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April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Illinois DCFS kicks off monthlong observance with virtual event in Carterville

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services today joined Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, the Poshard Foundation for Abused Children, Jackson County States Attorney Joe Cervantez, Associate Judge of the First Judicial Circuit Court Christy Solverson and John A. Logan College President Dr. Kirk Overstreet at a virtual press conference to commemorate Child Abuse Prevention Month. The online event, livestreamed from John A. Logan College in Carterville, kicked off a month-long observance to share child abuse and neglect prevention awareness messages and promote prevention efforts across the country.

“This year has been extremely difficult for all of us, but it’s also been a year of people and communities coming together to support each other,” said **Illinois DCFS Acting Director Marc D. Smith**. “By texting a friend to ask how they are doing, delivering groceries to a neighbor in need or staying on a video call for a few extra minutes so a child can tell you about their day we are all doing our part to strengthen families – and when families are strong, children are safer.”

“We are truly in unprecedented times. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on each of us and continues to impact our children and families. We’ve all experienced increased stress and disruption in our normal routines,” said **Denise McCaffrey, executive director of Prevent Child Abuse Illinois**. “This year more than ever, it is important that we raise awareness about child abuse prevention and create positive supports for parents and caregivers. April is the perfect time to share the message that all children deserve happy, healthy childhoods and we all have a responsibility and a role in protecting children.”

All Illinoisans can get involved and show their commitment to ending child abuse by wearing blue on April 9 and posting pictures on social media with the hashtags #GreatChildhoods and #GoBlueIllinois.

A recording of the kickoff will be made available on the DCFS Facebook page:
[Facebook.com/IllinoisDCFS](https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisDCFS).

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call the Illinois DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873). In a non-emergency situation, visit the Online Reporting System at <https://dcfsonlinereporting.dcf.illinois.gov/>. The user-friendly online system is an easy and convenient way for anyone to report suspected child abuse or neglect using any mobile device. Calls and online reports may be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

About the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Founded in 1964, DCFS is responsible for protecting children from abuse or neglect by responding to calls received on the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). With the goal of keeping children safe, DCFS strengthens and supports families with a wide range of services. When keeping a child safe means removing them from the home, DCFS makes every effort to reunite them with their family. When the best interest of the child makes this impossible, DCFS is committed to pursuing adoption by loving families to provide children with a safe and permanent home. DCFS is also responsible for licensing and monitoring of all Illinois child welfare agencies.

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