



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

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Michael T. Dougherty, District Attorney

**For Immediate Release**  
April 22, 2024

Contact: Shannon Carbone  
Phone: 303-441-3804  
[scarbone@bouldercounty.gov](mailto:scarbone@bouldercounty.gov)

**Press Release**  
***April is Child Abuse Prevention Month***

Child abuse is an unfortunate, difficult reality that should not be ignored. It is hard to quantify exactly how many children experience abuse (neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse or psychological abuse) because a large amount of the abuse goes unreported. However, the following data highlights the scope of the issue:

- From the 2022 Child Maltreatment report from the Administration for Children and Families within the Department of Health & Human Services:
  - There were approximately over 550,000 victims of abuse and neglect in 2022.
  - The most vulnerable of children, those in their first year of life, have the highest rate of victimization, and in 2022 there were an estimated 1,990 children who died from abuse and neglect in the United States.
- The organization, Darkness to Light, reports that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- According to the National Child Advocacy Center, 90% of child sexual abuse victims know their abuser. Research shows that most child victims will delay or may not ever disclose child sexual abuse to friends, family, or the authorities. It is also extremely rare that children lie about sexual abuse.

Child victims often experience shame, guilt, and fear as barriers to disclosure. Because of these dynamics, the District Attorney's Office has a specialized team dedicated to these cases. The District Attorney's Office works with law enforcement, victim advocates, and human services to hold perpetrators of abuse accountable and to get children to a safer place.

There are non-profit organizations that combat this problem. One example is the local child advocacy center, Blue Sky Bridge.

Blue Sky Bridge is an organization that offers therapy for children who have experienced trauma, victim advocacy for children and their non-offending caregivers, as well as a child-friendly place for kids to come and be forensically interviewed about their abuse, which can be used in the investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators of their abuse. Blue Sky Bridge, also, provides educational programs for children and parents to recognize and respond to abuse. To learn more, please visit <https://blueskybridge.org/>.

District Attorney Michael Dougherty stated, “No one person will put an end to child abuse. That’s why the outstanding collaboration here in Boulder County is so important. We are fortunate to work alongside such amazing non-profit organizations and law enforcement agencies dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. And, when child abuse does occur, we work together to make sure that there are consequences for those responsible.”

In honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month, there are pinwheels in various locations throughout Boulder County, including at the Justice Center. Blue Sky Bridge has helped to develop Project Pinwheel. Project Pinwheel is a group of agencies who work together to prevent and reduce child sexual assault in the Boulder community.

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, community members should call a local law enforcement agency or the Colorado Child Abuse Hotline at 1-844-264-5437.