

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS an estimated 558,899 children were victims of abuse and neglect in the U.S. in 2022, the most recent year for which there is national data.

WHEREAS, in Federal fiscal year 2021, 3.9 million reports were made to Child Protective Services and CACs investigated 247,543 cases involving sexual abuse allegations in 2022; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, an estimated 1,990 children died from abuse and neglect in the United States, a number consistently on the rise over the previous five years.

WHEREAS, in 2023, Children's Advocacy Centers around the country served some 381,364ⁱⁱ child victims of abuse, providing victim advocacy and support to these children and their families.

WHEREAS child abuse can have long-term psychological, emotional, and physical effects that have lasting consequences for victims of abuse; and

WHEREAS, in Texas, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday; 98% of the perpetrators are someone the victim knows; and

WHEREAS protective factors are conditions that reduce or eliminate risk and promote social, emotional, and developmental well-being of children; and

WHEREAS, effective child abuse prevention activities succeed because of the partnerships created between child welfare professionals, education, health, community, and faith-based organizations, businesses, law enforcement agencies, and families; and

WHEREAS child abuse and neglect are serious problems affecting every segment of our community, and finding solutions requires input and action from everyone; and

WHEREAS communities must make every effort to promote programs and activities that create strong and thriving children and families; and

WHEREAS we encourage public awareness of child abuse and neglect through education, recommit county resources to the cause, and promote community involvement

t through local activities; and

WHEREAS we acknowledge that we must work together as a community to increase awareness about child abuse and contribute to promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment; and **WHEREAS**, prevention remains the best defense for our children and families.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Weldon P. Cude, Atascosa County Judge, do hereby proclaim April 2025 as CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH in Atascosa County, Texas, and urge all citizens to recognize this month to dedicate themselves to the task of improving the quality of life for all children and families.

Atascosa County Judge Weldon P. Cude