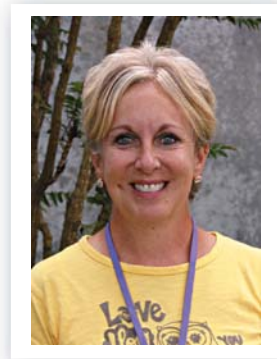


CHILD ABUSE



PROTECTING children, PROMOTING healthy families, PRESERVING communities

As everyone is aware, there have been several incidences of horrific child abuse in New Zealand this year. Most people are aware of the beating and death of Nia Glassie, but there are many children in our communities that are at risk of, or experiencing, abuse and neglect. Now is the time for communities to come together for the common cause of child protection. Child abuse is an epidemic that spans the entire world, regardless of ethnicity, religion or socio-economic status. It is everyone's responsibility to help protect children, as they are truly the innocent victims of this crime.

So we know the statistics, and are horrified by them. What next? There are lots of things that can be done. Educating the public is a key factor - letting people know that if they suspect a child is being mistreated, it must be reported. Teachers are often the first people that notice that a child is being abused or neglected, and nurses and doctors are trained to watch for red flags as well. We know that good parenting skills help to reduce child abuse - so that is the first place we should start to help break this cycle.

Kids can drive even the calmest parent crazy at times. Crying during the first year of life is the most common cause of abuse. Parents become very frustrated with a crying baby and lack of sleep, and can lose their tempers. The key is to make parents aware of the line-and how NOT to cross it. There are many world wide programs that help teach parenting skills to parents. Unfortunately, kids don't come with an instruction manual, and successful parenting does not come naturally to everyone. Nearly everyone can be taught parenting skills - and limits, discipline and loving attention make for happy and well behaved children.

Parenting tips:

1

Nurturing and attachment: encourage parents to play and talk to their children. Reading to kids can begin as early as infancy - babies love the sound of their parent's voices.

- Parents should say positive things to their children at least 80% of the time
- Be affectionate and use humor and surprise
- Avoid put downs
- Tell someone else - let the child hear her parents praise

Contact for comments/information
Camille Davis
Paediatric Nurse Practitioner
Pukekohe Family Health Care
Little Feet Paediatric Clinic
10 West Street Pukekohe, 09 237 0280

Little feet clinic is for children aged up to 11 years who are enrolled at Pukekohe Family Health Care. Parents can choose to have their child assessed by health professional Camille Davis MSN, BSN, RN, who has worked in Paediatrics for 25 years. Camille liaises closely with and has the support of the doctors at the practice at all times.

There are numerous resources within communities that can help with parenting issues. Some of these groups can help teach parenting skills, some help connect caregivers with other for support, and some help families access the general avenues of help.

If you have any concerns or questions contact Pukekohe Family Health Center or your health provider.

They can help guide you - remember, if you feel a child is being abused or neglected, it is your responsibility to notify CYF at 0508 326 459.
IF you feel the child is in immediate danger, call 111.

2

Knowledge of parenting and child development: parents can be taught about what sort of behavior they can expect at different ages. (example, the terrible twos!)

- With younger children it is better to re-focus their attention away from unwanted behavior, rather than yelling
- Ignore minor unwanted behavior
- Ignore cheekiness or rudeness
- Make cooperation fun - help them start and finish things
- Turn boring activities into games

3

Parental resilience - parents can be offered healthy ways to cope with stress

- Talk to someone if you are feeling stressed
- Get babysitting help when you need a break-network with other parents
- Talk to your child's teacher
- Take a parenting class