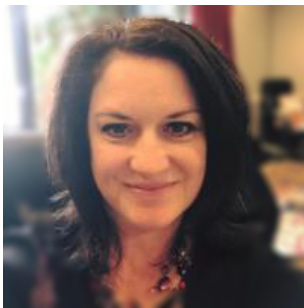




the power to prevent

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE ILLINOIS
NEWS AND EVENTS

a note from our Executive Director




Dear Friends,

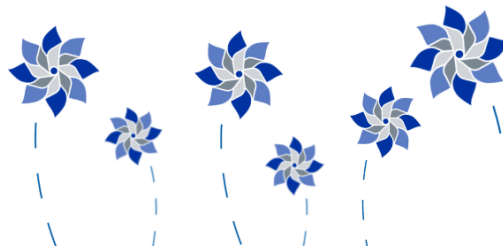
As summer settles in across Illinois, our team has been hard at work providing child abuse prevention education throughout the communities we serve. From participating in resource fairs to delivering trainings, our staff remains dedicated to equipping caregivers, parents, professionals, and community members with the knowledge and tools needed to create safe, nurturing environments for children.

This summer has been a hot one! With the warmer weather comes more time outdoors, more activities around water, and more opportunities for connection. It's a perfect time to remind ourselves of the importance of safety and supervision as children explore, play, and enjoy all that summer has to offer.

This newsletter is full of helpful resources – I encourage you to take a look! Be sure to also check out our upcoming webinars and events, all designed to support families and professionals in their prevention efforts. Thank you for all you do to promote safe, healthy environments where children can thrive. Have a fun and safe summer!



Tarra Winters
Executive Director
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois



news at PCA Illinois

PCA Illinois is excited to welcome our new Director of Communications and Development, Ash Hamilton!

Ash brings over [20 years of experience](#) in marketing and communications, with a versatile skill set that spans web best practices, search engine marketing (SEM), [graphic design](#), video [production](#), and email [marketing](#). He has worked extensively in higher education both as a marketing and communications professional and as an instructor.



In addition to his work in higher education, Ash has served as a K–12 [educator](#), where he played a central role in [fundraising](#), [event coordination](#), and [advocacy](#) for private schools operating outside of traditional state funding models.

Outside of his professional career, Ash is an independent filmmaker, having directed two feature-length films that have achieved global distribution on major streaming platforms. He resides just outside of Springfield, Illinois, where he enjoys a quiet rural lifestyle with his wife, their 12-year-old son, five indoor cats, and an ever-growing colony of feral cats that help keep the local field mouse population in check.

Welcome to the PCA Illinois team, Ash!

THANK YOU for helping us with our Community Survey!

We want to extend a heartfelt [thank you](#) to all our partners and community members who took the time to complete our [June Community Survey](#). Your [input](#) is invaluable and [helps guide our work](#) to better [support children](#) and [families](#) across Illinois. We're excited to share some key takeaways from the survey—highlighted with graphics—to give you a snapshot of what we heard and how it will shape our future efforts. [Your voice matters](#), and we're grateful you shared it with us!



PCA teams, staff and all thank you so much for all the ongoing support, advocacy and ongoing professional developmental opportunities that allows us to continue to learn, reflect and grow!



PCA is a valuable resource supporting staff and family alike. The conferences are a great way to learn and network. Thanks for all you do.

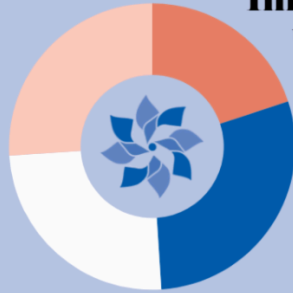




Community Survey Report



Information you find most useful on our website



Annual Conference

39%

Upcoming Webinars

51%

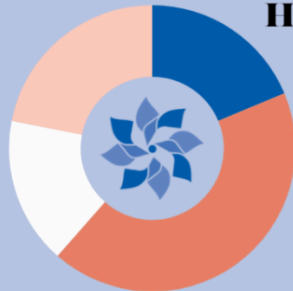
Programs & Trainings

57%

CAP Month

49%

How you prefer to receive information from us



Emails

80%

Conferences & Trainings

41%

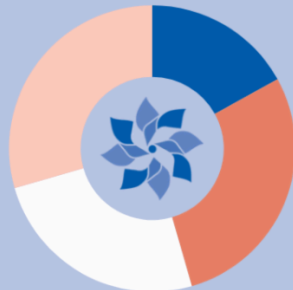
Resource Materials

35%

PCA Illinois Website

31%

Where do you use our brochures and slicks?



Staff Handouts

32%

With Parents & Caregivers

33%

Community Meetings

19%

In the Office

28%

knowledge is power

September is Baby Safety Month

This **September** we ask that you join us and celebrate **Baby Safety Month**, which is championed by the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association, in partnership with JPMA Cares.



Baby Safety Month!

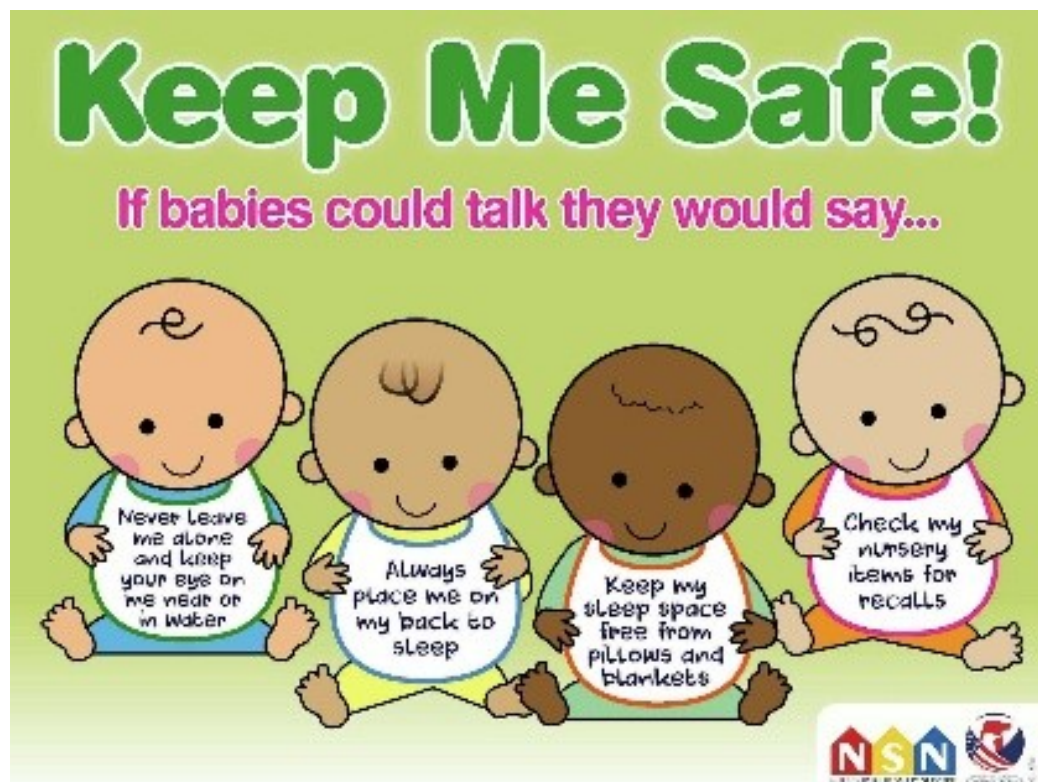
SEPTEMBER

This year, the focus is on **empowering parents and caregivers** with vital **knowledge** on the **safe** selection and utilization of **juvenile products**, while also inspiring a collective movement of **safety ambassadors** within our communities. The campaign acts as a guiding light, providing families with the necessary **tools** and **information** to cultivate the **safest** possible **environment** for their **children**. By fostering **awareness** and **education**, we can work **together** to establish a **culture of safety** and well-being, ensuring our little ones thrive in a secure and nurturing atmosphere.

Below are **resources** to learn more about this important topic:

- [2024 Baby Safety Month Digital Promotion Guide - Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association](#)
- [PCA Illinois SAFE BABY PROGRAM](#)

If you are interested in **learning more** about baby safety please get in touch with **Belinda Farr**, bfarr@pcaillinois.org



a call to action



Water Safety! **July 25th is World Drowning Prevention Day**

Summer is here and **water safety** is top of mind! Drowning remains one of the most **urgent** and **preventable** threats to **child safety**. One of the most persistent misconceptions about drowning is that it is loud and attention-grabbing. In reality, drowning is **quick** and **silent**. A child can slip underwater in seconds, and if a caregiver is distracted—reading, talking, or looking at a phone—they may not notice until it's too late. That's why **close, active supervision** is critical anytime children are in or near water.

According to 2017-2020 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WISQARS data:

- Unintentional drowning was the leading cause of death among children ages 1-4. For children ages 5-14, drowning was the second leading cause of unintentional death (after motor vehicle crashes).
- Approximately 900 children and adolescents ages 0-19 died from unintentional drowning each year. That is an average of 3 drowning deaths per day.

Some key **recommendations** to prevent drowning from the American Academy of Pediatrics (2020):

- Stay within an arm's reach whenever your baby is near water.
- Make sure there is a "water watcher"- an attentive adult paying attention to children in the water.
- Immediately drain buckets, baths, and wading pools after each use.
- Install a fence around home pools that is at least four feet tall, non-climbable, and has a self-latching, self-closing gate.
- On a boat, everyone should be wearing a life jacket.
- Swimming lessons for caregivers and children can help prevent drowning. CPR training is also recommended.
- Protect your teen by making sure that they:
 - Never swim alone.
 - Choose safe places to swim.
 - Never go in the water after drinking alcohol.

To learn more about water safety, please visit: [Drowning Prevention | Children's Safety Network](#)

prevention in partnership

#GoBlueIllinois Campaign Partners with Law Enforcement!

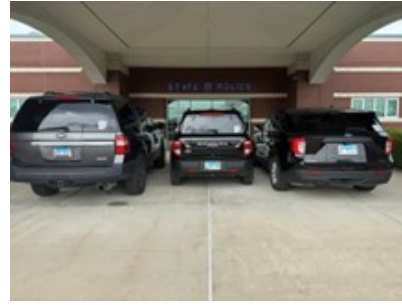
This quarter, we're excited to spotlight a meaningful **partnership** between PCA Illinois and the Illinois State Police and the Union County Sheriff's Office.

In April, PCA Illinois proudly joined forces with the Illinois State Police (ISP) and the Union County Sheriff's Office for our **#GoBlueIllinois** campaign, launching a **new window decal** initiative in honor of **Child Abuse Prevention Month**. ISP and Union County officers displayed decals on their **squad cars** with the message: "April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. All Children Deserve #GreatChildhoods." A total of 100 decals were distributed and proudly **showcased by ISP and Union County law enforcement**—helping to **raise visibility** and spark **awareness** for this important cause.

We are deeply grateful for the Illinois State Police and the Union County Sheriff's Office for their ongoing **commitment** to **prevention** and their role in shaping a **brighter future** for all **children**. These partnerships not only help raise awareness but



also drive **meaningful change** in our communities. We look forward to continuing this essential work together to create **great childhoods for every child!**



expanding our impact

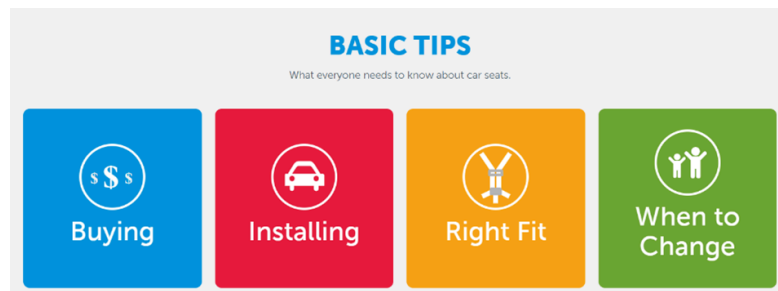
Our Central Region Prevention Specialist, Abby Behrens, is a Certified Car Seat Technician!

According to Safe Kids Worldwide, “correctly used child safety seats can **reduce the risk** of death in children by 71%.”

To ensure your child is riding safely, it's essential to use the right **car seat** and install it properly. [Safe Kids Worldwide](#) offers a comprehensive [Ultimate Car Seat Guide](#) that walks you through selecting the **best seat** for your child, proper **installation**, achieving the **correct fit**, and knowing when it's time to **transition** to a new seat. You can also find local child passenger safety technician [here](#).

In June, child passenger safety technicians attended a two-day conference where they met with car seat manufacturers to stay up to date on the latest **safety standards**—so you can feel confident you're getting the most current **information** and **support**.

To **learn more** about car seat safety, or to schedule a safety check, please contact [Abby Behrens, abehrens@pcaillinois.org](mailto:abehrens@pcaillinois.org)



staff spotlight

Jennifer Samartano
Erin's Law Foundation

Board Member

The **mission** of the Erin's Law Foundation is to **educate** and **empower** both children and adults in the **prevention** and **healing** of child sexual abuse.

A core focus of the foundation is prevention—achieved by offering **free, accessible curriculum** and **resources** to schools, community organizations, educators, and parents. These materials are designed to equip communities with the tools needed to **recognize, prevent, and respond** to abuse. The curriculum will be available across all 50 states and internationally and will be translated into multiple languages to ensure global reach and **impact**.

The **new curriculum** for Elementary and Middle School will roll out at the end of this summer, just in time for the new school year! The High School curriculum will be available in the fall. For **more information** about the Erin's Law Foundation, <https://erinslawfoundation.org/>

PCA Illinois staff **Jennifer Samartano** serves on the **Erin's Law Foundation Board** and is our Program Coordinator for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention efforts. For **more information** about the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention trainings of PCA Illinois, please email Jennifer.jsamartano@pcaillinois.org



To envision a world where all children grow up free from child sexual abuse of any kind.

SAVE THE DATE!

Webinars

- August 19th – 11:30am-1:00pm - ***Drug Endangered Children Awareness***
- September 9th – 11:30am-1:00pm - ***Drug Endangered Children Approach: Moving from Awareness to Action***
- September 25th – 10am-11:45am - ***Safe Sleep for Babies***

Events

- September 6th – 11am-3:30pm - ***The Downtown Springfield Family Funfest***
- October 23 & 24 in Lisle, Illinois - ***31st Annual Statewide Conference***

Save The Date



FUNDRAISER FOR PREVENT CHILD ABUSE ILLINOIS

Saturday, September 6
11:00 am - 3:30 pm
On the Y Block in Downtown Springfield

SAVE THE DATE

October 23-24, 2025

31st Annual Prevent Child Abuse
Illinois Statewide Conference



Full workshop and registration info will be available in August.

Location:
Sheraton Lisle/Naperville Hotel
3000 Warrenville Rd.
Lisle, IL
(630)-329-8538

Hotel Reservations:
Special room rates available.
Ask for Prevent Child Abuse
Illinois room block.
BOOK ONLINE HERE

Room blocks are available until
October 8, 2025

For more information contact:
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois at
217-522-1129
or
preventchildabuseillinois.org

AMAZING PLENARY SPEAKERS



Gaelin Elmore

is a dynamic and nationally sought-after keynote speaker, trainer, and thought leader. He works with organizations and people to become belonging-informed in order to help children overcome trauma and unleash their potential. Gaelin's passion and energy for his work stems from his heart for justice and his own lived experience. Gaelin aims to inspire, encourage, and equip others to think differently about their work and its long-term impact on others.



Danny Langloss

is a former police chief and current city manager. Danny has dedicated over two decades to transforming cultures, empowering teams, and creating purpose-driven organizations. His work includes founding child protection initiatives like the Shining Star Children's Center and serving as chairman of the Illinois Erin's Law Task Force, where he played a pivotal role in passing legislation requiring child sexual abuse prevention education across Illinois schools.



Kay Francis

is the author of "The Funny Thing about Stress; A Seriously Humorous Guide to a Happier Life." When it comes to humor, Kay is the "real deal" having performed as a professional standup comedian for many years and appearing on a number of national television and radio programs including Lifetime Cable's "Girls Night Out" and NBC's "America's Funniest People". It's clean, relatable humor-with-a-message at its funniest!

REGISTER HERE TODAY!

Registration before September 19, 2025 is just \$249!

Registration after September 19, 2025 is \$279!



Donate to support our mission!



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**Prevent Child Abuse
Illinois™**

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