

The Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council of Kings County (CAPCC) has a vision that Kings County will be a safe place where children are protected, encouraged, and empowered to reach their full potential.

The CAPCC is a community based collaborative whose primary purpose is to coordinate private and public services for the prevention, intervention, and treatment of abused children in Kings County. The CAPCC works to accomplish this by promoting public awareness of child abuse and neglect.

One good way to prevent child abuse is to recognize risk factors that are associated with child abuse, including: substance abuse, domestic violence, a personal history of child abuse, poverty, lack of parenting skills, and a small social support network. Another way is to support programs that work to prevent child abuse, such as community education programs, parent support groups, and mentoring. Good child abuse prevention strategies include learning the signs of child abuse and how to report suspected child abuse. Being able to recognize the signs of child abuse, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect, can be a good way to help prevent further abuse of children. This is especially important for people who have regular contact with children, such as teachers, coaches, and friends and family members of these children. Some signs of child abuse can include, but are not limited to: sudden changes in a child's behavior, a child with unexplained bruises or burns, etc. Further indicators

of child abuse include can be medical problems are not being cared for properly, for example, he may have regular asthma attacks or a lingering cough and hasn't been to the doctor. More signs can include a child being left without adult supervision, a parent who doesn't seem to have appropriate concern for their children, families who seem to have entirely negative relationships, a child who isn't dressed appropriately in cold weather, is dirty, or frequently misses school, or a child who talks about age-inappropriate sexual behaviors.

If you suspect that a child is being abused, you should report it right away.

There are many reasons why people do not report child abuse. These include not wanting to get involved, not being sure if it really is child abused, they aren't sure how to make a report of child abuse and assume that someone else will do it, they may not be aware of child abuse laws in their state (laws which could make reporting mandatory for certain people), or being afraid of getting in trouble for filing a report if the child isn't really being abused (which doesn't happen as long as you are making the report in good faith). None of these reasons are going to help a child who is being abused, especially if they are in a life-threatening situation. What if you're wrong? The local child welfare agency will likely do an investigation. If you are right and stop the abuse, you may change or save a child's life. To report child abuse, in addition to the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline

(1-800-4-A-CHILD), you can call your county child welfare agency's child abuse hotline (1-866-582-8776). Or in an emergency situation, call 911. For more information or for group presentations in your community call Shea Gowin CAPCC Prevention Specialist at (559) 303-9039.