

For Immediate Release

March 30, 2018

## **Illinois DCFS and community partners kick-off April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, support great childhoods for all Illinois youth**

*Events planned in Chicago, Springfield, Decatur, Edwardsville and Carterville*

(CHICAGO, Ill) – The public is invited to join the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, other child welfare stakeholders, elected officials and more for a month-long observance to share child abuse and neglect prevention awareness messages and to help promote prevention efforts across the country during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April.

This year's theme, **Supporting Great Childhoods**, is a call to action to help prevent child abuse and neglect by providing parents and families with support for children to thrive.

"At DCFS, we are often 'first responders' when it comes to helping families in crisis, and every day we see some of Illinois' most vulnerable children and their families," said Illinois DCFS Acting Director B.J. Walker. "Working together we can prevent serious harm to the children and reduce trauma that will potentially affect them all of their lives. In particular, we should join together – at the community level – to reach out and touch families who are struggling and do all that we can to support them so they can support their children."

In FY2017, there were 252,568 calls to the Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline resulting in an average of 1,500 investigations per week in Illinois. The impact of abuse on children manifests itself in many ways. Children may experience a range of emotional, psychological and physical problems and trauma as a result of being abused or neglected. Abused and neglected children are more likely to be self-destructive or aggressive, to abuse drugs and/or alcohol or become young offenders.

To heighten awareness, Illinois DCFS will host events across the state to mark the occasion. All events are open to the public. All Illinoisans are also encouraged to wear blue on April 6 to show support for Child Abuse Prevention Month and add the following hashtags to social media posts: #GreatChildhoods and #GoBlueIllinois.

(more)

**Upcoming Events:**

Tuesday, April 3, 2018

**Springfield** Kick-Off Event

10 a.m.

HSHS St. John's Hospital Pavilion Lobby

301 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Springfield

Wednesday, April 4, 2018

**Decatur** Kick-Off Event

10 a.m.

HSHS St. Mary's Hospital Main Lobby

1800 E. Lake Shore Drive, Decatur

Thursday, April 5, 2018

**Chicago** Blue Bow Kickoff Event

9 a.m.

Fourth Presbyterian Church (Michigan Ave. & Chestnut St.)

126 E. Chestnut Street, Chicago

Photo op and tying of blue bows to trees will take place at 9:50 a.m. outside.

Blue ribbons will be handed out to the public.

Friday, April 6, 2018

**Carterville** Kick-Off Event

10 a.m.

John A. Logan College (Main Entrance, Lower Level)

700 Logan College Drive, Carterville

Friday, April 6, 2018

**Edwardsville** Kick-Off Event

10 a.m.

Madison County Government Building

157 N. Main Street, Edwardsville

Monday, April 23 through Friday, April 27, 2018

**Chicago** Art Exhibit

9 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center Lobby

100 W. Randolph Street, Chicago

The exhibit will feature art from children who are currently in care, or have been in care, and by artists who have been affected by child abuse. Blue ribbons will be handed out to the public.

(more)

For a full calendar of related activities, click [here](#).

**Media Note:** Blue ribbons are a symbol of efforts to increase awareness of the prevalence and warning signs of child abuse and the prevention methods and measures available to reduce the incidence of child abuse.

Media Contact: Alissandra Calderon  
Associate Deputy Director of Communications  
312-814-6847; [Alissandra.Calderon2@illinois.gov](mailto:Alissandra.Calderon2@illinois.gov)

###