

The Alliance

FALL 2017

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Evidence-Based Parenting Class Comes to PFSA

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) began its work by helping local communities begin and sustain quality parent support and education programs to prevent child abuse and nurture healthy family relationships. In the decades that have followed, society and families have changed dramatically, but the need for support for parents and other caregivers hasn't decreased. If anything, helping struggling families is more important than ever. Here's one example of how PFSA prevents child abuse by helping parents.

PFSA is taking the lead in expanding an exciting parenting program across Pennsylvania – **ACT Raising Safe Kids**.

Launched in 2001 and revised in 2006 and 2011, *ACT Raising Safe Kids* is an evidence-based parent education program developed and coordinated by the American Psychological Association's Violence Prevention Office. It focuses on adults who care for children from birth to 8 years old. The program aims to strengthen positive parenting skills by teaching child development, behavior management, tools for effective anger and conflict management and media literacy. The *ACT Raising Safe Kids* program provides caregivers with a supportive social network to create safe

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Mission

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance educates, informs and leads communities to action to protect children from abuse and neglect.

pa-fsa.org



Save the date – April 4, 2018



Mark your calendar now for our **Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids Rally on April 4, 2018**. We're excited to begin planning for next year's premier event to observe Child Abuse Prevention Month. Last year, the first PFSA Blue Ribbon Champions Award Ceremony and Rally for Kids was a grand event held at the rotunda of the state Capitol. Blue ribbon flags were placed on the grounds of the State Capitol and along State Street as a reminder of the 34 children who died from abuse or neglect and recognizing the 4,032 children who were victims of child abuse in 2016.

The Blue Ribbon event was an opportunity to honor recognize Champions for Safe Kids from across the Commonwealth. These "everyday heroes" who stood up for children as part of their professional life, volunteer life, as parents or neighbors.

It's time to plan for next year's event and we need your help! To find out more, [join our planning committee](#) or become a sponsor for the "Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids" Rally contact Ann Moffitt, PFSA's Director of Development at 717-238-0937. Watch our website and Facebook page for updates! ●

Where Are They Now?

Over the past ten years, PFSA's **Painting for Prevention** collaborative murals have served as reminders of the importance of child abuse prevention. Each of the 28 murals remains in the community where it was created. Here are just a few of the mural current locations; you can find a complete list on our website.



Murals from 2009

- Scranton (2008) – Children's Advocacy Center of Northeast PA
- Bristol (2010) – Family Service Association of Bucks County, Kelly Family Center
- Muncy (2011) – SCI Muncy Parenting Department
- Sunbury (2014) – Northumberland County Children and Youth Services
- Johnstown (2015) – Beginnings, Inc.
- Easton (2016) – Easton City Hall

In June, the mural created in Allentown in 2009 was relocated to a new home in the Lehigh County Services Center. ●

Taking Hexagons on the Road

This past April we started *Working Together to Prevent Child Abuse*, an initiative to involve more PA citizens in Child Abuse Prevention Month. The program invited anyone who cares about kids – that's everybody! – to create a hexagon depicting their view of child abuse prevention and communities that care about kids. We received over 150 hexagons made by children, adults, families – anyone who cares about kids – from seven counties. A display of Working Together hexagons is being featured as part of the **2017 Interdependence Hexagon Exhibit XI** in Scranton. The exhibit began on September 1 and runs through September 29, 2017. We're looking forward to a bigger, better *Working Together* next April! ●



How You Can Help

- **Get to know your neighbors and kids who live nearby.**
- **Donate to child abuse prevention programs. Visit our website to support PFSA.**
- **Learn how to recognize and report child abuse.**
- **Look for the positive in every family and compliment parents.**
 - **Model solving problems without violence.**
 - **Participate in next year's Child Abuse Prevention Month events.** ●



On-Site/In-Person Mandated Reporter Training Now Available in Spanish

According to the Pew Research Center and the Lehigh Valley Research Consortium, Pennsylvania has grown increasingly diverse and the ethnic population experiencing the strongest growth is Hispanic or Latino. It is estimated that the total Hispanic population in Pennsylvania now exceeds 1.25 million or nearly 15% of our state's total population. Despite having the same training requirements as English speaking professionals who have a license or certification in a health-related field under the Department of State, this fast-growing population has not had the same training opportunities. Child abuse recognition and reporting training has been available in Spanish through on line training, but face-to-face training, which allows participants to ask questions and seek clarification in critical areas, has been missing.

PFSA is pleased to announce the launch of its acclaimed training for mandated reporters of child abuse, Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse, in Spanish. Through a unique partnership with Latino Connections, a full team of bilingual trainers will begin training professionals and volunteers who work with children in every region of Pennsylvania. And, thanks to the generous support of UPMC, PFSA's Train-the-Trainer program on child abuse recognition and reporting is also available in Spanish.

To schedule free, on-site training, enroll in Train-the-Trainer program or learn more about PFSA's online child abuse training in Spanish, visit www.pa-fsa.org. ●

PFSA Offers Train-the-Trainer for Mandated Reporters

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) realizes the immense responsibility of preparing staff to be knowledgeable and confident mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. PFSA's *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse* Train-the-Trainer (TTT) Program helps organizations build and expand in-house resources to offer Mandated Reporter Training. The organization chooses staff to become their in-house resource; these professionals are called "organizational trainers."

PFSA has more than 20 years' experience in training professionals on this subject and has trained thousands of mandated reporters across the state. PFSA is the only approved entity in Pennsylvania able to offer Train-the-Trainer (TTT). Our curriculum is approved for Act 48 credits and meets all requirements under both Act 126 (Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse requirement) and Act 31 for required training of mandated reporters.

What does an organizational trainer do?

The organizational trainer teaches PFSA's *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse* within their organization. The trainer helps participants complete the activities and answers questions, especially regarding specific situations that come up at their workplace.

How does PFSA prepare organizational trainers for this important role?

Our TTT session is two full days of instruction, practice sessions and review of our comprehensive Trainer's Guide. TTT is taught by our corps of master trainers, professionals with decades of experience who have been providing PFSA's training in the field. We provide

extensive information on how to set up training and best practices in presenting the material. After participating in the TTT Program, trainers will have knowledge and experience to keep everyone up-to-date on mandated reporter requirements.

What happens after the TTT session?

PFSA provides free update trainings whenever there are amendments to the CPSL, ongoing technical assistance regarding mandated reporting (when you call our toll-free number, you speak directly with our expert staff) and trainer development teleconferences to increase the skill and expertise of the organizational trainers.

To learn more about our Mandated Reporter Training, please visit www.pa-fsa.org or call 717-238-0937. ●



Protecting Babies, Supporting Mothers

Opioid use is all over media. You don't have to look far to find out about the harm that Substance Use Disorder (SUD) causes to babies exposed to drugs in utero. Everyone agrees that infants should be given the best start possible in life, and that entering the world with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS, "withdrawal" in newborns) is nowhere near that mark.

Recently, Rep. Kathy Watson (R-Bucks County) introduced legislation to help ensure that babies who are born dependent on controlled substances are safely cared for and receive medical services. The legislation reverses a 2015 amendment to the state's Child Protective Services Law that exempted health care providers from reporting infants born exposed to legally prescribed narcotics. Clearly, the protection of the newborn is the most crucial concern, but that's not where the concern ends.

We can care for both mothers and infants; it's not an "either/or" choice.

In an ideal world, treatment would be readily available for women seeking help early in pregnancy, surrounded by a loving family to temporarily care for the kids and provide support in recovery. Treatment would offer specialized services aimed at pregnant and post-partum mothers. This ideal world would not subject the substance user to the shame and stigma associated with SUD that often keeps people from asking for help. Women would not have to choose between getting prenatal care and losing custody of their children. And babies would be kept near – not taken away from – their mothers in early recovery.

If only we lived in an ideal world.

In our *real world*, we often take an opposite approach. Most SUD treatment centers don't offer services aimed at pregnant and postpartum women, and even fewer offer recovery drugs to control cravings and withdrawal to these women. Experts say that quitting drug use without the use of such medications has a higher incidence of relapse and can be stressful on a fetus. While there is progress in offering recovery medications in general, pregnant women face resistance from doctors wary of harming the fetus, though some studies have shown few or no long-term effects from their use.

Mandated reporters rightly make reports when infants are exposed to harmful drugs, and our overburdened, underfunded child welfare system becomes involved. In the state's 2016 *Annual Child Protective Services Report*, many of the calls to General Protective Services (GPS, for families where preventive services are needed) involve parental substance abuse, with mothers being reported most often. As the epidemic has grown, the Commonwealth has not responded to the needs of children to the extent needed.

While services vary, some counties have no alternative to removing children from the home. If it is safe – by providing ongoing treatment and support – to keep babies with their mothers, that should be the first goal of our child welfare and SUD treatment systems.

We each can help to prevent child abuse, and we can help children – and parents – affected by this deadly disease. September is National Recovery Month, a great time to become part of the movement toward an ideal world. ●



nts in Recovery

Recovering Families: A Program for Parents



One way that PA Family Support Alliance is helping parents with Substance Use Disorders (SUD) is our *Recovering Families* program, a parenting curriculum specific to those recovering from SUD. In it, we mirror much of the 12-step language (Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous) as we discuss how to talk to children about SUD and recovery, how to balance both parenting and recovery responsibilities, and the impact of SUDs on children. We work with local organizations to offer *Recovering Families* across Pennsylvania.

Currently, about 25% of those offering *Recovering Families* are parent education/family support groups; 18% are inpatient treatment programs; 15% are child welfare agencies; the rest are offered in corrections settings, outpatient treatment and other organizations.

In central Pennsylvania, a generous grant from the Josiah W. and Bessie H. Kline Foundation supports our work with parents in recovery at Hamilton Health Center's Baby Love program. Parents and their preschool-aged children gather weekly to eat lunch, have fun in age-appropriate child development activities, and learn new skills for positive parenting. One goal of the program is to encourage parents to reach out to each other for support outside of the group setting. PFSA works collaboratively with Hamilton Health to offer *Recovering Families* in Harrisburg.

Financial support from The Donald B. and Dorothy L. Stabler Foundation also makes it possible for PFSA to offer *Recovering Families* to parents in four programs operated by Gaudenzia, Inc. Beginning in September, residents of Vantage House in Lancaster, Integrity House in York, Concept 90 and New View in Harrisburg will participate in the *Recovering Families* program. Approximately twelve class sessions will be offered in each location, and repeated with new participants throughout the coming year. If you know an organization, foundation or individuals who would like to join these generous sponsors *help* PFSA *help* more parents through the *Recovering Families* program please contact PFSA's Director of Development, Ann Moffitt, 1-800-448-4906. ●



Congratulations!

PFSA's Program Director, Beth Bitler, has completed requirements to become a Certified Allied Addiction Practitioner (CAAP) through the PA Certifications Board (PCB). PCB is a private, non-profit corporation which offers voluntary credentialing to the substance use and other behavioral health professional. CAAPs work with people in treatment and recovery from Substance Use Disorder, typically in roles other than counseling or clinical.

Beth has been on the staff of PFSA for over 18 years, most recently developing the *Recovering Families* program. In that capacity she helps parents improve their relationships with their children and balance their needs in both parenting and recovery. "The certification process was important to me," says Beth, "as I learn more and more about the disease and the hope of recovery. I wanted to offer parents in *Recovering Families* updated information and enhance my skills." ●



Evidence-Based Parenting Class Comes to PFSA

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communities for their children. The program is delivered by certified *ACT* Facilitators, who can use the program in a variety of settings.

The program is based on research showing that:

- Children learn the basic foundations for life in the early years.
- Parents can be the best positive teachers and role models *or* the perpetrators of violence, abuse and neglect against their children.
- Exposure to abuse and neglect early in life can have serious long-term consequences for children.

ACT Raising Safe Kids is cost-effective and more affordable than other parenting interventions, and comparative study has shown that *ACT* presents better outcomes. The program is well evaluated by senior researchers. Parents enjoy the program because it is hands-on, participatory and teaches skills that can be used right away.

PFSA provides training for professionals who are seeking certification to offer *ACT* in their communities. The two-day training is conducted by *ACT* Master Trainers and the registration fee includes all materials needed to conduct the parent classes; the final step in certification is an observation by a Master Trainer. **The next *ACT Raising Safe Kids* Facilitator Training will be held November 2 – 3 in Harrisburg.**

Visit our website or call PFSA at 717-238-0937 for more information. ●

Children of Incarcerated Parents: Training for Staff and Volunteers

Tuesday, December 5, 2017 – Philadelphia

PFSA is hosting a special training on Children of Incarcerated Parents. This training will explore how to respond to the needs of children and families of the incarcerated. It will provide participants with an overview of data and demographics, and examine what is known about the impact of parental incarceration on children, including the effects of trauma and toxic stress on brain development. The training also provides a national perspective on promising practices for responding to the needs of these children.

The presenter for the program is Ann Adalist-Estrin. Ann is Director of the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated at Rutgers



University, Camden New Jersey. Under Ann's leadership, NRCCFI has provided training and consultation to government and

non-government agencies and community programs in 48 states. She consulted to Sesame Street's "Little Children, Big Challenges Campaign," among many projects.

Details were being finalized at press time. Visit www.pa-fsa.org for event details in late September. ●

Parents & Partners in Harrisburg



PFSA was a proud partner with The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (Harrisburg) in "Parents and Partners." Over the past three years, we trained 35 Family Engagement staff to transition children to kindergarten. Topics included communication skills, setting boundaries, resiliency, post-traumatic stress disorder, preventing child abuse, engaging parents in their child's education and advocating for children. Parents & Partners sponsored family fun events for over 1,300 people and distributed more than 1,700 resources like homework toolkits, school readiness calendars and children's books on entering kindergarten. PFSA worked with parents of preschoolers on alternatives to physical discipline, helping children adapt to change and other topics. ●

"If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet... there is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person."

— Fred Rogers



Test Your Knowledge About Reporting Child Abuse!

TRUE OR FALSE?

To make a report to ChildLine, you must have heard about the abuse directly from the child.

False. The child does not need to come before you for the mandated reporter to make a report of suspected child abuse. Recent changes to the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) clarified this point. You do not need to see or talk to the child to make a report. Once you have reasonable cause to suspect, a report must be made.

If the identity of the person who allegedly abused the child is not known, then the mandated reporter doesn't need to make a report.

False. You do not need to know the identity of the person responsible for the suspected child abuse to make a report. The investigation will determine who abused the child. You do not need to know their name, their address or their relationship to the child. All you need is reasonable cause to suspect someone has abused the child.

Employees who are minors and have direct contact with children are mandated reporters.

False. Only adults (over age 18) are considered to be mandated reporters. PFSA suggests that minors who have direct contact with other minors through work or volunteering be considered in a reporting policy so that they know whom to tell if they have a concern.

There is free, on-site training available to schools, religious organizations and community groups on how to recognize and report child abuse.

True! PFSA offers **free on-site training** at your location. Just choose your date and time and we'll come to you with the most updated information, presented by our expert trainers. Schedule your training by contacting PFSA at 717-238-0937 or visiting our website – www.pa-fsa.org.

ChildLine
1-800-932-0313
Child abuse hotline available 24 hours a day

Learn How to Recognize and Report Suspected Child Abuse

Register for one of our Mandated Reporter Training sessions:

- Saturday, September 23 – Dauphin County (3 sessions) and Centre County
- Monday, September 25 – Perry County
- Tuesday, September 26 – Greene County and York County
- Wednesday, September 27 – Dauphin County (2 sessions)
- Thursday, September 28 – Lancaster County
- Friday, September 29 – Berks County
- Monday, October 2 – Cumberland County
- Friday, October 13 – Delaware County

All sessions are FREE and OPEN to any mandated reporter. Visit our website pa-fsa.org to register! ●

Training for Recovering Families Instructors

PFSA offers training to organizations offering *Recovering Families* in treatment programs, community settings or parent support groups. Contact PFSA for more information or register for an upcoming session:

- Tuesday, October 3 in Harrisburg
- Wednesday, November 29 in New Kensington (Pittsburgh area)
- Monday, December 4 in Philadelphia

Additional dates will be added to our website www.pa-fsa.org ●

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“Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression.”

— Dr. Haim Ginott

