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

Letter to the Editor

"If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much".

As we at the Children's Aid Society prepare to launch *Use Your Voice*, a public awareness campaign which 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 that we all have an obligation to report signs of child 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 that early intervention can end a child's suffering and help the family move out of crisis, could those fears be overcome? If they knew that 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 contact the Children's Aid Society immediately if you suspect a child is being abused or at risk of abuse, 24 hours a day/7 days a week (905) 895-2318 or 1-800-718-3850. We are here to help. To learn more about the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, visit www.useyourvoice.ca.

Sincerely,

Martin McNamara
Executive Director, York Region Children's Aid Society

Quote by Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund