

# National **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH**

Advocacy Toolkit  
April 2024

## **Child Protection Center, Inc.**

PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, & TREATMENT OF CHILD ABUSE

[www.CPCSarasota.org](http://www.CPCSarasota.org) | 720 S Orange Ave, Sarasota, FL 34236 | 941-365-1277





# Child Abuse Prevention Month

## Advocacy Toolkit for the Child Protection Center (CPC)

### Toolkit Contents

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (2) About Child Abuse Prevention Month                      | (9) A Child Has Disclosed Abuse- Now What?       |
| (3) About the Child Protection Center                       | (10-11) Practice Personal Safety With Your Child |
| (4-6) How Can I Support CPC During CAPM?                    | (12) Internet Safety                             |
| (7) Know the Statistics                                     | (13) Host a FREE Training on Personal Safety     |
| (8) Signs of Abuse, How to Report, Reporting Content Online | (14) Coping Resources from Therapy               |

### About Child Abuse Prevention Month

In 1983, April was proclaimed to be the first National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is a month dedicated to raising awareness of child abuse, reducing the stigma that surrounds the topic, educating the public on how to recognize and report child abuse, promoting prevention strategies, and encouraging communities and families to work together and support one another to create a safe and stable environment where children can reach their full potential.

Each April, Prevent Child Abuse America and local affiliates nationwide, including CPC, celebrate Child Abuse Prevention Month to bring awareness to this issue that impacts every community across the U.S. This April the theme is "Building A Hopeful Future, Together," focusing on creating a nurturing and supportive environment for children and families across the nation. The Child Protection Center could not achieve this without community support-everyone can play a role in preventing child abuse!

### Meaning Behind the Pinwheel

In 2008, Prevent Child Abuse America introduced the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign. "What our research showed, and what our experiences have since reinforced, is that people respond positively to pinwheels, which represent childlike whimsy and lightheartedness and our vision for a world where all children grow up happy, healthy, and prepared to succeed in supportive families and communities."

**The pinwheel is a visual reminder of what we want for all children- to experience the simple joys of a safe and happy childhood.**

The campaign of planting pinwheel gardens raises awareness of child abuse while promoting the understanding that there is hope in the fight against it, as over 90% of child abuse can be prevented. It also represents a change in the way our society thinks about prevention, encouraging a focus on public policies and community activities that prioritize prevention from the start to ensure child abuse and neglect never occur.

[Click here to access a pinwheel coloring page and instructions for a DIY pinwheel to do with your kids.](#)

# Child Protection Center

A YEAR IN REVIEW



**MISSION:** Our mission is the prevention, intervention, and treatment of child abuse.

**VISION:** CPC envisions a community in which all children are safe from abuse and free to thrive.

## Prevention

### Personal Safety and Community Awareness Program (PSCA):

PSCA has been providing essential child abuse prevention education at no cost to children, parents, and professionals in Sarasota County since 1992. It is the longest tenured prevention program in Florida and has served over 800,000 individuals in its 30+ years. Research shows that child abuse can be prevented through empowering education and awareness. In order to create stronger safety nets around our community's children, we emphasize the importance of having power in prevention!

51,606

Children, parents, and professionals  
**Educated**



**"PSCA AND CPC ARE gifts to our children.**  
I give it the highest of accolades from the depths of my soul."  
-4th Grade Teacher after personal safety presentation

154

Sexual Abuse Prevention  
**LESSONS CONDUCTED**



## Intervention

### Children and Families Supervised Visitation Program (CFSVP):

Our Visitation Program provides a safe, neutral environment for children to maintain a relationship with a non-custodial caregiver, through the watchful eye of a highly trained volunteer. The overall goal is to foster healthy relationships, as research proves this connection improves overall well-being and stability for a child. Over 50 Sarasota County citizens serve as CFSVP volunteers.

1,362  
**HOURS OF  
volunteering**

323  
**Total  
PARTICIPANTS**

**"I have learned the true meaning of quality time from this program."**  
-CFSVP PARTICIPANT



### Child Protection Team (CPT):

CPT is a state-mandated program working alongside the Department of Children and Families and law enforcement in cases of suspected abuse and neglect. CPT evaluates allegations of abuse and provides recommendations for interventions to protect children. This devoted team facilitates critically important forensic interviews, medical examinations, and often testifies on behalf of a child in court. CPT is the only provider authorized by the state to perform these functions in Sarasota and DeSoto Counties.

"CPT approaches the children we treat with **care and compassion** WHILE SHOWING THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF PROFESSIONALISM."  
-Pediatric SANE Certified Nurse

3,127  
**ABUSE REPORTS  
REVIEWED**



576  
**Clients  
Served**



## Treatment

### Therapy Programs:

CPC's Therapy Programs serve children who have been physically and sexually abused, children exhibiting problematic sexual behaviors, the victim's non-offending caregiver and siblings, and adult survivors of child abuse. The overall goal is to provide services that afford survivors to live a healthy, restored life after their traumas. We are the only provider in Sarasota County specialized in child physical and sexual abuse treatments, free of charge.

#### INCREASES OF:

47% in referrals  
22% in clients served  
23% in therapy hours



2<sup>nd</sup> most productive team in Florida.  
**"YOU ARE SIMPLY ROCKING IT OUT IN SARASOTA!"**  
-State Clinical Coordinator

1 OF 4  
PROGRAMS EXCEEDING statewide averages across the board!





## How Can I Support the Child Protection Center During CAPM?

### 1 FINANCIAL SUPPORT



#### Give a DOUBLED donation during the Giving Challenge:

The Giving Challenge is an exciting 24-hour online giving event during which The Patterson Foundation will provide a 1:1 match up to \$100 per donor, per organization. It's an excellent time to rally behind the local nonprofits you believe in and wish to help succeed!



April 9-10, NOON TO NOON  
[Click here to donate to CPC for the Giving Challenge.](#)



#### Create a Facebook Fundraiser:

By creating a Facebook fundraiser, you're multiplying your impact by bringing the campaign to the attention of your friends and family. This means that not only are you raising essential funding for child abuse services, but you're spreading awareness of abuse and our mission, which in turn brings even more children to safety. Here's how:

- ✓ [Click here to set up your fundraiser.](#)
- ✓ Make the first donation to your fundraiser (people are more likely to give if they see that someone else has already done so).
- ✓ Share your fundraiser and encourage your friends to donate. Use the sample posts below to help you share your fundraiser and gather support.

#### Sample Facebook Posts:

This #ChildAbusePreventionMonth, I'm taking a stand against child abuse by launching this Facebook fundraiser in support of @ChildProtectionCenter and the life-saving services they provide. Last year alone, this nonprofit provided 307 medical exams for children to assess signs of abuse and neglect while also reaching 51,606 children and adults with prevention education. I hope you'll join me in the fight against child abuse by giving any gift you're able to.

I believe that every child has a right to safety, a right to joy, and a right to simply be a child. You can help provide life-saving services for children who have suffered abuse. Will you join me in support of @ChildProtectionCenter and give the gift of healing this #ChildAbusePreventionMonth?



#### Make a one-time or recurring donation:

Donating to the Child Protection Center directly supports the prevention, intervention, and treatment of child abuse in Sarasota and DeSoto Counties. You may not be in the medical room, therapy room, supervised visit, courtroom or classroom workshop, but these things would never happen without you. If you'd like to further your impact and protect children all year long, consider making your gift a recurring monthly donation.

[Make your one-time or recurring gift by clicking here.](#)



## 2 SPREAD AWARENESS



### Go #BlueForKids for #WearBlueDay Friday, April 5:

Blue is the color for child abuse prevention. Join us in spreading awareness for #WearBlueDay on Friday, April 5th by going #BlueForKids! Share your commitment with family, friends, and coworkers and encourage them to join you in wearing blue, take a pic, tag CPC, and use the hashtags! (For extra fun, if you tag CPC or email your pics to [shannonm@cpcsarasota.org](mailto:shannonm@cpcsarasota.org), we just might feature you in a #BlueForKids wrap-up video at the end of April!) Missed the 5th? No worries- you can raise awareness and share #BlueForKids pics all month long!



### Plant a pinwheel garden:

Blue pinwheels are the symbol for Child Abuse Prevention Month. Plant a pinwheel garden at your home or business. Don't have the space for a full pinwheel garden? Plant a mini garden in a pot to place by your mailbox, front door, desk, or lobby.



### Spread the word online:

Inspire others by sharing about Child Abuse Prevention Month online. We have numerous graphics ready to be shared- save the ones you like and share throughout the month with the hashtags #ChildAbusePreventionMonth and #WhyCPC.

[Click here to get CAPM Social Media Graphics.](#)



### Share our CAPM flyer:

Print and share at work, church, the library, community centers, neighborhood news postings, rec centers- wherever there are communal bulletin boards and postings.



[Click here to get our CAPM flyer.](#)



### Coffee for kids:

These wonderful businesses are partnering with our mission to raise awareness with CPC coffee sleeves! Be sure to grab your morning cup, snap a pic of your coffee sleeve, share it online, and tag us!



Michelle's Brown Bag Cafe Sun Soaked Coffee Company	Cedar Fox Coffee Pastry Art Cafe Blvd Cafe	Hashtag Cafe Sarasota Ford
--	--	-------------------------------



### CPC friendship bracelets:

For you and your kids! Wear your bracelet, snap a photo, share on social media and tag us. There are several ways to get some: stop by our Sarasota offices during business hours; book a free workshop with our Personal Safety Team; or stop by our booth at the North Port Community Baby Shower (April 13), the Sarasota Community Baby Shower (April 27), or the Education Foundation Ringling Bridge 5K/10K (April 28).



# CAPM Advocacy Toolkit for the Child Protection Center



## Book a speaker:

Contact us to arrange a speaker from CPC to come to your PTA/church/club/workplace, speak about how child abuse affects local children and how CPC is working towards a solution.

[Email SheilaM@CPCSarasota.org](mailto:SheilaM@CPCSarasota.org)



## Reach out to local businesses:

Local businesses play a vital role in funding our mission and spreading awareness. Here are some ideas on how a business can get involved:

- ✓ Host a give-back day, devoting a percentage of profits to a donation
- ✓ Planting a pinwheel garden or pot to raise awareness
- ✓ Have staff wear blue and share their #BlueForKids photos
- ✓ Host a donation drive for art supplies, children’s books/games, diapers, etc.
- ✓ Donate gift cards to be used for fundraising activities



## 3 VOLUNTEER



### Volunteer Day, held at CPC on the 3rd Thursday of each month:

CPC is busier than ever and we need your help. Our goal is to further connect you to our mission, give you a behind-the-scenes look into what we do, and to tackle our ever-growing to-do-list.

[Email LouAnnL@CPCSarasota.org](mailto:LouAnnL@CPCSarasota.org)



### Volunteer with Supervised Visitations:

The Children and Families Supervised Visitation Program (CFSVP) provides a safe, neutral space for children to continue their relationship with a non-custodial parent. CFSVP utilizes over nearly 70 volunteers, who give their time and compassion to the children and families we serve.

[Email DeeDraP@CPCSarasota.org](mailto:DeeDraP@CPCSarasota.org)

## 4 KEEP UP WITH IMPORTANT CAPM DATES



[Click here for a list of important dates during CAPM and a calendar of family-focused activities.](#)



## 5 GATHER NEEDED SUPPLIES



### Host a donation drive for our clients:

Donate items from our wish list. These are used by children in therapy and during family visitations.

Coloring books  
Kinetic sand  
Stress balls

Books  
Legos  
Paint

Essential oils and diffusers  
Children’s weighted blankets  
Diapers/wipes/underwear

Food toys  
Journals  
Puzzles



Child Abuse Statistics

ONE IN TEN children will be sexually abused.



In Florida, a child is abused every 21 minutes. That's over 68 children every day.



90% of children who are victims of child sexual abuse know their abuser.



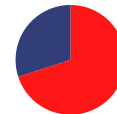
ONE IN FIVE children are solicited online.



60% of child sexual abuse victims never tell anyone.



Nearly 70% of all reported sexual assaults occur to children aged 17 and under.



Up to 40% of children who are sexually abused are abused by older, or more powerful children.



Of children who are sexually abused, 20% suffer their abuse before age 8.



School personnel are the #1 reporters of child abuse, identifying over 50% of child abuse cases.



Children and young adults who have survived child sexual abuse are 4X as likely to make plans of suicide.





## Signs of Child Abuse

**The signs of child abuse are often seen in behavioral changes, such as:**

Aggressiveness, passiveness, withdrawal, sexually inappropriate behaviors or knowledge, use of alcohol or drugs at an early age, and acting abnormally adult or infantile.

**Direct physical signs of abuse are not always common, but can include:**

Unexplained bruises or welts in various stages of healing, burns, fractures, bleeding, consistent hunger, poor hygiene, fatigue, and difficulty walking or sitting.

**Victims of child abuse often show indirect physical signs, such as:**

Anxiety, chronic stomach pains, nightmares, and bedwetting.

## How to Report Suspected Child Abuse

In Florida, everyone is a mandatory reporter. Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected, is mandated by law to place a report.

**Florida Abuse Hotline:  
1-800-96-ABUSE  
(1-800-962-2873)**

*\* Available 24/7 \**

*This toll free number is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week with counselors waiting to help you.*



If you see something, if you hear something, if you suspect something- **report it**. Don't wait for someone else to speak up- it could mean the life of a child. Many reporters find it helpful to organize their thoughts and information by writing it out before calling the hotline. **If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.**

## How to Report Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)

If/when we come across child sexual abuse material (CSAM- also known as child pornography) accidentally online, often our first instinct is to exit out of the video or image and try to forget seeing the upsetting content. The issue with this is that the child in the content is not being helped. We urge you to report it to the platform itself, local abuse hotlines (if location is known), and the CyberTipline. The Tipline also accepts reports of: online enticement of a child for sexual acts; child sex trafficking; misleading domain name; unsolicited obscene material sent to a child.

[Cyber Tipline](#)





## A Child Has Directly Disclosed Abuse to You- Now What?

When a child discloses abuse, they are seeking support and safety from someone they trust.

- ✓ Remain calm and listen patiently
- ✓ Reassure them that they're doing the right thing by telling you
- ✓ Ask open ended questions- "Tell me about that/Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?"
- ✓ As quickly as possible, call the Florida Abuse Hotline (1-800-962-2873) to file a report.

While this is an extremely difficult conversation to have, it is important to refrain from:

- ✓ Confronting the offender
- ✓ Disregarding the child
- ✓ Reacting dramatically
- ✓ Overwhelming the child with questions



**Call the Florida Abuse Hotline to make a report. If the child is in immediate danger, call 911.**



## Practicing Personal Safety With Your Child



### General safety practices for families with children of any age:

- 1 Talk to your child about personal safety often, just as you would for 'Stop, Drop, and Roll.'
- 2 Help your child develop an appropriate vocabulary for the parts of their body.
- 3 Help your child develop confidence and assertiveness skills. Give your child permission to be ugly and impolite if they are uncomfortable.
- 4 Never force your child to hug or kiss anyone, even relatives. Support when they say 'No.'
- 5 Help your child recognize when someone has set a boundary.

Remember- teaching children about body safety doesn't take away their innocence, it helps to protect it.



### Helping children understand consent:

#### Instead of this...

"Grandma will be sad if you don't give her a hug goodbye."

Keep tickling or roughhousing if they act uncertain or say stop.

Standing by if they're not listening to someone else's "No."

#### When we do this...

Give them the choice of how to connect- a hug, a wave, a fist bump, etc.

Let them know they can say "No" or "Stop" to tickling, hugs, roughhousing, etc.

Point out and help your child recognize when others have set a boundary.

#### Try this

"It's time to say bye to Grandma. **Would you like to give her a hug or a wave?"**

Check in and ask "Do you like that? Is this fun? **You can say stop.**" If they say no or to stop, stop.

"Does Bobby want to keep playing with your new toy? **I heard him say 'no.'**"

#### Kids learn this

I get to decide if I touch someone. **I don't have to do something** that makes me feel uncomfortable.

**I get to choose** if someone touches me.

When someone else isn't having fun or doesn't like something I'm doing, **I listen and stop right away.**



## What to say to family/friends who insist on hugs/kisses:

"We're teaching Megan about body boundaries and using her voice to let people know when she doesn't want to be touched, kissed, or hugged. Megan, if you don't want to give Grandpa a hug, that's okay. Would you like to wave or give a fist bump instead?"

"As Patrick's family and friends, we are his 'safe people.' We want Patrick to practice and feel comfortable saying no to the safe people in his life so he will feel empowered to say no when he's with an unsafe person."



## Helping kids understand secrets vs. surprises:

Surprises: Something that should be fun, happy, and temporary. There is an end date and the surprise is meant to make someone happy or excited.

Secrets: Something that is supposed to be kept hidden forever. Explain that it is never okay for someone to tell you not to tell your parents and that they will never be in trouble for breaking a secret or promise when it makes them uncomfortable or involves unsafe touch.

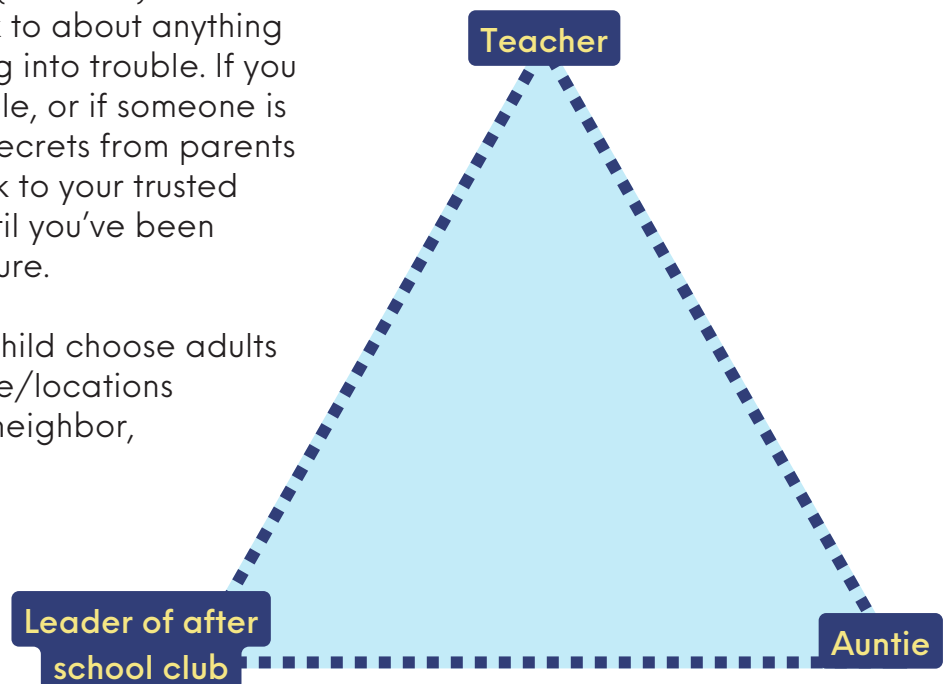
- ✓ Helping mom surprise dad with a birthday party
- ✓ Surprising grandparents with a family visit
- ✗ A classmate is being a bully and threatening anyone who tells the teacher
- ✗ Someone takes a picture of you and asks you not to tell



## Creating a safety net for communication:

Help your child identify three (or more!) trusted adults they know they can talk to about anything without being afraid of getting into trouble. If you ever feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or if someone is making you promise to keep secrets from parents or teachers, you should go talk to your trusted adults- and to keep telling until you've been helped and feel safe and secure.

We recommend having your child choose adults from different parts of their life/locations (school, church, dance class, neighbor, family member, etc.)





## Internet Safety



### General safe internet habits to teach your children:

- ✓ Never share personal information (address, name, where you go to school).
- ✓ Talk with your child about the difference between a friend and a stranger.
- ✓ Someone you only know online is a stranger. Remember that a person may pretend to be someone different online.
- ✓ Always use kind words and report anyone who is acting mean or being a bully.
- ✓ Always tell a trusted adult if anyone or anything makes you uncomfortable.
- ✓ Never agree to meet anyone you've met online in person.



### Questions to address before downloading a new app for your child:

Is the content of the app age appropriate? Who does this app connect my child with? What parental controls does the app over? What is the app teaching my child? Does my child know the risks of using this app?



### Internet safety resources from the Personal Safety Team:

[Internet Safety Tips for Parents](#)

[Social Media & Mental Health](#)

[Screen Time Checklist](#)

[Implementing Safety Rules & Software Tools](#)

[Cell Phone Contract](#)

Our Personal Safety and Community Awareness Program (PSCA) is constantly hard at work in classrooms across Sarasota County, discussing what it means to be a good digital citizen, and how to be smart and safe online. To schedule a workshop, contact PSCA Program Director Michelle McSwain at 941-365-1277 Ext. 106 or by email at

[MichelleB@CPCSarasota.org](mailto:MichelleB@CPCSarasota.org).



### Additional Internet safety resources:

[netsmartz.org](http://netsmartz.org)

Online safety education via the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

[Common Sense Media](#)

Ratings and reviews parents trust

[Protect Young Eyes](#)

Showing families how to create safer digital spaces.



## Host a FREE Training With the Personal Safety Team



Contact [MichelleB@CPCSarasota.org](mailto:MichelleB@CPCSarasota.org) (941-365-1277 Ext. 106) to arrange a free workshop through our Personal Safety & Community Awareness Program!

Workshops are a great option for:

- Staff at your church
- After school activities, youth groups, & camps
- Your own children/family
- The parents at your next playdate
- Anyone who wants to learn! Anyone & everyone can help keep children safe.

Over 20 PSCA workshops are available for children from Pre-K through High School as well as adults. A few popular topics include:

- Identifying & Reporting Abuse
- Internet Safety
- Sexual Abuse Prevention
- Anti-Bullying
- Abduction Prevention
- Empathy Training
- Stress Management



Customized workshops are also available to best fit the needs of your group!



## Coping Resources and Tools

The best way to teach our children how to cope with negative or overwhelming emotions in a healthy way is to model healthy coping skills or support them in co-regulation. We want children to know it's okay to feel angry, sad, or overwhelmed, but we want them to have resources on how to regulate those tough emotions and express them in a way that's safe for everyone.



### Phrases for caregivers to try when you're feeling angry with/around children and need to regulate:

"I'm feeling overwhelmed. I need to step away and give my body time to find its calm. I'm setting my alarm for 5 minutes and then we can come back to our conversation."

"I need to take a few minutes to calm down before we keep trying to figure this out. It's hard for me to think clearly when I'm angry, so give me a little time."

"I'm feeling really upset. My coffee spilled on my laptop. I'm going to take a few deep breaths to help myself feel better."



### Safe ways to regulate yourself when overstimulated:

- ✓ Taking space
- ✓ Writing your feelings down
- ✓ Listening to music
- ✓ Meditating
- ✓ Deep breathing
- ✓ Physical exercise
- ✓ Change of temperature (take a warm or cold shower)



### 3-3-3 when you're feeling anxious:

1 Look around and focus on **three things** you can see.

2 Next, name **three things** that you can hear.

3 Finally, move **three parts** of your body.

4 When you're done, take **three deep breaths.**



### Healthy coping skills from our Therapy Team:

Click the link below for a variety of tools and practices for breathing, relaxation, and grounding. These are excellent resources for anyone coping with anxiety or trauma.

[Click here to get Therapy resources.](#)

# Child Protection Center

PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, & TREATMENT OF CHILD ABUSE

SERVING SARASOTA & DESOTO COUNTIES SINCE 1980



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### CHAIR

Tina Granthon

Charlie Brooks  
Alina Cemitier  
Tony Dempsey

Jennifer Fox  
Tammy Karp  
Donna Koffman

Douglas Staley, Executive Director  
Suzanne Takerian, Chief Financial Officer

### VICE CHAIR

Jen Douglas

Graci McGillicuddy  
Tom McLaughlin  
Christie Mucha

Dr. Walter Lambert, Medical Director  
Sheila Miller, Board Secretary

Freya Robbins  
Dan Starostecki  
Jennifer Steube  
Nikki Williams

For more information on how you can make a difference with the Child Protection Center, please contact Sheila Miller at [SheilaM@CPCSarasota.org](mailto:SheilaM@CPCSarasota.org) or 941-365-1277 Ext. 111

 [@ChildProtectionCenter](https://www.facebook.com/ChildProtectionCenter)

 [@CPCSarasota](https://www.instagram.com/CPCSarasota)

 [@CPCSRO](https://twitter.com/CPCSRO)

 [@CPCSRO](https://www.youtube.com/CPCSRO)

### MAIN OFFICE: SARASOTA

720 South Orange Avenue  
Sarasota, Florida 34236

### NORTH PORT

5600 Peace River Rd  
North Port, Florida 34287

### ARCADIA

222 N. Roberts Avenue  
Arcadia, Florida 34266



[CPCSARASOTA.ORG](https://www.CPCSARASOTA.ORG)



Backed by  
National Children's Alliance®  
Accredited Member