5 THINGS NEIGHBORS, TEACHERS, FRIENDS AND FAMILY CONCERNED ABOUT CHILD ABUSE CAN DO TO HELP

1. **Let kids know they can talk to you.** And that you’re there for them. The most important thing adults can do to reduce the risk of sexual abuse for children is to maintain open lines of communication and encourage children to talk to them at any time with concerns about people’s behavior, feelings of discomfort in the home or sexual abuse, and make sure they know that you’ll believe them.

2. **Stay connected via phone or online.** During this time when children can’t come to you in person, we encourage you to stay in touch however you can. Call, text, email, suggest a video call. Reach out to families who may be struggling and offer support for them and their children. With parents and caregivers under incredible stress right now, they are at greater risk for abusive behaviors, so let them know that they’re not alone and there is support available for them. You can pass on the resources from the City of Chicago: [chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/resources.html](http://chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/resources.html)

3. **If you suspect a child is being abused, speak up.** If you suspect or know that a child (someone 17 or younger) is being abused, call the Illinois DCFS Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). If a child is in immediate danger, also call 911. Learn about the indicators of abuse and how you can help at [chicagocac.org/report](http://chicagocac.org/report)

4. **Shine a light on child abuse.** The physical and sexual abuse of children is too often hidden. Abuse is something that thrives in silence and isolation. You can help by sharing facts about child abuse with your friends and neighbors ([like this PDF](http://likethis PDF)) and by taking a stand and making it clear that you’re a person who cares about kids and is in the fight to prevent child abuse in Chicago. One way you can do that is by joining with people across the city and suburbs at 8 pm every night and literally shining a light. Light a candle and put it in your window, turn on the front porch light, fire up the flashlight or drag out some holiday lights and let them shine for Chicago’s kids.

5. **Give to the LUMINARY FUND.** This fund supports Chicago Children’s Advocacy Center, the city’s frontline responder in the urgent fight against child sexual abuse and physical abuse. At ChicagoCAC, we coordinate the efforts of child protection staff, law enforcement professionals, family advocates, medical experts and mental health clinicians under one roof. Since opening our doors in 2001, we have served more than 38,000 children.

Your gift at this crucial time can help shine a light on this issue and help protect all of Chicago’s kids from physical and sexual abuse. Give now at [chicagocac.org/luminaryfund](http://chicagocac.org/luminaryfund)