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PRESS RELEASE: April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

“We All Can Play a Part in Building Community, Building Hope.”

In the U.S each year, there is an estimated 3.4 million referrals of child abuse and neglect that are reported to Child Protective Services. There are an estimated 686,000 children that are the victims of child abuse and neglect each year. This number is staggering...and unacceptable. In 2016, Randolph County completed 1,194 assessments of abuse and of those about 200 were substantiated as abuse or neglect.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. This month and throughout the year, Randolph County Department of Social Services encourages all individuals and organizations to play an active role in making Randolph County a better place for children and families. By ensuring parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to care for their children, we can help prevent child abuse and neglect by making meaningful connections with children, youth and families in our communities.

Research shows promoting certain protective factors is among the most effective ways to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect. They are:

- Nurturing and attachment
- Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development
- Social connections
- Concrete supports for parents
- Social and emotional competence of children

The responsibility for the overall safety and well-being of community members lies within the community itself. April is a time to celebrate the important role that communities play in protecting children and strengthening families. Everyone's participation is critical. Focusing on ways to connect with families is the best thing our community can do to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect. The Blue Ribbon Pinwheels Project encourages citizen to show their solidarity in standing against child abuse by displaying blue pinwheels, balloons or ribbons during the month of April. More information available at <http://www.theblueribbon.org/>.

The child abuse reporting and response system is a part of local government social services within the community designed to stop and then prevent further abuse. In North Carolina, the law requires any resident that suspects child abuse or neglect to report it to their local Department of Social Services. In Randolph County, you can call the child abuse hotline at (336) 683-8200 during regular business hours or call 911 at any other time. For more information about child abuse prevention see: www.childwelfare.gov/ .

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