

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance – Introducing the Front Porch Project®

What is the Front Porch Project® (FPP)?

If you've ever seen a parent "losing their cool" with a child in a store or restaurant, if you've ever wondered if a child in your neighborhood is being supervised and cared for – you are not alone. These concerns, and others, are what the Front Porch Project® is all about.

FPP® is a community-based primary prevention initiative based on the belief that **everyone can -- and should -- become more aware of how to help protect fragile and at-risk children** in their own community. It provides ordinary citizens with the knowledge, training and encouragement they need to become involved.

Who is Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA)?

PFSA is a statewide leader in child abuse prevention. With funding from the Department of Public Welfare, **PFSA has been protecting Pennsylvania children from abuse for over thirty years.** We offer training, technical assistance and educational materials, as well as parent education publications and curricula, to a network of local prevention and family support programs. Surveys of parents involved in our Family Support Programs show that 98% of parents say they now have a better relationship with their children; more than 75% say they have learned how to understand, discipline and nurture their children since attending the program.

We also provide the bulk of the state's training for mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. Training is provided at no cost to staff of school districts, nonprofit organizations, child care centers, faith-based organizations, and others serving children and families. Our training programs are designed to help mandated reporters understand their legal responsibilities and role in protecting at-risk children. We offer both on-site and web-based training, presented by a corps of trainers with extensive background in child welfare. In FY 2009-2010, PFSA trained more than 7,500 mandated reporters. An independent evaluation by a senior researcher at Johns Hopkins University showed that PFSA's mandated reporter training program "substantially improves professionals' knowledge of their responsibilities as mandated reporters and confidence in their ability to properly report suspected child abuse and work with county agencies to protect children."

Why Is PFSA starting the Front Porch Project® in Pennsylvania?

Studies show that many people are concerned about children, and would like to get involved, but often do not know what to do. Over the years, **PFSA has been listening to citizens of Pennsylvania as they ask for help to do what is right for Pennsylvania's children; FPP is our response to this request.** In 2011, PFSA will partner with American Humane, a nationally recognized leader in the prevention of child maltreatment, to launch (FPP) in Pennsylvania.

PFSA is the lead entity for FPP in Pennsylvania – the first time in the nation a statewide organization is taking on this role –responsible for partnering with local organizations to set up trainings across the state, working with American Humane to train-the-trainers in Pennsylvania, and reaching out to community members who want to attend. PFSA will use its expertise in training and education to impact a new audience – ordinary citizens. Adding FPP to our array of services complements our current work and fills an essential gap in educating and supporting the general public about the important role they play in protecting children.

How do we know the Front Porch Project® works?

Participants complete an online survey at completion of training, and at six weeks, six months and one year following training. American Humane collects data from all sites and analyzes the results, providing sites with reports showing the extent to which people use the information from training. For example, data from December 2010 indicates that in follow-up surveys six weeks after training, 70 respondents estimated they had impacted 576 people (parents and children) by intervening in both small ways ("I wrote a letter to the grocery store so they would make a family-friendly checkout aisle that does not have candy in it, to help prevent stressful moments at checkout.") and larger, community-wide ways ("I threw a block party on my street to get to know my neighbors."). Participants who complete the training leave with the awareness, knowledge, skill and willingness to intervene for children. Their actions can impact thousands of children.

How can you help?

FPP is being launched in Pennsylvania with private funds; no public dollars are being requested. PFSA is looking for sponsors for local training sessions. Donations to cover the cost of lunch and (in some locations) use of space for the program are needed.