



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2021-0278, **Version:** 1

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**To:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Human Services  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Nick Honey, 565-4343  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

### **Recommended Action:**

Adopt a Gold Resolution designating the month of April 2021 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Sonoma County. (Countywide)

### **Executive Summary:**

April is nationally recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month. As part of this national educational opportunity, the Sonoma County Human Services Department (HSD) and the Child Parent Institute 1) share information on child abuse and neglect prevention efforts countywide, 2) acknowledge Child Abuse Prevention efforts by raising the Children's Memorial Flag at the County Center on April 30, 2021, and 3) request the Board of Supervisors to support child abuse prevention awareness and education by adopting a gold resolution.

### **Discussion:**

Child abuse continues to be a critical issue in Sonoma County and child abuse prevention requires an ongoing and comprehensive community-wide effort. In 2020, the COVID pandemic contributed to an overall decrease in the number of hotline calls that the Family, Youth and Children's Services Division (FY&C) received to report child abuse. However, more incidents of domestic violence and related child abuse were reported than in years prior, suggesting that while the number of reported incidents is lower, children remain vulnerable to stressors within their homes related to the pandemic.

Due to the pandemic, school staff and other traditional mandated reporters did not see children routinely and therefore likely did not identify suspected abuse and call the hotline. As a result, the volume of hotline calls and investigations of suspected child abuse dropped in 2020 by approximately 20%. 4,439 phone calls concerning child abuse or neglect were received through the Emergency Response Hotline and 1,719 of these reports required an in-person investigation. 459 reports were confirmed as rising to the level of substantiated child abuse or neglect - a 30% decrease from the year prior. Many of these families received prevention services from social workers and community providers that facilitated them to remain intact. Unfortunately, in 209 cases the situation was deemed so unsafe that children were removed from their home while parents were supported to address the safety issues. Approximately 20 children per month stayed at the Valley of the Moon Children's Center. Also, in 2020, 130 children and youth returned to their families after participating in services and once their homes were determined safe. Additionally, forever families adopted 27 children.

FY&C continued its Mandated Reporter Outreach training program in 2020 with the goal of increasing awareness and reporting of child abuse. Nearly 400 individuals from a variety of community organizations,

including schools, hospitals and law enforcement were trained in their role and responsibility as a mandated reporter. Training was offered virtually during the pandemic and approximately two-thirds of the 400 individuals were trained between April and December.

The FY&C Division partners with community-based providers to offer a variety of child abuse prevention services designed to support the families who are investigated for potential child abuse and who have some risk factors, but do not rise to the level of requiring longer-term child welfare involvement. These families are offered specialized community-based services for therapy, parenting education, or resource assistance, in order to create and maintain a safe home for their children. The contracts for prevention services total approximately \$575,000 and utilize Children's Trust Fund; Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment; Promoting Safe and Stable Families; Community Based Child Abuse Prevention funds and Realignment funding. In Fiscal Year 2019-2020, approximately 90 families began services and approximately 60% of families completed services and met their program goals.

HSD also contracts with the Child Parent Institute to manage the Prevent Child Abuse - Sonoma County Council (PCA-SC), which coordinates the community's efforts in child abuse prevention, service coordination, and awareness. The Prevent Child Abuse - Sonoma County Council is authorized by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors under the authority of the Welfare and Institutions Code Section 18980, Chapter 12.5, Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council Act. HSD and PCA-SC have partnered since 2005 to provide information about and engage community partners in child abuse prevention by offering quarterly trainings on topics related to child abuse prevention.

During COVID, more than 1,000 parents and community members participated in virtual trainings hosted by the PCA-SC and presented by national and local leaders on topics such as trauma-informed care and program development, relationship-based interventions, leadership, and protecting children during COVID. Partners on the PCA-SC include First Five, faith-based communities, parents, local business leaders and community-based organizations.

On April 29, 2021, the Council is hosting their annual Blue Ribbon event (virtually) in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month. The topic is 'Rediscovering the Beauty Within' by Sasha Neulinger.

Also, in acknowledgement of Child Abuse Prevention Month, the California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention, has asked that every County raise the Children's Memorial Flag on Friday, April 23, 2021, as a way to close Child Abuse Prevention month activities.

**Prior Board Actions:**

Every year, the Board of Supervisors has declared April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Sonoma County.

4/21/20

4/16/19

4/17/18

4/11/17

4/12/16

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

Expenditures	FY 20-21 Adopted	FY21-22 Projected	FY 22-23 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

N/A

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Resolution

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**

None