April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

On behalf of the Fulton County Schools Social Work Department, we would like to acknowledge April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Did you know that each year, approximately 3 million reports of suspected child abuse are filed in the United States? Child abuse is any mistreatment of a child that results in harm or injury. Examples include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Child abuse has no boundaries. It can happen across cultural lines and in families of all education and income levels. Child abuse is a community problem, because it can lead to things such as violence, alcoholism, and more abuse. By supporting each other, we help break the cycle of child abuse. Here are some examples of things we can do to help prevent child abuse in our community:

* Be a nurturing parent: Learn positive parenting skills. Know when and where to get help if you need it.
* Educate yourself: Learn about child abuse prevention policies and programs in the community.
* Reach out to neighbors: Preventing abuse can be as simple as being a good neighbor. Supporting families under stress helps reduce the risk of child abuse.
* Support prevention policies and legislation: Contact your local child welfare agency (DFCS), elected officials, or other community leaders to find out how you can help.
* Protect your child from abuse: Teach your child how to protect him or herself from harm.
* Know the warning signs of abuse, and report it: Be alert to the warning signs of abuse. If you suspect that a child is being abused, report it to authorities.

By working together to prevent child abuse in our community:

* The children in our communities become happier and healthier.
* Families grow stronger.
* Communities become more engaged places where members come together with a strengthened sense of belonging.

If you believe a child is being abused please contact the Department of Children and Family Services (DFCS) by calling 1-855-GACHILD or 1-855-422-4453. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, call 911 or your local emergency number.

For more information please visit [www.preventchildabusega.org](http://www.preventchildabusega.org) or call 1-800-CHILDREN which is a statewide information and referral helpline offering resources and support to parents and caregivers.

Respectfully,

Rikki Clark, LCSW

School Social Worker

404-583-8309

Clarkr1@fultonschools.org