

Preventing Child Physical Abuse

By: Bright Tomorrows Staff

Our local news has been filled with comments and questions surrounding child physical abuse and the horrors that result. During the recent training at ISU focused on recognizing and reporting abuse, the question was raised about how we prevent child physical abuse. The panel of experts discussed the need for stiffer penalties, knowing the signs of abuse, and the importance of reporting when first signs of abuse are noticed.

Child physical abuse is most frequently committed by parents or caregivers. Child abuse and neglect occur in all segments of our society, but the risk factors are greater in families where parents:

- Seem to be having economic, housing or personal problems
- Are isolated from their family or community
- Have difficulty controlling anger or stress
- Are dealing with physical or mental health issues
- Abuse alcohol or drugs
- Appear uninterested in the care, nourishment or safety of their children

By helping parents who might be struggling with any of these challenges, you reduce the likelihood that their children will be abused or neglected. Reach out to the children, too, and show them that you care.

Numerous studies have sought to find “protective factors” related to reduced incidence of child maltreatment. The protective factors found to be related to families include:

- parental resilience
- an array of social connections
- adequate knowledge of parenting and child development
- available support in times of need
- access to necessary services such as mental health

Communities and programs that encourage these protective factors in families should see reduction in the incidence of child abuse. *“Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children”*(Sitting Bull). For more information about Bright Tomorrows visit www.brightcac.org.