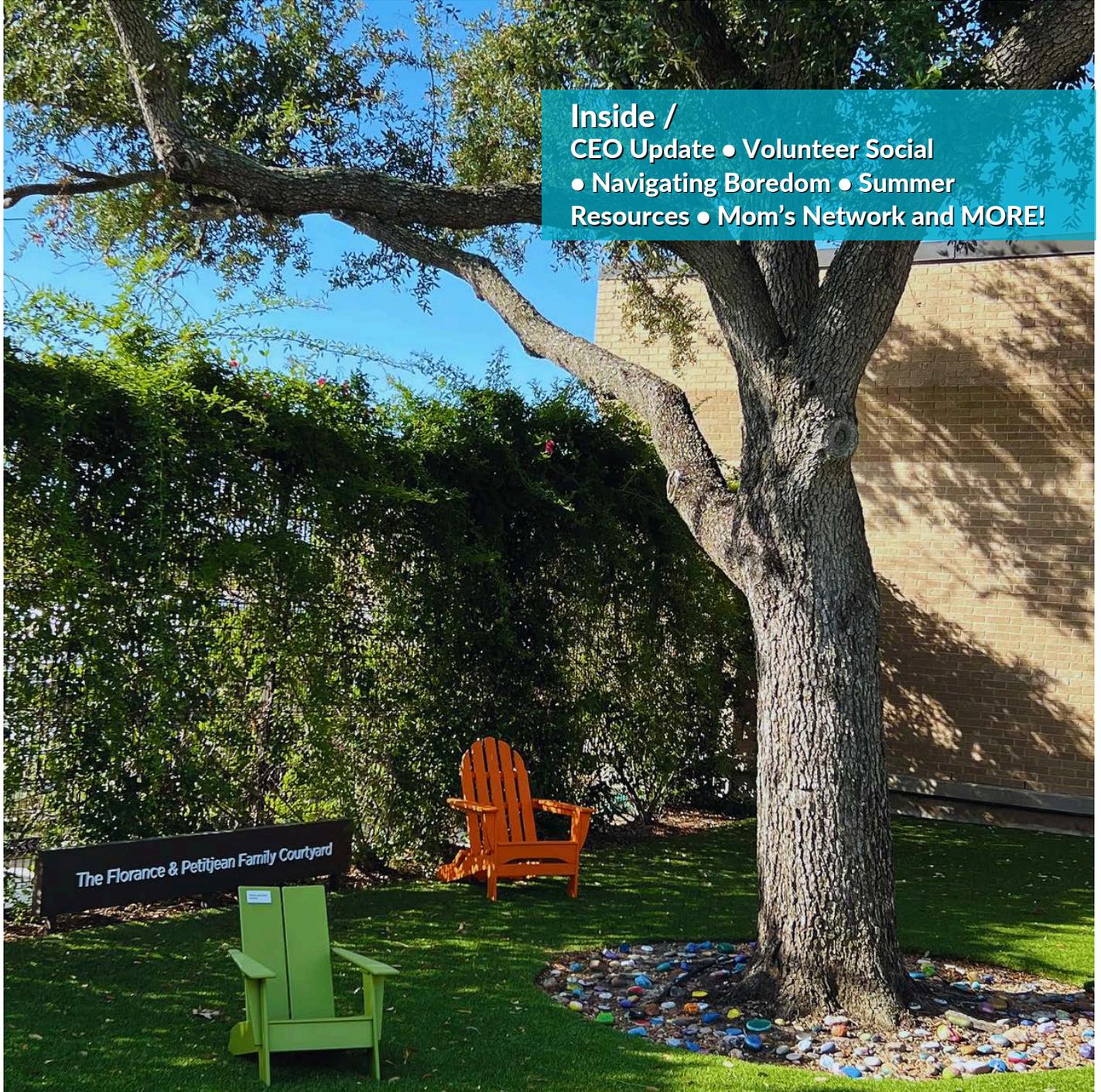


The VOICES of

CHILD **ADVOCATES** OF FORT BEND™



Inside /
CEO Update • Volunteer Social
• Navigating Boredom • Summer
Resources • Mom's Network and MORE!

July 2025

contents

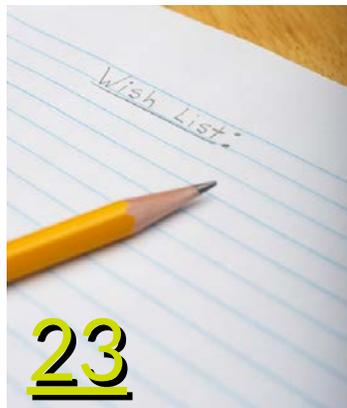


Keeping you informed on our mission:

Strengthen the Child's Voice, Heal the Hurt, and Break the Cycle of Abuse and Neglect for Children and Families in Fort Bend and surrounding counties.



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MOMS NETWORK



NEEDS + OPPORTUNITIES

NEWS + FEATURES

3 FROM THE CEO

CEO Ruthanne Mefford shares what we are up to this month

5 A MAGICAL EVENING

Volunteer Social...

7 FEATURE STORY

SUMMERTIME: NAVIGATING BOREDOM

Navigating Boredom and a Kaleidoscope of Emotions for Caregivers

9 SUMMER RESOURCES

Resources and safety tips to get you through the summer

15 CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MOMS NETWORK - KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

17 MONTHLY SPOTLIGHTS

see what we've been up to...

23 NEEDS + OPPORTUNITIES

Check out what we need this month and how you can help us

24 SAVE THESE DATES

Save these dates and plan to join us for these upcoming events



5403 AVENUE N
ROSENBERG, TX 77471
281-344-5100



WWW.CAFB.ORG



from the ceo

Welcome to our July issue of VOICES. . .

I hope this finds you enjoying your Summer. Here at Child Advocates of Fort Bend, we are as busy as ever with all kinds of summer activities. From our specialized programming for our NEST children and WINGS youth, numerous trainings including a three-day intensive TBRI training, various community events, the kickoff of our Human Trafficking Care Coordination initiative, to celebrating our high school seniors at our Graduation Event, we've had the opportunity to impact so many children's lives. Look inside this month's VOICES issue for all the details.

This month, we focus on Summer Safety to ensure that all children stay safe as their schedules change. They may be spending time outdoors or online and may have lower supervision during these months when they are not in school. We have included some helpful tips to keep your kids safe.

July is also the month that we highlight "normalcy" and what this means to children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma. Normalcy allows youth in out-of-home care to experience childhood and adolescence in ways similar to their peers not in foster care. This includes opportunities to participate in activities and experiences that other children their age enjoy. Normalcy for children is important because it supports their healthy development and well-being by allowing them to participate in age-appropriate activities and build relationships. It helps them learn life skills, navigate social situations, and develop a positive sense of self. Normalcy encourages the development of healthy relationships with caregivers, peers and community members, which can have a lasting impact on a child's social and

-continued next page



emotional well-being. It can also help children in foster care better prepare for a successful transition into adulthood. The role of the CASA Volunteer to advocate for a child's needs and wants and FRIENDS Council to fund a child's "special needs" are so critical to allow our children to enjoy things that are missing in their lives and can help make them feel special and "normal", just like the other kids. Normalcy might also be that welcoming volunteer in our CAC who sits with children at our children's tables in the playroom so they are eye-to-eye with the child, fully engaged in a puzzle or stacking Jenga blocks. Or it might look like a child selecting their favorite stuffed animal from our closet that a donor contributed to find comfort during his forensic interview. Or it might be a caregiver who has been trained in TBRI and has learned how to be a supportive adult and

help their child regulate their behaviors. Read more about ways our staff and volunteers focus on helping every child achieve normalcy after all the disruptions and instability they have experienced.

Thank you for all you do to support our children with your time, advocacy, donations, and support. Together, let's make sure that our children have a safe, enjoyable, and successful Summer.

For the Children's Sake,

Ruthanne

Ruthanne Mefford, CEO





A MAGICAL EVENING: OUR VOLUNTEER SOCIAL AT ENCHANTED FOREST



On Thursday, June 5th, Child Advocates of Fort Bend (CAFB) held its third annual Volunteer Social at Enchanted Forest. It was a beautiful evening, perfect for enjoying food, drinks, and shopping for plants and flowers, all while celebrating our dedicated volunteers. The generous staff at Enchanted Forest graciously stayed open late, allowing us to gather in their stunning space.

Staff, board members, volunteers, and their families attended the event, making it a truly special night to relax and socialize with those who are vital to our mission. Our volunteers are the backbone of CAFB, enabling us to heal the hurt and amplify children's voices.



Our volunteers contribute in countless ways. They prepare playrooms, clean toys, and create a sense of normalcy for children awaiting therapy or interviews. They advocate for children in court, ensuring their best interests are represented based on consistent communication with the child and their family or caregivers. They visit schools, educating children and staff on safety and self-advocacy. They answer phones, open doors, and warmly welcome our guests. Furthermore, volunteers are essential to our fundraising efforts. They gather supplies, stuff invitations, create beautiful centerpieces, wrap gifts, and dedicate their time to setting up and cleaning up events.

Quite simply, the staff at Child Advocates of Fort Bend could not do their jobs without our volunteers. Every task, no matter how seemingly small, is incredibly important and helpful to CAFB.

It was a true joy to witness the connections forming between volunteers, staff, and board members throughout the evening. Everyone present shared a common desire to serve others. It was a wonderful night.





FEATURE STORY

Summertime: Navigating Boredom and a Kaleidoscope of Emotions for Caregivers

By Jen Brown

Summer. The word itself often conjures images of sunshine, relaxation, and carefree days. But for caregivers, summer can sometimes feel less like a vacation and more like an extended, often unstructured challenge. With schools out and regular routines disrupted, the potential for boredom - both for kids and the caregiver - can loom large, bringing with it a complex mix of emotions.

It's okay to admit that summertime boredom can be tough. You're not alone if you find yourself grappling with these feelings. Let's explore how to navigate the long summer days, acknowledging both the good and the not-so-good emotions that can arise.

The Double-Edged Sword of Summertime Boredom

Boredom isn't always negative. Sometimes, it can be a catalyst for creativity or a much-needed pause. However, when it settles in for extended periods, especially for caregivers, it

can lead to frustration, guilt, and even resentment.

For the Child/Teen:

- **Increased restlessness** A lack of stimulating activities can lead to agitation, wandering, or repetitive behaviors, particularly for those with cognitive impairments.
- **Feelings of isolation** Fewer structured social opportunities can make them feel more alone.
- **Loss of purpose** The absence of routines can remove a sense of predictability and meaning from their day.

For the Caregiver:

- **Exhaustion from constant entertainment/supervision** The pressure to "fill the day" can be immense and draining.
- **Guilt** Feeling guilty for not being able to provide constant stimulation or for feeling bored yourself.

return of school or other structured activities that offer a break.

- **Isolation** Reduced opportunities for your own social engagement or respite care.
- **Anxiety** Worrying about how to manage the long days and potential behavioral issues.

Embracing the "Good" Feelings

Despite the challenges, summer can also bring unique opportunities for connection and simpler joys.

- **Relaxation (in small doses)** Without the rush of school mornings or therapy appointments, there might be moments for a slower pace. Savor these.
- **Spontaneity** The lack of strict schedules can allow for more impromptu activities - a walk in the park, an ice cream treat, or simply sitting on the porch together.
- **Deeper connection** With fewer external distractions, you might find more opportunities for one-on-one interaction and meaningful conversations.
- **Simple pleasures** Rediscover the joy in small things - a sunny day, a gentle breeze, the smell of freshly cut grass, or the taste of seasonal fruit.
- **Less pressure** Sometimes, the absence of a rigid schedule can feel freeing, allowing you to let go of some of the daily grind.

Acknowledging and Managing the "Bad" Feelings

It's crucial to validate your feelings, even the uncomfortable ones. Suppressing them only makes them fester.

- **Acknowledge and name your emotions** "I'm feeling frustrated today because I don't know what to do." or "I feel guilty for wanting a break." This simple act can be incredibly powerful.
- **Give yourself permission to feel them** You are human. Caregiving is incredibly demanding. It's okay to feel overwhelmed, bored, or resentful sometimes.

- **Communicate (if possible)** If you have a trusted friend, family member, or support group, share what you're experiencing. A listening ear can make a world of difference.
- **Prioritize self-care, even in small ways** A 15-minute break to read, listen to music, or step outside can be rejuvenating. Don't wait for a "perfect" opportunity; snatch moments where you can.
- **Adjust expectations** Summer doesn't have to be a non-stop parade of exciting activities. It's okay for some days to be quiet and simple.
- **Seek respite** If available, utilize respite care to give yourself a more significant break. Even a few hours can help reset your perspective.
- **Problem-solve for boredom**
 - **Create a "boredom busting" toolkit** Keep a box of simple crafts, puzzles, old photos, or favorite movies handy.
 - **Embrace routine, even loose ones** A general rhythm to the day can provide comfort and predictability.
 - **Involve them in simple tasks** Even folding laundry or watering plants can offer a sense of purpose.
 - **Utilize community resources** Check for senior centers, libraries, or community programs that offer accessible activities.
 - **Outdoor time** Even just sitting outside can be beneficial. Consider a small container garden or bird feeder.

Summer for caregivers is a unique blend of opportunities and challenges. By acknowledging the full spectrum of emotions that come with it - the good, the bad, and everything in between - you can navigate the season with greater self-compassion and resilience. Remember, you're doing an incredible job, and it's okay to seek moments of peace and personal well-being amidst the long summer days.



Summer Resources



Summer means fun in the sun, but it also brings unique risks like extreme heat, water hazards, food insecurity, safety concerns in various situations, and academic regression. Luckily, there are tons of resources to help you. Below are some essential summer safety tips and available resources so you can have a worry-free summer.

CHILD SAFETY IN PUBLIC

Keeping kids safe in public is about preparation, awareness, and clear communication. Here are some practical and child-friendly strategies to help ensure their safety in public spaces like parks, malls, events, or transit areas:

1. **Stay Close** Use phrases like “Keep me in your sight” or “Touch the stroller/shopping cart” to reinforce staying nearby.
2. **Safe Adults** Teach them to look for a uniformed employee or a police officer if they get lost.
3. **Bright Clothing** Dress kids in bright or matching outfits to make them easy to spot.
4. **Take a Photo** Snap a quick picture of your child before heading out so you have a current image of what they’re wearing. Establish a Meeting Spot: At parks or events, pick a landmark where you’ll meet if separated.

6. **“What If” Games** Ask questions like “What would you do if you couldn’t find me?” to help them think through safe responses.

7. **Code Word System** Create a family code word that only trusted adults know, so kids can identify safe people.

8. **Buddy System** Pair kids with a sibling or friend and teach them to stick together.

9. **Frequent Check-ins** If kids are old enough to explore a bit, set time intervals for check-ins.

10. **Teach Safety Signals** Agree on a hand signal or phrase if a child feels unsafe or tired.

FOOD INSECURITY RESOURCES DURING THE SUMMER

Summer Meals Site Finder

[Summer Meals for Kids Site Finder | Food and Nutrition Service](#)

They offer Eat On-Site or Meals To-Go to ensure children do not go hungry during the summer.

Fort Bend County Food Pantries

- East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry
435 Stafford Run Rd, Stafford
(281) 261-1006
- Rosenberg-Richmond Helping Hands, Inc.
902 Collins Rd, Richmond · (281) 232-4904
- Catholic Charities' Mamie George Community Center
1111 Collins Rd, Richmond · (281) 202-6200
- Helping Hands Food Pantry
802 Morton St, Richmond, TX 77469
(281)231-4904
- Victory Life Church International
3501 BF Terry Blvd, Rosenberg, TX 77471
(281)-776-9673
- Katy Christian Ministries
5504 1st St. Katy, TX 77493 (281)-391-0003

cont'd

WATER SAFETY TIPS

- Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards. Always swim with a buddy; do not allow anyone to swim alone.
- Provide close and constant attention to children you are supervising, even when a lifeguard is present, no matter how well the child can swim or how shallow the water. Avoid distractions including cell phones.
- Never leave a young child unattended near water and do not trust a child's life to another child; teach children to always ask permission to go near water.
- Life jackets can also be used by weaker swimmers of all ages in and around natural

water and swimming pools. Do not rely on air-filled or foam toys, as these are not safety devices. Life jackets reduce the risk of drowning while boating for people of all ages and swimming abilities. Life jackets should be used by children for all activities while in and around natural water.

- Designate a "water watcher" whenever in a group setting. Do not assume someone else is watching your child.

www.redcross.org/get-help

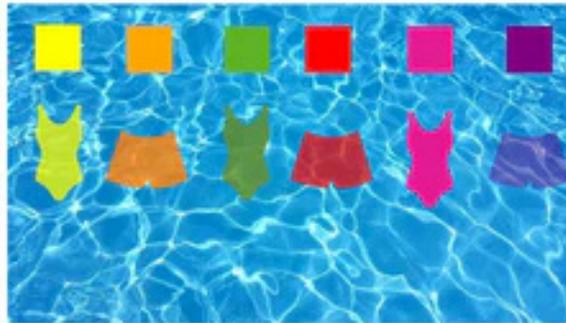
[Preventing Drowning | Drowning Prevention | CDC](#)

Swimwear safety

In the ocean



In the pool



5 WAYS TO HELP KEEP KIDS SAFE DURING SLEEPOVERS

Sleepovers can be a fun and important part of childhood – they help kids build friendships and independence. But they also come with safety considerations that every caregiver should thoughtfully address. Here are five key tips to help keep kids safe:

Know the Family and Setting

It's okay to ask questions about who will be in the home, what supervision looks like, and the family's rules and values. It is okay if you are asking questions about a family you are familiar with or already know. Most abuse happens with a known person, not a stranger. If you don't feel comfortable with what you hear, trust your instincts.

Communicate Expectations Clearly

Discuss house rules with the host family and with your child. Topics might include internet use, bedtime routines, supervision, and boundaries around privacy (bedroom doors closed or open, changing clothes, bath time etc.).

Establish an Open Door Policy

Teach your child they can always call or text you if they feel uncomfortable – no matter

the reason, no matter the time of night. Make sure they know you will come get them if asked, without judgment or punishment.

Talk About Body Safety Ahead of Time

Before the sleepover, have an age-appropriate conversation about body safety and boundaries. Remind your child that no one should touch them in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and they should not be asked to touch anyone in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. Also, they should not be asked to watch something that is not age appropriate. Encourage them to tell you if anything happens that worries them. Remind them, this is something they should call or text about immediately.

Limit or Skip Sleepovers When Unsure

It's perfectly acceptable to say "no" to sleepovers – even if other parents are saying yes. If you're not fully confident in the environment, suggest an alternative like a late-night playdate where your child returns home to sleep.

Remember: It's our job as adults to create safe spaces for children, and to model that it's okay to ask questions and prioritize safety. A few simple steps can make a big difference.





BALANCING FUN AND LEARNING FOR FORT BEND KIDS

As schools close their doors for summer, kids across Fort Bend County are eager for a break from early mornings and packed schedules. Summer should absolutely be a time to unwind and recharge, but it is also a great opportunity to keep young minds active and engaged. Without the structure of the school day, kids can easily slide into habits of excessive screen time or forget some of the skills they worked hard to build during the school year.

That does not mean summer needs to feel like school, it just means mixing in a little intention with the fun. Encouraging kids to stay curious, move their bodies, and use their imagination can go a long way in preventing learning loss and supporting healthy development. Whether it is joining a local summer camp, picking up a few books from the library, or spending time outdoors, there are plenty of ways families can continue learning and growing all summer long, without the need for worksheets or screens.

Below are practical tips on managing screen time, staying safe online, ideas for hands-on learning, and a roundup of local programs

and events happening right here in Fort Bend County.

Managing Screen Time

While digital devices are a part of daily life, too much recreational screen time can affect children's physical health, social development, and sleep habits. During the summer, it is easy for screen time to creep up, so setting clear boundaries is important.

- **Set Clear Limits:** Decide on reasonable daily screen limits and stick to them.
- **Encourage Alternatives:** Offer activities that keep kids engaged and active—board games, outdoor play, arts and crafts, or time with friends.
- **Be a Role Model:** Let kids see you putting your own devices down in favor of conversation, reading, or other screen-free time.

Online Safety: Stay Aware, Stay Involved

Alongside screen time comes another concern, online safety. With more free time, children and teens may spend extra hours online gaming, using social media, or exploring new apps. Parents and caregivers play a critical role in keeping them safe in digital spaces.

-cont'd

Here are a few key tips for protecting your child online this summer:

- **Know What They're Doing** Check which apps, games, and platforms your child is using. Read reviews and understand how they work.
- **Use Parental Controls** Set up restrictions on devices and Wi-Fi to limit inappropriate content and manage screen time.
- **Talk About Safety** Have open conversations about privacy, cyberbullying, and what to do if they receive a message or image that makes them uncomfortable.
- **Keep Devices in Shared Spaces** Encourage device use in common areas of the home, not behind closed doors.
- **Check In Regularly** Monitoring is not about spying; it is about staying involved. Review browser history, friend lists, and messages with younger children.

A little extra attention can go a long way in protecting your child and teaching them how to make smart, safe choices online.

Non-Screen Activities to Support Learning

Academic skills do not have to slide during the summer, but that does not mean sitting down with pencils and paper. Here are some ideas that blend learning with play:

- **Library Reading Programs** Encourage reading challenges and incentives available at local libraries.
- **Creative Projects** Let kids build, draw, write, cook, or invent. These hands-on activities boost problem-solving and critical thinking.
- **Nature Walks and Science Fun** Explore parks and trails. Collect leaves, watch bugs, and talk about what you see.

- **Family Game Nights** Board games can help with math, literacy, strategy, and social skills.

Local Programs and Events in Fort Bend County

There's no shortage of great options in our own backyard. Here are a few ways to keep kids active and learning this summer:

Fort Bend County Libraries Summer Reading Challenge

Begins May 26, 2025 at All Fort Bend County Library branches

Details "Color Our World" encourages readers of all ages to track reading, attend programs, and earn prizes.

Register at www.fortbend.lib.tx.us

Contact 281-342-4455

Sugar Land Parks & Recreation Youth Camps

Weekly sessions throughout summer at Sugar Land Recreation Centers and parks

Details A wide range of day camps for various age groups including sports, art, and STEM.

Register at www.sugarlandtx.gov/parks

Contact 281-275-2885

Fort Bend ISD Camp BLAST

Weekly sessions at Lakeview Elementary School, Malala Elementary School, Sienna Crossing Elementary School, Sullivan Elementary School

Details All-day camp for students entering K-5. Includes themed activities, field trips, lunch, and more.

Register at www.fortbendisd.com/blast

Contact 281-634-1826

-cont'd

Language Kids World Camps - Sugar Land

June 9 - July 24, 2025 at Commonwealth Elementary, 4909 Commonwealth Blvd, Sugar Land

Details Half-day camps offering Spanish, French, and global cultural exploration.

Register at www.languagekids.com

Contact 281-565-1388

Earth-Kind Kids' Camp

July 21-24, 2025 at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Rosenberg

Details Campers entering grades 3-5 explore gardening, environmental science, and sustainability.

Register at

fortbend.agrilife.org/youthcamps

Contact 281-342-3034

Kids & Cops Summer Camps

Weekly sessions throughout summer at various locations in Fort Bend County

Details For youth ages 10-12, focusing on teamwork, leadership, and self-esteem building.

Register at www.fortbendcountytx.gov

Contact 832-473-7851

A Summer of Growth

Kids do not need a packed schedule to thrive –they just need opportunities to explore, create, connect, and stay mentally active in ways that feel enjoyable and age-appropriate.

Fort Bend County offers plenty of options to help parents do just that, from free library programs and hands-on camps to outdoor adventures and local events. Whether your child is reading under a tree, building something new, or learning a few words in another language, these moments add up. They help build confidence, curiosity, and resilience... skills that matter far beyond the classroom.

As we all shift into summer mode, let's aim for balance: less scrolling and more doing, less sitting and more discovering. With a little planning and some community support, this summer can be both a break and a boost—for kids and parents alike.



Child Abuse Prevention

Moms Network - Keeping our Children Safe

On June 3rd, Child Advocates of Fort Bend hosted a special gathering of 30 young moms to learn how to "Keep Our Children Safe." These women are parenting children in an environment that is changing incredibly fast. Moms need new tools and tips to keep our kids safe.

We dispelled three common myths related to child abuse.

Myth 1: Abuse Doesn't Happen Here.

Yes, it does. It occurs in Sweetwater, First Colony, Riverstone, Richmond, Stafford - everywhere. In the state of Texas, 1 in 6 children will be sexually abused by the age of 18 years old. Last year alone, there were 6100 reports of child abuse in Fort Bend County and Child Advocates of Fort Bend served 2075 children who had been sexually abused, physically abused or neglected. And closer to home, we served 262 children from Sugar Land and 179 from Missouri City, right in our own backyard.

Myth 2: Stranger Danger.

Long ago this was taught in school - watch out for a scary man in a white van who will whisk me away. The truth is that over 90% of child abuse is by a family member or someone the child knows.

This led to the question, how does someone in my family or from my church or is my child's coach or teacher go about abusing my child?

The answer is - access and grooming. It begins by singling a child out and paying special attention to that child, making them feel important. Over time, the child feels more comfortable and you, the parent, also feel more comfortable allowing this person to spend more



time with your child. You grant permission for your child to be alone with this person for that a 1:1 piano lesson or coaching session. Gradually, the abuser tests the child's trustworthiness by trying something small and saying, "It's just between us, don't tell anyone." And slowly, this escalates until children find themselves in situations where they are being harmed and don't know how to get away and make it stop.

Myth 3: There's nothing we can do.

In our research, we were told again and again by parents of abused children, "I wish I would have known then what I know now." Or, "It never would happen to my child." Research tells us that 70% or more of abuse is preventable -

cont'd

and the person with the most influence and power to make abuse stop and keep your child safe is you - the parent.

Repeatedly, survivors told us that they tried to tell but nobody listened. So, it's important not only that you create protective factors but if that tragic thing happens to your child and they are abused you know what to look for and what to do.

We announced the launch of a brand new initiative, "The Mom's Network", part of our new Child Abuse Prevention Collaborative (CAP-C).

There are 3 cornerstones of CAP-C:

- SUSPECT
- DETECT
- PROTECT

Here are your tips.

SUSPECT - Trust Your Gut

The first tip is to trust your gut. Parent after parent tell us, "I had a funny feeling about that coach but my child has so much talent and potential to be an incredible athlete (or musician or dancer)." Or, "I never felt fully comfortable with that babysitter but I didn't have anyone else to call." Or, "My father abused me but I never thought he would abuse my daughter." If you feel any of these feelings, stop, think about the consequences if something would happen, and restrict this person from being alone with your child.

DETECT - Ask and LISTEN

The second tip is to be vigilant and connect with your child.

This starts by asking your child "How Are You?" every day and listening. Make eye to eye contact. Show them you're interested in what is happening and how they are feeling that day. And put away the phones. All your family's phones go in the kitchen at night, not in their bedrooms.

In our research, every survivor said, "I tried to tell, but no one listened." If they had listened, just think. Someone could have intervened and stopped the abuse. Instead, these children endured abuse often for months and sometimes years before anyone believed them. Even today, when our children go to criminal court to testify in front of a judge and jury, it is not uncommon for their family members still not to believe them (or choose not to believe).

So, please listen to your child. It takes so much courage for a child to speak up - after they have been groomed, intimidated or threatened. Silence is the most powerful tool the abuser has - and he will use it to keep their secret.

PROTECT - Be an Adult Buffer

The third tip is to learn what to do to prevent your child from being hurt or abused by someone. Implement protective factors so that your child is not in a position for someone to have private access to your child. Think sleepovers, Summer camp, babysitters, after-school 1:1 meetings between your child and his or her teacher or choir instructor or basketball coach, and youth outings at your church. Tips: minimize situations in which your child is alone with an adult. Complete background and reference checks on babysitters and daycare workers. Drop in unannounced. Implement parental controls on internet usage. Teach your child NOT to provide personal information and do NOT exchange photos, and certainly not suggestive or sexual photos.

Our vision is to put an end to child abuse. And we'll only do that by educating parents and kids. Together, we can make our community safer and never have another child endure the horror of abuse.

Want to learn more? Contact us to be part of the change. [Ruthanne @ RMefford@cafb.org](mailto:Ruthanne@RMefford@cafb.org)





monthly spotlights

updates from the programs and MORE!

Looking for a way to honor or memorialize someone you love?

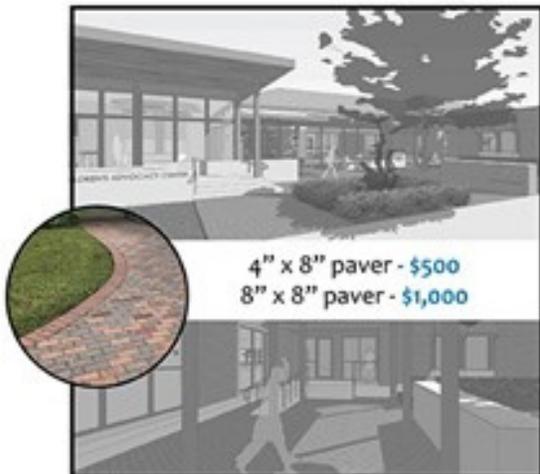
Would you like to pay tribute to someone by honoring or memorializing them for a life well lived or a special occasion? Send a donation in any amount with their name, address, and a note about why you are honoring them. We'll send an acknowledgement letter letting them know that you donated on their behalf. Honor someone today by [donating online](#) or by mailing a check to Child Advocates of Fort Bend, 5403 Avenue N, Rosenberg, TX 77471.

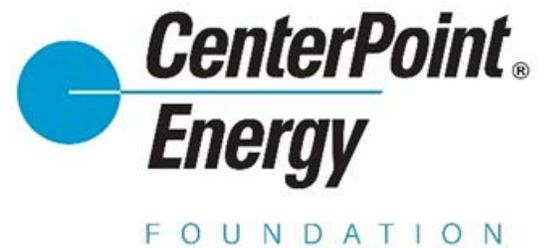
What are some permanent honorarium choices?

Pavers. Your \$500 or \$1,000 gift can purchase a medium or large paver in our front walkway engraved with your name or message. Purchase your paver today and someone will contact you to discuss your inscription. If you have already purchased a paver, we thank you!

If you wish to honor or memorialize someone special in a more significant way, why not name a room in our building after them? We have a variety of room naming opportunities available including private offices, therapy rooms, family meeting rooms, conference rooms and more.

For more information, please contact **Lisa Moore** at Lmoore@cafb.org





Preparing youth for success

The CenterPoint Energy Foundation (CNP) prepares today's youth for tomorrow's workforce. The Foundation recognizes that an educated and engaged citizenry is critical to the future of their business and service territories. Through their Community Vitality and Education giving pillars, CAFB was once again awarded a grant to benefit our youth in foster care and youth who participate in our WINGS LifeSkills programming.

Our grant project, "Preparing Foster Youth with Life Skills and Workforce Readiness," will focus on educational achievement, life skills training, trauma-informed care, family connection - all building skills and an ongoing support system so that youth who transition out of state care and into the community are healthy, independent and thriving. Our WINGS LifeSkills is more than

a summer program. The life skills sessions, campus crawl, wraparound services and developing circles of support truly are transformative for children's lives and helps them realize a future beyond the abuse with ongoing support systems to help them succeed. For the 2024-2025 school year, 14 of our youth successfully graduated high school (2 CASA, 12 CAC).

The CNP Foundation is committed to ensuring all students have the opportunities and tools they need to succeed academically, explore potential careers and are equipped to enter the workforce. We are grateful to them for the life-changing support our youth receive and for recognizing the impact our CASA WINGS Program and vital advocacy services deliver! More information can be found at CenterPointEnergy.com/Foundation.

2025 Celebrating our Graduates!

By Aly Ferrante

On Saturday, June 14th, Child Advocates of Fort Bend hosted its seventh annual Graduation Event, honoring 16 youth who have received services through Child Advocates of Fort Bend. More than just a traditional commencement, this celebration served as a powerful symbol of resilience and hope. For these graduates, it marked not only the completion of high school but also a testament to their strength in navigating life through the most difficult adversities.

The day was a heartfelt tribute to their academic accomplishments, unwavering determination, and bold visions for the future. Each graduate proudly walked across the stage to receive a certificate of achievement, a laptop compliments of the Fort Bend Child Welfare Board, and thoughtful gifts to support their next steps. In a moment of joy and pride, students had the opportunity to share their post-graduation plans—from pursuing higher education to entering the workforce—each announcement met with cheers from a supportive crowd.

These graduates have big dreams, and we are deeply honored to celebrate with them and continue cheering them on in the journeys ahead.





FRIENDS Backpack Drive

"Do it for the kids"

Schools start in early August. We need your help to fill backpacks with school supplies.

Please "ADOPT A CHILD"

You will be given the name of a child in need and an individual school supply list for their school and grade. We ask that you shop for your child, if you can. **Supplies are due July 14th-July 21st**. To participate, email **Brigit Engleman**, bengleman@hotmail.com for a specific child's list.

If you cannot shop, please send \$100 per child and FRIENDS will shop for you.

Make checks to "Friends of CAFB" and send to:

Alexis Jackson, Friends Treasurer
7406 Forest Shadow Dr.
Sugar Land TX 77479

For Zelle or Venmo options email alexisjackson@outlook.com or 713-582-0341

FRIENDS Membership Dues

Have you missed your annual dues payment for this year?

We count on our FRIENDS membership to help fund these kiddos.

Please include your \$50 membership dues (if you haven't already).

* Please put Friends Dues and/or School Supplies in the comments section.

Summer Sensory Activities for All Ages

By Jheri Walters LCSW-S

Summer is here, and it's a wonderful time to engage children in sensory-rich experiences that support their development and emotional well-being. Whether indoors or outdoors, sensory play helps children of all ages explore the world, build new skills, and regulate their emotions – all while having fun.

Here are some simple, accessible ideas for your family to try this summer:

Outdoor Sensory Fun

1. Nature Scavenger Hunt

Encourage children to use sight, touch, and smell by finding items like smooth stones, fragrant flowers, or crunchy leaves. Bonus: scavenger hunts promote curiosity and mindfulness.

2. Water Play Stations

Buckets, sponges, cups, and water beads offer endless opportunities for tactile exploration. Water play is soothing and great for children of all ages.

3. Sidewalk Art

Sidewalk chalk allows kids to express creativity through bold colors and textures. For added fun, spray water on the art and watch the designs change.

Indoor Sensory Activities

1. Sensory Bins

Fill a bin with rice, pasta, kinetic sand, or dried beans. Add scoops, toys, or small objects to discover. Sensory bins support fine motor skills and provide calm, focused play.

2. DIY Playdough or Slime

Making and playing with homemade dough engages touch and creativity. Add scents like lavender or peppermint to enhance the sensory experience.



3. Movement and Music Breaks

Encourage dancing, yoga, or simple stretching to connect body awareness with rhythm. Movement helps regulate energy and emotions.

Why Sensory Play Matters

Sensory activities help children:

- Build cognitive and motor skills
- Process emotions
- Increase focus and attention
- Develop resilience through exploration

Importantly, sensory play can also foster connection between caregivers and children – a vital protective factor for children who've experienced stress or trauma.

At our Child Advocates of Fort Bend, we encourage families to embrace play as a tool for healing and growth. Sensory activities provide safe, joyful ways to nurture children's development this summer – indoors and out.



Looking Beyond Cash to Make an Impact

If you recently donated to a charity, it's probably safe to say it was likely a "cash" donation from a bank or savings account. But, you might be surprised to learn that a whopping 90% of the wealth in the United States is held in "non-cash" assets like stocks and securities, real estate, and life insurance policies. Despite these significant holdings, only 14% of all non-profits in the USA received "non-cash" contributions last year.

Not only are "non-cash" assets often overlooked by donors, but they also make it possible for donors to give up to 20% more to charity because of the potential to eliminate capital gains taxes.

Here's how it works:

- Hold an appreciated asset for more than one year—owe no capital gains tax on gift
- Deduct the full fair market value of the gift

Does the gift of a "non-cash" asset make sense for you and your family? This might be

an effective option if you are:

- heavily invested in a particular stock or sector and looking to rebalance your portfolio
- ready to sell a vacation home, farm, undeveloped land, or other real estate
- holding a life insurance policy that is no longer needed for its original purpose
- considering an estate reduction strategy to potentially offset taxes that incorporates charitable giving
- a business owner anticipating a sale or liquidation

Donating "non-cash" assets can be a sophisticated and highly beneficial giving strategy for both donor and recipient. As with any transaction, consult a qualified financial expert to determine the best course of action. If you would like to learn more about making a gift to Child Advocates of Fort Bend and becoming a member of the "Forever Angels Legacy Society," please contact plannedgiving@CAFB.org to let your legacy... become their future.



ANGEL SPOTLIGHT

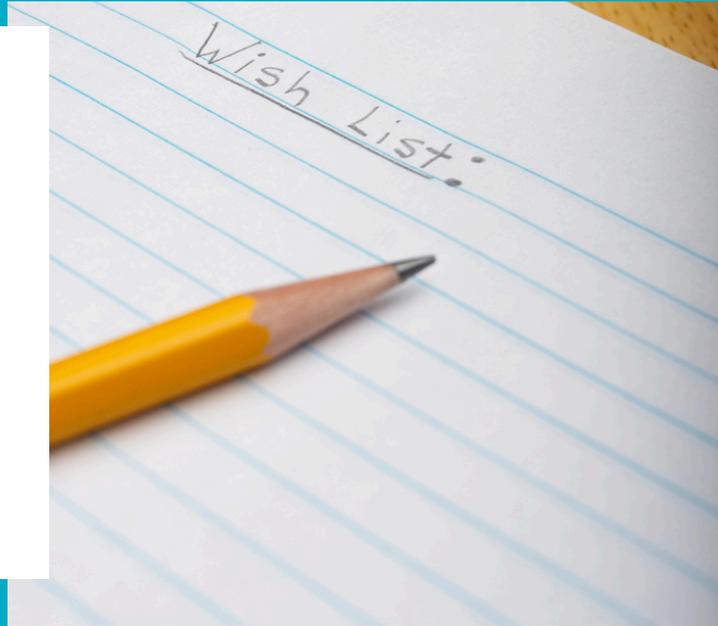
Gordon Warren

Gordon Warren is the type of volunteer every organization hopes for. His cheery disposition and smile spill over into all that he does—whether it's volunteering at the CAC, working the front desk, or giving prevention talks at area schools. When asked why he recently chose to make a planned-gift to Child Advocates of Fort Bend and become part of the "Forever Angels Legacy Society," this father of 5 and grandfather of 17 replied, "At the end of my life, I hope to tell my Heavenly Parents that I did the best I could with the gifts they gave me."

our needs

This month, we have immediate need for:

- **Gift cards**
VISA/ MasterCard, Walmart, HEB, fast food, Uber eats, Uber
- **10 Handheld or neck fans**
for Summer programming with youth
- **20 Reusable water bottles**
for Summer programming



Did you know that you can donate cars, airplanes, boats, motorcycles or trucks and select Child Advocates of Fort Bend to receive the proceeds?

Visit [HERE](#) for questions or contact Lisa at lmoore@cafb.org



save these dates



July 15

Summer Education Series: Recognize and Respond with Tour
11:00am - 1:00pm

July 22

Youth Mental Health First Aid
8:30am - 5:00pm
RSVP to Deidra Lyons-Lewis at dlyonslewis@cafb.org

July 24

Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children
10:00am - 1:00pm
[Register here](#)

July 29

Sip & Stroll
5:30pm - 7:00pm
Contact [Lisa](#) at LMoore@cafb.org to reserve your spot

July 30

Summer Education Series: Best Practices in Educational Advocacy
11:00am - 1:00pm



"But the most beautiful things in life are not just things. They're people, places, memories and pictures. They're feelings and moments and smiles and laughter."
- Anonymous