

History of National Child Abuse Prevention Month

The earliest traces of National Child Abuse Prevention Month (NCAPM) go back to the passage of the first Federal child protection legislation, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), in 1974. This was the result of growing public awareness of the necessity to guarantee the safety and welfare of children. CAPTA has been amended on numerous occasions over the years. The last time CAPTA was amended was with the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003. The initial purpose of the original legislation continues to remain whole.

In the early 1980s, Congress made more moves in raising awareness of child abuse. The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives concluded that the week of June 6-12, 1982, should be selected as the first National Child Abuse Prevention Week. They also asked the President to release a declaration that called upon Government agencies and the public to observe the chosen week with activities, ceremonies, and programs. The frightening rate at which children were continuing to be abused and neglected, as well as the

need for programs to thwart child abuse and to give assistance to parents and families affected by ill-treatment influenced these decisions. The week in June 1982 would transform into the first NCAPM in April 1983. Child abuse and neglect awareness activities have continued to be publicized across the country during April, annually.

As a part of the 20th anniversary of the original Presidential Proclamation designating April as NCAPM, the National Child Abuse Prevention Initiative was revived as a year-long effort in 2003. The plan was launched at the 14th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, which was devoted to the theme of prevention.

In 2004, there was rising consensus among national child abuse prevention organizations and related Federal agencies that creating a public desire for child abuse prevention needed the engagement of the public in labors of strengthening and supporting families, and enhancing parenting skills. Today, the Child Abuse Prevention Initiative is a vision for communities nation-

wide to keep children safe, provide the necessary support families need, and raise children of all ages to be safe and secure in adulthood.

The pinwheel became the new national public awareness symbol for child abuse and neglect prevention in 2009. It embodies efforts to revolutionize how our nation ponders prevention, by emphasizing activities that increase awareness and prevention before abuse and neglect happens. The pinwheel is a cheerful and moving symbol of childhood. It can be used in numerous ways to pull attention towards prevention of child abuse and neglect.

