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Colorado Parents, Community Organizations, CDHS, Illuminate Colorado and CDEC Team Members Launch Child Abuse Prevention Month at Capitol Event

Role of community organizations and prevention caseworkers recognized for strengthening families to help prevent child abuse and neglect

DENVER (April 3, 2023) –Community partners, child advocates and representatives from the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Illuminate Colorado, and the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) launched Child Abuse Prevention Month at a State Capitol event today. The occasion reinforced the importance of organizations, individuals and communities working together to strengthen families, one of the most effective ways to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The event featured speakers who reflect the continuum of child abuse prevention - from families who have accessed support, to community-based organizations that connect families to the resources they need, to the prevention work and resources provided by caseworkers and the child welfare system. Mekialaya White, KCNC-TV news anchor, emceed the event.

Timiya Jackson, executive director of [Heart & Hand Center of Denver](#) shared how her lived experience and the concrete supports she received as a child led to her role today with a Family Resource Center that provides programs to support children, youth and families.

Stacy Tracey with Denver County’s Department of Human Services explained her role as a prevention caseworker and the supports they provide to families to decrease the likelihood of abuse and neglect, including helping families identify needs and developing support plans to reduce a wide range of life stressors.

Attendees also heard from a Colorado parent who has benefitted from community support. “I know how important it is to have a strong family unit for raising kids – and all parents need extra support sometimes. I definitely did having nine kids to care for,” said Spanish-speaker Lupita Cardoza with the help of a translator. “My family is thriving and stronger because of the support I received through community programs and resources at Sister Carmen Community Center.”



“The speakers here today truly represent the continuum of prevention that’s so essential to strengthening families and keeping kids safe,” said Minna Castillo Cohen, director of the Office of Children, Youth and Families at CDHS. “From the primary prevention work that our partners do to stop child maltreatment before it ever starts, to secondary prevention work by CDEC and partners that addresses the risk factors associated with child maltreatment, to tertiary prevention, where we all collaborate to strengthen families involved in the child protection system to ensure brighter futures for children.”

The event is also the start of a month-long campaign by partners across the state to promote #PreventionInPartnership and #BuildingTogether to raise awareness of the many ways Coloradans can help to strengthen families in their community to ensure all children have the opportunity to thrive.

We all play a role in preventing child abuse and neglect. Some examples of how community partners and neighbors can lend support to families and relieve some of the overload experienced by parents and caregivers include:

- Offer to babysit to give parents a break
- Coordinate a meal sign-up calendar for new parents or a neighborhood family in need
- Organize a neighborhood gathering so families can meet each other
- Ask a family if they need something picked up the next time you run to the store

In addition to doing their part to help strengthen families, all Coloradans are encouraged to call the CO4Kids Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-844-CO-4-Kids or 844-264-5437) if they are concerned a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect.

Thanks to concerned Coloradans who made calls to the hotline in 2022, local county human service agencies in Colorado assessed the safety of more than 50,678 children. Of those children, 10,918 children experienced abuse or neglect and an additional 17,024 children’s families received voluntary support from social services to help strengthen their families and prevent child abuse or neglect in the future.

For more ways to help strengthen families, visit <https://co4kids.org/myrole>. To learn more about child abuse and neglect prevention and activities happening around the state, visit CO4Kids.org.

About CO4Kids

The Colorado Department of Human Services CO4Kids campaign encourages all Coloradans to help strengthen families and communities. To learn about the signs of child abuse and neglect and for information about how to become a foster or adoptive parent, visit CO4Kids.org. Call 844-CO-4-Kids (844-264-5437) to report concerns about child abuse and neglect. If a child or teen is in immediate danger, dial 9-1-1.

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