

## The Counselor's Corner

In 1984 Congress declared April to be National Child Prevention Month which is a time to recognize we can all play a part in the protection and well-being of children. The first recorded & highly publicized case of child abuse in America was in 1874 and involved a 10 year old child, Mary Ellen. Mary Ellen suffered repeated severe abuse at the hands of her adoptive parents. Animal cruelty laws were used to remove Mary Ellen from her adoptive parents because laws were lacking in regard to child protection. Information re: Mary Ellen can be found at:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/15/health/15abus.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/15/health/15abus.html?_r=0)

Society has improved in the protection of children since the case of Mary Ellen; however the statistics are still sobering:

- In America a report of child abuse and neglect is made every 10 seconds
- In America an average of 4 children dies every day as the result of abuse and neglect and approximately 70% are under the age of 4.
- 90-95% of the victims know the perpetrators.
- In 2013, 63,512 cases of child abuse and neglect were responded to by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services.
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are reported to have been sexual molested by the age of 18.
- Maltreatment of children occurs on every socio-economic level, across every ethnic and cultural lines and within all religions and at all levels of education

Tennessee law mandates anyone who suspects a child is being abused or neglected must make a report to the Department of Children's Services or local Law Enforcement or a Juvenile Court Judge and failure to report is a crime. The reporting number for the Tennessee Department of Children's Services is 1-877-237-0004 and your name and contact information will remain confidential as mandated by law. For more information regarding child abuse and neglect go to:

[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/child\\_abuse\\_physical\\_emotional\\_sexual\\_neglect.htm#warning](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/child_abuse_physical_emotional_sexual_neglect.htm#warning)

If you have a concern or suspicion a child you know is being abused or neglect, please make the call and you may save a life.

Children are to be celebrated and cherished every day and there are some wonderful ideas on the attached calendar for making memories with your child this month.

Vickie Lawson, MSSW

School Counselor