



City of Philadelphia

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAYOR NUTTER, CITY OFFICIALS, CHILD ADVOCATES TO URGE PHILADELPHIANS TO "BE AWARE" OF CHILD ABUSE

Philadelphia, November 22, 2011 – Mayor Michael A. Nutter was joined by City and School District officials, the District Attorney's office and child welfare advocates to urge Philadelphians to report suspected sexual or physical abuse or neglect of a child. Officials encouraged citizens to utilize City and state services as a resource and tool to report the abuse of a child.

"Children deserve to feel safe and protected by the adults in their lives. When it comes to the life or safety of a child, adults must be responsible and report child abuse," said Mayor Nutter. "It is never acceptable to assume that someone else will report abuse or that it is not your business to report it. It is every Philadelphians job to make sure that this is a safe city for people of every age. If you suspect a child is being abused, you have a duty to report it."

Officials discussed the signs of child abuse, physical and sexual and neglect.

- **Physical abuse** is non-accidental. It is the serious bodily injury of a child. Citizens should watch for unexplained bruises, bites, black eyes, broken bones, fading bruises or other noticeable marks.
- **Sexual abuse** includes both physical and non-physical sexual contact of a child and it is always forced. Citizens should look for a child who has difficulty walking or sitting, demonstrates unusual sexual knowledge or behavior, or does not want to participate in physical activity or change clothes for gym class.
- **Neglect** is the withholding of or failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life such as: food, clothing, shelter, or medical care. Citizens should be aware of frequently missed school days, the begging or stealing of money or food, a lack of needed medical, dental or eye care, or a consistently dirty appearance or body odor.



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PAGE 2

“It is also important for parents to teach their children about good and bad touch and encourage them to tell an adult if someone is touching them in an inappropriate way,” said Department of Human Services Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose. “You do not have to be able to prove suspected abuse. Our staff (DHS) is trained to investigate reports and make those determinations.”

If you suspect a child is being abused, you can report it directly to the Philadelphia Police Department or call 911. The Department of Human Services administers an anonymous hotline, which citizens can report suspected abuse at (215)683-6100. The state of Pennsylvania also maintains an abuse hotline, which can be reached at (800)932-0313.

Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey, District Attorney Seth Williams, Philadelphia School District Superintendent Dr. Lee Nunnery, Chris Kirchner, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Children’s Alliance and Frank Cervone, Executive Director of the Support Center for Child Advocate, also participated in urging Philadelphians to be aware and report child abuse.

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The Philadelphia Department of Human Services’ mission is to provide and promote safety, permanency, and well-being for children and youth at risk of abuse, neglect and delinquency.