



## April is *Still* Child Abuse Prevention Month

There is no dispute that everything feels different, unsettled, and upended right now. This is the month PA Family Support Alliance would normally be planting blue flags, waving blue ribbons, and asking elected officials, members of the media, and communities throughout the commonwealth to go blue for a day for Child Abuse Prevention Month.

With appreciation and gratitude, PFSA joins millions in lighting blue light bulbs in honor of the medical professionals who are caring for people with COVID-19, but we are still honoring Child Abuse Prevention Month by focusing our efforts on messaging that addresses child safety. We know that social isolation increases the likelihood that maltreatment may occur, and we know the stressors associated with poverty also can leave even the most loving parent vulnerable to abusive behavior. PFSA has tips on establishing daily routines for parents, talking to children about the pandemic, co-parenting through COVID-19, and much more. Resources may be found at [www.pa-fsa.org](http://www.pa-fsa.org) or by contacting us directly.

Join the team at PFSA in encouraging grandparents, aunts, and uncles alike to check in on family members often and through any form of technology available. A word of encouragement or a few moments of distraction for parents and children will go a long way in these times. Call upon your neighbors; check in on one another. Schedule virtual playdates if possible, offer a word of encouragement to another parent, and provide information on community resources for food, diapers, and other necessities — without judgment.

So, for just this year, PFSA is passing on the blue lights, the blue ribbons, and public events. Instead, we pledge to bring helpful resources for parents, virtual training for mandated reporters, and messages for community members. And, of course, we express our appreciation and gratitude to all child welfare professionals who work tirelessly to help families be strong and healthy, now more than ever!

# Co-Parenting

## During a Shelter-in-Place Mandate

## Using the *Strengthening Families Protective Factors* as a Guide



We want you to know it is possible to move beyond relationship mistakes and resentments, as well as the devastation that comes along with a change of heart, especially when there are children impacted by parental decision-making.

Understandably, there will be trying moments. Everyone is experiencing new anxieties, social isolation, and worries about income or job security. Though it may feel like you are alone, you are not. There are millions of families nationwide facing similar circumstances.

We have compiled a few tips to help with discussions between co-parents and caregivers during this unique and trying time. We encourage you to reach out to your available supports, as well as other parents, for assistance in times of need.

### PARENTAL RESILIENCE

- ▶ Emphasize the strengths both parents bring to the table for your partnership. What qualities do each of you possess that can be helpful during this time? Focusing on solutions takes power away from negativity and opens more room for problem-solving.
- ▶ Talk with your co-parenting partner about the admiration you both have for your child, and identify your child's strengths. Sometimes, especially now, we all need a reminder of the greater good. Things did not work out in your relationship, but keep your eye on the prize: You get to share the experience of raising a wonderful child, one who needs and relies on both parents. Does your child have qualities the two of you share or aspire to develop? We learn from our children, so remain curious together and stay open-minded.

Now more than ever, the pressure is on. Children are home from school. Caregivers are balancing the existing demands of day-to-day life against working from home and caring for children – which often includes conducting virtual learning for youngsters of myriad ages. Families are managing increasingly problematic finances...and in the midst of all that, individuals are trying to practice self-care and social connection with others.

In families that are blended, separated, or co-parenting, the current shelter-in-place climate can create challenging situations and decisions for families and caregivers. For some families, this might mean children reside with one parent longer than usual. That means balancing logistical and emotional factors in decision-making regarding shared time with children – which calls for difficult decisions, in many cases.

## SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

- ▶ Identify your shared and individual peer and parenting resources. Every parent needs extra support in times like this. It's okay to ask for help!
- ▶ Understand that these supports may not be in physical form right now, so work together to be creative. Consider virtual playdates or kid and parent meetups using technology like Zoom, Skype, and Huddle. Take turns acting as a chaperone in kid-focused group hangouts, so other parents have an hour or two to get work or cleaning done.

## KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Talk with your co-parenting partner about the language and approach you will both use to educate your child about the pandemic, as well as what age-appropriate discussions to have about school and social distancing.
- ▶ Lean on other parents to share resources to guide these discussions. Remember: Words have a lasting impact, and kids rely on parents for true and clear guidance

## CONCRETE SUPPORTS IN TIMES OF NEED

- ▶ Talk with your co-parenting partner about current needs. Are there areas where either of you struggles financially? Is either of you experiencing shortages of food, personal hygiene items, or life-sustaining materials? Work together in the best interest of your child to identify mutual and individual sources of support and resources. This will benefit your child's emotional and physical wellbeing.
- ▶ Develop a plan for resource-sharing and ways you can help each other. This may include reaching out to local food pantries together or on each other's behalf or contacting your child's teachers to ask if your school district is

providing daily packed breakfast and/or lunch meals for children.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN

- ▶ By maintaining healthy, grounded, and mindful communication as co-parents, you model effective social-emotional communication and problem-solving skills for your child. Plan family check-ins individually and together. Talk with your child about how they feel and remind them of your availability. Work as co-parents to develop daily schedules and boundaries for playtime, schoolwork, and healthy sleep habits, and enforce these rules together. These discussions can occur via phone or video chat.
- ▶ Families can engage in playtime, board games, or coloring through email, apps, and most video-chat platforms. Working together to remain creative and responsive to the needs of your family and your child is a positive experience that everyone can benefit from now and build upon later.





# Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Network

As Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf takes increasingly restrictive measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, PFSA's Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Network members continue their work!

Utilizing the resources provided by PFSA, as well as the PA Department of Human Services and Department of Health, these agencies and their staff remain committed to the communities they serve, adapting to meet ever-changing needs. Individuals and families are struggling, but the CBCAP Network members are developing creative and virtual solutions for ongoing assistance and programming in the absence of face-to-face contact.

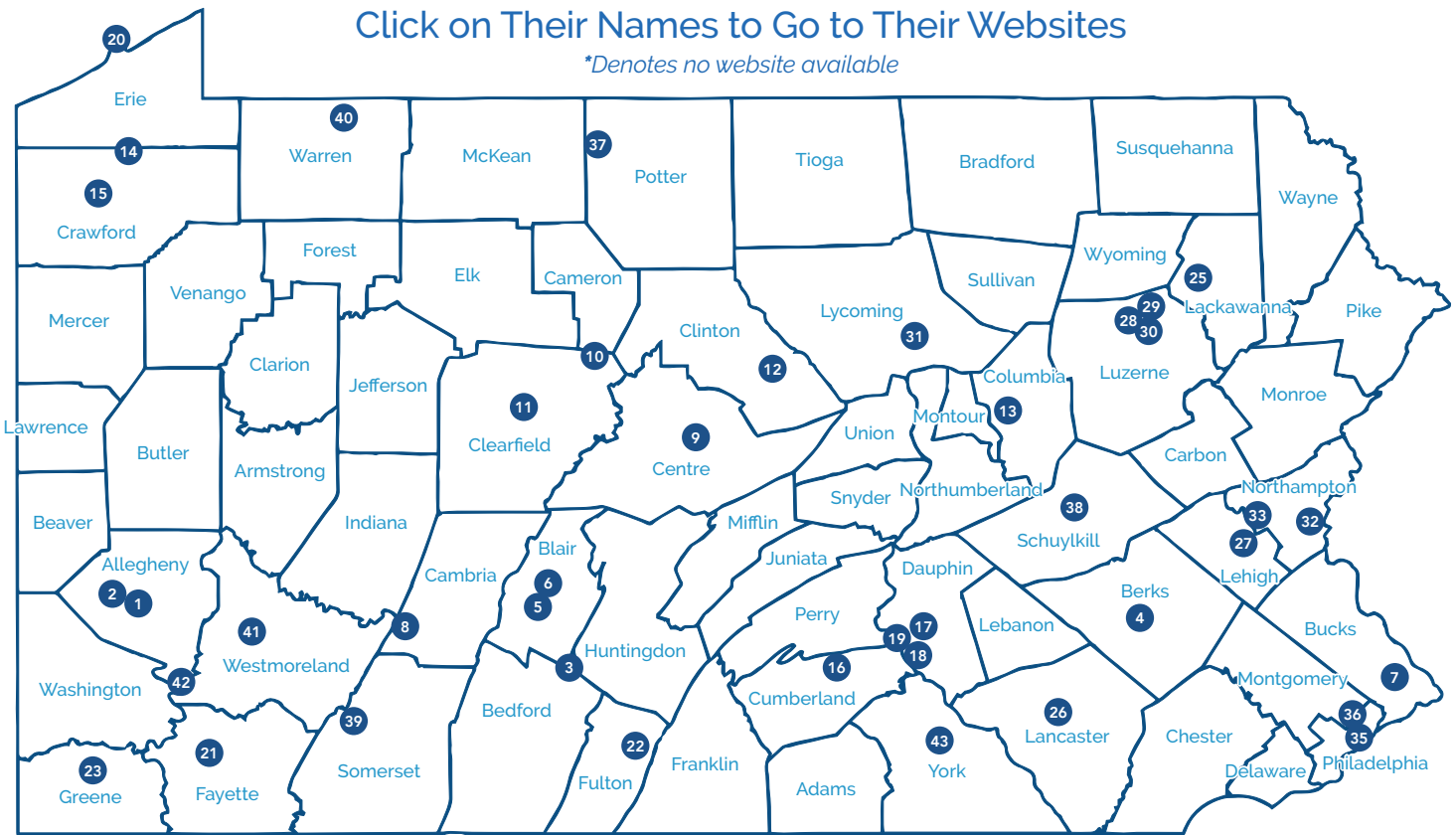
To recognize the efforts these agencies and organizations continue to make – and to highlight the many child abuse prevention services still available throughout Pennsylvania – PFSA is providing contact information and a map on the next page identifying the region each CBCAP Network agency and organization serves.

We hope to strengthen existing partnerships and forge new connections, so that when the COVID-19 crisis comes to its inevitable end, we will be even better equipped to carry on with our essential efforts for Pennsylvania's children.

# PFSA's CBCAP Network Partners

Click on Their Names to Go to Their Websites

*\*Denotes no website available*



- |            |  |                |   |
|------------|--|----------------|---|
| Allegheny  | 1. Renewal, Inc. - Lydia's Place                                 | Greene         | 23. Greene County Human Services Family Center              |
| Bedford    | 2. Holy Family Institute   | Indiana        | 24. CARE Center of Indiana County                           |
| Berks      | 3. Bedford-Fulton Head Start                                     | Lackawanna     | 25. EOTC Scranton Outreach Center for Community Resources   |
| Blair      | 4. Children's Home of Reading                                    | Lancaster      | 26. Blueprints for Addiction Recovery                       |
| Bucks      | 5. Roman Catholic Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown                   | Lehigh         | 27. Pinebrook Family Answers                                |
| Cambria    | 6. Child Advocates of Blair County                               | Luzerne        | 28. Luzerne County Head Start                               |
| Centre     | 7. Family Service Association of Bucks County                    | Northampton    | 29. The Institute for Human Resources & Services*           |
| Clearfield | 8. Beginnings, Inc.  | Philadelphia   | 30. Family Service Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania |
| Clinton    | 9. Children's Advocacy Center of Centre County                   | Lycoming       | 31. SCI Muncy*  |
| Columbia   | 10. Children's Aid Society of Clearfield County                  | Northampton    | 32. Project Child   |
| Crawford   | 11. Quehanna Boot Camp   | Northumberland | 33. Family Connection of Easton                             |
| Cumberland | 12. Infant Development Program                                   | Potter         | 34. Northumberland County Family Center                     |
| Dauphin    | 13. United Way of Columbia and Montour Counties*                 | Schuylkill     | 35. Catholic Social Services Philadelphia                   |
| Erie       | 14. SCI Cambridge Springs  | Somerset       | 36. CORA Services   |
| Fayette    | 15. Center for Family Services                                   | Warren         | 37. Potter County Human Services                            |
| Fulton     | 16. PA Department of Corrections Bureau of Community Corrections | Westmoreland   | 38. Clinical Outcomes Group, Inc.                           |
|            | 17. LGBT Center of Harrisburg                                    | York           | 39. Trinity Farms Center for Healing                        |
|            | 18. Tri-County Community Action                                  |                | 40. Forest-Warren Human Services                            |
|            | 19. Capital Area Head Start                                      |                | 41. Wesley Family Services Greensburg                       |
|            | 20. Erie Family Center   |                | 42. Monessen Family Center                                  |
|            | 21. Crime Victims Center of Fayette County                       |                | 43. Lehman Center - Children's Aid Society                  |
|            | 22. Fulton County Family Partnership                             |                |   |



# Be a Blue Ribbon Neighbor Today and Every Day

## How Community Members Can Protect PA's Most Vulnerable Neighbors

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and we all have a role to play in protecting PA's kids. With social distancing and pandemic-mitigating requirements, children are now much less visible than in the days prior to shelter-in-place. There are no playdates, schools are closed, birthday parties are cancelled. Safe havens like schools, extracurricular activities, team sports, teachers, and guidance counselors are no longer accessible to children, which increases the risk of situations involving abuse and neglect.

As a community, we need to support families with children and report suspected abuse and neglect so parents and caregivers receive the assistance needed to keep their children safe.

During times like these, community awareness, education, and support are vital to help all families continue to thrive and keep Pennsylvania's most vulnerable neighbors, children, safe.

Talk with your family and loved ones to consider ways you can safely reach out to families in your community. By eliminating stress and encouraging caregivers to reach out for and accept help, you are participating in primary prevention.



**Drop off groceries** at the front door, without social interaction. Many families have tight budgets and/or limited resources due to unemployment and lack of childcare.



**Check in** with known caregivers in your community. Sometimes neighborly small talk and warm hellos can provide an outlet for a caregiver or parent who has otherwise lacked contact with adults during this time. Ask folks how they are and if they need any errands run or supplies either for themselves or children in the home.



**Find fun activities** that are age-appropriate for children and can be done at home. Caregivers may struggle with the new adjustments of working from home and managing homeschooling for children with little to no assistance. By providing outlets for children, you offer caregivers much-needed, healthy breaks.



**Chat with kids and caregivers** through a virtual platform (like Zoom, Facebook, or Skype) where you can see each other and interact in positive ways to encourage them. Many families use planned virtual visits as a way of providing remote childcare timeouts, so that caregivers can complete a few home- or work-based tasks while a trustworthy adult plays a game or colors a picture with children on a video call.



**Connect them with community resources.** Email PFSA at [info@pa-fsa.org](mailto:info@pa-fsa.org) to find community-based agencies in the area.

Learn the warning signs of child abuse and neglect in children and how to report concerns so you are prepared:

- ▶ Numerous and/or unexplained injuries or bruises
- ▶ Chronic, pronounced anxiety and expressed feelings of inadequacy
- ▶ Flinching or an avoidance of being touched
- ▶ Fear of parent(s) or caregiver(s)
- ▶ Poor impulse control
- ▶ Demonstrating abusive behavior or talk
- ▶ Cruelty to animals or others

**Anyone can make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect by calling ChildLine at 800-932-0313.**

For additional and up-to-date resources, visit our website at [www.pafsa.org](http://www.pafsa.org). (Includes free virtual training for mandated reporters.)

For daily updates and links to reputable resources, like and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

## PFSA is Now Offering Mandated Reporter Training!

To meet the needs of our mandated reporters during the COVID-19 crisis, PFSA is now offering a FREE 3-hour virtual training. This training is approved by the Departments of State, Human Services, and Education and meets all requirements for Mandated Reporter Training in Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse (to include Act 126).

This training will satisfy requirements for both Act 31 continuing education units under the Department of State and Act 48 CEUs under the Department of Education.

**To obtain information about our training options and available sessions, please email [training@pa-fsa.org](mailto:training@pa-fsa.org).**

## Mandated Reporter Trainer Spotlight: Mark Castrantas

Mark Castrantas has been a trainer for PFSA since March 2016. He is a retired supervisor from Bucks County Children and Youth, where he worked for twenty years. Prior to beginning at Bucks County Children and Youth, he worked for four years with at-risk youth in the wraparound program at Penndel Mental Health Center. He was a practicing chiropractor for 36 years until his retirement in 2018.

Mark graduated from the Pennsylvania College of Chiropractic with a doctor of chiropractic degree and from Thomas Edison State College

with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. Mark is enjoying his semi-retirement as a trainer for PFSA, an instructor for the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, and an Airbnb host in Bucks County, where he lives with his wife, Lorraine. Mark has been married for forty years, is a proud father of three, and is papa bear to a wonderful granddaughter.

We appreciate the wealth of knowledge Mark brings to each training he provides to mandated reporters.

# An Interview with... Kathleen McGraw

## of Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company

Ann Moffitt, ACFRE and PFSA's Development Director, had the opportunity to interview Kathleen McGraw on March 31. McGraw is the Director of Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility for Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company (HERC) and an active member of PFSA's State Board of Directors.

HERC remains a dedicated partner and sponsor of our PA Blue Ribbon Champion for Safe Kids awards, celebrating those Champions who have done great things to keep PA's children safe.

### **Ann: Why is PA Family Support Alliance important to the Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company?**

Kathleen: The youth population is the most vulnerable, and many of our guests are children and adolescents. The Hershey Entertainment and Resorts Company (HERC) is dedicated to green, clean family fun and keeping people safe, happy, and healthy. HERC is built on families having meaningful vacations and outings, so we're fully committed to keeping them happy and healthy as they spend their time with us.

Further, we employ young people as young as age 14. These youth are taught how to work with younger children and be aware and observant of many difficult situations. They are trained to report using the If you see something, say something! method. Our work and our teams strive to give voice to those who often don't have one.

### **Ann: What does it mean to Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company to be a**



### **Blue Ribbon Champion for Safe Kids?**

Kathleen: Being a *Blue Ribbon Champion for Safe Kids* perfectly aligns with our company's brand, built on the philosophy and example of Milton S. Hershey and his wife. They created the Milton Hershey School especially for children in need of a nurturing environment. The school supports these children as they learn and cares for them as they grow.

By fulfilling Mr. Hershey's legacy, we maintain our focus on families and children through our philanthropic decisions and our volunteer efforts.

### **Ann: We all have a role to play as part of our communities in keeping kids safe. How does this relate to the activities of your organization?**

Kathleen: Hersheypark and our Hershey resorts are focused on family entertainment. HERC is dedicated to being a family destination, providing wholesome entertainment and activities.

For more than a hundred years, families have been coming to our locations — and generation after generation, they return. Grandparents providing family reunions bring their grandkids to enjoy those activities that were important memories for them. Our whole objective is to provide healthy, fun entertainment to families with children of all ages. *All children deserve to be safe and healthy.*