

## Risk Factors for Child Abuse and Neglect

Identifying and addressing key risk factors is key to reducing child abuse and neglect in Klamath County. There is no single cause of child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect cut across all boundaries of income-level, race/ethnicity, family characteristics, and urban/rural status. No group is “exempt”. However, there are a key set of risk factors for child abuse and neglect present in Klamath County:

- Domestic Violence
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Poverty
- Unstable Housing
- Unemployment
- Mental Health Issues
- Childhood history of abuse

The numbers don’t lie. The Oregon Department of Justice reports that Klamath County has one of the worst per capita rates of violence against women and children in the state. Parental drug and alcohol abuse is present in approximately 63% of child abuse and neglect cases. Childhood poverty is 44% worse than the state. And unemployment is 24% worse than the state. We need a coordinated plan across systems weaving prevention into every facet of our community. We can and should do better for our children.

## Childhood decides.

Jean Paul Sartre



### What can you do to prevent child abuse and neglect?

**Parents.** Being a parent is one of the hardest jobs in the world. It can be overwhelming at times. As a parent, you need to know that there is help available. If you need resources or if you are in crisis, contact 1-800-4-A-Child, a 24-hour *confidential* hotline staffed by counselors. You can also visit [www.KlamathStopTheHurt.org](http://www.KlamathStopTheHurt.org).

**Kids.** Stand Up. Speak Out. Stay Safe. As a child or youth, you need to know:

1. No one has the right to abuse you
2. You don’t deserve to be abused. It is not your fault.
3. If you are being abused, you are a victim
5. It is wrong you are suffering pain, fear or sadness
6. You are not alone
7. Abusers may scare or threaten kids so they won’t tell
8. If you are being abused, please tell a safe person – that’s someone you can trust like a teacher, counselor, school nurse, neighbor or parents.
9. You can call 1-800-4-A-Child if you need help.

**Community.** Our community needs to know the signs of abuse and how to report abuse. Please see [www.KlamathStopTheHurt.org](http://www.KlamathStopTheHurt.org).

**Agencies.** For consistency and early identification of high risk families, we need to ensure all agencies know the key risk factors for child abuse and neglect and coordinate a standardized risk assessment tool and resource referral across systems. *CASA for Children of Klamath County, 2011.*

## Promoting Factors Present in Healthy Families

Promoting Factors Present in Healthy Families is Key to Reducing Child Abuse and Neglect in Klamath County. The following factors are present in healthy families:

- Nurturing and attachment
- Knowledge of parenting
- Knowledge of child development
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete supports for parents

These factors need to be promoted across all systems including resource referral.

We do have multi-generational issues of child abuse and neglect. Health promotion is violence prevention. By promoting six core strengths for healthy brain development across systems, we can help children grow up to be healthy, successful adults in our community and break the cycle of abuse. If a child develops the capacity to be humane, his likelihood for committing violence decreases.



There are practical tips to promote healthy brain development for children and youth at [www.klamathfallscasa.org/community-resources/healthy](http://www.klamathfallscasa.org/community-resources/healthy).