



PINWHEELS

FRC joins 'Pinwheels' to make a difference for children



APRIL 25, 2014 5:00 AM • BY JUDY ANDRESON, FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

ELKO — The Family Resource Center is again this year participating in Pinwheels for Prevention, a national public awareness campaign that puts a new spin on preventing child abuse and neglect.

In Nevada, abuse or neglect of a child means physical or mental non-accidental injury; sexual abuse or sexual exploitation; or negligent

treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 caused or allowed by a person responsible for his or her welfare.

Physical abuse includes non-accidental physical injuries to a child such as a sprain or dislocation of an arm or leg; damage to cartilage tissues, such as a broken nose; fracture of a bone or the skull; injury to an internal organ; burns or scalding; cuts, lacerations, punctures or bites; permanent or temporary disfigurement; or a permanent or temporary loss or impairment of a part or organ of the body.

Emotional abuse or mental injury means an injury to the intellectual or psychological capacity or the emotional condition of a child. This type of injury results in observable and substantial impairment of a child's ability to function within his normal range of performance or behavior.

Sexual abuse occurs when sex acts are performed with children. Sexual exploitation occurs when children are forced, allowed, or encouraged to engage in prostitution, pornography or to engage in any other type of sexual activity such as posing for live sex shows.

Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child occurs if a child has been abandoned, is without proper care, control and supervision or lacks the subsistence, education, shelter, medical care or other care necessary for the well-being of the child. This includes leaving young children unsupervised or alone, locked out in or out of the house.

The Family Resource Center partnered with the Boys & Girls Club and Children's Cabinet in promoting the health and development of children. More than 150 goodie bags are being distributed to families. These bags contain educational materials regarding parental self-care, child care and simple activities for parents and children to do together.

In addition to promoting the child abuse prevention campaign in April, the Family Resource Center offers programs for parents who want to enhance their parenting skills. These programs include activities in the Family Center where parents and children come together to participate

in songs, games and other learning activities. Parenting courses for all family types are also available and include age-specific classes, blended families and parents going through a divorce.

Pinwheels for Prevention is a positive campaign highlighting change regarding the way people think about child abuse prevention. The goal of the campaign is focusing on community activities and public policies that prioritize prevention. Laying the foundation for healthy growth ensures child abuse and neglect never occur in the first place.

Here are five tips anyone can use to deter child abuse:

- **Self-Care.** When problems of everyday life pile up and you feel overwhelmed, take time out so you don't take it out on children. Learn the facts about child abuse and pay attention to the children in your life.
- **Care for children.** Spend time listening to a child, reading to a child or playing a computer game with a child. Children need to know they are appreciated, loved and capable of following their dreams.
- **Care for others.** Support others with children in their lives. Child abuse and neglect is a community issue and we can create our homes, schools and communities to be places where children are treated with respect.
- **Get involved.** Ask community leaders, groups and institutions to develop services to meet the needs of children and families. Volunteer at agencies that support children and families. Stay informed about local, state and national policies that impact children.
- **Report.** If you have reasonable suspicion a child has been, or is in danger of being harmed call 753-1300, or 911 for law enforcement. You may also make a report on the Nevada Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 800-992-5757.

The pinwheel reflects the belief that getting it right early is better than trying to fix it later. An uplifting symbol of childhood, the pinwheel represents efforts to ensure the healthy development of children while recognizing that child development is a building block for community and economic development.

When children don't have equal opportunities for growth and development, we put the future of our society at risk. A focus on innovative programming, such as those implemented by the Family Resource Center, lays the foundation for child safety, growth and development. These programs also reduce the possibility of more serious problems occurring later.

Pinwheels for Prevention is far more than an awareness campaign. It focuses on education of the issue and encourages action in preventing abuse and neglect.

Assisting DCFS

The Family Resource Center receives funding to assist the Division of Child and Family Services to complete safety assessments for low-risk reports on families who were reported. Since July 1, 2013, the Family Resource Center has conducted safety assessments for 90 families through Differential Response and Title IVB programming. The approach involves

ensuring child safety by expanding the ability of DCFS to respond to reports of child abuse and neglect. This broader set of responses for working with families at the first sign of trouble supports families that are in need of outside resources, before further problems develop.

This alternative way to respond to child abuse moves the work with families from a one-size-fits-all response to child abuse reports, to providing programs and services for the families. This response keeps children safe, and families strong. Caseworkers for the Differential Response program at the Family Resource Center step in early which leads to better results, rather than waiting until the family is in a real crisis. Caseworkers engage the family in solutions, services and supports while helping them resolve issues.

Child abuse and neglect is a complex and multidimensional problem and DCFS alone cannot effectively intervene in the lives of maltreated children and their families. This coordinated effort by DCFS and the Family Resource Center involves a broad range of community agencies and professionals which is essential for child protection in our community.

Staff members at the Family Resource Centers of Northeastern Nevada are available to discuss what you can do to prevent child abuse and neglect, either as an individual, group or business. Feel free to call the Family Resource Center in Elko at 753-7352.

The Family Resource Center is located on the corner of Seventh and Railroad streets. Parents who would like a goodie bag can visit the Center Monday-Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. to noon and 1-5 p.m.

Child Abuse Facts

- Child abuse, contrary to popular belief, occurs in all cultural, ethnic, occupational and socioeconomic groups
- The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect estimates over two million children are abused or neglected each year
- Abuse is a vicious cycle — usually passed on from generation to generation
- Abusers can be friends, neighbors and relatives
- Parents are the most frequent perpetrators of child abuse
- The most common cause of death in children, under age 6, is due to child abuse
- One out of every four children will experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18
- Offenders will continue to abuse without intervention and treatment

Source: Children's Bureau, Administration of Children and Families, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.

