

**NATIONAL
CHILD ABUSE
COALITION**

1000 Vermont Ave., NW * Suite 700 * Washington * DC 20005

Phone 202-347-3666 * Email bircht@earthlink.net * Fax 202-289-0776

November 13, 2009

The Honorable Peter Orszag
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Orszag:

As members and affiliates of the National Child Abuse Coalition committed to strengthening the federal response to the protection of children and the prevention of child abuse and neglect, we urge your support in the President's Fiscal Year 2011 budget for a significant increase in funding for programs authorized by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). For far too many years, the funding for these programs has remained well below the authorized funding levels.

Our request to you for a budget proposal at the authorized funding levels would support innovative practices in child protective services and effective evidence-based and evidence-informed child abuse prevention programs. Additional funding to help states protect children and support families is critical. As the U.S. economy has worsened, increases in reports of child maltreatment have been linked to the weakened state of the economy. The National Research Council has identified unemployment among the stresses associated with child maltreatment in families. Research has shown us that child maltreatment rates are higher in areas with unusually high rates of unemployment. In times of crisis, families need additional supports and services to prevent maltreatment from occurring.

Our nation's child welfare system is stretched far beyond capacity. The Child Welfare League of America has set the standard for CPS caseloads at no more than 12 active investigations per worker per month, yet the average caseload for child welfare workers is nearly double the recommended level, and obviously much higher in many jurisdictions. Federal officials in the Child and Family Service Reviews have repeatedly cited states for such deficiencies as caseworkers who are not visiting children often enough to assess needs; and failure to provide promised medical and mental health services. Increased funding for CAPTA state grants would enable state child protective services to expand post-investigative services for child victims, shorten the time to the delivery of services, support innovative programs that work to address the co-occurrence of child maltreatment and domestic violence, and extend services to other at-risk families.

Full funding for CAPTA's basic state grants could be applied to research-based policies and practices such as alternative response and family group decision-making.

- Alternative response offers potential for a major system reform within child protection with a more flexible approach for addressing child maltreatment reports. The alternative response offers an opportunity to engage families and to introduce more prevention services. The results of a randomized control trial on an alternative response approach implemented in Minnesota included the following outcomes: improved child safety,

improved family well-being, reduced recurrence of maltreatment, positive long-term outcomes, and cost savings. A follow-up report concluded that the approach is both cost effective and cost beneficial: system costs declined and the goal of protecting children was achieved.

- Family group decision-making (FGDM) refers to a collection of approaches in which family members come together to make decisions about caring for their children and to develop a plan for services. While approaches differ, they all feature participation by family members (broadly defined) in the assessment and a broad range of decisions to ensure a child's safety. Such family-centered practices have been documented in supporting positive outcomes regarding children's safety, permanency, and well-being. While FGDM is recognized as a successful practice and policy for CPS, the full utilization of these strategies was frequently not evident according to the HHS Child and Family Service Reviews, 2006: "Most states did not excel at engaging families and involving parents and children in the case planning process."

Full funding for CAPTA's community-based child abuse prevention (CBCAP) grants would promote more community-wide projects that seek to advance prevention by funding community-based efforts to prevent abuse and neglect. Communities across the country have developed preventive services which show success in programs for new parents, home visitor services, respite and crisis care, parent mutual support-shared leadership and family support services. These community-based organizations play a critical role in delivering prevention services, but their budgets—often based on charitable donations—are likely to suffer during difficult economic times. CBCAP funding could be used to link to other Administration efforts including but not limited to: Promise Neighborhoods, Social Innovation Fund, Early Learning Challenge Fund and other efforts to encourage community collaborations.

We are grateful to the President for giving his priority attention to the protection of vulnerable children and we look to the Administration's continuing support of programs to protect children and to prevent child abuse and neglect. We hope we can count on your leadership to promote these increased funding levels for CAPTA. We greatly appreciate your commitment to ensuring that children at risk of abuse or neglect and their families receive the services necessary to ensure their healthy development. Thank you for your attention to our request. If you would like additional information, please contact Tom Birch, legislative counsel for the National Child Abuse Coalition, at 202-347-3666 or bircht@earthlink.net.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Children's Residential Centers
American Humane Association
American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
American Psychological Association
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Center for Children and Family Futures
CHILD, Inc.
Child Welfare League of America
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
Every Child Matters Education Fund
Family Violence Prevention Fund
First Star
Foster Family-based Treatment Association
Kids Hope United

Lutheran Services in America
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Social Workers
National CASA Association
National Children's Alliance
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Council of Jewish Women
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Respite Coalition
Parents Anonymous
Prevent Child Abuse America
Stop It Now!
Voices for America's Children

State and Local Organizations

Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
Prevent Child Abuse Alabama
Children's Action Alliance (AZ)
Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence
Family Service Agency (North Little Rock, AR)
Prevent Child Abuse California
Crossroads Treatment Centers, Inc. (CA)
EMQ Families First (Campbell, CA)
Paradise Oaks Youth Services (Citrus Heights, CA)
Rebekah Children's Services (Gilroy, CA)
Charis Youth Center (Grass Valley, CA)
East Bay Agency for Children (Oakland, CA)
Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services (Pasadena, CA)
River Oak Center for Children (Sacramento, CA)
Peacock Acres Inc. (Salinas, CA)
Family Care Network, Inc. (San Luis Obispo, CA)
Redwood Children's Services, Inc. (Ukiah, CA)
Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies
Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families
Turning Point Center for Youth and Family Development, Inc. (Fort Collins, CO)
Alternative Homes for Youth, Inc (Greeley, CO)
Prevent Child Abuse Connecticut
Prevent Child Abuse Delaware
Children & Families First (Wilmington, DE)
Safe Shores -- The District of Columbia Children's Advocacy Center
Healthy Families Florida
Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida
Prevent Child Abuse Florida
Healthy Families Alachua/Columbia/Union and Bradford Counties (Gainesville, FL)
Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children
Prevent Child Abuse Georgia
Families First, Inc. (Atlanta, GA)
Healthy Families Gainesville (Gainesville, GA)
Prevent Child Abuse Hawaii
Idaho's Children's Trust Fund
Prevent Child Abuse Idaho
Child Care Association of Illinois
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois
Chicago Children's Advocacy Center (IL)

Lawrence Hall Youth Services (Chicago, IL)
Methodist Youth Services, Inc. (Chicago, IL)
Northwestern University Settlement Association (Chicago, IL)
Bethany for Children & Families (Moline, IL)
The Baby Fold (Normal, IL)
Child Abuse Council (Rock Island, IL)
Prevent Child Abuse Indiana
Family Service of Central Indiana
Children's Bureau, Inc. (Indianapolis, IN)
TRI-CAP Dubois-Pike-Warrick Economic Opportunity Committee, Inc. (Jasper, IN)
Family Connections (Versailles, IN)
Lutheran Services in Iowa
Prevent Child Abuse Iowa
Bethany for Children & Families (Davenport, IA)
Kansas Children's Service League
Prevent Child Abuse Kansas
Youthville (Wichita, KS)
Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky
Children's Alliance (Frankfort, KY)
Bellewood Presbyterian Home for Children (Louisville, KY)
Boys and Girls Haven (Louisville, KY)
Family & Children's Place (Louisville, KY)
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth (Nazareth, KY)
Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana
Prevent Child Abuse Maine
Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth
Prevent Child Abuse Maryland
The Family Tree, Inc. (Baltimore, MD)
Children's League of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund
Massachusetts Citizens for Children, Inc.
Prevent Child Abuse Massachusetts
Prevent Child Abuse Michigan
Child and Family Services of Northwestern Michigan
Holy Cross Children's Services (Clinton MI)
Catholic Social Services of Wayne County (Detroit, MI)
Eagle Village, Inc. (Hersey, MI)
Child and Family Resource Council (Kent County, MI)
Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota
Minnesota Center Against Violence & Abuse, University of Minnesota
Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies
The City, Inc. (Minneapolis, MN)
Therapeutic Services Agency, Inc. (Pine City, MN)
Children's Home Society & Family Services (St. Paul, MN)
Prevent Child Abuse Missouri
The Children's Place (Kansas City, MO)
Montana Children's Initiative
Prevent Child Abuse Nevada
New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund
Prevent Child Abuse New Hampshire
New Jersey Alliance for Children, Youth and Families
Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey
Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc. (NJ)
Robins' Nest Inc. (Glassboro, NJ)
New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children
Prevent Child Abuse New York

Healthy Families New York
Early Care & Learning Council (Albany, NY)
Parsons Child and Family Center (Albany, NY)
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (Albany, NY)
Green Chimneys Children's Services (Brewster, NY)
Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network, Inc. (Buffalo, NY)
Child and Family Services (Buffalo, NY)
Healthy Families Cayuga/Seneca (NY)
The Children's Village, Echo Hills (Dobbs Ferry, NY)
Coalition Against Child Abuse & Neglect (Garden City, NY)
Family Service League (Huntington NY)
Public Health Solutions (New York, NY)
The New York Foundling Vincent J. Fontana Center for Child Protection (New York, NY)
Spectrum Human Services (Orchard Park, NY)
Behavioral Health Services North (Plattsburgh, NY)
Hillside Family of Agencies (Rochester, NY)
CARRT (Children At Risk Response Team) Center (Schoharie, NY)
Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc. (Spring Valley, NY)
Andrus Children's Center (Yonkers, NY)
Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota
Public Children Services Association of Ohio
Voices for Ohio's Children
Summit County Children Services (Akron, OH)
The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers (Columbus, OH)
Lucas County Children Services (Toledo, OH)
Prevent Child Abuse Oklahoma
Prevent Child Abuse Pennsylvania
Children's Home of York (PA)
Family Service Assn. of Bucks County (PA)
PathWays PA (Holmes, PA)
United Way of Beaver County (Monaca, PA)
KidsPeace (Orefield, PA)
Methodist Home for Children (Philadelphia, PA)
Pressley Ridge (Pittsburgh, PA)
The Children's Home of Reading (Reading, PA)
Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island
Rhode Island Council on Residential Programs for Children and Youth Inc.
Neighborhood Alliance of Pawtucket (RI)
The Children's Trust of South Carolina
Circle of Parents Tennessee
Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee
Healthy Start/Healthy Families of Anderson County (TN)
Goodwill Homes Community Services, Inc. (Memphis, TN)
Youth Villages (Memphis, TN)
Healthy Start of Anderson County (Oak Ridge, TN)
The Center for Family Development (Shelbyville, TN)
Prevent Child Abuse Texas
Center for Public Policy Priorities (Austin, TX)
Buckner Children and Family Services, Inc. (Dallas, TX)
Child Abuse Prevention Center (Dallas, TX)
DePelchin Children's Center (Houston, TX)
Prevent Child Abuse Utah
Child & Family Support Center of Cache County, Inc. (Logan, UT)
Prevent Child Abuse Vermont
FACES of Virginia Families: Foster, Adoption, and Kinship Association
Prevent Child Abuse Virginia

Prevent Child Abuse Hampton Roads (VA)
Children, Youth & Family Services (Charlottesville, VA)
West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund
National Association of Social Workers, West Virginia Chapter
Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia
TEAM for West Virginia Children
Wisconsin Association of Family and Children's Agencies
Wisconsin Children's Trust Fund
Adoption Resources of Wisconsin
Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin
Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin
Word of Hope Ministries (Milwaukee, WI)
St. Rose Youth & Family Center (Milwaukee, WI)
Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming

cc: Hon. Carmen Nazario, HHS Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
Heather A. Higginbottom, Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
Robert Gordon, OMB Associate Director for Education, Income Maintenance and Labor