

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL**

April 19, 2022

**Proclaim April 2022 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Los Angeles County**

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), ICAN Associates, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and other County and community agencies highlight this month to promote the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to bring hope and inspiration to children and families.

Among the County’s efforts to protect children and prevent abuse is the review of child deaths by a parent or caretaker. In the last 30 years, the ICAN Child Death Review Team examined nearly 1,000 cases of child abuse fatalities. One of the risk factors related to these tragedies was over-discipline for normal childish behavior. Research has shown that hitting does not lead to better behavior, but rather teaches children that violence is an acceptable way to express anger. ICAN has initiated a No-Hit Zone campaign, piloted at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, where no adult hits a child or an adult partner, and no child hits another child. Positive discipline and messaging that discourages the hitting of another person, big or small, are important steps toward preventing child abuse and achieving a culture of non-violence at home and in schools.

Support for Child Death Review Teams was provided by a State Child Death Review Council, which, unfortunately, was disbanded in 2008 due to State budget cuts.

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MOTION

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ICAN Associates is sponsoring Assembly Bill 2654 (Lackey) to re-convene the State Child Death Review Council to promote the development and coordination among child death review teams throughout the State. The sharing of information, expertise, and findings of these teams will expand our understanding of the risk factors to vulnerable children and provide a critical resource to our County and counties across the State for more effective prevention of the tragic loss of young lives.

Lastly, this year, and every year, hundreds of children across Los Angeles County participate in the ICAN Associates Child Abuse Prevention Children's Poster Art contest, which provides children the opportunity to express their ideas and concerns regarding child abuse and neglect, while developing inspiring artwork depicting their concerns and ideas for keeping children safe. Even with the challenges classrooms have faced during the pandemic, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders have continued to create moving pictures highlighting the need to protect children – despite the lack of art materials in many schools. Their artwork provides some of the most poignant insights into the ways in which child abuse can impact our youngest residents.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Proclaim the month of April 2022 as “Child Abuse Prevention Month” throughout the County of Los Angeles, and recognize the professionals and volunteers who work to promote the safety, joy and well-being of children and families.
2. Declare the County of Los Angeles as a No-Hit Zone, in recognition of the vital need to prevent the devastating impacts of child abuse and neglect. In accordance with this declaration, all County departments and contracted agencies shall post the No-Hit posters and information, and find ways to ensure this information is distributed to the families they serve.
3. Direct the Executive Director of the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), in collaboration with the Directors of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Chief Executive Office's (CEO) Countywide Communications, to report back to the Board, in writing within 60 days, on the development and implementation of two Countywide

campaigns intended to educate County employees and residents on the importance of child abuse prevention and the following related initiatives:

- a. The ICAN Associates Child Abuse Prevention Children's Poster Art contest winners; and
  - b. The ICAN Associates No-Hit Zone campaign.
4. Direct the CEO - Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations branch, to support Assembly Bill 2654 (Lackey) which would remove the funding contingency limitation and require the re-convening of the California State Child Death Review Council to provide statewide coordination and integration of State and local efforts to track, investigate and prevent child deaths.
  5. Direct the Executive Director of ICAN, with funding support from the Office of Child Protection and DCFS to establish a one-time \$50,000 scholarship fund to support children who may want to participate in ICAN Associate's Poster Art contest but are otherwise unable to because of a shortage of art supplies.

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