

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **Agencies to host movie screening of ‘Spotlight’ Oct. 11 to raise awareness about prevention of child sexual abuse**

**(Lawrence, KS)** – The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, The Sexual Trauma and Abuse Care Center, Kansas Children’s Service League and the Douglas County Child Abuse Prevention Task Force want to put a spotlight on prevention of child sexual abuse and how everyone plays a role in protecting children.

The agencies will host a screening of the two-hour movie “Spotlight,” an Oscar-winning film about The Boston Globe’s coverage of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. The movie will begin at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 11 in the Lawrence Public Library’s auditorium, 707 Vermont St., and will be followed by a discussion about the movie and what residents can do to make a difference.

“It’s important that we know how to talk about childhood sexual abuse, so that we can work towards preventing it in our community,” said Layla McEniry, youth educator at The Sexual Trauma and Abuse Care Center.

According to Darkness to Light, a national nonprofit that seeks to protect children from sexual abuse, there are five steps to protecting children:

- **Learn the facts.** One in 10 children in the U.S. is sexually abused by the age of 18. More than 90 percent of sexually abused children are abused by someone known by the child or family.
- **Minimize opportunity.** More than 80 percent of child sexual abuse incidents occur when children are isolated, one-on-one situations with adults or other youth.
- **Talk about it.** One of the best protections against sexual abuse is our relationship with children. Have open conversations with children about body safety, sex and boundaries.
- **Recognize the signs.** The most common symptoms of child sexual abuse are emotional or behavioral changes. Know the signs of abuse to protect children from further harm.
- **React responsibly.** Understand how to respond to suspicions or reports of child sexual abuse. Very few reports are false.

Research shows that people who are sexually violated as children are far more likely to experience psychological problems often lasting into adulthood, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, suicide, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, school dropout and relationship problems.

Case Management Supervisor Jenn Preston, of the Health Department, hopes the event brings more attention to what each of us can do to prevent child sexual abuse. “Most children are abused by people they know and trust. This event will highlight what adults can do to ensure children are in safe and healthy relationships with the adults in their lives.”

The Health Department received a \$750 grant from Prevent Child Abuse America to provide the community event.