

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

APRIL 1, 2025

**PROCLAIMING APRIL AS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH**

Nothing is more important to the quality of life in Los Angeles County than the safety, well-being and joy of our children. This year has brought unforeseen challenges to our neighborhoods, underscoring the importance of addressing childhood trauma, emotional and physical, within and outside of families.

This year, hundreds of children across Los Angeles County participated in the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) Associates Child Abuse Prevention Month Children’s Poster Art Contest, which provides them the opportunity to express their ideas and concerns about children who experience trauma and abuse. Despite challenges associated with the wildfires, 4th, 5th and 6th graders have continued to create moving artwork highlighting the importance of the well-being of children. Over the years, over twenty five thousand students have participated in this contest.

Among our County’s efforts to protect children and prevent abuse is the ICAN Safe Sleep for Baby Campaign, the LA County No Hit Zone Proclamation, and the Safely Surrendered Infant Project. The Department of Public Health joined with ICAN and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) by initiating a Safe Sleep program in county hospitals to provide cribs to all new parents who otherwise do not have a safe place for their infants to sleep. Olive View Medical Center was the first to launch this project, including car seats along with cribs.

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This Board has supported ICAN's No Hit Campaign by declaring Los Angeles County a No Hit Zone and provided media support for public service messages. The message that it is not okay to hit another person, big or small, is an important step toward preventing child abuse and achieving a culture of non-violence at home and in schools. LA County has also led the charge for the Safe Surrender campaign, and as a result, 287 newborn babies have been safely surrendered, most of them adopted into loving homes.

Although the ICAN Child Death Review Team has documented over 1,000 tragic cases of child abuse fatalities in Los Angeles County, this year the team reported an all-time low in the number of child abuse fatalities. This brings hope and highlights the importance of our county's inter-agency collaboration, enlightened practice, public awareness and community support. However, ICAN's findings have revealed a pervasive connection between child abuse and domestic violence. Over half of child abuse fatalities involved interpersonal violence, and the majority of child abductions involved a female domestic violence victim.

ICAN is now completing a comprehensive training for all direct service agencies to provide guidelines for the response to domestic abuse when there are children in the home. Release of this training is expected in June 2025. Efforts to protect child victims and those exposed to violence will continue to be a priority until every child in Los Angeles County can thrive in a safe and loving home.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors proclaim the month of April 2025 as "Child Abuse Prevention Month" and recognize the professionals and volunteers who work to promote the safety of children and families.

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