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APRIL IS NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH: Learn 24 Ways to Prevent Child Abuse...Before it Starts

BETHLEHEM, PENN., April 1, 2008 – Americans work hard to protect their children, but child abuse and neglect remain at unacceptably high levels with nearly 900,000 U.S. youngsters hurt each year. Since many of even the best-intentioned parents don't know how to prevent abuse and the conditions under which it may come about, the 125-year-old national children's crisis charity KidsPeace is offering free downloadable information packets called, "24 Ways You Can Prevent Child Abuse...Before it Starts."

During this April's National Child Abuse Prevention Month, parents, teachers and others can go to www.kidspeace.org (click on "resources" and "brochures") and find two dozen simple yet effective tips to Make Your Home Safe, Give Your Child Trust and Build Communication, Give Your Child Independence, and Give Your Child Self-Esteem.

"Most parents love their kids and want the best for them," says Dr. Lorrie Henderson, acting president of KidsPeace, which helps thousands of children every day at 65 centers nationwide to overcome abuse, neglect, and the other emotional crises. "Our task now is to help adults identify and avoid the most common situations in which a child may be harmed physically, sexually, or emotionally – as well as to create the kind of positive, open communications that can serve as an early line of defense when trouble looms."

Just a few of the "24 Ways You Can Prevent Child Abuse," which are explained in more depth online, include the following:

- Establish house rules and be consistent
- Interview your babysitters
- Never strike in anger – use short timeouts and try not to yell or use hurtful words
- Teach your children to say "no" to anyone who asks them to do anything they feel is wrong
- When you feel frustrated, angry or overwhelmed, vent your feelings positively – away from your children. Do not stay alone with your children if you are overwhelmed. Call a friend or leave your children with someone trustworthy.
- Put yourself in your child's place and ask "Is what I've said or done building my child up or putting my child down?" and "Is what I've said or done really for my needs or for the needs of my child?"
- Listen to your children and be available when they have fears, worries, or other concerns

“Even in a nation that loves its children, abuse happens far too often – about once every 30 seconds,” says Dr. Herbert Mandell, medical director for KidsPeace and the KidsPeace Children’s Hospital, which helps youngsters in severe crisis. “If we can avoid or better handle the situations that can lead to problems, we have a better chance of lowering the incidence of child abuse...and keeping our kids, whom we work so hard to protect, healthy and happy.”

KidsPeace is a 125-year-old national children’s charity dedicated to helping America’s kids avoid and overcome the kinds of crises that can strike any child – from traumas to neglect, depression, and the stresses of modern life. KidsPeace helps thousands of children a day with lifesaving programs at 65 centers nationally and millions more through public education and outreach efforts supported by its national spokesperson and founder of the Memory Foundation Leeza Gibbons and child safety and self-esteem icon RETRO BILL. KidsPeace was called “the outstanding organization” of its kind by the American Association of Psychiatric Services for Children and “a prototype of what we need for all children everywhere” by family expert Dr. Lee Salk. For more information, go to www.kidspeace.org.

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