



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte-Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

April 12, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeannine Mallory,
Public Information Officer
Pinellas County Health Department
727-824-6908 (media only)

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

According to *Child Maltreatment 2005*, an estimated 1,460 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in 2005.

You may be able to help prevent further deaths by understanding child abuse and what to do when children are at risk. You can help in your community by supporting families and ensuring that parents have the knowledge and resources they need to protect children from the risk of child abuse and neglect.

An important step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination you should take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse.

The following may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect.

The Child:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home

The Parent:

- Shows little concern for the child
- Denies the existence of, or blames the child for, the child's problems in school or at home
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve

If you suspect that someone is harming a child, reporting your suspicions may protect the child and get help for the family. **Call the Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).** For more information about violence prevention, call our injury and violence prevention program at **(727) 824-6900** or visit www.pinellashealth.com/InjuryViolencePrevention.asp

###

The Mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of our community through public and private partnerships in an environment that respects diversity.