



MAT HECK, JR.
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

Montgomery County, Ohio
(937) 225-5757
info@mcpo.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prosecutor Heck Recognizes April as Child Abuse Prevention Month

DAYTON, OH (04/01/2020) – Prosecuting Attorney Mat Heck, Jr. announced today the recognition of April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month to bring to the public’s attention the importance of giving every child a safe, stable, and nurturing place to live and grow.

As we have seen recently, incidents of child abuse and neglect remain unacceptably frequent in our community. Over the past year, there have been far too many cases of children and infants being injured or dying from abuse and/or neglect in Montgomery County. National statistics show that 1 in 4 children are abused or neglected at some point in their lives and the effect that abuse has on those children can be long-lasting, both physically and mentally.

Everyone can have an active role in helping to prevent child abuse and neglect. The assistance of the public in communicating and reporting incidents of suspected child abuse is crucial. Safety plans must be put into place and continuous follow-up needs to occur. Law enforcement and the courts have a significant role in protecting victims, especially children, from future harm. As long as there is a single case of child abuse or neglect in our community, we need to do a better job. Every child deserves to be raised without fear of abuse or neglect.

Prosecutor Heck added, “Today, with the current coronavirus directives, people and families are even more stressed than usual. Children are out of school, many parents are out of work, and everyone is sheltering at home. This greatly increases the chances of child abuse and domestic violence occurring. Teachers, who are a great source of referrals of suspected abuse, will not be able to see cases of abuse or neglect when children are not in school.”

“Therefore, now, more than ever, it is important that if you see something, say something. Report suspected child abuse or neglect by calling your local law enforcement agency or the child protection agency. In an emergency, call 911.” The child protection agency number in Montgomery County is (937) 224-KIDS (5437).

Heck continued, “I want to stress that my office and staff remain committed to holding accountable those who abuse or neglect children. This month is about preventing abuse, and the best way to do that is to support our children. If you are a parent who is becoming stressed ask for help.

CARE House, our local Children’s Advocacy Center, has helpful advice for families during the COVID-19 pandemic. See attached.

###



COVID-19: Dealing with stress and anxiety as a family

Connecting Together

Everyone is feeling the strain of dealing with rapid changes to our home life, work, and social lives. Make sure you are taking time to check on your own mental health. Do you need to contact a friend to talk, take a long walk, get some fresh air, or some exercise? Research supports that physical activity can help reduce stress symptoms by releasing endorphins, which help make us feel good. This goes for our children as well! During this stressful time make sure you're taking care of yourself and providing a calm to the storm for your children. You can help do this by the following:



- Pay attention to your feelings and seek out healthy activities that make you feel calm.
- Check in with your children. Ask how they are feeling. Offer reassurance that, “it’s ok to feel scared or worried, this is something we will get through together”.
- Make sure you’re giving your children extra hugs, snuggles, and closeness to help foster a sense of connectedness. Our brains work better when we feel safe and connected; so focus on those activities you can do together as a family.
- Create a new routine. While school is out and many are off work, its important to still try to follow some sense of routine. Children do best when they know what to expect. This can be as simple as posting a schedule of the days' activities.
- Try to build in times of rest, time for outdoor play, and free time.
- Find ways for everyone to contribute. With everyone home, the piles of laundry may be increasing. Include your children in things they may not normally help with. This is a good time to teach those important skills, but also give children a sense of contribution.

Fill the Time

- Go for a walk around the neighborhood and collect leaves, seeds, sticks, etc. and bring them home to make a collage.
- Try a new recipe! Don't have everything you need? Experiment and come up with a new dish on your own!
- Check out the Cincinnati Zoo Home Safari Resources for a Facebook Live video each day at 3pm ET. The live video will feature a new animal each day and include an at home activity to complete. http://cincinnati-zoo.org/home-safari-resources/?fbclid=IwAR3ZSsoc_tRiFpvSM_zlfzKoVyw7mu50aqMOjuUcd1r0Gs2unnwX_mdqM
- Need a new craft to keep the kids busy, try making your own play-doh.
 - 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 3/4 cup salt
 - 4 teaspoons cream of tartar
 - 2 cups lukewarm water
 - 2 Tablespoons of vegetable oil (coconut oil works too)
 - Food coloring, optional, could also use kool-aid to color
- Turn up the music: have a dance party, try out a different style of music, learn some new dance moves!
- Learn to draw like an illustrator! Visit the Kennedy Center for Lunch Doodles with Mo Willems for an instructional video posted each day by 1pm ET. <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/mo-willems/>
- This is a great time to find a pen pal, write to your elderly family members, or distant relatives. Exchange addresses with other parents so your child can write to their classmates or friends.



Resources on COVID-19

“Coping with Stress”

US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/copingwith-stresstips.html>

“Helping Children Cope with Emergencies”

US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>

Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with COVID-19

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network:

https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf

Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus

National Public Radio:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

Talking to Teens & Tweens about Coronavirus

The New York Times:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html>



CARE House

410 Valley Street
Dayton, Ohio 45404

For more information, please visit our website www.thecarehouse.org



CARE House complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. For more information, see link on our home page at <https://www.childrensdayton.org>

©2020 CARE House. All Rights Reserved.