

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | APRIL 1, 2020

## **Human Services and Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota call upon ND residents to wear blue in support of children and families on April 3 for Child Abuse Prevention Month**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota (PCAND) and the North Dakota Department of Human Services encourage North Dakotans to join them in wearing blue on Friday, April 3, to show support for children and families during National Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Month and to reinforce the message that “everyone plays a role in making great childhoods happen.”

“Wear Blue Day is an opportunity for people of all backgrounds to collectively draw attention to effective programs and policies that help children and families thrive,” said PCAND Executive Director Sandy Tibke. “April is a time to help people across the country understand that safe, stable and healthy nurturing relationships and environments are necessary to ensure that children grow up happy and healthy,” explained Tibke.

Tibke said, it is equally important to recognize that the time to act is now.

“COVID-19 has made life difficult for everyone – especially children and families. Although the risk to our children’s physical health from the outbreak itself appears to be lower, in times of extreme stress and uncertainty, children are at greater risk for experiencing child abuse and neglect,” Tibke said.

Parents are having to cope with school and workplace closings and added stress from loss of income, changes in their child care situation, and even food insecurity, she said. Additionally, while social distancing is important for health reasons, it increases the risk for isolation, which can negatively impact individuals’ mental well-being and parenting abilities.

Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota recommends the following ways to help raise awareness and impact positive change virtually during this year’s CAP month:

- Show support for children and families by wearing blue on April 3, Wear Blue Day, by posting a picture or video on your favorite social media channel(s) and including the #wearbluedaynd hashtag.
- Be a source for social and emotional connectedness and support for children and families by reaching out to them. Resource information is on the department’s website at [www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/families.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/families.html).
- Contact community leaders and show support for family-friendly policies and programs that help reduce stress on parents and caregivers.

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- Follow Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota on Facebook and share their posts widely – and encourage friends and family to do the same. Use the hashtags #PCAND #GreatChildhoods and #CAPMonth to show a commitment to helping children, families and entire communities to thrive.

The department's Children and Family Services Division contracts with PCAND to implement primary prevention strategies to support children and families and reduce child maltreatment. The division supports and funds numerous statewide child abuse and neglect prevention programs and activities in collaboration with PCAND, the North Dakota State University Extension Service – Parent Education Network and other public and private partners.

The department reminds individuals that if they suspect a child is being abused or neglected, they should call their local human service zone office, formerly known as county social services office. Contact information can be found at [www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv). **If a child is in immediate danger, contact law enforcement.**

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