



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Middleton

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
April 2012 is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

FOR the purpose of celebrating April 2012 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month; encouraging all individuals and organizations to play a role in making Baltimore City a better place for children and families, and; expressing appreciation to the organizations that work to protect children, provide treatment to the abused, and assist parents in providing proper care and attention to their children.

Recitals

In proclaiming April 2012 Child Abuse Prevention Month, the President of the United States stated: As parents, as communities, and as a Nation, the work of raising our children stands among our greatest responsibilities and our most profound blessings. The support we give and the examples we set form cornerstone for their success, and by teaching our children to trust in themselves, we equip them with confidence, hope, and determination that can last a lifetime. Tragically, neglect and abuse erode this fundamental promise for too many young Americans. During National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we renew our commitment to break the cycle of violence, strengthen support for all who have been affected, and empower our young people with the best we have to offer”.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finds that while safe, stable, and nurturing relationships between children and adults serve as a buffer against maltreatment, not all children are fortunate enough to be exposed to these positive relationships. Unfortunately, child maltreatment is a significant public health problem in the United States. In 2009, Child Protective Services confirmed more than 700,000 children were abused or neglected. These confirmed cases, however, represent only a fraction of the true magnitude of the problem.

The Family Tree is Maryland’s leading 501(c)(3) dedicated to improving our community by providing families with proven solutions to prevent child abuse and neglect, which in Maryland is defined as the physical or mental injury to a child by a parent, care giver or family member; or sexual abuse whether or not physical injuries are sustained. The Family Tree partners with numerous agencies, organizations and businesses to improve the health, education, and well-being of Maryland’s children.

A fact sheet published by The Family Tree further states that:

- Physical abuse includes hitting, spanking, pinching, biting, shaking, beating, burning or
 - punching a child. Sexual abuse includes rape, touching/fondling or involving a child in pornography.
- Child neglect involves the failure to give proper care and attention to a child, or placing the child's health or welfare in jeopardy. It is also failure to provide a child's basic physical, emotional, or educational needs.
- Emotional abuse can involve criticizing, insulting, rejecting or withholding love from a child.

In 1987, the Baltimore Child Abuse Center (BCAC) opened in response to growing awareness that sexually abused children were not only suffering the lasting effects of abuse, but they were also being re-victimized by the lengthy and often repetitive investigative process intended to help them. The mission of BCAC is to provide all reported victims of child sexual abuse in Baltimore, and their non-offending caretakers, with comprehensive interviews, medical treatment, referrals and crisis counseling services, with a goal of preventing future sexual child abuse. The Center sees an average of 1000 children a year who are the victims of sexual abuse.

Nationally 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused by the time they are 18; only about 10% of child sexual abuse is ever reported; ½ of sexual abuse victims are younger than 9. Officials at the Baltimore Child Abuse Center report that the majority of victims of child sexual abuse are children under the age of 6, the average age of the children seen is 8. At the Baltimore Child Abuse Center, 38% of children seen are boys; nearly 40% are younger than seven; 76% are younger than 12. Ninety percent of abusers are someone the child or family knows and almost ½ of child sexual abuse is committed by teenage boys or young adults aged 14 to 30.

Advocates for children remind us that child sexual abuse is a crime of secrecy and that by simply breaking the silence and starting a conversation with children adults can begin taking steps to prevent abuse. Likewise, small acts of kindness, protection, and caring - a hug, a smile, or loving words - make a big difference to children. Research consistently shows that babies who receive affection from their parents have the best chance of developing into children, teens, and adults who are happy, healthy, and competent. Research also shows that a relationship with a consistent, stable, and caring adult in the early years is associated later in life with better academic grades, healthier behaviors, more positive peer interactions, and an increased ability to cope with stress.

As is the vision of The Family Tree - Every family has the tools to raise children to become healthy, productive, and competent adults.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body celebrates April 2012 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month; encourages all individuals and organizations to play a role in making Baltimore City a better place for children and families, and; expresses appreciation to the organizations that work to protect children, provide treatment to the abused, and assist parents in providing proper care and attention to their children.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor; the Director, The Family Tree; the Executive Director, Baltimore Child Abuse Center; the Commissioner of Health, and; the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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