



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**LOCAL AND STATE LEADERS JOIN  
'BEXAR COUNTY STRATEGIC ALLIANCE AGAINST CHILD ABUSE'**

*April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month*

SAN ANTONIO – April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month and in recognition of the important role the community plays in protecting our youth, numerous local and state officials were on hand today to sign onto an interagency agreement known as the *Bexar County Strategic Alliance Against Child Abuse*.

The Alliance represents a multi-disciplinary support team that works with local non-profit ChildSafe. The network includes the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Bexar County District Attorney's Office, San Antonio Police Department, Bexar County Sheriff's Office, Child Protective Services, CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Hospital, University Health System, and University of Texas Health Science Center, private and state funders, the City of San Antonio and other community partners throughout the county.

For 23 years, ChildSafe has served as a Children's Advocacy Center for young victims of sexual abuse in San Antonio. ChildSafe has provided counseling, medical evaluations, training and other services that restore dignity, trust and hope to more than 13,000 children traumatized by sexual abuse in the last 11 years.

"Thanks to the work of ChildSafe and the support of the Alliance partners, San Antonio now has a direct line into local hospitals to ensure that abused children have their medical needs addressed immediately. Our community has also taken a strong stance on imposing serious repercussions for perpetrators, an effort led by our District Attorney's Office; and we are providing swift justice, thanks to the courts," said County Judge Nelson Wolff, who served as the keynote speaker during the day's signing event. "Preventing child abuse truly is the responsibility of a community, and I am proud of the dedication San Antonio has demonstrated to protecting our most vulnerable citizens."

Last year, more than 66,000 Texas children were victims of abuse or neglect. According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 227 children died because of abuse or neglect at the hands of their parents or guardians. While this was a slight decrease from the previous year, greater awareness and prevention is important considering that:

- In San Antonio, 1-in-4 girls and 1-in-6 boys have been sexually abused
- 99 percent of the children ChildSafe serves know their perpetrator
- Almost 75 percent are under the age of 13
- 27 percent are not even old enough to attend kindergarten

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Mayor Julián Castro and the Commissioner’s Court both issued proclamations recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and urged all citizens to work together to help significantly reduce child abuse and neglect in our city.

“It is more important than ever for our teams to work together,” said Kim Abernethy, President and CEO of ChildSafe. “These children have experienced horrific acts at the hands of their perpetrators and they and their families need support for hope and healing,” she continued. “It is imperative for our organizations to have open and productive communication so as to serve our youngest citizens with our best effort,” Abernethy said.

To report suspected abuse or neglect, call the state Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or online at [TxAbuseHotline.org](http://TxAbuseHotline.org).

For more information about ChildSafe’s work, please visit [www.childsafe-sa.org](http://www.childsafe-sa.org).

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