

# PRESS RELEASE

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## April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

*Orange County residents are encouraged to wear blue on April 24<sup>th</sup> & use #GoBlueForOCKids on social media*

**Orange County, CA** – The County of Orange Social Services Agency (SSA) invites the citizens of Orange County to show their support of ending childhood abuse and neglect by wearing blue on April 24, 2018 for National Child Abuse Prevention Month. In addition, residents are encouraged to take photos of themselves, their friends, their coworkers and their loved ones while wearing blue and tag their photos using the hashtag **#GoBlueForOCKids** on social media.

Members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors will also be presenting a proclamation for National Child Abuse Prevention Month at the Board meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup> and will be encouraging their constituents to speak up if they see child abuse or neglect.

“April is a time to celebrate the important role that our community plays in protecting children and strengthening Orange County families. Our communities are stronger when all residents are aware of child abuse prevention and are involved in supporting families as they strive to raise their children in safe, caring environments,” said First District Supervisor Andrew Do, Chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

Currently, there are about 730,000 children residing in Orange County. Last year in Orange County, the Child Abuse Registry received a monthly average of 4,000 calls, a decrease from the year prior. Of these calls, only about 119 cases per month required Juvenile Court involvement. The remaining cases either did not rise to the level of SSA involvement or we were able to address families’ needs through prevention efforts in the community.

“Orange County residents know how it is important to say something if they see something. This holds true when it comes to the protection of our children – our County’s most important asset,” said Fourth District Supervisor Shawn Nelson, Vice Chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

In Fiscal Year 2016-17, of the 48,912 calls to the Child Abuse Registry, only 1,143 children (or 2.3%) entered the dependency system. The positive effects of preventative efforts indicate that the number of children entering the child welfare system as dependents is significantly decreasing.

“The first and most important job of parents is to protect their children. It is also essential for neighbors and community leaders to assist in looking out for the safety of our youngest residents. In addition to those efforts, the County also provides wonderful services through our Family Resource Centers to prevent child abuse and neglect in our communities,” said Michelle Steel, Supervisor, Second District.

Research shows that protective factors are present in healthy families. Promoting the following factors is among the most effective ways to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect:

- Concrete Support in Time of Need
- Parental Resilience
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Social Connections
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children

“It’s gratifying to know that California has some of the toughest child abuse laws in the nation. In Orange County, we have zero tolerance for this crime,” said Third District Supervisor Todd Spitzer.

“We all need to do our part in Orange County to helping stop child abuse and neglect. I encourage my constituents to join the County and show their support for ending child abuse and in supporting services that positively impact our children,” said Lisa Bartlett, Supervisor, Fifth District.



Should an Orange County resident suspect child abuse or neglect, they are encouraged to call the Child Abuse Registry at 714-940-1000 or 800-207-4464, 24-hour hotline, 7 days a week.

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