



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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**Gov. Whitmer proclaims April as Child Abuse Prevention Month;  
highlights importance of prevention services**

*Prevention services reduce child maltreatment, improve health and  
educational outcomes and increase economic stability*

LANSING, Mich. – In honor of [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recognizes the critical role prevention programs and supports play in keeping children safe and strengthening families.

“Every family deserves the chance to thrive. MDHHS is committed to ensuring families have access to the support they need, when they need it,” said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. “Early support helps families stay strong and stable to enable children to grow up safe and healthy, and for communities to thrive.”

Research [demonstrates](#) that positive childhood experiences — such as feeling safe, supported by family and connected to community — are linked to better health outcomes, higher educational attainment and improved economic well-being throughout a person’s lifespan. Positive childhood experiences help set the stage for lasting well-being and resilience, and child abuse prevention services and supports are some of the many ways MDHHS helps families develop pathways to connection, growth and hope.

Through the department’s Keep Kids Safe Action Agenda, which includes dozens of protocols and policies to improve the safety and well-being of Michigan children, MDHHS follows best practices in child welfare and commits to following the nation’s highest standards. The action agenda focuses on five key categories: prevention, intervention, stability, wellness and workforce to ensure the best possible support for children and families.

In the area of prevention, MDHHS has made significant progress, including:

- Creating a structured decision-making tool that guides staff who receive calls of suspected child abuse and neglect to the state’s toll-free hotline.
- Launching a vulnerable-children protocol for county offices to help identify early signs of potential harm with added safety reviews for very young children who are unable to fully speak yet. Developing protocols to provide guidance for child welfare staff to talk with families about firearm safety.

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Through the innovative [Children's Services Administration \(CSA\) teaming model](#), MDHHS is overhauling how services are delivered to Michigan families. The teaming model provides employees with clear and distinct roles and guidance on collaboration expectations to provide support for families from the moment they enter the child welfare system. The team, including caseworkers, supervisors, family resource specialists and other support roles, works in a pod to address family-specific needs, whether it's economic, educational or administrative. Poverty can often be mistaken for neglect; but by connecting a family with the resources and services they need, a teaming pod can help families avoid crisis.

Additionally, MDHHS partners with child welfare organizations support a full range of prevention services that help reduce the risk of maltreatment and family separation, strengthen a family's capacity to thrive and promote child safety and family well-being. Child abuse prevention exists along a continuum, guided by framework that includes three levels of support: primary prevention for all families across the state, secondary prevention for those at heightened risk, and tertiary prevention for families that have a confirmed abuse or neglect case to prevent re-entry to the child welfare system.

Examples of prevention programs and initiatives include:

[MI Parenting Resource](#), a primary prevention program provided by Michigan State University with support from MDHHS, offers a collection of videos introducing research-supported strategies for common caregiving concerns, such as how to increase child cooperation, teach children new behaviors, and identify and manage emotions.

[Michigan Home Visiting](#), a free, voluntary primary prevention program that helps reduce incidences of child abuse and neglect by partnering with families to improve self-sufficiency, family and child health and school readiness. The goal of home visits is to make sure parents are supported to help their children grow and develop in a safe environment.

A key tertiary prevention strategy offered through MDHHS is [MiFamily Together](#), a two-year pilot initiative designed to provide flexible, family-centered preservation services tailored to a family's unique circumstances, whether they are experiencing a crisis, need additional support to prevent out-of-home placement or are preparing for children to return home from foster care. Due to positive outcomes demonstrated during the pilot, MiFamily Together is anticipated to expand statewide in October.

Additionally, [Children Trust Michigan](#) (CTM), a non-profit housed within MDHHS that funds primary and secondary prevention programs that provide services and support for families ranging from baby pantries, car seats, parent education and help with concrete needs including utilities and transportation.

More information on child abuse prevention and family preservation services can be found on the [MDHHS website](#). Many programs are managed at the county level and contacting a [local MDHHS office](#) or [Children Trust Michigan partner](#) can provide regional information.

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