

April 4, 2017



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PLANTS PINWHEELS TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

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Tallahassee, Fla. –Today, the Florida Department of Health recognized Child Abuse Prevention Month by joining other state agencies and community partners to support the nationwide *Pinwheels for Prevention* campaign. This morning, State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. Celeste Philip joined Florida First Lady Ann Scott and other state leaders to kick-off Child Abuse Prevention Month. Department employees also came together Friday to plant pinwheels to support the annual awareness campaign.

“We care deeply about the health and well-being of all children in Florida. The first 1,000 days of a child’s life are arguably the most influential to their future health,” said Dr. Philip. “When children’s needs are met in the first three years of life, they are more likely to thrive. We invite all Floridians to consider ways you can encourage families and get engaged with children’s issues in your community.”

Pinwheels for Prevention is part of a national movement to change the way people think about prevention. Florida’s campaign emphasizes the importance of learning about healthy child development, reinforcing positive parenting practices and taking action on behalf of the children and families in our communities. The blue and silver pinwheels represent the happy, healthy childhoods all children deserve. The campaign is sponsored by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) in partnership with the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Prevent Child Abuse Florida and numerous partners throughout the state.

One of the department’s key priorities is reducing infant mortality for all ethnicities. While Florida’s overall infant mortality rate has reached historic lows in recent years, these improvements have not been uniform across all groups, particularly black infants.

Through the department’s Florida’s Healthy Babies initiative, all 67 county health departments are engaged in identifying infant mortality disparities in their community and working with local partners to address these disparities through new or existing programs. As part of Florida’s Healthy Babies, the department has launched the Baby Steps to Baby Friendly program and the Protective Factors project. Baby Steps to Baby Friendly encourages and recognizes hospitals that promote and offer support for breastfeeding. The Protective Factors project uses evidence-based curricula to help families get the support they need to raise healthy children. Protective factors enhance parental resilience, social connections, provide concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social and emotional competence of children that decreases the risk of child maltreatment.

Child abuse can include mental or emotional abuse, or neglect. The Florida Department of Health's Children's Medical Services Child Protection Teams (CPTs) are medically-directed, multidisciplinary, community-based programs, which provide assessments that supplement the child protective investigation activities of DCF and designated sheriff offices. Each CPT is led by board-certified pediatricians with expertise in abuse and neglect. CPT staff also provides training for child protection investigators, other community providers of child welfare services, emergency room staff, and other medical providers.

If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, please call the Florida Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

To learn more about the department's Child Protection Teams, please click [here](#).

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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