



2018 Public Policy Agenda

Advocating for a better future for the next generation

There is nothing more important for the future of our nation than to ensure that children in every community have the great childhood they deserve. In order to make this dream a reality, we urge Congress to take action and strengthen American policies.

We must prioritize children in both policy and budget decisions and increase early funding for prevention to save taxpayers over the long-term while simultaneously improving outcomes for children at risk. For these reasons, Prevent Child Abuse America advocates for policies, legislation and programs that not only promote healthy child development, but help to improve family functioning as well, supporting families and preventing child abuse and neglect before it occurs.



To accomplish this, Prevent Child Abuse America urges the President and Congress to take the following actions in 2018:

PRIORITIZE PREVENTION AND ENSURE SAFETY IN FEDERAL BUDGET AND POLICY DECISIONS

We want Congress to ensure decisions related to the federal budget maintain and, where appropriate, enhance our nation's commitment to healthy child development and strengthen American policies. We will encourage Congress to support the following:



Assure Long-term Reauthorization of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program

The Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program is an evidence-based policy that supports overburdened families at-risk for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including child maltreatment. This bipartisan, federal and state partnership supports funding for voluntary home visiting services in every state that build upon decades of scientific research, helping states to achieve impressive outcomes at significant savings for state and federal governments.

We ask that Congress and the President pass a 5-year extension with incremental funding increases up to \$800M per year for this successful federal-state partnership and pro-family program.



Reauthorize and Invest in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), created in 1974, is the only federal legislation that exclusively targets prevention, assessment, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect. It is also the only federal legislation that provides for universal primary prevention of child abuse and neglect capacity building. State grants from CAPTA and Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CB-CAP) provide a continuum of preventive services, allow the development of unique approaches and foster understanding and knowledge of diverse populations to address child abuse and neglect prevention in our communities. The expansive mission and directives inserted into CAPTA by Congress are severely underfunded and has led to uneven implementation and protection.

Congress must act urgently to reauthorize CAPTA, including adequately funding and fully implementing provisions in the law. By fully funding CAPTA at \$200 million, Congress can help strengthen the network of support in states focused on prevention, investigation and treatment activities for families.



Reauthorize Title IV-E Waivers

Section 1130 of the Social Security Act authorizes the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary to approve State demonstrations involving Title IV-E waivers. These waivers provide states with the flexibility to use funds to test new approaches to building protective factors along the child abuse prevention and child welfare service continuum. Demonstration projects aim to prevent child abuse and neglect through early intervention, while also reducing the instances of re-entry into foster care by reducing instances of maltreatment.

We urge Congress to fund, reauthorize and prioritize these waivers, which are set to terminate on September 30, 2019.



Include Home Visiting in Plans of Safe Care to Ensure the Safety and Well-Being of Infants with Prenatal Exposure, Their Mothers and Families

The Comprehensive Addiction and Treatment Act of 2016 (CARA) deals with various aspects of substance abuse, particularly opioid use. The CARA Act includes amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) regarding Plans of Safe Care for infants exposed to substances. The language calls for a response to drug- and alcohol-affected infants, but does not specify how this response should be defined or operationalized. That leaves the definitional task up to States.

We request that home visiting be utilized as a best practice when states start to develop their Plans of Safe Care.



Enact the Family First Prevention Services Act into Law

The Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016 contains many important provisions that allow federal Title IV-E foster care funds to be used for prevention services and programs, including mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services, in-home parent skill-based programs, parent education, and individual and family counseling.

We urge Congress to enact the Family First Prevention Services Act into law so that these funds can be used for prevention services and programs in a bold step forward to shift current funding priorities to allow for investment in front-end prevention services and programs.



Increase or Maintain Funding Levels for Other Key Prevention-Focused Policies

This includes level or increased funding for:

- Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) at \$2,856 billion
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (PSSF) at \$325 million
- Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit
- Restore funding for preventive services funded by the Title IV-B, Child Welfare Services (CWS) to \$269 million
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- 21st Century Cures Act grants and training to promote infant and early childhood mental health
- Evidence-based processes such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Essentials for Childhood Framework to \$16.25 million to fund 25 new states
- Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) at \$1.7 billion
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) at \$16.5 billion

BUILD AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN

Congress and the President should build the infrastructure to empower future generations. We owe it to our children and our nation to outline a specific course of action, including:

- **Support for flexible funding** in existing entitlement programs to provide critical services in mental health, substance abuse, and in-home parent skills training such as counseling and early infant home visiting services to support identification and mitigation of risk within families.
- **Develop standard definitions, investigative procedures, and reporting requirements** across all 50 states in an effort to eliminate inconsistent state definitions of maltreatment that affect legal standards and create barriers to multidisciplinary coordination and data collection. We also need to ensure that the Fifth National Incidence Study (NIS) of Child Abuse and Neglect is produced. The NIS is a congressionally mandated, periodic effort of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and serves as the nation's needs assessment on child abuse and neglect.
- **Invest in a coordinated public health and safety approach** involving federal, state, private and public institutions to tackle complex social problems, support community change and increase primary prevention services.
- **Provide adequate funding** for access to universal and responsive services and supports for families that address underlying issues including prenatal care, mental health, employment, education, housing, early childhood education, paid family leave, parent skills training, as well as substance abuse and domestic violence programs.
- **Issue guidance to states** regarding the use of Medicaid, the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit, and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) for wraparound services, where it is permitted, including what can be used to fund services such as mental health treatment, health screenings, and substance use screening and treatment.

OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON IT

Our nation must work together to address the social and economic challenges confronting a shared vision and help shape a future where all of America's children have the great childhood they deserve. Looking ahead, Prevent Child Abuse America will work with the President, Congress, stakeholders and national coalitions to ensure important programs, services and funding are protected.

2018 should become the starting point for a call for universal services, a substantial increase in funding and state action plans based upon a collective agreement that every child deserves a great childhood. Prevention of child abuse and neglect should be a national priority and we hope Congress and the Administration act urgently to prioritize the recommendations in our agenda.

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ABOUT PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA

Founded in 1972, Prevent Child Abuse America is a national organization with chapters in all 50 states and nearly 600 Healthy Families America home visitation sites. We lay the groundwork to deliver the great childhoods that all children deserve. We promote services that improve child well-being and develop programs that help to prevent all types of abuse and neglect. Ninety-four cents of every dollar spent goes directly into programs and services, which is why we have received top ratings by a variety of charity oversight organizations, including Charity Navigator, GreatNonprofits and GuideStar. To learn more about what we're doing to prevent child abuse and neglect and how you can help, visit us at preventchildabuse.org.