

April 2001: Child Abuse Prevention Month

Ideas for Preventing Child Abuse in American Indian Communities

PLANNING

1. Establish a Child Abuse Prevention Month committee within your organization or community—a grassroots community action team—to plan the "whats, whens and hows" of making everyone aware of the importance of preventing child abuse. (Contact NICWA for ideas. Our address is given at the end of this document).
2. Remember: "A good plan today is better than a great plan tomorrow." Try not to get bogged down in planning. Think of the great number of children and families that will benefit once you take action.
3. Declare a theme for Child Abuse Prevention Month. Organizations can also create slogans to enhance their theme, such as "Community Coalition for Children." Try brainstorming to find the theme or slogan that works best for your group.
4. Create a calendar and a checklist for organizing and implementing Child Abuse Prevention Month plans. Be sure to schedule time to support one another in your goals and make sure your goals are indeed attainable.
5. Fortify yourself or your spokesperson with the most recent child abuse/neglect statistics (which can be obtained from BIA, tribal or state social services), a quotable rationale for prevention, and specific information about your organization—goals, activities, growth, support.
6. Check with other organizations in the community to see if they are planning events in the month of April. For example, someone might be planning an all-Indian basketball tournament or a powwow. This is an excellent opportunity to attach a prevention theme to the event. Also, you want to make sure you don't overlap your important events with someone else's important events.
7. Make sure the materials you create or use identify who you are and how people can get in touch with you. If you are a community prevention committee, name yourself and give a phone number and contact person.
8. Prepare mailing lists, particularly for media, other child and family service organizations, pediatricians, tribal officials, corporate participants or prospects, schools, and spiritual leaders and places of worship.
9. Identify funding needs and resources. Contact NICWA for information regarding funding.

KICK-OFF ACTIVITIES

10. Issue "Media Alerts" or press releases to local radio and television stations, tribal and local newspapers, and community organizations announcing that April Is National Child Abuse Prevention Month.
11. Proclamations with or without a signing ceremony are still popular ways to kick off Child Abuse Prevention Month. They help validate and institutionalize prevention activities. Ask for proclamations from your tribal elected officials or elders, and from your mayor, city council, village president, board of trustees, county board, school boards, etc., locally.
12. "Kick-off" Child Abuse Prevention Month in a variety of ways, such as with an open house, powwow, a school event, special luncheon or dinner, conference or seminar, fund raiser, or media event.

MASS MEDIA ACTIVITIES

13. Receptivity by the media to your April events can be enhanced by including a prominent media or community personality on your Child Abuse Prevention Month planning committee.
14. Localize NICWA's media campaign video and radio public service announcements and print ads. The materials are developed in such a way that this can be done. (Also, you may contact our office for a catalogue of additional prevention materials.)
15. Create Child Abuse Prevention Month press packets and distribute them to the media. The packet usually includes information about your event, group, organization, issue, etc., as well as contact names.
16. Create resource packets for your other community organizations that include a schedule of your activities, a list of what they can do to get involved, literature, and other helpful information.
17. Host a "Broadcast Breakfast" or luncheon to introduce the local media to your plans for celebrating Child Abuse Prevention Month. Use the occasion to educate the media or to express appreciation for individual or collective support for your cause/services.
18. Contact talk show hosts. Offer suggestions for program content and spokespersons on subjects related to strengthening families and protecting children, such as involving extended family in prevention, the need for

MASS MEDIA ACTIVITIES (cont.)

everyone to be part of the solution to the child abuse problem, or the relationship between child abuse and substance abuse. Media coverage is important to educate the nearby non-Indian communities as well.

19. Use media "community calendars" to publicize events for children and families during April.

20. Design and produce a program for cable television in your community that promotes child abuse prevention. Utilize your local community college or schools for this kind of project.

21. Approach a major advertiser in your area and negotiate incorporation of a Child Abuse Prevention Month message within their broadcast or print ad(s) during April. For example, if there is timber industry on your reservation, contact the corporation's manager.

22. Promote use of NICWA Public Service Announcements by newspapers during April.

23. Create educational, informative side bars to accompany print PSA'S.

24. Work with local newspapers to get the Spider-Man comic in supplement form inserted during April. (*National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse can be of assistance. Spiderman speaks out about child abuse and neglect in a special comic series. NCPA's address is given in #92.*)

25. Collaborate with a local writer to create an article or series of articles for April on how to intervene when you see the potential for child abuse; why we should incorporate traditions into parenting classes; how to make shopping with children a more pleasant experience; or, why tribes should pass children's rights resolutions, for example.

26. Convince newspaper(s) to publish a Child Abuse Prevention Month calendar, focusing on events and activities planned for children and their families. Give them a copy of the one you have developed.

27. Educate the public on a key issue, such as corporal punishment in schools, by writing a guest editorial or article.

28. Take lots of photographs of your events. There are times when newspapers will not print your story (not newsworthy enough), but may be very willing to print your photo, especially if it is interesting. (Black and white photos work best.)

OTHER PUBLIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

29. Create Child Abuse Prevention Month banners and make them available to schools, social service organizations, family court, and libraries, for example. Connect with a local business for funding.

30. Use electronic billboards—usually found along urban express-way systems and on or near banks, car dealerships, fast food restaurants, etc.—to display your Child Abuse Prevention Month message(s).

31. Get your messages on scoreboards at sporting events—baseball, basketball, football. Suggestion: tie in a fund raising component, such as a corporate-sponsored race or a contest for increased attention. Enlist tribal employees to form community teams.

32. Develop signs for schoolbuses or local transit to carry your message.

33. Distribute the Exchange Club's "You Can't Beat 'Em" April calendar through schools, places of worship, and/or community groups. It gives parents the opportunity to write down something good about their child(ren) each day. (The calendar and order form is included in the NICWA Prevention Packet.)

34. Create fliers for use as shopping bag stuffers by retailers or as bill or statement stuffers by local utilities or banks using NICWA's Newsprint PSA's or create your own.

35. Provide camera-ready artwork to your tribe's elected officials asking them to incorporate child abuse prevention messages in their mailings to tribal members and others.

36. Develop and print bookmarks for distribution through libraries or schools. Ask the PTA, schoolboard or tribe to help. Use the back side to list community resources.

37. Collaborate with your local IHS Community Health Representatives (CHR) or Indian Child Welfare program to distribute literature to Indian Health Service clinics and hospitals during April. (See NICWA catalog for ordering information.)

38. Begin working on a campaign in April to create activities for the summer when children are at home full-time. This is a great time for some family fun activities or parent-child bonding.

OTHER PUBLIC AWARENESS (cont.)

39. Make your community aware of the line of "Positively Indian!" greeting cards produced by the National Indian Child Welfare Association. Promoting them will benefit NICWA and provide a new tool for enhancing education, especially during April. (See the NICWA catalog.)
40. Develop an awareness program on the subject of selecting and preparing baby-sitters. (Contact NICWA for information resources regarding babysitting.) Target hospital, child care and school parent information/education programs.
41. Get your local independent or chain grocery store(s) to print child abuse prevention messages on their bags during April.

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

42. Hold a "Volunteer Recognition" event during April.
43. Take time out to express appreciation to the Child Protective Services workers in your community—tribal, BIA, and/or state—during April. They need your support and encouragement.
44. Schedule a special tribal leadership awareness training for April.
45. Convene the boards or representatives from other tribal child abuse organizations/councils for a one or two day "Partnerships" seminar to get acquainted, set priorities, establish working relationships, etc.
46. Conduct a drive to involve more community members in your activities. Since child abuse and neglect affects all of us, it is a good idea to involve the whole community.
47. Contact at least one other tribal social services program and exchange ideas or get input regarding Child Abuse Prevention Month plans/activities.
48. Conduct a "Blue Ribbon Campaign" in your community or reservation-wide. (Information enclosed.)
49. Begin planning in April to participate in or attend the 13th Annual "Protecting Our Children" National American Indian Child Welfare Association Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, April 25-27, 1995 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. (Contact NICWA for more information about the conference.)

SCHOOLS

50. Plan a "Report Card Reflex" (*produced by the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse*) prevention campaign to coincide with the quarterly grade reports which should occur in April in most schools around the country. (A camera-ready copy is included in your NICWA Prevention Packet.)
51. Work with school systems on poster or essay contests that create awareness in children of what the essential ingredients are in good parent-child and family relationships. Publicize and award prizes.
52. Organize a poetry contest relevant to Child Abuse Prevention Month. Publicize and award prizes.
53. Create and distribute Child Abuse Prevention Month posters to schools serving your communities or reservation.
54. Invite a community prevention speaker to come to the school to talk to students about communicating with their parents.
55. Plan and conduct training programs for school personnel within the context of Child Abuse Prevention Month.
56. Work with schools to encourage special "personal safety" programming for children during April, i.e., a Spider-Man appearance, storytelling, speakers, videos, puppet shows.
57. Persuade a local business or the tribe to sponsor appearances of Spider-Man in schools in April. (Call Joy Byers at National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPA) for more information. See #92.)
58. Conduct reservationwide or community training seminars for educators focusing on child abuse related issues, such as child development and behavior, the educator's role in child abuse prevention, alternatives to using corporal punishment in the classroom, and traditional American Indian child management practices.
59. Distribute items--pencils, pens or rulers, for example--to school children during April with positive messages, such as "Be a friend" and "Respect One Another."
60. Get your messages on scoreboards at sporting events—baseball, basketball, football.
61. Hold "Parent Day" at the school and allow parents to be a part of the teaching process with their children.

ACTIVITIES WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS AND AMERICAN INDIAN LEADERS

62. Work with tribal policymakers to establish the 90's as the "Decade of the Child."
63. Sponsor or co-sponsor a Tribal Conference on Child Abuse Prevention in April. Approach a major business in your area to furnish one or more scholarships.
64. Host a breakfast or a regional conference of or community coalition as a resource on the subject of child abuse and neglect and necessary prevention strategies.
65. Work with the appropriate tribal or BIA department to achieve recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month through notification on tribal or BIA checks.
66. Collaborate with the department of children/family services and the children's trust or prevention fund in your state to plan and conduct a reservation or community-wide prevention activity.
67. Use April as the time to take action on legislation affecting the welfare of children and families or to educate leaders and community members about child abuse and neglect legislation issues.

ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

68. Remind all youth-serving agencies, organizations and schools that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month; encourage them to plan a special event for April to celebrate children/families. Encourage formation of partnerships.
69. Host a child abuse prevention conference or seminar in April for youth leaders from various groups—youth sports, Indian clubs, and religious groups, for example.
70. Contact Alcohol and Drug Abuse prevention programs in your community or on the reservation to plan a Child Abuse Prevention Month activity. If any community group holds a special event in April, invite them to help plan.
71. Contact child abuse prevention resources on other reservations, in the state or nation. Obtain ideas and literature on prevention activities.
72. Conduct a community education session on child abuse prevention and/or related issues--child care, the substance abuse-child abuse connection, stress management—in April for at least one business or tribal office where tribal members work.

73. Organize a "Safe-at Home" day with your local little league or softball league. Arrange for an elder to throw out the first pitch; create and produce "Safe-at Home" buttons or stickers for kids and their families to wear; secure corporate sponsorship; notify the media, etc.

ACTIVITIES INVOLVING THE RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL COMMUNITIES

74. Notify the places of worship and spiritual leaders in your community that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Propose setting aside a day in April to celebrate children and families.
75. Organize elders and spiritual leaders and hold a traditional ceremony to celebrate family. Invite community members, especially parents.
76. Engage local churches and spiritual elders in grassroots planning activities. Involve them as volunteers or in fundraising.
77. Distribute child abuse literature and information through church and ceremonial activities.
78. Work with religious leaders to establish study groups within their congregations on the problem of family violence, how it affects communities, and how to effect change.
79. Work with religious and spiritual leaders to encourage positive parenting by setting up parenting education courses or parent support groups. Suggest to church members that they consider offering their facility for meetings of self-help or support groups for abusive parents or adult victims.

FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

80. Consider the fund raising potential of any of the above ideas.
81. Hold an auction in April—"Bids for Kids"—the proceeds of which go to a grassroots child abuse prevention organization.
82. Hold a family fun fair. Sell tickets for participants to come in and win part of the prize money, or gather raffle items from local businesses to raffle off.
83. Sponsor a "Bowl-A-Thon" where the proceeds benefit children or families in some way.

FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES (cont.)

84. Contact a local merchant or business to set up a donation from them based upon a portion of their sales in the month of April or throughout the year.

85. Sponsor an all-Indian basketball tournament with an entrance fee for each team, admission at the door for spectators, concessions, and raffle items with proceeds benefitting your efforts.

86. Diaper Runs, Walks, or Races collect goods, rather than money. Registration fees for these events are boxes of disposable diapers that are donated to programs, such as treatment programs for drug addicted babies and their mothers and programs that give care to teenage parents and their babies.

87. Community college campuses are sources of volunteers for fundraising events. Hold a "teeter-totter marathon" to raise money for child abuse prevention. Continuous rowing, stationary bicycling, or jogging are also ideas for "marathon" activities. Conducting the event off campus, such as at a community center, increases the potential for greater proceeds.

88. Other fundraising ideas—powwows; cowplops (a field is marked off in squares, everyone buys a square, a cow is fed and let go in the field, and whoever bought the square where the cow "plops" wins half the money); fun runs; or community meals.

RESOURCES

89. Familiarize yourself and your committee with two NICWA publications—"Grassroots Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in Indian Communities" or "Walking in Your Child's Moccasins" or "Watchful Eyes (re: what community members can do)"—and learn what you can about child abuse and neglect. Pass the booklets on too.

90. Talk to community members who are aware of the numbers of reported cases of child abuse in your community. Arm yourself with knowledge. Talk to community members who are outspoken about their own experiences as victims of abuse and/or as abusers. If you've had your own experience, share it with others who might benefit.

91. Find out about local, regional and national conferences and workshops where children and family issues are being talked about, e.g., the National Association for Native American Children of Alcoholics, Seattle, WA; National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect Conference, NICWA, Portland, OR; and others.

92. Contact the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse for general child abuse and neglect information. Their address and telephone numbers are: NCPCA Public Awareness Department, 332 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1600 Chicago, IL 60604; (312)663-3520.

93. Contact NICWA for American Indian-relevant and other information, resources, or materials you might need to make this year's Child Abuse Prevention Month the most successful and effective ever. Please write or call for a catalogue.

94. Work with a local musical group to host a "no child abuse listener appreciation" concert.

95. Help set up a local child abuse prevention resource center in the public library or Indian health clinic, where prevention information can be made available to all.

96. Develop a Web site on the World Wide Web Internet for your tribe or community that contains Indian child abuse prevention information as well as names and numbers of local resources that people in need may turn to.

97. Create a bumper sticker that names your tribe and says something about not abusing children and make it available to tribal members.

98. Ask your tribal council to have the casino sponsor some activity eg; the tiny-tots dance at a pow-wow during April.

99. Call the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse & Neglect Information for materials to help you prevent child abuse in your community (800) 394-3366.

Our address and telephone number:

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*Thank you.
May the Great Spirit watch over and protect
the families and children of your community.*