

# SAFE CHILDREN INITIATIVE

As representatives from a diverse group of religious communities, we are united in our love of faith and affirm our commitment to the safety, security, and well-being of all children.

We recognize that we all have a responsibility to care for children, and have joined together as allies in our mission to protect Utah's children and strengthen Utah's families.

## We are **united** in these *COMMON* principles

- 1 Children are our most precious gift and represent the future of humankind.
- 2 Religious communities are uniquely situated to provide critical support, guidance, counseling and love for their members, which fosters a long-term protective environment around children and families.
- 3 All children deserve safe, stable, nurturing homes and families, regardless of their family structure, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or immigration status.
- 4 Strengthening families in our faith communities will improve the likelihood that children will grow up in supportive, faith-based homes that will help them reach their full potential.
- 5 Any violence against any child in any setting, including the abuse and mistreatment of children, violates the basic tenets of each of our religions, which are based on love and care for our fellow beings.

**W**e recognize that we have many opportunities as religious leaders to put these principles into practice in our daily work.

**W**e will use teachings from our religious texts that emphasize the great worth and dignity of children.

**W**e will also provide and advocate for education, training, and support for families and others in our community who seek needed resources to help families and children who struggle.

**W**e urge, and will ask, all members of Utah's religious community, and all communities, to join with us in protecting Utah's children and making their safety and well-being one of our highest priorities. In addition, we strongly encourage all members of Utah's religious community to draw from expertise of local agencies and endeavor to hold trainings that will help each faith group increase awareness and understanding of child abuse and neglect, and the long-term impact of trauma on children and adults.