

12th Annual Wear Blue

Child Abuse Is Preventable

Wednesday, April 12, 2023



A Campaign Tool Kit

for Ohio's Children Services Agencies

[#OhioWearsBlue](#)

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Wear Blue

History

In 2011, Stark County Job & Family Services decided to promote “Wear Blue to Work” (WB2W) day instead of holding a pinwheel planting ceremony for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Local businesses and partners were enlisted to encourage employees to wear blue to work on one day in April, take group photos, and publish them to the agency’s (and the company’s) Facebook page. In conjunction with the one-day event, the agency opted to use the image of a blue pinwheel instead of a blue ribbon to represent child abuse prevention.

In 2012, Public Children Services Association of Ohio and its committee of public information officers across the state adopted “Wear Blue to Work” as a statewide campaign focused on grassroots outreach to community businesses and other partners. The campaign was a huge social media success, improving the number of “likes” on agency Facebook pages, encouraging “water-cooler conversations,” and giving supporters of child abuse prevention a symbolic action behind which to rally. The campaign was successful at the state level, too, as Governor John Kasich, legislators, and other officials participated by wearing blue and having their photo posted.

In 2013, the committee rebranded the campaign as “Wear Blue. Child Abuse Is Preventable” and designated the second Wednesday of every April (April 12, 2023) for the “Wear Blue” observance going forward. In dropping “to work,” we recognize that individuals can participate in raising awareness by wearing blue anywhere – to work, to school, to a community event or meeting, and even at home.

Why Blue?

While blue has been adopted by a number of causes, it has for a long time been associated with child abuse awareness, often using a solid light blue ribbon. Among certain advocacy organizations, the ribbon is sometimes worn as a braided bracelet by survivors of violent physical or sexual child abuse in memory of victims. Navy blue is also associated with human trafficking and sex slavery awareness. Because of the association with child abuse awareness, “Wear Blue” has become the basis of this campaign, and the second Wednesday of each April has been designated as “Wear Blue Day.” (Pictured is the original 2011 Stark County button.)



For 2023, all 85 county PCSAs plus any interested partners are encouraged to adopt April 12 for the Wear Blue campaign and to engage in this statewide unified promotional campaign. This is a project of the PCSAO Community Education Committee.

Campaign Objectives

- Engage the business community, community service organizations, schools (K-12, higher ed), civic organizations, and others to participate in a one-day recognition of child abuse/neglect.
- Utilize social media to highlight the event. (A [statewide Facebook page](#) is available, and each county PCSA is encouraged to create an event on its agency Facebook page.)
- Provide local resource information.

Outreach Tips

- Contact your local chamber of commerce and ask if it can disseminate information. Call or e-mail human resources leaders in larger businesses and organizations.
- Contact your local United Way and/or community foundation and ask if it can disseminate information, particularly to donors.
- Contact local school boards, institutions of higher education, vocational schools, and other education leaders to enlist participation.
- Provide participating organizations with “Wear Blue” materials and, if available, Prevent Child Abuse stickers.
- Use Facebook and Twitter to create an event for “Wear Blue.”
- Encourage participating partners to take photos and e-mail those to you the day of the event, or post them directly to your agency Facebook page. (Be sure there are no issues about confidentiality and that any necessary permissions have been obtained.)

COVID-safe Ideas for Local Awareness Activities

- Focus on events that are not in-person such as setting up a pinwheel installation in a public place people could view from the car.
- Share a pinwheel design (example: <https://www.firstpalette.com/printable/pinwheel.html>) and invite people to participate by placing a pinwheel there themselves. An agency could prepare and distribute kits for this.
- People could also take a picture of their pinwheel or themselves placing it and post it to social media.
- Run a “creative photo” contest encouraging use of special filters and other innovations, selecting winner with the most “likes”
- Invite elected officials at the local, county, state, and federal level to wear blue and send a photo; then create a collage or video collage of their photos. Be sure to tag them on social media so they benefit from being recognized. You could create a video vignette of elected officials ([view Summit County’s from 2018](#))
- Work with your local Humane Association to prevent abuse of children and animals.
- Work with a college marketing student to help you design a digital publicity campaign. This could be a great virtual opportunity at a time when students are lacking for internship experiences.
- Provide your community with a list of “3 things you can do at home to promote child abuse prevention.” Focus on tips for family discussions.
- Involve your local bus service to help promote Wear Blue by providing them with posters, sample messages to air on the bus or asking them to use the color blue in April.
- Host a virtual 5k walk/run to raise money for scholarships for foster children or local levy campaign
- Explore with your local newspaper the possibility that the day’s/week’s edition will be printed in blue ink

- Ask local news anchors to wear blue and promote the day
- Ask that local buildings and bridges with the capability to be lit in blue and follow up with photos of them

Reminder: Where necessary, obtain written releases for photos that are shared publicly.

Tools

A number of tools are available to agencies and their partners to promote a local Wear Blue campaign.

Tool: Logo

Agencies are encouraged to use the official “Wear Blue” logo. Both high- and low-resolution versions of the logo are available on the [PCSAO Wear Blue webpage](#).



Tool: Pinwheel Button or Sticker

If available, a pinwheel button or sticker can be passed out to agency staff and all participating businesses, schools, and organizations as quantities allow. Pictured is the current “Wear Blue” sticker.

Tool: Newspaper/Magazine

Engage local newspapers and magazines to participate in the event. Don’t forget about the smaller suburban and weekly papers. As noted above, counties have worked with local publications to print in blue ink or feature a similar promotion on Wear Blue Day. Local magazines and websites that feature reader-submitted photographs of individuals in the community may print event photos after the fact.

Tool: Social Media

Create an event page on Facebook and ask agency staff and anyone who “likes” the page to share information. On April 12, share submitted photos on your Facebook page, or on the page we’ve created, [Wear Blue Ohio](#). If your agency does not have a Facebook page, this is a great time to create one! Be sure to use our hashtag: **#OhioWearsBlue**



See the [PCSAO Wear Blue webpage](#) for examples of outreach materials from prior campaigns.