



Proclamation: Recognition of April 2019 as Child Abuse Prevention Month

WHEREAS, children are our future, and safe and healthy childhoods establish the foundation for stable, successful, and independent adults; and

WHEREAS, child abuse continues to be a persistent and pervasive problem in San Francisco with 5,142 allegations of child abuse, and 494 substantiations in 2018. Child maltreatment impacts not just the child, but the family, community, and society as a whole. Indeed, the physical, mental, and emotional effects of maltreatment persist long after abuse occurs, resulting in ongoing costs to our city. The preliminary estimations of the cumulative financial impact to the San Francisco community for the 494 verified child victims in 2018 is \$223.6 million. Abused children are more likely to experience negative educational, health, and behavioral outcomes, which contribute to many of San Francisco's challenges, such as homelessness, chronic health issues, and high high school dropout rates; and

WHEREAS, while child abuse crosses all zip codes, socioeconomic levels, ethnicities, and family structures, it is important to recognize that the rates of child maltreatment are not equally distributed along racial and ethnic lines. Rates of substantiation are significantly higher among Black, Native American, and LatinX families than other ethnic groups. This is a result of a complex constellation of factors that is just beginning to be understood; and

WHEREAS, the majority of child abuse cases stem from situations that are preventable, and child abuse can be reduced by making sure every family has the support it needs to enhance their Five Protective Factors of: (i) children's social and emotional competence, (ii) parents' knowledge of parenting and child development, (iii) parents' resilience, (iv) families' social connections, and (v) families' concrete supports; and

WHEREAS, effective prevention efforts succeed because of meaningful collaboration and partnerships among public and private organizations and the community. San Francisco has created an important network of programs and policies that prevent child abuse and improve the response when abuse does happen, and continues to ensure greater collaboration in the community; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to continue to raise awareness about child abuse and its devastating impact and support all vulnerable children and their families.

NOW, THEREFORE, We, the Human Services Commission, join with others, including the Human Services Agency and Safe & Sound, to recognize April 2019 as Child Abuse Prevention Month. We urge our community to join together to shine a light on child abuse and stand up for vulnerable children. For our city's future, we all have the responsibility to unite to support each family's efforts to keep themselves and their children safe and healthy and acknowledge the accomplishments of families, public and private organizations, and communities working together to end child abuse.

Dr. James McCray, Jr.
Vice President, Human Services Commission

3/25/2019
Date