



**BITTERROOT EARLY LEARNING NETWORK**  
Nurturing Minds, Connecting Communities

**Prevention**  
is every **1**'s responsibility

**Strengthening**  
**April is Families Month!**

APRIL IS  
CHILD ABUSE  
PREVENTION  
MONTH



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April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month, a time dedicated to shedding light on the critical issue of child abuse and neglect. It serves as a reminder of the importance of ensuring the safety, well-being, and protection of children in our communities. Child abuse can take many forms, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect. It can have lasting effects on children, impacting their physical health, emotional development, and overall quality of life.

This booklet is designed to engage you and your child in meaningful conversations and activities that promote awareness and prevention of child abuse. By participating in these activities, you are celebrating the amazing ways families can spend time together and help others in the community. Together, we can work towards building a world where every child is safe, nurtured, and free from harm.

If you or someone you know is experiencing or witnessing child abuse, please reach out for help. Below are resources and hotlines that can provide support and guidance:

**Resources:**

- National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)
- Child Welfare Information Gateway: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/>
- Prevent Child Abuse America: <https://preventchildabuse.org/>
- Darkness to Light: <https://www.d2l.org/>

These resources offer valuable information, support, and guidance on how to recognize, report, and prevent child abuse. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of children everywhere. Thank you for taking the time to participate in these activities and for your commitment to protecting children. Make sure to tag @bitterrootearlylearningnetwork and share your activities on social media to help spread the word about prevention and kindness!

Use the following Hashtags to get involved with what Ravalli County is doing for April.  
#GoBlue #StrongFamilies #SafeKids #GrowingBetterTogether #StrengtheningFamilies



**Activity 1:** Sit with your child and work together to color the picture of a safe and happy child. Use this time to talk about what makes a child feel safe and loved.



## Activity 2: Story Time

Story Time is a wonderful opportunity to engage with your child and explore important themes like resilience, safety, and overcoming challenges. Choose a story that resonates with your child's age and interests, focusing on characters who face difficulties and find ways to cope or seek help. As you read together, discuss the story's message and how it relates to real-life situations. Encourage your child to share their thoughts and feelings about the story. What do the characters' faces look like? What are they doing with their bodies? I wonder how they're feeling?

Reading with your child offers numerous benefits beyond just storytelling. It helps develop their language and literacy skills, expands their vocabulary, and fosters a love for reading. It also strengthens the parent-child bond and provides a safe space for open communication. Through stories, children can learn valuable lessons, gain empathy and understanding for others, and develop problem-solving skills.

When discussing the story's themes, you can relate them to your child's own experiences and discuss how they can apply the lessons learned in the story to their own lives. This can help empower them to recognize and respond to challenging situations, build resilience, and understand the importance of seeking help when needed.

Examples of books to read:



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## Activity 3: Safety Plan

Creating a safety plan with your child is an important step in empowering them to stay safe and seek help if they ever feel scared or uncomfortable. It's crucial to include discussions about secrets and boundaries. Here's an example of what this might look like:

**Safe Places:** Identify safe places in your home, neighborhood, and community where your child can go if they feel unsafe. Examples include:

In the house: Their bedroom, a designated safe room, or a neighbor's house.

In the neighborhood: A trusted neighbor's house, a nearby park with other children and adults, or a community center.

In the community: A police station, fire station, or library.

**Safe People:** Discuss who your child can talk to if they feel scared or uncomfortable. These should be trusted adults who can provide help and support. Examples include:

Parents or guardians

Teachers or school counselors

Family friends or relatives

Police officers or firefighters

Doctors or nurses

**Emergency Contacts:** Make a list of emergency contact numbers that your child can use if they need help. This can be laminated and kept in their backpacks. Include numbers for:

911 for emergencies

A trusted family member or neighbor

The National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)

**Role-Playing:** Practice scenarios with your child where they might need to use their safety plan. This could include what to do if they get lost, if a stranger approaches them, or if they feel unsafe at home or school.

Regularly review and update the safety plan with your child as they grow and their surroundings change. Encourage them to ask questions and share any concerns they may have.

Creating a safety plan with your child helps them feel empowered and prepared to handle challenging situations. It also opens up important conversations about safety, boundaries, and the importance of seeking help when needed.



## Activity 4: Kindness Jar

The Kindness Jar activity is a creative way to encourage acts of kindness and empathy within your family. By discussing how kindness can help prevent abuse, you can teach your child about the importance of treating others with respect and compassion. Here's how you can do this activity:

**Materials Needed:** A jar, paper, markers or pens, and scissors.

**Decorate the Jar:** Have your child decorate the jar with drawings or stickers. You can also write "Kindness Jar" on it.

**Acts of Kindness:** Together, come up with acts of kindness that you can do for each other. Write these acts on small pieces of paper and fold them.

**Fill the Jar:** Place the folded papers with acts of kindness into the jar.

**Discussion:** Talk about how showing kindness and empathy towards others can create a positive and safe environment. Explain that being kind can help prevent abuse by promoting understanding, respect, and healthy relationships.

**Choose Acts of Kindness:** Each day or week, depending on your preference, take turns choosing an act of kindness from the jar and perform it for each other. Encourage your child to think of their own acts of kindness to add to the jar.

By practicing kindness, your child learns valuable lessons about empathy, compassion, and respect, which are essential in preventing abuse. This activity also fosters a positive and caring atmosphere within your family, reinforcing the importance of treating others with kindness and respect.

