



Community Links

A community is as strong as its smallest link.

Community Links is a project that visually represents a commitment to prevent child abuse and neglect. Individuals write what they intend to do to keep kids safe and families strong on slips of paper, which are then linked together to create a long chain.

Connecting the many links into one long chain is a fun way to demonstrate that community members are working together to protect children. In addition, displaying the community links will help bring awareness to the issue of preventing child abuse and neglect.

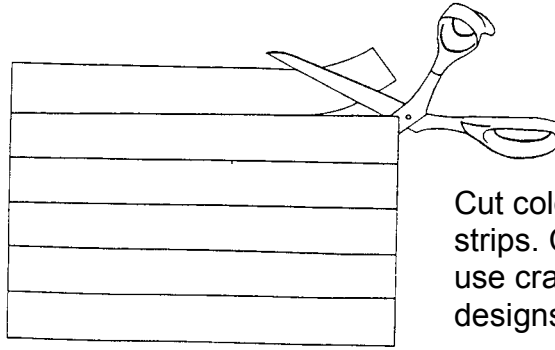
Project implementation

1. Decide first what audience you would like to target for the Community Links project.
 - You can include an entire community, or you can target just one organization, such as a school, church or local business.
2. Distribute paper chain links along with a packet of information on child abuse and neglect prevention strategies and parenting information. On the chain link, individuals should write what they will do to keep kids safe and families strong.
3. Get the word out to the community about your project the following ways:
 - Send letters to community members encouraging them to participate.
 - Post fliers at local businesses and organizations with information about Community Links.
 - Ask other businesses and organizations to distribute your fliers.
4. Connect chain links and display as a symbol of community strength and support.
 - Choose a prominent location to display the chain, such as a library, mall or government building.
5. Liven up your campaign with some clever ways of using Community Links.
 - Have a contest to guess the number of links.
 - Ask children to create links, too. They can write one way they are going to stay safe.
 - Use the chain in conjunction with other activities such as developmental screenings or educational workshops.
 - Send a press release and pictures of the Community Links chain to the media.

Community Links directions

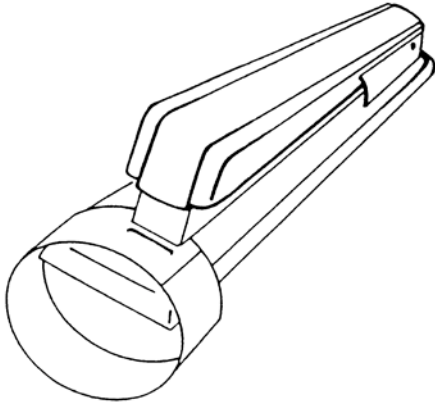


1.

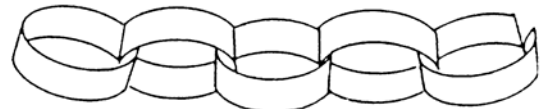


Cut colored construction paper into 1" to 1 ½" strips. Choose lots of different colored paper, or use crayons or magic markers to make colorful designs on the paper before you even cut it.

2.

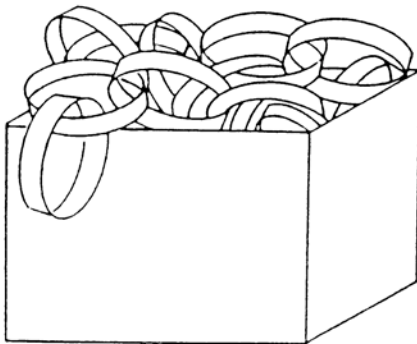


Have each person write one thing they will do to keep children safe on his or her strip of paper. Start the first link by stapling the strip into a loop. Make sure it overlaps for strength. Additional links can then be looped through other loops and stapled. Make your chain as long as you want. The longer, the better!



Hint-Small loops make stronger chains!

3.



Put your completed chains in a large plastic bag or a box and drop them off at the locations listed in the box below. Remember to come out to the Community Links Event and see your chain linked with others.

Community Links



Community Links sample letter

Dear community member:

April is Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month. We would like to invite you to be a part of an activity designed to bring families and communities together to celebrate children. The project is quick, easy, inexpensive, fun and—best of all—illustrates a positive message of support and commitment to our community's children.

[Organization's Name] is sponsoring "Community Links" on **[Date]** at **[Location]**. We are asking that you join us in making paper chain links which will be linked together at **[Location]** to create one long chain representing the joining together of many hands and hearts in support of children. We know from other places where this project has been tried that just the making of the chain generates many opportunities for a valuable discussion of family support, the importance of children and what each of us can do to prevent child abuse and neglect.

It is simple to get started. Just read the enclosed, easy-to-follow instructions and begin making chains! We hope every person in **[Name Of Organization, Business, Etc.]** will have an opportunity to participate. Please join us!

Sincerely,

[Name of steering group]