

Walk for Children New York!

Local Organizer Handbook

Who holds the answers to child abuse?

We all do.



Prevent Child Abuse
New York

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Introduction and Local Organizer Instructions

Hello! Thank you for your interest in organizing a Walk for Children New York in your community. This handbook is your guide to planning and implementing your walk. If you follow the suggestions in this booklet, you will be able to build community spirit and exceed your fundraising goals. In the process, you will also be educating New Yorkers about preventing child abuse and neglect in their communities. With this effort, you are building a better future for our children and our communities!

The money you raise will support the statewide programs of Prevent Child Abuse New York. You will find more information Prevent Child Abuse New York and its programs on page 5.

Please take the time to review this book and lay out your own plans for your event. We'd like you to become familiar with the facts regarding child abuse, prevention, and the work of Prevent Child Abuse New York. Our hope is that this will motivate you, your walkers, and those you contact for sponsorships.

We have given you a broad range of outreach ideas in this handbook. Keep in mind, these are only starting points to get you thinking. You are free to adapt a walker or sponsorship recruitment plan that fits well with your personality and interests. The staff of Prevent Child Abuse New York is also available to help you plan walk and devise strategies to reach out to potential walkers and sponsors. Call 1-800-CHILDREN or e-mail walk@preventchildabuseny.org.

We look forward to working with you to make your Walk for Children a fun and fulfilling event.

What Is Child Abuse Prevention?

Preventing child abuse means stopping it before it begins. Prevention efforts focus on helping families learn how to best meet the emotional, physical, and developmental needs of their children. For example, local schools or family resource centers can provide opportunities for parents to socialize, exchange information, and learn more about children's growth and development. Family support programs, such as home visitation services or parent support groups, help parents develop their parenting skills.

Your walk is a perfect opportunity to highlight the role we all can play to support parents and families. We'll send you prevention literature to distribute at your walk, so you walkers understand the many things they can do to prevent child abuse in their communities.

Child Abuse in New York

The consequences of child abuse and neglect are far-reaching and affect us all. Research shows that children who have been abused are more likely to perform poorly in school, get involved in criminal activities, and abuse and neglect their own children. Preventing abuse and neglect is critical to protecting New York's children and minimizing the costs of long-term intervention for crime, corrections, truancy, hospitalization, special education, and mental health care.

In 2006, 76,590 New York State children were abused or neglected approximately 16.9 of every 1,000 children in the state.

- ✱ 91.5 percent of victims suffered from neglect.
- ✱ 10.6 percent of victims suffered from physical abuse.
- ✱ 3.4 percent of victims suffered from sexual abuse.
- ✱ .7 percent of victims suffered from emotional maltreatment.
- ✱ 4.4 percent of victims suffered from medical neglect.
- ✱ 25.6 percent of victims suffered from other types.

Other types of maltreatment include, for example, abandonment, threats of harm, or congenital drug addiction. Totals are more than 100% because a child may be the victim of more than one type of maltreatment.

In New York State in 2006, 75 children died as a result of abuse or neglect, a fatality rate of 1.64 per 100,000 children. This is the same number of fatalities as 2005.

Prevent Child Abuse New York

For more than 25 years, Prevent Child Abuse New York has been the state's leading organization focused on preventing child maltreatment before it occurs. We strive to engage communities in the important work of strengthening families and valuing children. That's what it takes to prevent child abuse: community support of all children and their families.

The proceeds from your Walk for Children will benefit our programs, which include:

Prevention Information Resource Center & Parent Helpline: 1.800.342.7472 (PIRC)

The PIRC & Parent Helpline is an information and referral service for parents, professionals, and other citizens who want to prevent child abuse and intervene in abusive situations. Positive parenting is the first line of defense against child abuse, so PIRC focuses heavily on resources for parents. The Helpline is available to everyone in New York, 24 hours every day, in English and Spanish.

Healthy Families New York

We promote Healthy Families New York, a program that provides in-home visits to new parents who need extra support. The program improves parents' knowledge, skills, and relationships with their children. Our training team helps assure that all families in programs throughout the state receive quality services.

Legislative and Policy Advocacy

We provide statewide leadership in advocating for programs and policies that protect children and prevent abuse. We work with coalitions and mobilize advocates from across the state.

Annual Child Abuse Prevention Conference

Our annual conference inspires and equips hundreds of professionals, parents, and volunteers with the latest abuse prevention and family support techniques.

Public Awareness and Education

We encourage statewide involvement in ending child abuse through exhibits, public information campaigns, the Internet, and prevention literature that we provide to schools, agencies, and other community organizations.

Step I: Deciding to Organize a Walk for Children

- ✧ Decide to hold a local walk for children to support Prevent Child Abuse New York. Decide on a date, time, and location for your walk. Potential locations include a public park, a local campus, a shopping center, or around your neighborhood. PLEASE NOTE: Be sure to obtain permission from the appropriate people before walking on public or private property.
- ✧ Contact us at least eight weeks before your walk. Call 1-800-CHILDREN and let us know your name and contact information, when and where your walk will be, and how many registration brochures you'd like to distribute in your community.
- ✧ Make note of the T-shirt deadline for your walk. This date will be three weeks before your walk. Every walker you register by that date will receive a complimentary Walk for Children T-shirt.
- ✧ Receive Walk for Children registration brochures in the mail from us. These brochures will include your contact information (so your walkers know how to reach you) and the date, time, and location of your walk. They also include a walker registration form that should be completed by every walker in your event. There is a \$15 registration fee for all walkers ages 12 and over.

Step 2: Planning Your Walk for Children

- ✧ Recruit walkers. Collect registration forms and fees from every walker. Checks can be made payable to Prevent Child Abuse New York. See page 9 to read strategies about recruiting walkers.
- ✧ Encourage walkers to solicit sponsors. Registration brochures are stuffed with sponsorship envelopes. Your walkers should use these envelopes to keep track of their sponsorship money. See pages 11-12 for more information about sponsorships.
- ✧ If you want to ask businesses in your community to donate snacks and refreshments, let us know. We'll give you letters requesting donations written on our letterhead that you can fax, mail, or present in person.
- ✧ Three weeks before your walk, mail us all the registration forms and fees you have collected. After we receive them, we'll send you a T-shirt for each walker. PLEASE NOTE: You can still register walkers after this time, but we regret that we will be unable to give them a shirt.
- ✧ Decide if you want to find music or entertainment for your walk. Maybe a girl scout troop can do facepainting or some local clowns will donate their time to your event. Perhaps a local DJ or band will play for free.

Step 3: At Your Walk

- ✱ Give yourself enough time to set up a registration area and hang any decorations. You may want to post signs so your walkers know where to meet you.
- ✱ Make a registration list and have all the walkers who come to your event sign in.
- ✱ Collect sponsorship money from your walkers. After your walk, please send the sponsorship money, along with any registration forms and fees you've collected since your T-shirt deadline, to Prevent Child Abuse New York, 33 Elk St., 2nd Fl., Albany, NY 12207.
- ✱ Enjoy your walk and the community spirit your event has created!

Recruiting Walkers

Here are some places that might be good locations for finding walkers:

- ✱ Places of worship (for example, Sunday school, youth groups, outreach committees)
- ✱ Clubs (garden, book, play group, aerobics, golf, bridge)
- ✱ Teams (parents and kids in any sporting organization)
- ✱ Your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers

Here are some ideas to get people excited about your walk:

- ✱ Encourage walkers to form teams. Teams can challenge one another to see who raises the most money (for example, Soccer Moms versus Soccer Dads, Accounting versus Customer Service).
- ✱ Ask your walkers to check to see if their employers will match their personal donation, or match the total amount they raise.
- ✱ Get people to register early. Let them know that they will receive a Walk for Children T-shirt if they register in advance. At the walk, they will also receive a blue ribbon bookmark, with information about preventing child abuse.
- ✱ Have your walkers set a fundraising goal of at least \$300 by asking people to sponsor them. See pages 11-12 for more information about sponsorship.

Questions? Call 1-800-CHILDREN or e-mail walk@preventchildabuseny.org

Sample Walker Recruitment E-mails

E-mail is a great tool to recruit walkers. You can also build camaraderie within your group of walkers by sending them weekly e-mails to encourage their fundraising efforts. Keep them posted on your event by sending short but regular updates. Here are some examples of e-mails you can send to walkers:

E-mail to recruit walkers:

Walk to end child abuse by joining the Walk for Children and making a difference. Please contact (insert your name, e-mail address, and phone number) for more information.

E-mail to update walkers:

Congratulations! You're helping to prevent child abuse and neglect in New York by raising money for the Walk for Children. The money you raise will provide support to parents and children who may be at-risk for child maltreatment.

Tips to Get Sponsors and Raise Money

- ✧ Set a goal. \$300 is a good place to start.
- ✧ Aim to sign up at least one new sponsor every day.
- ✧ Call, write, or e-mail people you know and ask them to sponsor you, or better yet, to join you in walking and raising money.
- ✧ Ask them to e-mail their friends and ask them to participate, too.
- ✧ Follow-up with reminder calls and e-mails (see examples provided).
- ✧ Ask if your company (or your sponsors' companies) will match donations.
- ✧ Organize a team to honor someone special to you (Mom, Dad, mentor, etc.).
- ✧ Get your children's school and clubs involved; make it a group project.

Raise \$300 in just eight days! It IS possible!

Day 1: Start with sponsoring yourself for \$25.

Day 2: Ask three family members to contribute \$20 each.

Day 3: Ask three friends to contribute \$15 each.

Day 4: Ask five co-workers to contribute \$10 each.

Day 5: Ask four people from your place of worship, health club, or sports league to contribute \$10 each.

Day 6: Ask three neighbors to contribute \$10 each.

Day 7: Ask your boss to make a company contribution of \$25 (or ask about a matching gifts program).

Day 8: Ask one business you frequent to contribute \$25 (doctor, dentist, pediatrician, mechanic, dry cleaner, restaurant, etc.).

Questions? Call 1-800-CHILDREN or e-mail walk@preventchildabuseny.org

Sample Sponsor Request Letter

Dear _____ :

I am walking in the Walk for Children to prevent child abuse and neglect on [local walk date] at [local walk location]. I am hoping to enlist your support as one of my sponsors.

All proceeds from the Walk for Children will go to Prevent Child Abuse New York. For 25 years, Prevent Child Abuse New York has been the leading state organization focused on preventing child maltreatment before it occurs.

Their programs help to build healthy families where children are loved, nurtured and protected: Programs like the Prevention Information Resource Center and Parent Helpline, Healthy Families New York, public education, and advocacy provide resources and support for families and communities throughout New York.

Thank you for considering my request. If you would like to help, please cut out the check box below and return it to me at [your address] with a check made out to Prevent Child Abuse New York. I hope to hear from you soon!

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Yes, I will help prevent child abuse. I will sponsor you for:

\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other Amount _____

Name and Address _____

Questions? Call 1-800-CHILDREN or e-mail walk@preventchildabuseny.org

Publicizing Your Walk

- ✧ Ask local restaurants, retail shops, and offices to display Walk for Children registration brochures.
- ✧ Get an announcement or print ad in your community newspaper, church bulletin, or organization newsletter. We'll help you write the ad. Call 1-800-CHILDREN or e-mail walk@preventchildabuseny.org.
- ✧ Many newspapers and television channels have community calendars on their Web sites. Post the details of your event to your local community calendars.
- ✧ Call your local news outlets and ask if they will announce your walk on the air or in the paper.

Local Organizer Checklist

- ✘ Contact Prevent Child Abuse New York and let us know you're interested.
- ✘ Decide on a location. Be sure to get proper permits and permission before committing to a place.
- ✘ Contact Prevent Child Abuse New York with your walk date, time, and location.
- ✘ Take note of your T-shirt deadline
- ✘ Receive registration brochures in the mail from us. Make sure the contact information and walk information is correct.
- ✘ Begin distributing registration brochures to your friends and family and in your community. Hang posters around town.
- ✘ Post information about the walk to on-line community calendars. Try to get ads in church bulletins and newsletters.
- ✘ Decide if you want to have entertainment and, if so, locate entertainment.
- ✘ Decide if you want to ask businesses to donate snacks and refreshments. Let us know if you do, and we'll write the letters for you.
- ✘ Collect registrations and fees as they come in. Encourage walkers to collect sponsorship money.
- ✘ On your T-shirt deadline, call us and let us know how many walkers you have. Then mail the registration forms and fees you have collected to Prevent Child Abuse New York, 33 Elk St., 2nd Fl., Albany, NY 12207. (Remember, you can still register people after this date, but we can not guarantee them a T-shirt.)
- ✘ Maintain communication with your walkers to encourage them to collect sponsorships.
- ✘ Distribute information about your walk to your local media. Ask if they will be able to cover your walk.
- ✘ At your walk, set up a registration area where walkers can check in. Have them sign a registration list.
- ✘ Collect outstanding registration forms and fees.
- ✘ Collect sponsorship money.
- ✘ Mail registration forms, fees, and sponsorship money to us. Please make sure you have all your walkers names and addresses, so we can send thank you letters.
- ✘ Walk and have fun!

Questions? Call 1-800-CHILDREN or e-mail walk@preventchildabuseny.org