Child Abuse Prevention Month

Sample Letter to the Editor for Advocates

To The Editor:

Every child deserves good health, safety, and stability. When children have a healthy well-being, they are more likely to succeed in school and more likely to contribute to our communities and economy as adults.

Without adequate support, survivors of child abuse and neglect (CAN) may cope with that trauma through unexpected or potentially dangerous behavior, including acting out in school or turning to substance use. CAN survivors are also far more likely than their peers to become homeless and fall into human trafficking.

Unfortunately, abuse and neglect in Michigan has risen by more than one third in recent years (Consider also including your own county’s data, which can be found at [MLPP’s Kids Count Data Book](http://www.mlpp.org/kids-count/michigan-2/2017-kids-count-in-michigan-data-book)). Abuse and neglect cost the state 1 billion every year in criminal justice, child welfare, public health, educational, and other spending.

Michigan’s local CAN councils and prevention service providers work with local partners and agencies to prevent abuse and neglect by educating adults and encouraging community-wide action for prevention, directly serving over 100,000 children and families at-risk last year. Unfortunately, their funding, through tax check-offs and license plate fees, has fallen precipitously. They cannot meet the full abuse and neglect prevention needs of our community without more support.

I hope you join me this April, Child Abuse Prevention Month, in telling our state legislators to improve childhood well-being by investing in abuse and neglect prevention.

Some more tips:

* Make it personal wherever you can! How does abuse and neglect effect your work and your community?
* Word limits for letters to the editor or op-eds are usually short, between 250-500 words
* Has your target outlet recently published stories or editorials that you could relate to prevention? It can help to connect your issue to a story they’re already following
* Submit your letter to the paper’s editor, or whoever runs the editorial/opinion desk
* Follow-up after a week to check the status of your pitch.