



CONGRESS MUST ACT NOW TO REAUTHORIZE, FULLY FUND, AND MODERNIZE THE CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT (CAPTA)

Originally enacted in 1974, CAPTA is the only federal program exclusively dedicated to the prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect. CAPTA is also the only legislation that addresses universal primary prevention capacity building at a local level, supporting services **essential to healthy and thriving communities in every state**.

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA URGES CONGRESS TO:

1. ACT NOW TO REAUTHORIZE CAPTA.

- CAPTA expired on September 30, 2015, and must be reauthorized to provide the resources states need to **help develop, implement, and evaluate strategies that prevent child maltreatment**, reduce entry into the public child welfare system, and enhance the overall well-being of children and families.

2. INCREASE CAPTA'S FUNDING TO \$1 BILLION ANNUALLY, APPROPRIATING \$500 MILLION TO BOTH TITLE I AND TITLE II.

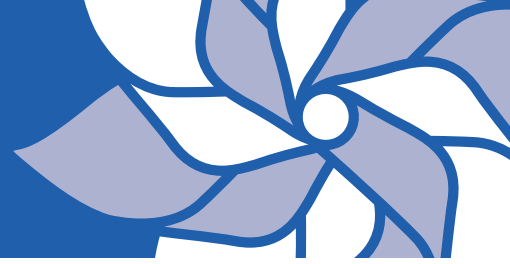
- The expansive mission and directives inserted into CAPTA by Congress are **severely underfunded** and have led to uneven implementation and protection.
- CAPTA is **currently funded at less than half its authorized level** of \$200 million, a drop in the bucket compared to the public dollars spent after neglect or abuse has occurred.
- Some states receive as little as \$85,000 annually—not enough to properly meet nearly two-dozen state grant requirements while also maintaining their Child Protective Service (CPS) systems.

3. PRIORITIZE COMMUNITY-BASED CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION (CB-CAP) GRANTS.

- CB-CAP grants **provide critical support for locally driven services** essential to building healthy and thriving communities, including voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs, parenting education, mental health and substance abuse services, and other family support services.
- Although Congress has authorized funding of \$80 million annually for CB-CAP, it is currently only funded at \$39 million for all 50 states, far less than necessary to implement and evaluate these programs throughout each state and provide service delivery.
- Increasing funding to \$500 million annually will **ensure greater service delivery to address the needs of vulnerable families** and **facilitate robust systems-building** at the state and community levels.
- CB-CAP can serve as a catalyst for—and important supplement to—other related policy areas, including early childhood development, broad parenting supports, health care, mental health, substance abuse, jobs, and upward mobility, among many others.

4. RE-ENVISION AND MODERNIZE CAPTA BY SUPPORTING POLICIES THAT PRIORITIZE PREVENTION AND FAMILY STRENGTHENING STRATEGIES, BUILD UP SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE, AND DISSEMINATE AND BRING TO SCALE BEST PRACTICES.

- CAPTA, as written in 1974, concentrates primarily on intervention-based child welfare strategies that are implemented after a crisis occurs, rather than on the **prevention of abuse before it happens**.
- Modernize CAPTA to focus on prevention and family strengthening strategies, align to current best practices, and support a system that gives families and communities the tools and resources necessary for healthy, safe homes—making foster care an option of last resort.
- Re-envision Title I to provide states and localities support for service delivery and infrastructure. By creating integrated networks of child and family services, communities have the resources to invest in infrastructure that links at all levels.
- Building these systems can help create the infrastructure for the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), the SUPPORT Act, and other existing federal policies.



WHY WE NEED CAPTA

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AFFECT MORE THAN ONE MILLION CHILDREN ANNUALLY—at least 1 in 7 children have experienced child abuse and/or neglect in the past year.¹

CAPTA WILL SAVE TAXPAYERS TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS—in the U.S., the total lifetime economic burden associated with child maltreatment is approximately \$2 trillion, rivaling the cost of other high-profile public health crises, such as stroke and type 2 diabetes.²

TOTAL FEDERAL COSTS OF PREVENTION PROGRAM FUNDING WERE OFFSET OVER FOUR YEARS, creating savings in mental health services, hospitalization costs, the child welfare system/child protective services, juvenile justice and law enforcement, special education programs, and substance abuse treatment, among numerous other impacted areas.³

“ I’m able to get high school credit and learn how good it is to spend loving time with my son. I’ve learned how to play with, talk to, and soothe him. [I use these techniques] at home and they’ve worked well.”

– Letter from 17-year-old mother to Parent Child Center, a CB-CAP funded program in Vermont

“ Home visiting gave me the routine my family needed. Programs, like the one that helped me, pair parents looking for additional support and mentoring with trained home visitors such as nurses, social workers, and educators to help lay the foundation for the health, education, development, and economic self-sufficiency of the entire family...thanks to the home visiting program, I enrolled in college, have earned my first medical license as an emergency medical technician, and am on track to become a paramedic.”

– Christine, Healthy Families America home visiting participant

ABOUT PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA

Founded in 1972, Prevent Child Abuse America is a national organization dedicated to healthy child development and the prevention of child abuse and neglect, with chapters in all 50 states and nearly 600 Healthy Families America home visiting sites throughout the country. PCA America promotes services that improve child well-being and develops programs that help to prevent all types of abuse and neglect.

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¹ Beverly L. Fortson, Joanne Klevens, Leah K. Gilbert, Melissa T. Merrick, and Sandra P. Alexander, “Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities,” National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA (2016): 8.

² Cora Peterson, Curtis Florence, and Joanne Klevens, “The Economic Burden of Child Maltreatment in the United States, 2015,” *Child Abuse & Neglect* Vol. 86 (December 2018): 178–183.

³ U.S. General Accountability Office, “Child Abuse: Prevention Programs Need Greater Emphasis,” GAO Publication No. GAO/HRD-92-99 (1992).