



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Since 1983, April has been recognized as a time to reflect on what we as a community are doing to prevent child abuse and neglect. It is also a time to highlight the many resources that exist across Alaska to strengthen and support families – the heart of child abuse prevention.

To be entrusted with the care and well-being of a child is a great honor and privilege. It is also a great responsibility – one each of us carries as parents, grandparents, teachers, concerned neighbors, and community members. Yet the statistics on child abuse and neglect in Alaska remain staggering. From July 1998 through June 1999, 16,249 cases of harm to Alaskan children were reported to the State Division of Family and Youth Services.

It is essential that we remember we do not face this challenge alone. Child abuse prevention efforts must be woven into the very fabric of our communities – into the structure of our schools, places of work, hospitals and health clinics, congregations of faith, day care facilities, and in each neighborhood, village, city, and borough. Just as no one can succeed at raising children alone, it takes the community to come together to put an end to child abuse.

Together, we can work to assure that every child in Alaska is free from abuse, is nurtured by a loving family, and is a valued member of a caring community. And we can work together to assure that all Alaska children will grow into a future that is bright with hope and promise.

The enclosed Community Resource Kit contains a wealth of ideas, resources, and activities to raise awareness of child abuse prevention and the opportunity to reach out to support parents in your community. This Kit is designed to be copied, and we hope you will share the resource with as many people in your community as possible.

Thank you for your willingness to be a partner in the effort to prevent child abuse and neglect in Alaska. We applaud your active involvement in assuring that your community sets high standards for the health and safety of its youngest citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol H. Brice".

Carol H. Brice, Chair  
Alaska Children's Trust

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Perdue".

Karen Perdue, Commissioner  
Dept. of Health & Social Services