

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

#StandUpForChildren

**SEE SOMETHING.
SAY SOMETHING.**

Resources and Information compiled
by Families Strengthening Families

1504 Louisville Street
Starkville, MS 39759
662.615.0033

 @DiscoveryCenterSOSD

STARKVILLE OKTIBBEHA SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISCOVERY



CENTER

StarkvilleSD.com/SaySomething



“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

-Nelson Mandela



1st Presidential Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation

*Proclamation 5172 National Child Abuse Prevention Month 1984
April 3, 1984 By the President of the United States of America*

A Proclamation

Abuse of children occurs in all segments of our society, in rural, suburban, and urban areas and among all racial, ethnic, and income groups. The time has come for Americans to unite in an all-out effort to eradicate child abuse, both physical and sexual, from the nation.

Child abuse is a national concern, but it is a community and family problem first, and the answers must be found at the community level. Most physical and emotional violence takes place within the family. All Americans aware of the problem of child abuse must work for an end to this tragedy.

There is a place for everyone in this effort. By being a good neighbor to the family next door who may be under stress, Americans can be an enormous help. Our schools have an important role to play by educating children about parental roles and responsibilities, values, and appropriate behavior in the family setting. We must do what we can to reverse the trend of abused children becoming abusive parents. In addition, voluntary community self-help groups such as Parents Anonymous are taking positive steps to break this cycle.

In recognition of the need to find ways to prevent the agony of child abuse from continuing in future generations, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 161, has designated the month of April 1984 as "National Child Abuse Prevention Month" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this period.

Now, therefore, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of April 1984, as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. We must find a way to leave our future generations a priceless legacy—the confidence and trust resulting from a secure childhood.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 4:45p.m., April 3, 1984]



FOREWORD

As we compiled information for this project, we were reminded of a young man that attended one of our parent café sessions several years ago. He grew up in a single parent household and did not know his father. He had become a father, but did not know how to be a father. He started taking our classes not because he had to but because he wanted to. He sincerely desired to be a better father. National statistics have proven that his son will be less likely to be abused by him or anyone else because he was active in his child's life and acquired necessary parenting skills.

Child abuse in all its forms is universal. It can be found in all cultures, societies, and nationalities. It occurs across all demographic and economic groups. However, more importantly, child abuse is preventable.

Although the topic of child abuse is difficult, it is crucial to know the signs so that we can work together as a society to help prevent it. The goal of this project is to help prevent child abuse by raising awareness. If a child is in danger, some adult must intervene to save the child. Remember, IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

History	6
What is Child Abuse	11
General Signs of Maltreatment	13
Risk Factors	14
Types of Child Abuse	15
Impact of Child Abuse on Development	22
Protective Factors	24
Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect	25
Child Abuse Statistics	26
Some Basic Parenting Guidelines	29
Bibliography	30
Families Strengthening Families Online Services	31





A SHORT HISTORY OF CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Child abuse is not a new phenomenon. Remains of infants were found buried in the walls at the city of Jericho dating back to 7,000 BCE. Siculus, the Greek historian of the first century, recorded the killing of weak and infirm children. Greek midwives in the second century were told to dispose of unfit children. British and American histories are replete with stories of children working long hours in factories. Children were forced to work in conditions considered inhumane today.

There were laws governing how animals were treated long before similar laws for children came into being. Children were treated as objects. A child was the property of the father, who could do with him/her as he pleased. That began to change in the early 1870's when the American Society for the Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) took on the case of Mary Ellen Wilson, a child who was found to be grossly maltreated at her foster home. Mary Ellen was starved and beaten daily. The attorneys argued that laws protecting animals should not be greater than laws protecting children. In time, the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was formed. The basic standard for how children should be treated began to spread across the United States.

Before the mid-1960's, progress implementing children's rights was slow. The Women's Movement, which brought attention to the way women were being treated, also elevated the cause of children who were similarly mistreated. Prior to 1971, when the first rape crisis center opened in New York, issues of domestic abuse and child abuse were considered private matters to be dealt with in the home. Few laws existed that dealt with the subject of abuse. Law enforcement rarely got involved. The Women's Movement changed that.

Increasing public awareness of the need to ensure the safety and welfare of children led to the passage of the first federal child protection legislation, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) in 1974. In the early 1980's Congress made a further commitment to identify and implement solutions to child abuse resolving that June 6-12, 1982 be designated as National Child Abuse Prevention Week. In 1983 President Ronald Reagan issued the first presidential proclamation identifying the month of April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

In 1989 the Blue Ribbon Campaign to prevent child abuse had its early beginnings as a result of Bonnie Finney's tribute to her grandson who died from abuse. She tied a blue ribbon to the antennae of her van. When people asked her why, she shared the story of the abuse of her grandchildren that led to the ultimate death of her 3-year old grandson. The spirit of the blue ribbon grew and eventually became a national symbol.

BONNIE'S STORY

Bonnie's story demonstrates the effect that just one concerned citizen can have on raising public awareness and promoting child abuse prevention efforts. Below is Bonnie's story in her own words. **Please be aware that her story contains details that some readers may find disturbing.**

Dear Advocate for the Child:

NO! It isn't true! It simply cannot be true! They are telling me that my grandson is dead...they are wrong! There must be some mistake.....Michael is fine.....but deep in my heart, I knew it was true for I have not seen him in weeks. It's been so long since I sat by his side in the hospital. Of course I knew something was wrong as I sat there. I saw fear on his face, the bruises on his body, and the healing cigarette burns on his hands. His doctor did not believe my daughter's story..."he fell in slippery water in the bathtub"...I felt sick...I didn't understand....Are my granddaughters all right, was all I thought. Where are they? I only had one child. She was a beautiful little girl. She was the light of our eyes. We knew she had entered into a stormy marriage, for we brought her home several times in the five years the marriage lasted. We suspected heavy use of drugs...BUT...in those five years, three beautiful, healthy children had been born. I loved them dearly, and they loved me. The children were 16 months, 3 years and 4 years old.



After the ordeal at the hospital, my grandson was placed in foster care for three weeks. He cried when they came to take him back to his mother. He told his foster mother, "my momma doesn't love me," and he begged to stay. I ached for his dilemma. I was not physically able to care for him. The courts seemed to believe that home was the best place for him...but I knew better and I told...no, begged them not to return him to his mother. But I was overruled. My instinct as a grandmother did not count.

I never saw Michael again. My 16 month old granddaughter was hospitalized after being beaten severely...her leg was broken in four places, and her hand burned from the tip of her little fingers to her wrist. It was only then that the "search was on" for Michael. We learned that he had been killed, wrapped in a sheet, stuffed in a tool box and dumped in to a dismal swamp three months earlier.

My grandchildren suffered and battled so much throughout their young lives that it sickened me. My life was turned into physical and mental chaos. My efforts to understand became a plea to stop abusing children. I tied a blue ribbon on my van antenna to make people wonder. It caught on locally with restaurants, businesses, the police department and radio and television stations. They all started supporting me in my efforts to make a real awareness campaign.

Why the color blue? I never intend to forget the battered, bruised bodies of my grandchildren. Bruises are black, then eventually blue. Therefore, blue serves as a constant reminder to me to fight for our children. Everyday, I pray that our children will be allowed to hear the sounds of a different drummer.

Join with me...we must protect our most precious gift of all...our children. Please wear a blue ribbon...put one on your car...give one to your friends...tell them what it means...you may be saving a child's life! If you suspect anything is happening to your children...your grandchildren...the child next door.. PLEASE ACT! If you don't get any results or a response, please try again. You may not hear their screams...you may not see their bruises...so check for the pain and screams in their eyes.



Bonnie Finney, Norfolk, VA

NATIONAL SYMBOLS

The BLUE RIBBONS represent bruised bodies of children.

The PINWHEELS represent childhood innocence, unseen energy, wish fulfillment, and transformation. Some cultures believe the pinwheel is an instrument that turns obstacles into opportunities.



No child is born to experience abuse, but many do experience it. For many children, abuse is all they are used to. It's all they know. Uninterrupted, this behavior may pass from generation to generation.

True child protection starts with you. It comes from awareness of, garnering knowledge about, and understanding of what comprises child abuse. It comes from a willingness to act when we see or suspect abuse. It comes from remembering that child abuse is not something that just happens to other people's children; it can happen to ours too. The abuse of children survives and thrives on silence. Break the silence!

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse is doing something or failing to do something that results in harm to a child or puts a child at risk of harm.



GENERAL SIGNS OF MALTREATMENT

A child who's being abused may feel guilty, ashamed or confused. He or she may be afraid to tell anyone about the abuse, especially if the abuser is a parent, other relative or family friend. **The following are some signs of general maltreatment that may help determine whether a child needs help.**

IF THE CHILD:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home
- Is reluctant to be around a particular person
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdraw
- Is depressed
- Has low self-esteem

IF THE PARENT:

- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- Denies the existence of, or blames the child for, the child's problems in school or at home
- Shows little concern for the child
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve

Specific signs and symptoms depend on the type of abuse and can vary. Warning signs are just that-warning signs. The presence of warning signs doesn't necessarily mean that a child is being abused.



RISK FACTORS

Some factors that may increase a person's risk of becoming abusive are as follows:

- A history of being abused or abusive
- Physical or mental illness, such as depression or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Family crisis or stress, including domestic violence and other marital conflicts, or single parenting
- A child in the family who is developmentally or physically disabled
- Financial stress, unemployment or poverty
- Social or extended family isolation
- Poor understanding of child development and parenting skills
- Alcohol, drugs or other substance abuse
- Concentrated neighborhood disadvantage (high poverty, high unemployment rates)
- Poor social connections
- Community violence
- Lack of community resources or lack of parental knowledge of the availability of resources

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

The Four Types:

- **PHYSICAL**

any type of contact that results in bodily harm or bruising, or physically restraining a child improperly

- **EMOTIONAL**

anything said or done that is hurtful or threatening to a child, such as name-calling, belittling a child, or making threats of harm

- **SEXUAL**

inappropriate physical contact or nonphysical acts with a child

- **NEGLECT**

not meeting the basic needs of the child or leaving a child unsupervised

PHYSICAL ABUSE

A child who is the victim of physical abuse may have repeated physical injuries and/or emergency room or doctor visits with or without adequate explanation. The child may claim to be accident prone or provide other stories about how he/she sustained injuries. The child may tend to wear excessive clothing to cover injuries or otherwise engage in secrecy in an attempt to protect the abuser.

SOME INDICATORS OF SUSPECTED PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Parent or other adult caregivers offer conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury or provides an explanation that is not consistent with the injury
- Injury that is complicated by a delay in seeking treatment
- Complaints of soreness or appearance of uncomfortable movement
- Withdrawn and/or aggressive behavior, including extremes in behavior
- Black eyes, especially bilateral (both eyes)
- Internal damage, such as bleeding or rupture of an organ from blunt trauma
- Bruises with a recognizable shape, like bite marks or the shape of an object (a spoon, belt, wire hanger, etc.)
- Circular marks around the wrists or ankles (signs of twisting or tying up)
- Self-destructive behaviors, such as cutting, burning, suicidal talk or actions, smoking, alcohol or drug use

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is inherent in all forms of child abuse, either directly as a form of abuse itself, or as a consequence of other types of abuse. Emotional abuse is an underappreciated type of abuse because it is hard to define or measure and does not leave a physical mark. The effects of emotional abuse can be so subtle that an emotionally mistreated child may show no outward signs of abuse. That makes emotional abuse the most difficult type of child abuse to identify.

Emotional abuse is about control. It takes many shapes and forms. The emotional abuser communicates insulting, threatening, devaluing, mocking, controlling, and critical messages that undermine the child's self-esteem and self-worth.

SOME INDICATORS OF SUSPECTED EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Low self-esteem
- Poor coping skills
- Evidence of self-injury (cutting, burning, drug use)
- Seems to separate from reality
- Constantly tense or on guard
- Has attempted suicide
- Desperately seeks affection
- Demonstrates difficulties in school
- Talks badly about self
- Vague physical complaints or illness

SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse refers to any type of sexual contact/activity with a child. Sexual indicators vary depending on the child's age. Sexual indicators found in young children (under ten years old) are high probability indicators because they represent sexual knowledge not ordinarily possessed by young children.

SOME INDICATORS OF SUSPECTED SEXUAL ABUSE

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bloody, torn, or stained underclothes
- Bleeding, bruises, or swelling in genital area
- Pain, itching, or burning in genital area
- Nightmares or bedwetting
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections
- Sexually-transmitted diseases
- Exceptional secrecy
- Poor hygiene
- Excessive bathing and/or handwashing
- Overly protective and concerned for siblings
- Avoids or has fear of a specific person without obvious reason
- Shrinks away or seems threatened by physical contact
- Suicide attempts or self-harming, especially in adolescents
- Inappropriate sexual knowledge and behavior

SEXUAL GROOMING

Children are most often molested by someone they know and trust (*even in their own home*). Trust is often a game. Sex offenders seduce children by a technique called grooming. The stages of grooming are as follows:

- Step 1: Targeting the victim
- Step 2: Gaining the victim's trust
- Step 3: Filling a need
- Step 4: Isolating the child
- Step 5: Sexualizing the relationship
- Step 6: Maintaining control
- Step 7: Letting go (*Sex offenders tend to have an age preference for the children they molest. Once the child passes the threshold of what the offender likes, the child ceases to be attractive or of use to the offender. This is often the most dangerous time.*)

Family structure is the most important risk factor in child sexual abuse. Children who live with two married biological parents are at a lower risk than children who live with stepparents or a single parent. Children who live with a single parent who has a live-in partner are at the highest risk of sexual abuse.

NEGLECT

Child neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs. It is abuse by omission. It may be intentional or unintentional. The five types of neglect are as follows: physical, medical, educational, emotional, and inadequate supervision.

SOME INDICATORS OF SUSPECTED NEGLECT

- Wears clothing that is soiled, too small, too large, or often in need of repair
- Frequently absent from school
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Demonstrates poor hygiene, smells of urine or feces, has dirty or decaying teeth
- Craves attention
- Seems inadequately dressed for the weather
- Always seems to be hungry, hoards, steals, or begs for food
- Frequently reports caring for younger siblings
- Demonstrates destructive or aggressive behavior and shows no apparent guilt over his or her acts
- Often appears listless, depressed, withdrawn, or tired with little energy
- Acts out

It shouldn't hurt to be a child



STOP Child Abuse & Neglect

Call

Mississippi Centralized Intake

1-800-222-8000

www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov

THE IMPACT OF CHILD ABUSE ON DEVELOPMENT

The development of a child is very important. There is a “true self” that we were born with that forms the essence of who we are. Interpersonal events can be major factors directing the course of maturation from infancy to adulthood.

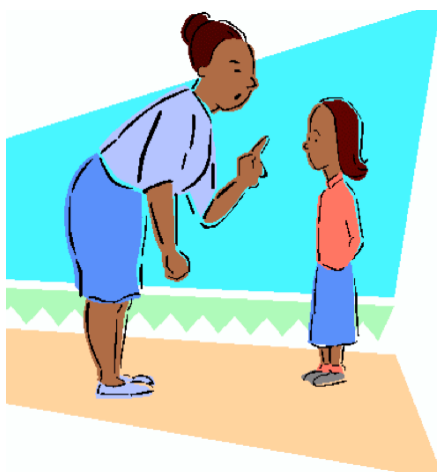
Children have two vulnerabilities. One, they are gullible. Two, their sources of information are limited. Children internalize whatever parents or other influential persons say about them during their formative years. When children absorb erroneous information about themselves it can potentially misdirect their course through life, prevent full maturation, and create a false self-identity or “adopted self.”

These impressions, accumulated by the child and combined with an idea of what the world will accept, form most of the construct of the child’s self-image. When a child is maliciously denied access to his real personhood, he may spend his life in a trial-and-error process of discovery in which every piece of evidence is questionable. For the most part, children are abused in secret and are issued dire warnings not to tell. The child is led down a “*blind alley.*”

THE LIES IMPLANTED BY ABUSE

Of all the horrid ramifications of child abuse, the self-beliefs formed by the child produce the greatest destruction. Abuse is the most penetrating and permanent communication possible. It conveys to the child one or more of the following messages:

- ***“I caused it to happen.”***
(Power or the illusion of power, depending up on the developmental stage)
- ***“It’s my fault because I am bad.”***
(False information internalized, encapsulated)
- ***“I don’t deserve any better.”***
(Erroneous judgment about self)



PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective Factors are parental skillsets that create healthy environments for the optimal development of all children. Research evidence supports the idea that when these Protective Factors are present and robust in a family, the likelihood of abuse and neglect diminish. The Protective Factors are as follows:

- **PARENTAL RESILIENCE** (Be Strong and Flexible)

Parental Resilience is the ability to constructively cope with and bounce back from all types of challenges.

- **RELATIONSHIPS** (Social Connections)

Friends, family members, neighbors, and other members of a community provide emotional support and concrete assistance to parents.

- **KNOWLEDGE** (Parenting is Part Natural and Part Learned)

Having accurate information about rearing your children with appropriate expectations for their behavior helps parents better understand and care for their children..

- **SUPPORT** (Concrete Support)

Parents need access to concrete supports and services that can minimize the stress of difficult situations

- **COMMUNICATION** (Social and Emotional Competence)

A child's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate, and to effectively communicate his or her emotions has a great impact on the parent/child relationship.

REPORTING

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

If a child tells you he or she has been abused, do the following:

- ⇒ Remain calm and listen to the child
- ⇒ Do Not make promises, but let the child know that you will seek assistance
- ⇒ Report the abuse

***If someone is in
immediate danger,
call 911.***

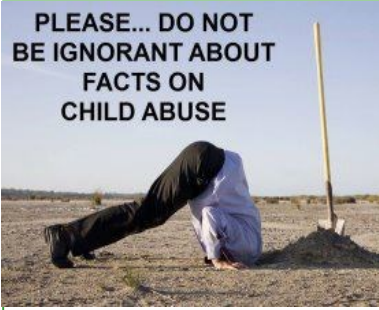
Anyone can report suspected child abuse or neglect. Reporting abuse or neglect can protect a child and get help for a family.

To report abuse:

- ⇒ Contact your local Child protection Service Office
- ⇒ Call 1.800.222.8000 (Mississippi Hotline Number)
- ⇒ Call 1.800.4.A.CHILD or 1.800.422.4453 (National Hotline Number)
- ⇒ Report online at <https://reportabuse.mdcps.ms.gov>

YOU MAY REPORT ANONYMOUSLY.

PLEASE... DO NOT
BE IGNORANT ABOUT
FACTS ON
CHILD ABUSE



CHILD ABUSE STATISTICS

**Every 10 seconds a child
is abused. That's one
too many.**

NATIONALLY

- In 2018, approximately 3,534,000 children were the subject of an investigation or alternative response. Of that number, 678,000 children were determined to be victims of maltreatment.
- In 2018, 60.8% of child victims were neglected, 10.7% were physically abused, and 7.0% were sexually abused. More than 15% were victims of two or more maltreatment types.
- In 2018, an estimated 1,770 children died from abuse and neglect.

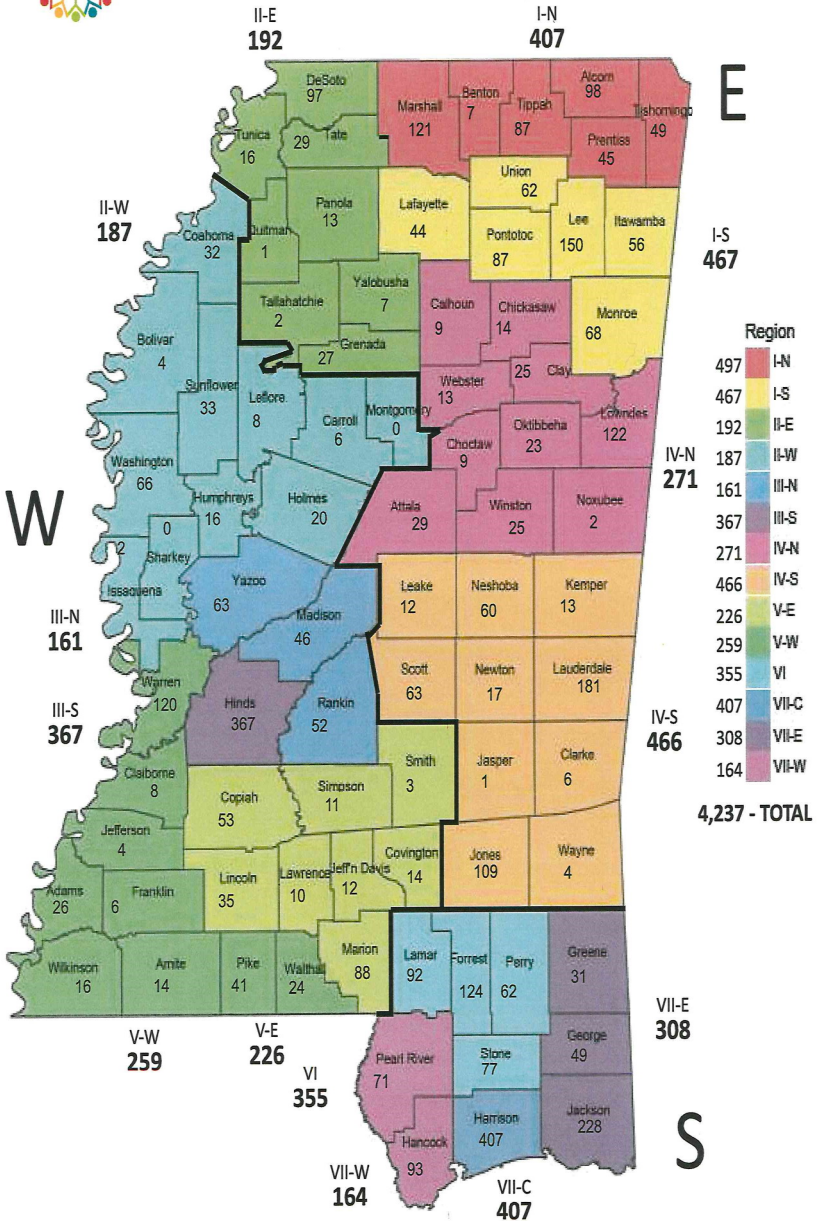
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

- In 2017, Mississippi had 33,267 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those referrals, 27,775 reports were referred for investigation.
- In 2017, there were 10,429 victims of abuse and neglect in Mississippi, a rate of 14.6 per 1,000 children. Of those victimized children, 75.7% were neglected, 14.8% were physically abused, and 11.2% were sexually abused.
- In 2017, there were 40 child deaths resulting from abuse or neglect.



4,237 Children in MDCPS Custody

4/1/2020



PARENTING
is the
JOB of a LIFETIME!



The purpose of parenting is to protect and prepare our children to survive and thrive in the kind of society in which they will live.



SOME BASIC PARENTING GUIDELINES

- Be a good role model. *(You are your child's first teacher.)*
- Know what to expect at each age level.
- Set clear and realistic expectations.
- Use methods that fit your child. Each child is different.
- Teach responsibility. Catch your child doing good on purpose and PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE!
- Listen to learn and listen for feelings. *(This gives you insight on how to help your child. Take time for "teachable moments.")*
- Separate the misbehavior from the child. *(Kiss your child goodnight every night, even if they are asleep.)*
- Practice positive discipline. Apply fair consequences.
- Be Consistent. Create a unified front with the other parent. *(Mixed signals breed confusion, frustration, and manipulation.)*
- Words have power. Use them wisely. *(They can build-up or tear-down. Once spoken they cannot be retrieved.)*
- Take care of yourself first and you'll be better able to take care of others. *(This does not mean getting your hair and nails done before you provide basic needs for your children.)*
- Spend time together on purpose. This does not mean simply sharing time and space like being in the same room.
- Don't overlook or put-off dealing with problems. *(Problems don't disappear. They only grow if not addressed.)*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brohl, K., and Potter, J. C. *When Your Child Has Been Molested: A Parents' Guide to Healing and Recovery* (revised ed.) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004

Daly, Evin M. *Child Abuse: What You Need to Know*. Miami: Parker Publishing, 2014

Ewart, III, Heyward Bruce. *Am I Bad? Recovering From Abuse*. Ann Arbor: Loving Healing Press, 2007

Flowers, R. Barri. *Runaway Kids and Teenage Prostitution: America's Lost, Abandoned, and Sexually Exploited Children*. Connecticut: Praeger Publisher, 2001

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov>

<https://www.beststrongfamilies.org>

<https://www.childwelfare.gov>

<https://www.cwla.org>

<https://www.fcp-parentcafe.com>

<https://www.mdcps.ms.gov>

<https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org>

Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District
Discovery Center
Families Strengthening Families
662.615.0033

Funded By: Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services

SOSD Discovery Center Parenting Help



Parenting Question of the Week on Facebook:
@ SOSD Discovery Center updated every Tuesday



Virtual Parent Cafes every Tuesday at 2:00p.m.

Meeting ID: 814 2880 8707 Passcode: 890034 or phone 1.312.626.6799

Parent/Caregivers Vitality Conversations every 4th Tuesday at 6:00p.m.

Meeting ID: 896 8014 3914 Passcode: 227965 or phone 1.312.626.6799

ACT Raising Safe Kids Class every Thursday at 6:00p.m.

Meeting ID: 878 5751 3038 Passcode: 115808 or phone 1.312.626.6799



PARENT TALK at Discovery Center Podcast updated every 2nd & 4th Wednesday



STARKVILLE OKTIBBEHA SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISCOVERY



CENTER

1504 Louisville Street
Starkville, MS 39759

662.615.0033

 @DiscoveryCenterSOSD

For more information about the programs & resources available through the Discovery Center Families Strengthening Families program, contact:

Barbara Culberson

bculberson@starkvillesd.com

Funded by MDCPS Child Protection Services Children's Trust Fund

StarkvilleSD.com/SaySomething