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**Contact:**

Carla Rodriguez, Public Awareness Communications Specialist  
720.951.6177  
[carla.a.rodriquez@state.co.us](mailto:carla.a.rodriquez@state.co.us)

**CDHS Recognizes April as Child Abuse Prevention Month**

*Colorado is committed to strengthen families and prevent child abuse*

**DENVER (April 1, 2024)** – The Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) at the Colorado Department of Human Services recognizes April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. OCYF calls all individuals, communities, legislators, state agencies, media, organizations as well as public and private service providers in the state to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect from ever happening.

This collective responsibility creates a positive support system that families can rely on during difficult times. It also reinforces the [five protective factors](#) that can reduce the likelihood of child abuse. These factors include parental resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development and social-emotional competence of children.

"Throughout my childhood and into adulthood, I didn't know where to go to find the help, support, or guidance I needed," recalls [Nate Bustamante](#), who was involved in the child welfare system as both a child and a parent, and now has helped over 60 parents find services and overcome challenges. "I help parents find resources and shift their perspective because I have seen miracles happen when they change their view."

There are [more than 50 ways](#) in which neighbors, community organizations, employers, people in the service industry, faith communities and any Coloradan can help strengthen families. 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.

"We've made tremendous progress as a state in ensuring families have access to supportive services whenever they face challenges, yet there is still much to do to ensure that every parent or caregiver has easy and equitable access to these resources," says OCYF Interim Director Mollie Bradlee. "However, we can't do this alone. We need more individuals like

Nate, who are willing to lend a helping hand to families and, through healthy and positive relationships, become an integral part of their support system.”

In 2023, the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline received 117,760 calls related to child welfare, with 32,839 screened due to meeting statutory criteria for assignment and further assessment. In the same year, approximately 4,000 referrals were referred to county level prevention services. In 97% of child welfare assessments of abuse and neglect, children and youth were able to remain in their homes while families are connected with supportive services.

### **About CO4Kids**

CO4Kids is the Colorado Department of Human Services’ statewide initiative to provide awareness about Colorado’s child welfare system. It focuses on educating the public about the signs of child abuse and neglect, while raising awareness about the Hotline (844-264-5437) to report concerns related to a child or youth. CO4Kids also strives to strengthen families as a means of preventing abuse and neglect from happening in the first place, helping all Colorado kids grow in a safe environment. The campaign is committed to recruiting and retaining foster and adoptive parents so that when an out-of-home placement is unavoidable due to safety concerns, a child has a safe place to thrive.