



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

Media Release

For Immediate Release: October 20, 2009

Choose Your Partner Carefully! Your Child's Life Depends on It

With an alarming rate of child abuse deaths, Franklin County Children Services, in partnership with the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Nationwide Children's Hospital, is launching a campaign urging single parents to carefully consider who they allow to care for and be with their children. This effort will begin with an awareness event and press conference on Friday, October 30 at 10:30 a.m. at 855 W. Mound Street.

"Who you get involved with has a direct impact on your children," says Eric Fenner, Franklin County Children Services' executive director. "When child abuse becomes an issue, one parent's poor decision-making can quickly lead to tragedy. You can't be too cautious when it comes to ensuring the safety and well-being of your children."

Since 2007, eight Franklin County children have died at the hands of a parent's abusive partner. And while they constitute the majority of cases, women aren't always the ones making bad decisions—men choose poorly, too. In fact, two of the eight children's deaths in the past two years were due to a father's abusive girlfriend.

Choosing a partner carefully is one of the most important decisions a parent can make—your child's safety is at stake. Children should not be introduced to every dating partner—only introduce partners once a commitment to the relationship and shared values have been established.

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Before leaving a new boyfriend or girlfriend alone with your child, the following are a few essential questions parents should ask themselves about their new partner:

- Does your partner have children of their own? How do they parent them?
- Does he or she show anger or impatience when your child cries or has a tantrum?
- Does he or she ridicule or call your child bad names?
- Does he or she think it's funny to scare your child?
- Does he or she exhibit controlling behavior or get physically aggressive with you?

If you answered yes to even one of these questions, your child might be at risk and should not be left alone with your partner.

"Parents often assume that because their partner cares for them, they will also care for their child. This is a potentially deadly mistake. More often the partner is interested only in their relationship with the parent and not the child," said Yvette McGee Brown, President of the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

For more information or literature, contact Franklin County Children Services at 614-341-6060 or www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services or the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at 614-722-8200 or www.nationwidechildrens.org/ccfa.