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**ADVOCATES BEGIN CAMPAIGN TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES  
DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS  
Everyone Can Make Great Childhoods Happen – Especially You, Especially Now!**

Denver, CO – Today, **Illuminate Colorado**, in coordination with **Prevent Child Abuse America**, and other state and local community partners throughout Colorado, begins a month-long nationwide awareness and impact campaign: **“Everyone Can Make Great Childhoods Happen—Especially You, Especially Now!”** to engage Coloradans in strengthening families to prevent child maltreatment.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month - a time that has always been dedicated to reinforcing the role that each person plays in ensuring that children, families and entire communities thrive. Right now, that message is critical. The COVID-19 public health crisis is a clear reminder just how connected we all are - and how much we depend on one another.

According to a survey conducted by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment prior to the statewide stay at home order, **nervousness and anxiety are high and the outbreak of COVID-19 has had huge impacts for many in the workforce.** 42.5% surveyed had switched to working from home, 11.1% had their hours reduced, and 9.3% had temporarily lost their job, with an additional 1.3% reporting permanent job loss. **That has huge implications for all parents and caregivers in the workforce.**

**“When parents are stressed, have few social connections, and limited access to resources to support their families, the risk to children of experiencing toxic stress and child maltreatment is great,”** said **Jade Woodard executive director of Illuminate Colorado.** “We are asking Coloradans to learn about the positive things we all need to be doing to strengthen families right now.”

The campaign is focused on the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors, a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. Research has shown when families, organizations and communities focus on building five key protective factors, child abuse and neglect can effectively be prevented. The five key protective factors to increase *right now to prevent child maltreatment during this COVID-19 Public Health Crisis* are:

- Social Connections
- Parental Resilience
- Concrete Supports
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Social & Emotional Competence of Children

“Many people still don’t know that healthy brain development is a building process that begins before we are born. When children experience toxic stress, including child abuse and neglect, their brain is physically changed, requiring significant, costly support from communities to heal and grow up to become healthy thriving adults who are our future neighbors, employees and leaders of tomorrow,” said Woodard.

“In this unprecedented and ever-changing time, one thing is certain to ensure that our children, families and communities thrive during the COVID-19 public health crisis and recover from the economic impact as quickly

as possible, we must all do our part *right now* to make great childhoods happen in every household and community in Colorado or the costs will be even greater down the road,” said Woodard.

Coloradans are encouraged to visit [www.COPinweelsForPrevention.org](http://www.COPinweelsForPrevention.org) to learn more about how to get involved. The website includes an Inspiration Center for Coloradans to pledge to strengthen families right now and encourages people to share stories, photos and videos using “#DoingMyPartCO to Make #GreatChildhoods Right Now” in various social media challenges and online contests.

The winners of the month-long photo contest will have the opportunity to select nonprofits serving children and families in Colorado to receive mini-grants ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 thanks to the support of Illuminate Colorado donors, the **Kempe Foundation for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect** and the **Get Grounded Foundation**.

Due to the stay-at-home order for the State of Colorado, Illuminate Colorado has been unable to ship pinwheels, a staple of the annual child abuse prevention month awareness events in Colorado communities.

“Pinwheels are the national symbol for the prevention of child abuse. They are used to inspire a positive conversation about what communities can do to create great childhoods. We were hoping to be distributing the more than 50,000 pinwheels sitting in our offices right now, but everything has changed for Colorado families, so everything has changed for us. But, we hope that the people of Colorado will still purchase pinwheels online and try some of the other ways to inspire a conversation online. We all need to do our part to stay safe right now, and that includes keeping children safe and families strong.”

Orders for pinwheels are still encouraged. Funds generated from the sales of pinwheels online at [www.COPinweelsForPrevention.org](http://www.COPinweelsForPrevention.org) will go to support efforts to prevent child maltreatment in Colorado.

#### **About Illuminate Colorado**

Illuminate Colorado is a statewide nonprofit strengthening families, organizations, and communities to prevent child maltreatment. As the Colorado Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, the organization leads the Pinwheels for Prevention Campaign in Colorado, which began in Colorado in 2009 and has grown exponentially over the years with hundreds of local organizations and individuals distributing more than 50,000 thousand pinwheels each year to raise awareness for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Visit [www.IlluminateColorado.org](http://www.IlluminateColorado.org) to learn more.

#### **About Prevent Child Abuse America**

Founded in 1972, Prevent Child Abuse America is the nation’s oldest nonprofit organization dedicated to the primary prevention of child abuse and neglect. Through its nationwide chapter network and nearly 600 Healthy Families America home visiting sites throughout the country, it promotes services that improve child well-being and develops programs that help to prevent all types of abuse and neglect. Visit [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org) to learn more.

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