

New Jersey



Children's
Alliance

NJCA Newsletter

Back-to-School Edition





Dear Friends,

Summer always feels like the shortest season; no sooner do the pools open and summer barbeques begin, then the back-to-school routine is in full swing again and everything is coming up pumpkin spice. This summer at NJCA was a whirlwind of activity, and I am excited to share the news of our growth and progress with you, including a new partnership with the NJ State Federation of Women's Clubs, presentations at various conferences, a "hootenanny" of a summer fundraiser and an upcoming fall hockey game, growth in our programs Know & Tell child abuse prevention training and Problematic Sexual Behaviors (PSB) treatment and referral program, and some new staff roles and members.

We are also always seeking to share tools and resources for families on keeping children safe, and as the school year gets going again, we are encouraging families to take some time to create or revisit a Family Safety Plan. Prevention begins with conversations, and we encourage families to use the tools and guidelines in this newsletter to strengthen their family's protective measures against child abuse.

As always, I want to thank you for prioritizing the work of hope, healing, and justice for children - through your support of NJCA and Child Advocacy Centers, by learning about preventive measures and the signs and symptoms of abuse, and in sharing information about child abuse prevention and response.

With Gratitude,

Debbie Riveros, MPA
Executive Director

Partnership with New Jersey Federation of Women's Clubs

We are proud, excited, and honored to have been chosen by the NJ State Federation of Women's Clubs of GFWC as their 2024-2026 Special State Project organization! For the

next two years, the amazing members of the women's clubs throughout the state will be partnering with us and the Child Advocacy Centers on projects and initiatives to serve children and families and raise awareness of issues in child abuse prevention and response. The New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs is the largest volunteer women's service organization in the state and a member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Executive Director Debbie Riveros and Director of Communications and Outreach Olga Aramini have been attending meetings of clubs throughout the state to present to club members about our work and discuss ways that they can help.

In August, clubs throughout the state collected 648 backpacks filled with school supplies to provide to child abuse victims who are being served by Child Advocacy Centers. We, and the staff of the Child Advocacy Centers, are grateful for the generosity and efforts of the women's clubs in this and future initiatives to help the children of New Jersey!



Know & Tell

The Know & Tell child abuse prevention training program continues to grow and expand. We recently brought the training to staff of the Skyway Family Success Center, Prevention Links, Greenway Family Success Center, and Liberty Family Success Center in Hudson County, and were joined by members of the Hudson County CAC Multidisciplinary Team to speak specifically about the response to child abuse allegations and disclosures in Hudson County. Team members at the Cape May County Child Advocacy Center also got trained as Know & Tell facilitators, and will be offering this training to organizations throughout Cape May County.

For information on bringing this free training to your organization, contact Olga Aramini at olga@njcainc.org.



Problematic Sexual Behaviors (PSB) Treatment and Referral Program

The PSB (Problematic Sexual Behavior) Program, which increases access to specialized medical and mental health services for youth who engage in PSB or were impacted by PSB, launched in March 2024. In the first three months, 248 referrals were made to the

program and 101 intakes were conducted with families which resulted in 79 referrals for services at no cost to families. In addition, 98 presentations were conducted and over 3,500 people were trained in understanding and serving children and adolescents who engage in PSB and provided information about the PSB program. We at NJCA, along with our partners in this program, are thrilled to be among the first states to offer this model of treatment, which truly represents the spirit of prevention and healing, given the evidence that 98% of youth with PSB who receive evidence-based treatment do not engage in the behaviors again.

The program also has a new Program Manager, Maria Isabella Pontoriero (aka "Mip"), as well as a new Program Coordinator, Valeria Vila, who will be focusing on collecting, analyzing, and communicating data on the program. If you are interested in receiving training on responding to PSB or would like additional information about our PSB Program, please contact us at mip@njcainc.org.



Outreach

Our summer outreach efforts, geared towards raising awareness of issues related to child abuse prevention and response and the work of Child Advocacy Centers, featured presence at a variety of events including National Night out in North Brunswick and Morris Plains and a booth at the New Jersey Mayor's Conference in Atlantic City. Debbie Riveros and Olga Aramini also delivered presentations at two conferences - one titled "Dynamics of Abuse Disclosure" for the New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council (NJ CPAC), and another on "Preventing, Recognizing, and Responding to Child Abuse" with a specific focus on children with disabilities for the Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) virtual conference. Thank you to our interns Nathaniel and Ash and volunteer Lily for

setting up our tables, distributing information, and painting rocks with kids, and to all the community partners who invite us to your events.

If you know of a community event or a conference where resources on child safety, "kindness rocks" painting for kids, reach out to Olga Aramini, olga@njcainc.org!



Fundraising

Our summer fundraiser was a real "hootenanny", with line dancing, craft beers, and a basket raffle! Thank you to everyone who came out to Anglesea Aleworks to support us!



For our next fundraiser, NJCA is hosting a day game (!) with the **NEW JERSEY DEVILS!**



It's on **Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day, October 14th**, at 1pm at

the Prudential Center in Newark, against the new Utah Hockey Club! It is a holiday for many organizations, so come join us if you can!

Tickets available here: [New Jersey Children's Alliance \(fevo-enterprise.com\)](https://fevo-enterprise.com). **Purchase Deadline: Sep 23, 2024 11:59 PM EDT**. Please share this with your team, your associated partner agencies, and any hockey fans you know!

Finally - we have an online store for our nearly-famous "This shirt protects children" and "This shirt helps children heal" designs! Each design features useful child abuse prevention and response information on the back, so each purchase not only supports a great cause but also helps educate everyone who crosses your path, and shows support for child abuse victims. A variety of styles and colors are available. Check out the shop: [njca's Shop | Featuring custom t-shirts, prints, and more \(threadless.com\)](https://threadless.com).



Spotlight on Prevention: Family Safety Plan

Back-to-school time is a great time to create or revisit your family safety plan for preventing sexual abuse. Family safety planning should include creating and discussing a set of rules regarding boundaries, privacy, and communication, such as the ones suggested in the graphic below.

FAMILY RULES

1. My body belongs to me. I never have to hug or kiss anyone I don't want to.
2. I know the difference between secrets and surprises. We don't keep secrets from parents and caregivers.
3. If I ever feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or worried, I know who my trusted adults are and can talk to them anytime. They will believe me and will try to help.
4. No one should touch my private parts, ask to see them, or show me their private parts. If someone does, I have to tell a trusted adult right away.



Each child should also have an agreed-upon list of at least 3-4 "trusted adults".

TRUSTED ADULTS

Together with your child, create a list of at least 3-4 "trusted adults" that your child can feel comfortable talking to and confiding in. Let these adults know that they have been chosen for this role.

My trusted adults are:



This is also a perfect time to make sure that all children as well as adults in the family are educated on key safety topics.

EDUCATION

Children should be taught proper names for all body parts, and the difference between safe and unsafe touch.

Adults should learn about healthy sexual development in children, as well as warning signs of grooming, and the types, signs and symptoms of abuse.

Adults should be aware of what to do if they suspect that a child is being abused, or if a child discloses abuse.



For more safety tips, be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram @njcainc, and share the information to help keep all children safe!

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