



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

301 SECOND STREET - WOODLAND, CALIFORNIA 95695 - 530.666.8180 - FAX 530.666.8185

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 3, 2020

Contact: Jonathan Raven, Chief Deputy DA
Jonathan.raven@yolocounty.org
Bilingual Spanish Representative Available
at (530) 666-8356

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

(Woodland, CA) – April 3, 2020 – As the community responds to measures put in place to “flatten the curve” and conserve our medical resources in response to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), many families are placed in a state of unprecedented stress, both financially and emotionally; personally and professionally. Families and children face fear and anxiety due to the increasing severity of restrictions, ongoing disruptions in routine, uncertainty about the future, and onslaught of information caused by the coronavirus. The Yolo County District Attorney’s Office wants you to know that we appreciate all that you are doing to keep our community safe, healthy, and able to respond to this medical emergency. Fear, anxiety, and frustration are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. With schools and business closing, activities cancelled, children and families home around the clock, it can all feel overwhelming. The staff at the District Attorney’s Office want you to know that you are not alone and that we will survive this as a community.

At times like this, the risk for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE’s) increases dramatically. ACEs Connection (<https://www.acesconnection.com/>), recommends the following **10 ways to avoid ACEs (during the pandemic):**

1. Think about **social connection and physical distance**, not social distance. Continuing to nurture close relationships with friends and relatives protect against ACEs.
2. **Talk with your children**. Like their parents, children may be fearful, or simply missing their routines. Ask them about their concerns. Their answers will guide you on how to talk with them. Reassure them: although this is serious, they and their parents will live through it.
3. **Reach out for support**, particularly if you have an infant at home. Infants exhaust and frustrate their parents. These feelings drive some parents to hurt their infants, making the first six months the most dangerous age for child abuse. **If you have a baby in your home**, expect

these normal feelings. If your baby won't stop crying, and it's getting to you, put the baby down, and gather yourself. Maybe call a friend, put on headphones, and wait it out.

4. **Reach out to support.** Reach out to your friends or relatives with infants [and children] at home. Try to listen without offering advice – a sympathetic ear can do miracles.
5. Address **concrete family needs.** Shelter-in-place orders may lead families to struggling to meet basic needs. Offer to help by getting diapers for families that need them, cook a meal, or drop off food. Be on the lookout for families who have trouble getting food. If you can, contribute to local relief efforts.
6. Address **parental mental health.** Depression is common and treatable. Those with a history of depression, parents with newborns, and people who have lost their jobs are at particular risk. Recognize common signs of depression: anger and irritability, loss of energy, loss of interest in daily activities, and feeling helpless and hopeless. If you are concerned, reach out for help. Family doctors, pediatricians, and obstetricians are well trained in recognizing and treating signs of depression.
7. **Check in** with the children in your life. Schoolteachers and early childhood educators can recognize signs of abuse or neglect. Children who are out of sight because their schools are closed are more vulnerable.
8. Be on the lookout for **family violence.** Many professionals expect an increase in family violence due to changes in routines, economic stress, and simply being cooped up in tight quarters together. If there is a gun in your home, this may be a particularly dangerous time. Reach out to the [National Domestic Violence](https://www.ndv.org/) hotline (800-799-7233) for advice.
[In Yolo County: **Empower Yolo's 24-hour crisis lines** are staffed and ready to help: **530-662-1133 or 916-371-1907** <http://empoweryolo.org/crisis-support/>].
9. **Engage** with your community, in whatever ways are possible. Local, state, and federal government are mobilizing support. Decision-makers need to hear from all of us about strengthening social safety nets. Helping others gives us (and older children and teens) a sense of purpose that can help counter stress.
10. **Create positive moments.** Go for walks, play games, cook or bake something together. Many families are growing closer as we face this crisis together. Look for those moments that will create happy memories, even now.

District Attorney, Jeff Reisig, reminds people that having the news on continuously at times like these can be confusing, scary, and overwhelming for children. "It can be overwhelming for all of us. Turn off the news for a period of time every day and please be mindful of adult conversations about the pandemic in front of children."

Other resources and tips for parents to reduce stress, structure home activities, and make the most of this time together can be found here:

<https://preventchildabuse.org/coronavirus-resources/>
<https://www.yolokids.org/families-guides>

As mentioned above, with schools closed, children suffering from abuse and neglect are less visible to those who can help them. If you suspect child abuse or neglect, please contact the **Child Welfare Reporting Abuse Hotline at: 530-669-2345**

Whether you have children at home or not, District Attorney, Jeff Reisig encourages all Yolo County residents to be aware of the above information and look out for each other. Stay connected. Check-in on your loved ones and friends, offer support where you can. Just listening can help tremendously. We will get through this, together.

###