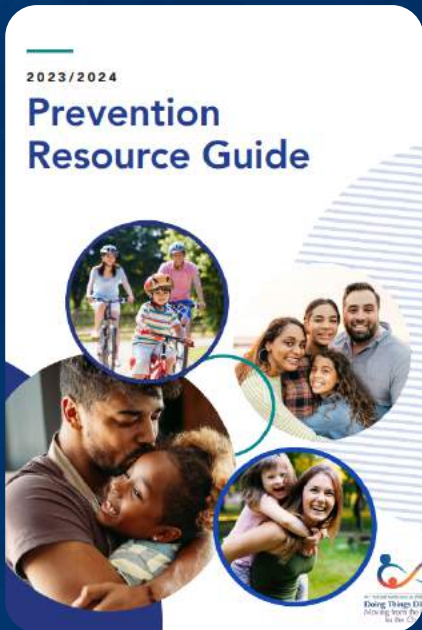
## PREVENTION RESOURCES

After learning all of this new information on child abuse, you may be feeling unsure as to where to start when it comes to playing your part in child abuse prevention or aid. If you enjoy a deep dive into descriptive literature, the Department of Health & Human Services has released their 2023/2024 Prevention Resource Guide--including topics such as Creating a More Supportive Society for All Families, Building Proactive Child and Family Well-Being Systems, Aligning Organizations for Family Resilience and Healing, and more.

If you run any social media for a nonprofit, charity, community group, small or large business, or even just for personal use, a Social Media Outreach Toolkit would be most beneficial in helping you spread the word on Child Abuse Prevention. This toolkit was put together by the Children's Bureau and the Child Welfare Information Gateway and includes content such as graphics and GIFs, email signatures, and captions in both English and Spanish for social media posts.

If you prefer to help out in a hands-on way, volunteering for or donating to nonprofits/charities that work with children from abusive homes might be more your style. Fortunately for you, there are many out there, and CASA of the 16th JDC is one of them! Other local charities/nonprofits that help children who may come from abusive/neglectful homes are CASA of SOLA for Children, Foster the Love, Hope House, Hearts of Hope, The Akidiana Project, Brave Heart Children in Need, Inc., and so many more.

CLICK ANY TO LEARN MORE





# SEXUAL ASSAULT

## awareness month

Community is powerful. Community creates a sense of belonging and reminds us of how our beliefs, choices, and actions impact one another. The center of **Building Connected Communities**, this year's SA Awareness Month theme, is ensuring our communities are safe, inclusive, and equitable. As long as there have been people who care about making the world a better place, there have been individuals advocating for sexual assault prevention. In the United States, movements for social change and equality began to gain traction in the 1940s and 50s with the civil rights era. Although, open discussion of the realities of sexual assault and domestic violence were limited at these times, activists for equal rights began to challenge the status quo. We recognize that how we talk about sexual violence significantly impacts survivors, their families, our communities, and society. We also understand that our voices have power and that when one of us does not feel safe or respected we are all affected. As such, we must strive to create strong, connected communities that take care of one another and make decisions to ensure the safety and well-being of others to end sexual violence.

**Sexual violence** is an umbrella term that includes any type of unwanted sexual contact--including sexual assault, harassment, and abuse--and can take forms such as: rape or sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, unwanted sexual contact/touching, sexual exploitation and trafficking, exposing one's genitals or naked body to others without consent, nonconsensual image sharing, and/or words and actions of a sexual nature against a person's will and without their consent.

Statistics show that most women and men across all sexual identities who experienced contact sexual violence reported that the person who harmed them was someone they knew; and over **53% of women** and over **29% of men** reported experiencing contact sexual violence. **1 in 5** male victims reported only male perpetrators, **1 in 2** had only female perpetrators, and about **1 in 6** had both male and female perpetrators. **32.9% of adults with intellectual disabilities** have experienced sexual violence.

One of the most important steps to preventing sexual assault is understanding consent and knowing when it is being refused or given. **Consent** is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity. Consent should be clearly and freely communicated. A verbal and affirmative expression of consent can help both you and your partner to understand and respect each other's boundaries. Consent cannot be given by individuals who are underage, intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, or asleep or unconscious. If someone agrees to an activity under pressure of intimidation or threat, that isn't considered consent because it was not given freely. Unequal power dynamics, such as engaging in sexual activity with an employee or student, also mean that consent cannot be freely given.



# SEXUAL ASSAULT

## awareness month

When you're engaging in sexual activity, consent is about communication. And it should happen every time for every type of activity. Consenting to one activity, one time, does not mean someone gives consent for other activities or for the same activity on other occasions. It's important to discuss boundaries and expectations with your partner prior to engaging in any sexual behavior. More importantly, know that you can change your mind at any time. One way to do this is to clearly communicate to your partner that you are no longer comfortable with this activity and wish to stop. Withdrawing consent can sometimes be challenging or difficult to do verbally, so non-verbal cues can also be used to convey this. The best way to ensure that all parties are comfortable with any sexual activity is to talk about it, check in periodically, and make sure everyone involved consents before escalating or changing activities.

Now that we've talked about what consent looks like, let's discuss what it DOESN'T look like **Consent is NOT:** refusing to acknowledge "no", a partner who is disengaged, nonresponsive, or visibly upset, assuming that wearing certain clothes, flirting, or kissing is an invitation for anything more, someone being under the legal age of consent, as defined by the state, someone being incapacitated because of drugs or alcohol, pressuring someone into sexual activity by using fear or intimidation, and/or assuming you have permission to engage in a sexual act because you've done it in the past.

We all have a right to safety in our daily lives--to have our boundaries respected and make choices about what happens to our bodies--at home, school, the workplace, and in public places. That sense of wellbeing and safety can be taken away by knowing that sexual assault, harassment, and abuse are common and not always taken seriously. To learn more about sexual assault an prevention click any of the buttons below.

The logo for the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) features the lowercase letters "nsvrc" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. Below the text is a horizontal line composed of three segments: a blue segment on the left, an orange segment in the middle, and a blue segment on the right.

National Sexual Violence  
Resource Center

The logo for RAINN (National Sexual Assault Hotline) features the word "RAINN" in a large, bold, dark blue, sans-serif font.



NATIONAL

# VOLUNTEER

MONTH

When your kindness connects with the kind acts of others, real change is possible. National Volunteer Month is an annual celebration dedicated to honoring volunteering efforts around the world--recognizing and becoming people who selflessly devote their time, skills, and energy to support various causes. From aiding the less fortunate to preserving the environment, volunteers play an indispensable role in shaping a brighter future for all. That's why this year's National Volunteer Month theme is **celebrating service!**

For some of us, hands-on volunteering can prove to be the most rewarding. Our advocacy program at CASA of the 16th JDC guarantees our volunteers work directly with the children in our care. This allows CASA Advocates to see the progress of their appointed child(ren)'s case first-hand, and many even get to see their appointed child(ren)'s case close through adoption or reunification! And the best news is you can start your CASA Advocacy journey today! Simply head to <https://casa16jdc.org/become-an-advocate> and start your application!

Whether you choose to volunteer in your community, participate in an international outreach, or rally others to support a charitable cause, your contribution will have a profound and lasting effect on the lives of countless families. This National Volunteer Month, consider becoming a volunteer and be a driving force of positive change in the world. Your time and effort will not only touch the lives of those in need but also inspire others to join the cause of hope and compassion.