

Letters to the Editor

OUR READERS WRITE

Don't be afraid to report suspected child abuse

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The Era-Banner

Children, often silent, powerless victims in the face of abuse or neglect.

-- Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defence Fund

As we at the Children's Aid Society prepare to launch Use Your Voice, a public awareness campaign that marks the start of October's Child Abuse Prevention Month, we are faced with a task that shapes all our days: How to best stand up for children?

Child abuse and neglect are serious problems in our society: this fact is not new to anyone.

What is less known, however, is we all have an obligation to report signs of abuse and neglect to a Children's Aid Society, whether we are certain it is occurring or even if we just suspect.

Nobody wants to see a child hurt. But the fears sometimes associated with making a report -- of being wrong, that the family will know who made the call, that the situation will get worse -- can sometimes get in the way of standing up for a child in need.

We wonder though, if people knew early intervention can end a child's suffering and help the family move out of crisis, could those fears be overcome?

If they knew the lives of thousands of children are immeasurably improved each year because of intervention by the child welfare community, would it break down the barriers to reporting abuse?

So, our task this October, while considerable, is clear: To break down the barriers. To stand up for children. And to use our voices.

Please call 905-895-2318 or 1-800-718-3850 if you suspect a child is being abused or at risk of abuse. To learn more about the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, visit www.useyourvoice.ca

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