

PROCLAMATION
DECLARING APRIL 2019 AS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

WHEREAS, 1,501 children in Palm Beach County were victims of verified child abuse and neglect in 2017-2018, creating an overall child abuse rate for the county of 5.2 per 1,000, slightly down from 5.3 per 1,000 last year; and,

WHEREAS, tragically, six children died from child abuse in Palm Beach County last year, the same number as the previous year; and

WHEREAS, nearly 40 percent of those abused and neglected children are under the age of 6, and nearly 87.5 percent of them are under the age of 13; and

WHEREAS, this year in Palm Beach County, 833 children were removed from their homes because of abuse, and there are only 267 active foster families to care for them – fewer than last year; and

WHEREAS, Palm Beach County has seen significantly more children removed from their homes – a 22 percent increase in children placed in the foster care system than last year; and

WHEREAS, the continuing use of opioids contributes to incidents of child abuse and neglect when children are present in the home of drug users, and that substance misuse was the top allegation cited in verified cases; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that parents maltreated as children are at higher risk of abusing their own children, continuing this tragic cycle of abuse; and

WHEREAS, toxic stress that stems from abuse can damage young children's developing brains, create learning and behavioral problems and hinder their future achievements, which has huge implications for our whole community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS OF PALM BEACH COUNTY that the following will be observed:

April 2019 Child Abuse Prevention Month