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**County's Children and Youth Services
details resources to combat sexual abuse of children**

Delaware County Council and the Office of Children and Youth Services presented valuable information regarding the prevention of sexual abuse of children at its public meeting on Nov. 22.

While the public remains shocked by recent events in the news, County Council emphasized that Children and Youth Services (CYS) and its partners in the community are committed to preventing abuse, protecting and treating those who are abused, and prosecuting those who commit abuse.

County Councilman Tom McGarrigle, Council's liaison to the County's Human Services Department, said it's important that all residents know there are various hotlines they can call, and organizations they can report abuse to.

Councilman McGarrigle said one of the County's partners, Family Support Line, has a mission to "prevent, treat and train for the trauma of child sexual abuse."

Family Support Line, based in Media, recently released an informational newsletter detailing behaviors to watch out for in potential offenders plus tips and guidelines for talking to children about inappropriate contact.

"As the Family Support Line newsletter states, we, as adults, all have a part to play here," Councilman McGarrigle said. "This is about watching for behaviors of adults around children. This is about speaking up and stepping in. This is about listening to our children, and teaching safety rules."

Deidre Gordon, CYS administrator, said people can call the Pennsylvania State Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-932-0313 or their local police if they suspect sexual abuse of a child.

CYS operates a Children and Youth Sexual Abuse Center at 100 W. Sixth St., Media. The phone number is 610-891-5258. The agency investigates reports of sexual abuse of children in which the alleged perpetrator is a household member or caregiver.

CYS also investigates referrals of other types of abuse of children, such as physical abuse and neglect, and provides a range of services to maltreated children and their families. Referrals can be made to the Upper Darby office of CYS at 610-713-2000 or the Chester office at 610-447-1000.

"Most of us cannot imagine what would make an adult abuse a child, but the truth is there are people who are committing acts that harm children," Gordon said. "The point is, if you suspect abuse, make that phone call."