

Patron : Mrs. Regina Leung
贊助人 : 梁唐青儀女士



Against Child Abuse Ltd.

防止虐待兒童會有限公司

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Chairperson : Dr. Patrick Cheung
主席 : 張志雄醫生

Director : Dr. Jessica Ho
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Press Release

Love and Protect our Children into a Bright Future **(15. 11. 2012)**

The Against Child Abuse (ACA) held a press conference to report on significant events and statistics of its work for the year 2011/12. ACA also shared concerns and recommendations for child protection.

In the year under review, a total of 811 cases were handled on hotline and drop-in level. Of the 811 cases, 305 (38%) were on suspected child abuse. Of the 305 suspected abuse cases, 150 cases (49%) were on physical abuse. This ranked the highest in number among all cases. The second highest was neglect cases, with 44 cases(14%); followed by psychological abuse cases, 42 (14%); multiple abuse cases, 37 (12%) and sexual abuse cases, 32(11%). The number of psychological abuse cases and multiple abuse cases has had a significant increase, compared with the figures in the previous year, which recorded 25 cases and 29 cases respectively.

50% family members called hotline and parents took the initiative to seek for help

Among the 811 hotline and drop-in cases handled, 405 (50%) were referred by family members. Of these, 241 (59%) were from children's mother, 56 (14%) from their father, 77 (19%) from relatives/friends and 31 (8%) from the abused children themselves. There were 15 (2%) abusers who reported the cases themselves and sought support from ACA. The figure reveals that the support from family members is very important and some parents are willing to seek help from ACA when they encounter parenting difficulties. Thus, the hotline is a very important support channel. In January 2012, ACA launched Parent-child Support Hotline. Its service hours have been extended from 5pm to 9pm, Monday to Friday. Our experienced social worker and trained volunteers help to handle the hotline. We hope to reach more families to provide support in child protection.

Most of the 375 suspected abusers involved in the 305 cases were parents (249, 66%). The statistics show the importance of promoting positive parenting skills for parents.



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Majority of the children were primary students

The age distribution of the 606 children involved in the 811 cases is as follows: 140 (23%) from 6 to 8, 114 (19%) from 9 to 11, 91 (15%) from 12 to 14, 88 (15%) from 3 to 5, 45 (7%) from 15 to 17, 58 (10%) were 2 years old or below, and 8 (1%) were 18 or above. The figures show that children studying in primary school are most vulnerable to being abused. Children advancing from kindergartens to primary schools require more adjustment to the studying mode in primary schools. During this transition stage, their academic performance may not be able to meet the school expectation. Parents also need to help their children to adjust to their stressful study environment. To provide support and to promote positive parenting, ACA provides education to parents. We also provide adjustment programmes for school children so as to enhance their learning ability.

Launching of innovative projects to support families

Last year, ACA developed various prevention projects and trained volunteers as mentors to provide home visitations and support to children and families in need, including families with a new born, deprived families, single and young mothers, parents with emotional or mental problems, cross border and new arrival families with children aged 0-5 and ethnic minority families. We also launched and supported various projects to promote children's rights, such as A Child's Voice for a Caring Community Project, Child Protection Web Platform, Children's Council Project, Kids' Dream and Joyful Kids Group.

Service user sharing: self confidence re-established (*a mother's voice after using ACA's services*).

Ivy suffers from hereditary diabetes. When she found that she was pregnant last year, she had already broken up with her Taiwan boyfriend. Because of her conditions, both physical changes resulting from her pregnancy, and emotional upset resulting from her previous tie with her ex-boyfriend, she was unable to continue working. Worse still, she had to face everything without the support from her family, lovers or friends. She became depressed and had suicidal thoughts. She hurt herself several times. Fortunately, the United Christian Hospital referred her case to ACA. Our social worker invited her to join the "Daylily Project" and matched her with two volunteers of the Project. A close relationship was gradually developed between Ivy and the volunteers. With the volunteers' care, support and encouragement, Ivy's self confidence was



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re-established. When Ivy encountered any difficulties, she sought help from the volunteers at once. Now, she was more relieved and devoted her whole-hearted attention in caring for her newborn baby.

It is everyone's responsibility to protect children. Our recommendations are:

1. To invest more resources in preliminary prevention such as home investigation projects for families with new born.
2. To raise public awareness concerning child protection, especially the prevention and handling of psychological child abuse.
3. To help the child carers, especially young parents, single parents, parents with mental problems and poor families to acquire positive parenting knowledge and skills. We also urge policies on poverty alleviation, housing, labor and education to include services to help these families.
4. To enhance the professionals' knowledge in their work in protecting children's right.
5. To review the following policies for children:
 - 5.1 legislation to ban corporal punishment
 - 5.2 legislation to make "Sexual Conviction Record Check" mandatory
 - 5.3 legislation to ban leaving children unattended
- 6 To develop a database link system among social sectors, health sectors and police in order to share, analyze and disseminate information.
- 7 To advocate the establishment of an independent child commission to ensure that children's voice is listened to and their views are respected. The function of the commission is to integrate data, review the legislation and policies and work in the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It should also aim at setting targets to protect the 1.1 million children in Hong Kong by allowing them the right to participate in their own development.

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