

Recent articles in the Baltimore Jewish Times remind us that child abuse in all its forms – sexual, physical, and emotional – is a problem that knows no communal boundaries. At this time, it is not sufficient to deplore child abuse. We publicly acknowledge that it exists not only in society-at-large, but in the Jewish community, as well. As leaders of congregations and institutions in the Baltimore Jewish community, we recognize, as one, the existence of the problem in our midst, our moral obligation to raise awareness in our communities, and the moral imperative to do all in our power to prevent further occurrences and help in the healing of victims of abuse and their families. Once it was a shande to discuss this topic; now it is a shande to ignore it.

Our children are our guarantors of Torah and they are our future. We must ensure that they grow and learn in safe environments. This must be our highest priority. We pledge ourselves to render the environments under our purview safe, and to train our staffs appropriately with respect to preventing and detecting child abuse in all its guises. We pledge ourselves to being sensitive to victims who share with us what has happened to them and to helping them in their healing. Child abuse causes much suffering and we pledge ourselves to serving the pastoral needs of the families of victims, as well as innocent family members of abusers.

All abuse is wrong and against the values of Torah, to which we are committed. The abuse of children, among the most vulnerable members of our communities, is especially reprehensible and demands our immediate attention and our commitment to eradicate it.



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