

COMMUNITY ACTION

Healthy Families Cayuga-Seneca: Bottoms up for helping families



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April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. This is a time of reflection, celebration and action. The beautiful blue pinwheels available through Prevent Child Abuse America grace the hands of many during this time, and represent a shared commitment to embrace the mission of prevention. There are six protective factors that have been determined to play a significant role in reducing child abuse and neglect:

Nurturing and attachment: The early experience of developing a bond. Children learn to trust that their caretaker is able to provide for their needs and demonstrate love, acceptance and protection.

Knowledge of parenting and child development: Effective parenting that includes consistency, respect, communication, safe limits and affection — all contributing to self-assured,

successful children.

Parental resilience: Coping with life's ups and downs by utilizing inner strengths, a strong support system and community resources to manage the stressors that parents face.

Social connections: Having connections with friends and supportive peers or co-workers — someone who is able to listen, offer options and support.

Concrete support for parents: Access to resources that help families meet their basic needs and services that contribute to their well-being and growth.

Social and emotional competence of children: Parents are able to demonstrate their ability to self-regulate, share emotion appropriately, communicate effectively and relate well to others.

Cayuga Seneca Community Action Agency offers several programs that consistently adhere to these protective factors, including Healthy Families, Head Start and Early Head Start. The agency offers families the support and opportunity to experience wholesome parenting from the

first stages of pregnancy through the amazing and sometimes challenging first five years of their child's life. It is an incredible journey!

We are grateful to live and work in a community that has embraced our agency's mission to respectfully assist people to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency through direct services, education and community partnerships. We experience this daily through collaboration, donations, volunteerism and enthusiastic support of our fundraising efforts. It is in this same spirit of action that I invite your participation in our month long Bottoms Up! Diaper Drive to celebrate Child Abuse Prevention Month.

A baby goes through thousands of diapers within the first 30 months of life, an estimated expense of \$100 per month or \$3,000 total per child. Considering that 22 percent of children younger than 5 in the United States live in poverty, a percentage that is mirrored locally, this proves to be a trying expense for many low-income families. There are no subsidies or government programs that aid with the purchase of diapers. Diapers cannot be purchased with food stamps or WIC checks. Efforts to stretch a meager supply of diapers result in health risks for our children. According to the National Diaper Bank Network, 34 percent of mothers admit to cutting back on food or utilities in order to buy diapers.

A simple diaper becomes much more when you think of it in terms of an investment. Healthy, happy babies and families are the foundation of a successful future. I encourage you to be an agent of action and contribute a package of diapers — any brand, any size — for the babies and children in need in our community.

Our agency is accepting disposable diapers, any size or brand, at our new Auburn site located at 89 York St., Suite 1, and our Waterloo location at 23 Center St. If you are unable to drop diapers off, we will gladly pick them up. Please call (315) 255-1703 ext. 211 to make arrangements. You may also donate monetarily by cash, check or online through our secure website, http://cscaa.com/healthy_families.html.

Celebrate the children in your life by contributing to the success of families throughout Cayuga and Seneca counties. Invest in our future today by supporting our Bottoms Up Diaper Drive!