

HOW ARE Sonoma County Kids *Doing?*



PREVENT CHILD ABUSE
Sonoma County

protecting children and youth from abuse and neglect

THANK YOU TO OUR MANY COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS





APRIL IS NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Healthy, thriving children and youth are vital members of healthy, thriving communities. We know that experiences early in life have lasting effects that not only shape the trajectories of individual lives, but also determine the future health of communities. Every member of the community can play a role in ensuring that kids and teens grow up in safe, nurturing families.

The first step to helping create change is understanding the serious challenges many Sonoma County children and families are facing.

This publication highlights:

- The impact of child abuse on Sonoma County in 2016
- Services and programs working to prevent abuse and protect children
- The critical role of and urgent need for foster parents in Sonoma County
- Advice for helping struggling parents
- Support for adult survivors of child abuse
- Resources for offering hope through taking action

As professionals dedicated to helping children, teens and families thrive, we are grateful to every community member who partners with us in this work. It is our hope that these pages inform and inspire actions – large and small – that together create a healthier, stronger Sonoma County for all of us.

Karen Fies, Director
Sonoma County Human Services Department
Robin Bowen, Executive Director
Child Parent Institute

a community report from

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE Sonoma County

Since 2005, Child Parent Institute (CPI) has coordinated the countywide efforts of our local child abuse prevention council, Prevent Child Abuse – Sonoma County (PCA-SC). Our council provides a consistent forum for interagency cooperation and coordination in the prevention, detection, and treatment of child abuse cases. Funding is provided by the Sonoma County Human Services Department and approved by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors.

PCA-SC supports family strengthening organizations by providing:

EDUCATION

Regular meetings provide networking and professional training for those involved in child abuse prevention and intervention services.

AWARENESS

We work to build a community that protects children and promotes healthy families, increasing community awareness and learning opportunities for parents, professionals and the public.

PCA-SC provides leadership for child abuse prevention through:

ADVOCACY

We advocate for policies that support families and protect children.

OUTREACH

We partner with the Sonoma County Human Services Department to offer regular trainings to help community partners identify and report suspected child abuse and neglect.

Interested in learning more or joining our steering committee?

EMAIL: robinb@calparents.org



What do you already know about

Protecting Sonoma County Children and Youth?

Take the quiz



1 **Who can report child abuse or neglect?**

- A. Trained mandated reporters
- B. Anyone with concerns
- C. Law enforcement
- D. Medical professionals

2 **All are types of child abuse, except:**

- A. Physical
- B. Emotional
- C. Neglect
- D. Sexual
- E. Homelessness

3 **The most common type of abuse is:**

- A. Sexual
- B. Emotional
- C. Neglect
- D. Physical

4 **Report concerns to the Child Protection Hotline when you have:**

- A. Reasonable suspicion
- B. Verifiable proof
- C. Photographic evidence
- D. A detailed history of abuse or neglect

5 **After investigation by Child Protection Services, about __% children are moved to foster care because their homes are unsafe:**

- A. 3%
- B. 50%
- C. 65%
- D. 15%

6 **How can we keep Sonoma County kids safe?**

- A. Get to know children and youth in your community
- B. Connect with and support struggling families in your community
- C. Report child abuse or neglect
- D. Become a foster parent or enrich your family through adoption
- E. All of the above

Answers: How'd you do? 1-B; 2-E; 3-C; 4-A; 5-A; 6-E

Learn to Prevent Child Abuse & Neglect

Sonoma County Family, Youth and Children's Division offers free presentations to community members and training to professionals who are Mandated Reporters.

INFORMATION & SCHEDULING
FYCmandatedreporter@schsd.org | (707) 565-4329

FACT

WE ALL PAY THE PRICE FOR CHILD ABUSE

THE Economics of Child Abuse

Sonoma County Human Services Department provided data on 2016 reported and verified cases. Monetary calculations are based on the 2015 rate of inflation. Costs do not include 2016 fatalities caused by child abuse. There were three child deaths caused by child abuse in Sonoma County in 2015, with each death costing nearly \$1.5 million in health care and loss of productivity, for a total loss of \$4.4 million to our community as a whole.



Thanks to the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center + Haas School of Business, University of California Berkeley's Social Sector Solutions for the calculation formula. To learn more about the cost calculation, visit sfcapc.org/CostOfAbuse. Thanks to HAND Foundation for supporting the release of the report.

Every **10 minutes** a child abuse case is reported in the Bay Area.

~58,000 ❤️ reports of child abuse in the Bay Area every year

5,516 ❤️ reports of child abuse in Sonoma County in 2016

3.5+ MILLION ❤️ reports of child abuse in the U.S. every year

578 ❤️ verified cases in Sonoma County

X \$256,992 the cost per victim over the course of their lifetime

\$148.5 Million

The same amount of money could send more than **15,000 kids** to preschool.

FACT

child abuse incidents are vastly underreported and could cost the community as much as **\$3.05 Billion**

2016 SONOMA COUNTY CHILD ABUSE REPORT Prevention, Protection and Care

Many agencies belong to the local safety net that supports the well-being of children and youth. The County of Sonoma Human Services Department Family, Youth and Children's Division alone invested \$724,000 in child abuse prevention in 2016. The following data describes the wide scope and impact of child welfare and protection programs and services.

PREVENTION

- **4,769** community professionals who are Mandated Reporters were trained in child abuse prevention and reporting. They included teachers, police, fire fighters and health care professionals.
- More than **1,400** residents and professionals were trained by Sonoma County ACEs Connection about the traumatic effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences in children and youth.

REPORTS AND INVESTIGATION

- **5,516** calls reported concerns to the Child Protection Hotline.
- **2,220** reports required investigation by Family, Youth and Children's Division.
- **The majority** of children could safely remain in their families with support from social workers and services, such as parent and child counseling, housing support, parenting classes and referrals to community resources.

- **233** Sonoma County children had to be brought into foster care because they weren't safe at home.
- There were **4,850** total allegations of the types of abuse listed below; often more than one type affected the same child or youth.
- Of that total, **754** allegations were confirmed in the cases of **578** children.

Allegation by Type

Allegation by Type	% of 754
Neglect	58%
Emotional Abuse	12%
At Risk, Sibling Abused	8%
Caretaker Absence / Incapacity	7%
Physical Abuse	5%
Severe Neglect	5%
Sexual Abuse	4%
Exploitation	1%

FOSTER CARE / ADOPTION

- **631** individual youth were in foster care at some time during 2016. They were cared for by foster families and relatives, in group homes or in transitional homes for youth going to school or working.
- On average, **26** children were cared for each day at the County emergency shelter, Valley of the Moon Children's Home.
- **30** children and youth were adopted by forever families.

REUNIFYING CHILDREN & FAMILIES

- **100** children and youth returned to their families once they could be safely cared for. They spent an average of **246** days in foster care before returning home.
- **Others** remained in foster care, or left foster care when they became adults at age 18, entered legal guardianship or were legally emancipated.



URGENT NEED CARING FOSTER PARENTS



Remember when people
used to underestimate you —

and the one person who didn't?

Contact us to find out if **YOU** would make a great foster parent.
(707) 565-4274 • www.SonomaFosterCare.org



Through no fault of their own, each day between
50 – 75 Sonoma County children and teens need a safe place to live..

Most just need a temporary haven while their parents get help
coping with the issues that created an unstable home.

Some will need a forever family.

Others are teens trying to stand on their own two feet who need
a room to rent and some encouragement.

How children are treated in Our Community will shape their lives.
We need to show them kindness and give them faith in their futures.

Whether you are a teacher, firefighter, pastor, counselor, working professional, retiree or work in the
home, gay or straight, single or married, you can help fill the URGENT NEED for foster parents.

Consider becoming a foster parent, adoptive parent or host home.

Contact us today: (707) 565-4274 • www.SonomaFosterCare.org

***“Being an emergency foster family
has been a life-changing experience,
not only for me but my entire family.
Each precious child that has been
in our home has enriched our lives
immeasurably.”***

~A Sonoma County Foster Parent



SUPPORT *for* Adults Abused as Children

Many adults abused in childhood need a safe place to feel supported, grow and learn more about how those experiences shape who they are today.

Adults Abused as Children Anonymous empowers adults to create inner peace, lasting change and healing. Join a **free** weekly meeting:

Adults Abused as Children Anonymous

First United Methodist Church
1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa
admin@adultsabusedaschildren.com
(707) 861-0144
www.adultsabusedaschildren.com

THANK YOU!

Prevent Child Abuse-Sonoma County is grateful to the Board of Supervisors for its ongoing support to prevent child abuse and neglect.

PCA-SC Steering Committee:

Linda Carlson, Exchange Club and Umpqua Bank; Sybil Halloran, Center for Innovation and Resources; Ronit Rubinoff, Legal Aid of Sonoma County; Kaylene Hirtzer, Abbey Law Firm, Jody Rodgers, Lourdes Aguilera and Hayly Peacock, Child Parent Institute; and Monica Edwards, Sonoma County Human Services Department.

Parenting & Prejudice

by Grace Harris, Parent Resources Director, Child Parent Institute

I recently attended training on prejudice. Prejudice has to do with the attitudes and opinions one group holds about another. Sometimes we can be quite inflexible about these opinions. It struck me that parents as a group often experience prejudice. We seem to have an ideal image of what a “good parent” should be.

The list of expectations is long – always do the best for your child, keep your child safe at all times, be understanding, don’t lose your temper, help your child when needed and encourage independence otherwise. This list goes on. We get our ideas about ideal parenting from our experiences (both what we want and what we don’t want) and from media, friends and family.

Many people grow up in families that don’t approximate these ideals – families with little positive attention and a lot of anger, families with a lot of stress brought on by mere survival, families where discouragement and trauma has been passed down through generations. It is important to remember that *parents were once children too.*

When you see a parent who seems less than ideal, step back a minute and wonder if they are tired, if they have a challenging kid, if they are worried about making this month’s rent.

That said, if you see or suspect child abuse, report it. This allows families to get help.

But if you see a parent losing his or her temper or being inattentive, think – what could I do that would be kind? Could I distract the child and give the parent a break for a few seconds to calm down? Could I just smile at the parent and say, “I know – I had days like that when my children were little,” or “I think this hot/cold/rainy weather is making everyone feel frazzled.”

Let’s assume that most parents are trying, and a little bit of support can go a long way.

It’s important to remember that parents were once children too.





5 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES:

Focus On What's Strong, Not What's Wrong

There are five factors that healthy families have in common. Many local agencies build on these factors to support families.

Parental Resilience: The ability to cope and bounce back from challenges

Social Connections: Friends, family, neighbors, and others who provide emotional support and assistance

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: Accurate information about raising children and appropriate expectations for their behavior

Concrete Support in Times of Need: Being able to cover day-to-day expenses and unexpected costs that come up from time to time, access to supports such as health services, counseling, and other social services

Children's Social and Emotional Development: A child's ability to interact positively with others and communicate emotions effectively



Offer HOPE & HELP Volunteer, Donate & Learn

Join the community making a difference for Sonoma County children

HELP PREVENT NEGLECT & ABUSE

- If you suspect a child is being neglected or physically, emotionally, or sexually abused, call the local Child Protection Hotline, day or night: (707) 565-4304
- Schedule a presentation about child abuse prevention for your service group, congregation or employees: (707) 565-4320, fycmandatedreporter@schsd.org
- Promote parenting classes to parents you know who need support: (707) 585-6108, www.calparents.org.
- Donate to support the work of Prevent Child Abuse-Sonoma County: www.calparents.org/donate and select Child Abuse Prevention Outreach
- Learn about the lifelong negative effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on individuals and communities: acetoohigh.com
- Attend a training on ACEs or schedule one for your group: acesconnection.com/g/sonoma-county-aces-connection
- Refer parents, children and youth to counseling services: (707) 284-1500

HELP FOSTER YOUTH

- Become a temporary foster parent or adoptive parent, or suggest it to someone you know: (707) 565-4274, sonomafostercare.org
- For youth at the emergency shelter, volunteer on-site or donate gift cards or gently used luggage: (707) 565-6350
- Schedule a presentation about foster care for your service group, congregation or employees: (707) 565-4274
- Support a foster child as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA): (707) 537-6375, sonomacasa.org

- Donate to Valley of the Moon Children's Foundation to provide foster youth educational scholarships, dental care and other services: (707) 565-8380, vomcf.org
- Donate to the Redwood Empire Foster Parent Association (REFPA) to supply emergency clothing needs and educational and recreational opportunities: repfa.org

HELP OLDER FOSTER YOUTH

- Rent your spare room and guide a foster youth learning to live as an independent adult through TLC Child & Family Services: (707) 528-3020, tlc4kids.org
- Volunteer with older foster youth through Social Advocates for Youth (SAY): (707) 800-3967, saysc.org
- Donate travel-sized, personal hygiene products and professional clothing for job interviews to former foster youth at VOICES: (707) 579-4327, onthemovebayarea.org

