

# Preventing Child Maltreatment



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), creating **safe, stable, nurturing** relationships and environments is essential for helping children and families thrive. These relationships and environments also help protect children against or lessen the negative effects of violence.

**Safety:** extent to which a child is free from fear and secure from physical or psychological harm within their social and physical environment.

**Stability:** degree of predictability and consistency in a child's social, emotional, and physical environment.

**Nurturing:** extent to which a child's physical, emotional, and developmental needs are sensitively and consistently met.

## Parents and Caregivers:

Young children experience the world through their relationships with parents and other caregivers. The quality of these relationships and the environment in which they develop, play a significant role in a child's development. Parents and caregivers can:

- Set aside time each day to talk or play with your child.
- Establish routines. Children feel secure when the environment is structured for them.
- Validate your child's feelings and offer physical and emotional support.
- Know who is supervising your child when they're outside your home.
- Teach your child how to stay safe when they're online or on digital devices.

Raising children can be challenging—ask for help when you needed. Reach out to babysitters, family members, or close friends. Discuss your concerns with your child's doctor. Also find out if your community offers support groups or programs for parents and caregivers.

## Everyone:

Ensuring the well-being of children is a shared responsibility. Friends, family, and other trusted adults can help by developing nurturing, supportive relationships with the children in their lives. Other ideas for supporting kids:

- Recognize the challenges that families face and offer support to reduce stress
- Encourage parents and caregivers to ask for help when they need it
- Volunteer as a mentor at an afterschool program or offer to babysit
- Neighborhood associations can connect families to resources
- We can all support efforts to: adopt policies in support of families; increase access to high-quality childcare and education; create safe places or neighborhood activities where children are supervised, and families can gather; provide access to free or low-cost evidence-based parent training; discourage violence and help ensure the safety of all members of a community

Training and treatment for children and families can reduce the short- and long-term effects of child maltreatment. It can also improve parent-child interactions and family functioning. Reach out for support.