

# September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month



About one in five children in the United States are obese. Children with obesity are at higher risk for chronic health conditions and diseases like asthma, sleep apnea, bone and joint problems, and type 2 diabetes. Obesity can also lead to lifelong physical and mental health problems.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the top five factors contributing to childhood obesity are:

1. Too much time spent being inactive
2. Lack of sleep
3. Lack of places to go in the community to get physical activity
4. Ease of access to inexpensive, high-calorie foods and sugary beverages
5. Lack of access to affordable, healthier foods

During a pandemic, when many schools are virtual and sports events are canceled or postponed, it can be even harder to ensure children receive the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. However, the physical and mental benefits of regular physical activity for children are undeniable.

By promoting physical activity, we can help reduce childhood obesity risk factors during the pandemic, offering additional benefits during these anxious times. Exercise reduces stress and boosts the immune system in children – just as it does for adults.

Here are some ways to get your kids up and moving, regardless of how much space you have. Make it a family activity whenever possible, so you as a caregiver can enjoy the benefits, too!

1. Blow up a balloon and tell the kids to keep it off the ground without holding it.
2. Turn on some music and have a dance party.
3. Have competitive kids? See how many squats they can do in 15 seconds.
4. Read while standing up.
5. Find some yoga sessions online and do them together as a family.
6. Take a 30-minute walk as a family.

For more ideas, check out the American Heart Association website: [www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active/25-ways-to-get-moving-at-home-infographic](http://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active/25-ways-to-get-moving-at-home-infographic)

For more information on other ways parents and caregivers can help prevent obesity and support healthy growth, visit the CDC website: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/features/childhood-obesity/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/features/childhood-obesity/index.html)



## PFSA Welcomes Justin Donofrio

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We are excited to introduce you to our newest team member, Justin Donofrio! Justin joined the PFSA team on August 31, 2020, as the Family Support & Community Engagement Coordinator. Having received his Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) with a concentration in management, leadership, and community practice, Justin has over nine years of experience working with nonprofits and community organizations, primarily in the fields of child welfare and education.

With his valuable experience, Justin brings a comprehensive knowledge of Pennsylvania's child welfare system to PFSA. Justin has had the opportunity to collaborate with several local and statewide stakeholders across the commonwealth, and he has also conducted local, regional, and statewide training for child welfare professionals. Most recently, Justin developed and delivered training for local school boards throughout Pennsylvania and implemented evaluation procedures for various types of training workshops.

Justin values family, friends, and community in his life, and he loves spending time with his wife, Barbara, and their dog, Mya. Some of Justin's favorite activities include hiking, day trips, backyard sports, and cooking.



# Help Us Keep PA Kids Safe This Fall & Beyond

As you plan for another year of school activities, family vacations, and work events, be sure you're also considering your plan for charitable support of your chosen causes — including

PFSA and our mission of keeping PA kids safe, healthy, and free from abuse and neglect.

Visit [pafsa.org/donate](https://pafsa.org/donate) to schedule easy, automatic monthly contributions, providing PFSA with invaluable, dependable support.

We count on you to help us provide educational and preventative programming for parents, professionals, and volunteers who work with children every day. Your monthly scheduled donation of \$10, \$20, or more is greatly appreciated! One-time gifts are also always welcome.

## Mandated Reporter Trainer Spotlight: Cindy Stevenson

Cindy Stevenson has been providing Mandated Reporter Training on behalf of PFSA since February 2016.

Her career providing service to others spans more than 30 years. She spent 10 years working in early childhood education, developing curriculum and training childcare center staff in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Texas, providing direct care and teaching private kindergarten.

Cindy has worked as therapeutic staff support in juvenile detention centers and has provided adolescent group therapy services in a partial hospitalization program.

Cindy began her career in child welfare in 2002 as an intake caseworker for Franklin County Children and Youth Services and transferred to Fulton County in 2010. Cindy developed expertise in investigating child sexual abuse cases, conducting forensic interviews, and testifying as an expert witness.

In 2009, Cindy was one of the founding faculty for ChildFirst PA, an intensive five-day training program for multidisciplinary investigative teams. In 2018, Cindy began working as a legal advocate for a nonprofit agency serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.



Cindy lives in Chambersburg, PA, and is the proud mother of four children and grandmother of two. Cindy's role model is her mother, Mary Stevenson, of Gettysburg, PA. Growing up and into adulthood, Cindy was greatly impacted by her mother's work and practices that exemplified what it means to live a life of service, advocating for those in need in our communities.

**We appreciate the wealth of knowledge Cindy brings to each training she provides to mandated reporters. Thank you, Cindy!**



# Upcoming Trainings

During the month of September, PFSA is offering FREE 3-hour VIRTUAL trainings for community members and mandated reporters of child abuse.

## **Front Porch Project®**

The Front Porch Project is a community-based prevention initiative based on the belief that everyone can – and should – become more aware of how to help protect children and support families in their own community. It provides community members with the knowledge, training, and encouragement they need to take an active role in preventing abuse and neglect before it occurs.

## **Mandated Reporter Training**

Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse is for mandated reporters of child abuse. 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 suspected child abuse.

**For information about these trainings and available sessions, please email [training@pa-fsa.org](mailto:training@pa-fsa.org).**