



## BECOME A PARTNER

### You are #Essential4Kids

#### What is #Essential4Kids?

On April 1, 2020, Missouri KidsFirst kicked off #Essential4Kids, a campaign designed to educate all adults about what to do if they suspect a child has been abused or neglected. Missouri saw a dramatic decrease in reports of child abuse and neglect during the Covid-19 pandemic. #Essential4Kids was created to empower all adults with education and resources to create safer environments for children. #Essential4Kids was viewed over 250,000 times on social media and was adapted in over 20 other states! The need to educate ALL adults on what to do to react responsibly to child abuse and neglect was clear, so #Essential4Kids is an ongoing awareness campaign. Find out more at [essential4kids.org](http://essential4kids.org).

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### Missouri's kids count on the adults in their lives to report child abuse and neglect.

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The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted families in Missouri emotionally and financially. Research shows that in times of crisis and economic instability, child abuse and neglect rates increase. Read on to learn how #Essential4Kids educates adults about the signs of abuse and neglect and why it is important to take action! We invite you to join us as a partner!



#### Join Us

Go to [www.essential4kids.org](http://www.essential4kids.org)

Resources are available for all adults. Specialized resources include downloadable one-page flyers for: schools, youth serving organizations, faith communities, law enforcement, and childcare providers.

**Start a conversation with your community** about the information and share the resources provided in the #Essential4Kids campaign. This campaign is for ALL adults: friends, family, neighbors, faith communities, community organizations, schools, and anyone who cares about child safety.

**Share the information you learn** from the #Essential4Kids campaign on your social networks.

**Subscribe** to the Missouri KidsFirst Newsletter and follow Missouri KidsFirst on social media.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.



## TALKING POINTS FOR PARTNERS

### Learn the facts and share

#### The Facts

- It is a sad fact that the vast majority of abuse happens in the home. 81% of perpetrators are either a parent or an unmarried partner of a parent.
- Additionally, 87% of cases happen within the family.
- National Children's Alliance statistics collected at Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) show that in about 20-25% of cases are when kids harm other kids. In many cases, that's a sibling.

#### Trust Your Gut

If something does not look safe, sound safe, or feel safe – report.

**1-800-392-3738**

#### Effectively Reporting

- Explain how the suspected abuse has impacted the child.
- Be precise with dates, times, and locations, if available.
- Describe specific changes in behavior/emotions: expressions of fear, interactions with other children and adults, impact on grades, and/or impact of an unsafe environment.

#### Why do I need to know about reporting child abuse?

Two factors affect the reporting of child abuse: where the abuse happens, and where the abuse is disclosed or discovered. YOU may be the only adult a child chooses to tell or you may discover that a child is being abused. If so, you need to be prepared to react responsibly.

#### YOU may be a safe adult for a child!

You don't need to be a parent to be a safe adult. You might be a teacher, coach, mentor, aunt/uncle or play another role in a child's life.

A safe adult is someone who:

- is an adult that can get a child help if they're ever hurt or unsafe.
- doesn't break boundaries or safety rules, or try to get the child to break them.
- the child feels comfortable with and can easily talk to about things that may be difficult to talk about.
- the child can trust to keep them safe.

Cultivating a healthy, trusting relationship with a child is actually one of the best protections against abuse!

Check out Darkness to Light to learn more about being a Safe Adult: [d2l.org/how-to-be-a-safe-adult/](https://d2l.org/how-to-be-a-safe-adult/)

### How can YOU keep kids safe?

#### Ask for help:

Making a report is asking for help and services. You are not making an accusation when you report, you are requesting professional help for a child and their family.

#### You may be the only person to act:

Do not assume that someone else has already made the call. Make a call to Children's Division and let them know you are concerned. Anonymous reports are accepted.

#### If a child expresses to you that they have been abused – Stay calm and listen with compassion.

- Tell the child, "I believe you."
- Only ask open ended questions, like "Tell me more."
- Avoid trying to dig for details or having different adults question the child's story. This can re-traumatize the child and damage the investigation and/or prosecution.

All national child abuse statistics cited from U.S. Administration for Children & Families, Child Maltreatment 2018. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2018>

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For more resources: [essential4kids.org](https://essential4kids.org)  
For free child abuse or neglect reporting training:  
[protectmokids.com](https://protectmokids.com)

**#Essential4Kids**

[missourikidsfirst.org](https://missourikidsfirst.org)  
Funded by the  
Children's Justice Act and MRCAC