



**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUDGE
State of Illinois
Third Judicial Circuit
Madison and Bond Counties**

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Press Release

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For Immediate Release:

**CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH and
WEAR BLUE DAY!**

Child Abuse Prevention Month has been observed each April since the first presidential proclamation in 1983. Every year, millions of Americans participate in public awareness events to celebrate childhood and raise awareness that all children deserve to grow up in happy, healthy environments. This year, once again, the Third Judicial Circuit Family Violence Prevention Council is partnering with Prevent Child Abuse Illinois and DCFS to hold a public forum and press conference at the Madison County Administration Building, 157 North Main Street in Edwardsville on Friday April 5th at 10:00 a.m. We recognize this awareness month by doing everything possible to emphasize the need to care about and actively support children and families.

The press conference will begin at 10:00 AM. The Honorable Judge Maureen Schuette will host the event and will introduce speakers Judge Ryan Jumper, Madison County Coroner Steve Nonn, Hope Carbonaro with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and Tarra Winters from Prevent Child Abuse Illinois. The Honorable Kurt Prenzler, Madison County Board Chairman, will read the Proclamation.

On display at the press conference will be the Oasis Women's Center's Clothesline Project. In this moving display, a clothesline is hung with t-shirts that have been decorated recently by victims of domestic violence, many of whom are children, and their supporters. The t-shirts vividly represent their own feelings and experiences.

The Madison County Child Advocacy Center will display the numbers of children involved in investigations of abuse and who have been interviewed at the Center last year, with 530 blue and pink paper silhouettes poignantly representing each child. The Child Advocacy Center is a wonderful resource for brave children involved in allegations of abuse. The Center staff work closely with a multidisciplinary team of professionals to provide services to children involved in investigations of child abuse.

We also hope that Fitz, the newest member of the Courthouse staff, will be available to attend the event. Fitz is a beautiful male Labrador Retriever and a highly trained therapy dog. "Fitz will be an amazing resource for children and adults in courtroom situations and those in need of comfort and support," said Judge Schuette who was instrumental in obtaining Fitz.

Friday April 5th is also Wear Blue Day! Please show your support and commitment to preventing child abuse by joining us on 5th April and wearing blue! Many local agencies will be present at the event with information on resources and support for children and their families in our community who need help. For further information, please contact Coordinator Tina Culp at 618-465-1978 or tinaculp@oasiswomenscenter.com. Additional information about Prevent Child Abuse Illinois and Child Abuse Prevention Month can be found on the website at www.preventchildabuseillinois.org.

Children are our future and their early years significantly impact their future successes. Each one of us has the ability to help children and families in their neighborhoods. The public and the press are urged to attend this important event.