

2014

Advocacy Guide on the Prevention of Child Maltreatment



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Prevent Child Abuse America
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Prevent Child Abuse America

About Prevent Child Abuse America

Prevent Child Abuse America, founded in 1972 in Chicago, works to ensure the healthy development of children nationwide. The organization promotes that vision through a network of chapters in 50 states and over 609 Healthy Families America home visitation sites in 40 states, the District of Columbia, America Samoa, Guam, the Northern Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada. A major organizational focus is to advocate for the existence of a national policy framework and strategy for children and families while promoting evidence-based practices that prevent abuse and neglect from ever occurring.

Acknowledgements

Prevent Child Abuse America dedicates this Guide to the children and their families for whom it was written. We thank the advocates who are working towards the goal of ending the abuse and neglect of our nation's children.

We are grateful to all those who have participated at various points in the development of this Guide: Kelly Crane, James Hmurovich, Jennifer Rison, Ben Tanzer, Zach Hiner, Barbara Shaffer, Kathryn Harding, Cydney Wessel, Marissa Morabito and Janet Rosenzweig.

Dear Child Advocates,

“If we do not know where we are going, we may not get there.” How many times have we heard this admonition?

We at Prevent Child Abuse America think it’s time that our country encourages our policymakers to create that “destination” for our children and families for a shared vision of the healthy development of our nation’s children. We believe that having that shared vision will enable our state and local governments to energize and engage communities and neighborhoods to play a role in making child abuse and neglect not only unacceptable, but unthinkable. And, the reward? A return in investment that not only helps to develop the potential of all children to become functional and contributing members of our communities, but adults who have the education, balanced experiences, mental health, physical energy and dedication to help make our country the destination location for child and family well-being for every child and family.

Whether you are a parent or community leader and have never considered yourself an advocate or whether you are a statewide Prevent Child Abuse America chapter and have been extensively involved with your state’s legislative process, I hope that you will all take something useful from this resource.

Your advocacy agenda, or advocacy mission statement, will drive your efforts. It is important to put some time into creating this blueprint.

I encourage you to use this guide as best fits your organization. Some topics may be more relevant to you than others. I also encourage you to try new things that you have not previously considered. This is a great opportunity to be creative and push your organization in new directions!

Best of luck in your advocacy efforts!

Sincerely,



James M. Hmurovich
President & CEO
Prevent Child Abuse America

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background Information

This guide is intended for use by Prevent Child Abuse America chapters, Healthy Families America state leaders, and other partners to assist efforts to advocate for local, state and federal policy and program initiatives aimed at preventing child maltreatment. This is a working tool for our network's advocacy efforts, and you are encouraged to utilize and modify this material for your advocacy needs.

Prevent Child Abuse America, founded in 1972 in Chicago, works to ensure the healthy development of children nationwide. The organization promotes that vision through a network of chapters in 50 states and over 609 Healthy Families America home visitation sites in 40 states, the District of Columbia, America Samoa, Guam, the Northern Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada. A major organizational focus is to advocate for the existence of a national policy framework and strategy for children and families while promoting evidence-based practices that prevent abuse and neglect from ever occurring.

The mission is to "prevent the abuse and neglect of our nation's children" and includes all forms of abuse and neglect, whether physical, sexual, emotional or peer-peer abuse.

Because there is a link between child abuse and neglect and an individual's productivity, when we invest in child maltreatment prevention and promote healthy child development, we are investing in community and economic development. Unfortunately, children are sometimes exposed to extreme and sustained stress like child abuse and neglect, which can undermine a child's development. This toxic stress damages the developing brain and adversely affects an individual's learning and behavior, as well as increases susceptibility to physical and mental illness and involvement in delinquent and/or criminal activities, and makes academic achievement more difficult.

To achieve its mission, Prevent Child Abuse America is committed to:

- Provide national leadership in public policy development for children and families;
- Serve as a clearinghouse for effective innovative prevention strategies including education and training;
- Foster the translation of research into practice to inform more effective public policy on children and families;
- Deliver evidence based strategies that promote optimal models that enable communities to assess their ability and capacity to provide for children and families;
- Advise neighborhoods and communities on a continuum of programs that provide the array of services necessary for healthy and age appropriate child development and family support; and,
- Communicate that a) positive child development is linked to community and economic development b) abuse and neglect is preventable and there are a variety of innovative and effective prevention strategies, c) it is critical to engage parents, families, communities, public officials, educators and the business community in child abuse prevention efforts, and d) there are a variety of actions that promote the mission and empowers individuals and groups to become engaged in individual and systemic changes.

Prevent Child Abuse America recognizes that every day we each have the opportunity to help create the kind of nation we want to live in. We also recognize that when all children don't have equal opportunity for healthy growth and development, we put our future as a society at risk. We know that there are many effective child development efforts being implemented around the country, like services that focus on shaken baby syndrome prevention, sexual safety, and home visitation such as our signature program, Healthy Families America. We also know that we can do better, because a focus on innovative and needed services lays the foundation for children's growth and development that reduces the later possibility of more serious problems from occurring.

Prevent Child Abuse America takes an official position on issues vital to the well-being of our nation's children and families. These position statements and resolutions formalize our viewpoint on public policies and issues that pertain to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. They provide a framework for our staff as it performs such activities as responding to legislation, the media, and judicial proceedings, as well as participating in public activities or events.

- [Click here](#) to view the current position statements approved by the National Board of Directors.
- [Click here](#) to view the Board's resolutions that provide recommendations on public policies that are central to the mission.

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy comes in several forms with each representing a different approach in the way change is brought into society. It can include a variety of activities such as media campaigns, public speaking, publishing research, all with the goal of influencing public-policy decisions within a number of social systems and institutions. Much of advocacy is simply seeing a need and finding ways to address that need.

You are already an advocate if you have ever:

- Posted about an issue that's important to you on Facebook, Twitter, or other social media sites,
- Given your opinion in a town meeting,
- Returned a faulty product to a store,
- Stood up for someone who was being unfairly treated in a public place,
- Written a letter to a business about poor or outstanding services received,
- Gone to City Hall to complain about a property tax bill that seems too high, or
- Met with your state legislator or local community leader to discuss concerns in your community.

Becoming an advocate doesn't need to feel intimidating. Policymakers benefit from hearing about the issues that are of the most concern to their constituents and welcome that feedback. Being an advocate gives you the opportunity to encourage the public and policymakers to prioritize and act on issues that benefit children and families. Together, we can ensure that the institutions and policies are operating effectively to foster healthy child development and prevent child abuse and neglect.

There are some underlying principles of advocacy that are helpful to keep in mind:

- Advocacy assumes that all people have rights, and that those rights are enforceable.
- Advocacy is most effective when focused on a specific issue.
- Policy advocacy is concerned with ensuring that institutions work the way that they should.

This guide focuses on advocating on behalf of children and families – specifically, for child abuse and neglect prevention policies and services. Being a child and family advocate provides you the opportunity to influence the manner in which the public and policymakers think and act on child abuse and neglect issues. Based on the above principles, we act under the assumption that all children have an existing right to a safe and healthy childhood. As child advocates, we are concerned with ensuring that the institutions and policies in place to protect children are operating effectively, and we are concerned with supporting efforts to help these institutions and programs operate more effectively. While the advocacy strategies discussed in this guide can be applied to many different issues, the examples highlighted throughout will illustrate prevention advocacy efforts.

Overview of Guide

The following chapters provide information and guidance on a variety of advocacy tactics, including:

Prevention of Child Maltreatment: Becoming familiar with the latest research and statistics on the significant scope of child maltreatment is a critical step in becoming an effective advocate. This chapter outlines the recent data on child abuse and neglect, including the consequences and risk factors for child maltreatment and effective prevention strategies.

Legislative Advocacy: Legislators are the decision-makers through which policies are made, programs are created, and dollars are allocated to those programs and policies. By cultivating relationships with legislators, and by becoming a resource on child abuse and neglect prevention, the Prevent Child Abuse America network can influence and shape child abuse prevention policy throughout the states and the nation. This chapter focuses on ways to cultivate those relationships and strategies for influencing the legislative process.

Media Advocacy: Informing the public and policymakers through the media can be a powerful force for change. This chapter offers tips on dealing with media and cultivating relationships with the press, and provides the tools needed to use the media to effectively communicate about child abuse and neglect prevention.

Advocacy During Election Years: Election years provide an important venue from which to initiate public awareness and social change. This chapter discusses ways to inform candidates about child abuse prevention efforts and garner support from candidates on prevention issues. This chapter also covers post-election advocacy strategies and ways to communicate with newly elected officials.

Regulatory Advocacy: Local, state, and federal regulatory agencies are the administrative bodies responsible for implementing the programs and policies authorized by the legislature. Advocates have the opportunity to help shape how these programs and policies will look and ensure that they are operationalized as intended and in the best interest of children and families. This chapter provides an outline of the regulatory process and suggests ways to advocate throughout that process.

Organizing Your Advocacy Efforts: Collaborating with others can make your advocacy efforts more effective. This chapter focuses on two ways to organize your efforts by joining forces with others to promote your cause through coalition building and grassroots organizing.

- *Coalition Building:* There is power in numbers and by creating or joining a coalition with organizations focused on compatible child and family issues, network members can strengthen their voices and create a powerful presence for child abuse prevention programs and policies. This section provides the framework of how to build a coalition and offers advocacy strategies.
- *Grassroots Organizing:* Constituents elect their public official and influence the decisions that these officials make. This section provides the framework from which to mobilize an advocacy effort around the people in your community.

Federal and State Policy Initiatives: Being familiar and understanding both federal and state policy initiatives that affect the prevention of child maltreatment is important. This section will provide an overview of the policies that impact the prevention of child maltreatment, including the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and federal child abuse and neglect prevention funding.

FrameWorks Institute Messaging Research

Building on the research the FrameWorks Institute first provided Prevent Child Abuse America in 2004, the next iteration of the research is allowing Prevent Child Abuse America to employ a set of key frames and values, and the development of a core story, focused on child development and the variety of environments with which children interact.

FrameWorks' position is that the developmental frame offers the prevention field the greatest opportunity to engage the public in our work and influence the policies we support. FrameWorks also recommends that we move this narrative away from a focus on the family and the hurdles associated with the "family bubble." Therefore, FrameWorks outlines the core story of development in the following ways:

1. Child development is a foundation for community development and economic development, as capable children become the foundation of a prosperous and sustainable society (*Prosperity*).
2. The basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood (*Brain Architecture*).
3. Brains are built from the bottom up (*Skill Begets Skill*).
4. The interaction of genes and experience shapes the developing brain and relationships are the active ingredient in this Serve and Return process (*Serve and Return*).
5. Cognitive, emotional and social capacities are inextricably intertwined, and learning, behavior, and physical and mental health are inter-related over the life course (*Can't Do One Without The Other*).
6. Toxic stress damages the developing brain and leads to problems in learning, behavior, and increased susceptibility to physical and mental illness over time (*Toxic Stress*).

7. Brain plasticity and the ability to change behavior decrease over time and getting it right early is less costly to society and individuals than trying to fix it later (Pay Now or Pay Later).

Viewing these key frame elements of the core story in terms of values, we're focusing on four themes: 1) Prosperity – as we look for ways to keep our country prosperous, we need to think of the connection between child development and economic development; 2) Stewardship – the future of our society tomorrow depends on how we raise our youth today; 3) Reciprocity – we give to our children now so that they can give back to society as they grow; and 4) Responsible Manager – addressing problems before they get worse is the responsible way to manage our society's future – taking advantage of opportunities that arise once we understand science better allows us to innovate.

And in terms of simplifying models, there are three explanatory models that are all part of this core story, but do slightly different things: a) Brain architecture explains what develops; b) Serve and Return explains how that brain architecture gets built; and c) Toxic Stress explains the conditions that disrupt development.

Core Messaging

Building then on this foundation, Prevent Child Abuse America is developing core messaging that will drive our communications going forward and build on the idea that child development is key to community and economic development:

1. **Child abuse prevention is a critical issue** (for our state/community/country) in the near term and is the most critical issue we can address for the long-term prosperity of our (state/community/country).
 - We know that brains are built from the bottom up and that toxic stress from abuse and neglect impedes healthy brain development, which is the core of child development, and that, in turn, is the core of community and economic development.
 - Effective child development efforts (such as home visiting, treatment for maternal depression, Shaken Baby Syndrome awareness, healthy sexual development and bullying prevention programs) lay a strong foundation for a child's successful growth and development while helping reducing the long-term costs to society (crime, the cycle of abuse, health care, poor education, lost productivity).
 - It's simple: When we don't put the healthy growth and development of our children at the top of our list of priorities, we jeopardize our entire future.

2. Calls to Action:

- You can help:
 - At election time, everyone says children are a priority. This is the time to demonstrate it. Write your congressperson, governor, senator, state representative and tell them.
 - Learn more about how we prevent child abuse and neglect and be an ambassador to your family, friends and neighbors.
 - Promote the health and well-being of every child in your community.

- Organize your neighbors to ensure prevention services are available for the families in your community.
- Participate in and/or volunteer your time and skills to, youth-focused neighborhood organizations.
- Support family or friends who are under stress.
- Donate to family support and child advocacy causes.

To access the FrameWorks Institute’s “Talking Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention” tool kit, go to:
<http://www.preventchildabuse.org/index.php/research/frameworks-index>.

Ten Tips for Advocacy

1. *Get to know your legislators.* Identify who represents you at the national and state level and become familiar with their concerns and priorities, including their expertise, interest, and views. Become familiar with legislators’ districts and constituencies, voting records, and schedules for being in the capitol and being home in their district. Contact legislators before you have an issue that you want addressed.
**See Appendix C for more information on how to locate your legislator.*
2. *Learn the legislative process.* Understand how ideas work their way through the process to become laws or programs. Stay abreast of events and issues in your community and legislature.
3. *Identify fellow advocates and partners.* Forming a coalition with those that have common objectives arms you with more power and potentially more influence. Strengthen relationships with allies.
4. *Be open to negotiation.* Do not dismiss potential allies because of past disagreements or a history of opposition. You never know who may turn out to support your issue.
5. *Be honest, straightforward and realistic.* These are musts for any successful relationship. Never stretch the truth of a situation or make promises that you can’t keep.
6. *Timing is everything.* The earlier in the legislative process that you involve yourself, the more likely you will be able to influence the process.
7. *Be sure to follow up with legislators and their staff.* Provide requested follow-up information and be a reliable and timely resource to your legislators, letting them know that they can rely on you as a resource.
8. *Recognize the sensitivity of issues that involve government and family.* The same policy that some people believe will strengthen families is often seen by others as intrusive. Focus on families, not on the family, in your goals and communication.
9. *Always say thanks.* Compliment policymakers who support your issues. Policymakers get hundreds of letters of criticism for every letter of appreciation they receive. Write letters thanking them when they support goals and policies you have recommended. Write letters to the editors in their community newspapers thanking the legislator by name for their leadership and support. They will remember those letters and who wrote them.
10. *Have staying power and be persistent.* Don’t give up! Don’t let one defeat discourage you. Changes don’t happen overnight, but if you stay committed, you will succeed.

Chapter 2: Prevention of Child Maltreatment

Child abuse and neglect can have profound and long-lasting harmful effects on children. Abuse and neglect can impact a child's emotional, social, and cognitive development, including the development of the brain. In addition to the immediate harms of child maltreatment, over time maltreatment can cause developmental impairment, lead a child to risky behavior and chronic disease. It is important for all of us to know that child abuse and neglect is preventable, and to achieve this, we all have a role to play in promoting healthy child and family development. When we fail to prevent abuse and neglect from occurring, it has tremendous consequences for the child, the family, our communities and even our nation.

This chapter will provide an overview of child maltreatment and the importance of prevention efforts. It will highlight the impact of child maltreatment, including the consequences to children, families, and society, and provide information on a variety of prevention efforts and strategies. These specifics will be helpful to understand as you advocate for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Overview of Child Maltreatment

Child maltreatment occurs in all segments of our society. It is a type of violence that includes physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and neglect against those under the age of eighteen by a parent, caregiver, or another person in a custodial role, such as a coach or teacher.

The effects of child abuse and neglect are far-reaching and have been found to be linked to later-health outcomes. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is one of the largest investigations conducted to assess the linkages between childhood maltreatment and later-life health and well-being. The study discovered that childhood trauma has effects well beyond childhood. It examined the effects of child abuse and related adverse childhood experiences as a public health problem and found that individuals who experienced child maltreatment were more likely to engage in risky behavior, such as smoking, substance abuse and sexual promiscuity, and to suffer from adverse health effects such as obesity and certain chronic diseases (Centers for Disease Control, 2013). The ACE Study findings suggest that certain experiences are major risk factors for the leading causes of illness and death as well as poor quality of life in the United States.

In addition to the ACE study, there has been much research on the effects of child maltreatment showing a wide range of the consequences of child maltreatment on children, families and society, including:

- Maltreatment that occurs early in the life of a child can cause important regions of the brain to form and function improperly, potentially leading to differences in brain anatomy and functioning with lifelong consequences for mental health (Twardosz & Lutzker, 2010).
- Children who experience maltreatment are also at increased risk for adverse health effects and certain chronic diseases as adults, including heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, liver disease, obesity,

high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and high levels of C-reactive protein (Felitti et al. 1998; Danese et al. 2009).

- Children who experience maltreatment are at increased risk for smoking, alcoholism, and drug abuse as adults, as well as engaging in high-risk sexual behaviors (Felitti et al. 1998; Runyan et al. 2002).
- Those with a history of child abuse and neglect are 1.5 times more likely to use illicit drugs, especially marijuana, in middle adulthood (Widom et al. 2006).
- A longitudinal study found that abused youth were less likely to have graduated from high school and more likely to have been a teen parent (Langsford et al. 2007).
- A National Institute of Justice study indicated that being abused or neglected as a child increased the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 59 percent. Abuse and neglect also increased the likelihood of adult criminal behavior by 28 percent and violent crime by 30 percent (Widom & Maxfield 2001).

Risk Factors for Maltreatment

Children are not responsible for the harm inflicted upon them; it is an adult's responsibility to keep children safe. Certain characteristics have been found to increase a child's risk of being maltreated. A basic observation is that, the younger the child, the higher the rate of victimization. Other risk factors include:

- Being younger than four years old or having special needs as these children are the most vulnerable;
- Substance abuse in the family
- Poverty
- Family disorganization, dissolution, and violence, including intimate partner violence,
- Parenting stress, poor parent-child relationships, and negative interactions,
- Concentrated neighborhood disadvantage (e.g., high poverty and residential instability, high unemployment rates, and high density of alcohol outlets), and poor social connections.

Relationship of Poverty to Maltreatment

While there are a number of aspects that contribute to the risk for child maltreatment, such as depression, substance abuse, and social isolation, none is a greater risk factor than the relationship between low income and child maltreatment. Poverty is seen as the single best predictor of child abuse or neglect.

With 23% of children under the age of 18 living in poverty in the United States in 2011, this dynamic cannot be overlooked (U.S Census Bureau). A significant reason poverty may influence maltreatment is the link between low income and parental stress and depression and the parental challenges that arise with a lack of resources (Drake & Zuravin, 1998; Sedlak et al., 2010). People who live in poverty often do not have the resources to properly care for their children and may have a high level of stress that makes it hard to deal with daily challenges. Unemployment, poor housing, and parental stress and depression are all risk factors for child maltreatment which are heightened when a parent is living in poverty.

Research has further established the relationship between low income and child maltreatment. According to the Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4), children living in households with low socioeconomic status had significantly higher rates of maltreatment. In fact, children in poverty experience some form of maltreatment at a higher rate than that of other children; they were more than three times as likely to be abused and about seven times as likely to be neglected (Sedlak et al, 2010). Additionally, the relationship of poverty on child maltreatment has been shown to be a causal, not just correlational, relationship. Studies

have shown that even small increases in income within an economically disadvantaged population reduced the risk of a report of child maltreatment (Cancian, Slack, Yang, 2010). Living in poverty or near poverty has a direct link to the risk for child maltreatment.

Protective Factors for Child Maltreatment

Protective factors buffer children from being abused or neglected. These factors exist at various levels. Protective factors have not been studied as extensively or rigorously as risk factors. However, identifying and understanding protective factors are equally as important as researching risk factors.

There is scientific evidence to support the following five protective factors which are the foundation of the Strengthening Families Approach:

- Parental resilience
- Social connections,
- Concrete support in times of need,
- Knowledge of parenting and child development, and
- Social and emotional competence of children.

Research supports the common-sense notion that when these Protective Factors are well established in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes. These protective factors are also “promotive” factors that build family strengths and a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development. To view more information on these protective factors that help safeguard children, click [here](#).

What Does it Mean to be “Trauma-Informed?”

Traumatic experiences in childhood cause stress, may disrupt healthy child development, and increase the need for medical services and more. As we’ve learned from the ACE Study childhood trauma has impacts well beyond childhood. ACEs, including child abuse and neglect, can set off a sequence of negative events later in life, and can lead to a cycle of violence and trauma for future generations.

According to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#), “Trauma-informed organizations, programs, and services are based on an understanding of the vulnerabilities or triggers of trauma survivors that traditional service delivery approaches may exacerbate, so that these services and programs can be more supportive and avoid re-traumatization.”

To learn more about being trauma-informed and about trauma-informed systems, see Appendix B.

What is Prevention?

The goal for child maltreatment prevention is to stop child abuse and neglect from happening in the first place.

Prevention of child abuse and neglect covers a broad range of strategies including public awareness, innovative programming, such as home visiting, and preventing additional trauma with abuse survivors. Research has identified a number of effective prevention strategies. These efforts should aim to reduce the risk factors for

child maltreatment while increasing the awareness about child abuse and neglect. Following is an overview of effective examples of policies and programs aimed at preventing child maltreatment.

Effective Prevention Strategies

In the interest of inclusiveness, we used a very broad definition of effectiveness for this listing: strategies or programs having any publicly available report or publication indicating success in achieving short- or long-term outcomes. Prevention strategies are described below, with examples of successful programs. This is not a comprehensive list of effective prevention efforts; additionally, there are many emerging programs that are just beginning to develop their evidence-base that are not included below.

1. *Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome (also known as Abusive Head Trauma)*. Shaken baby syndrome refers to a variety of symptoms associated with the violent shaking of an infant or young child; shaking is commonly triggered by a caretaker's frustration when the child is crying. Prevention strategies typically offer brief parenting education to new parents on infant crying, the dangers of shaking a child, and coping mechanisms to resolve parental anger or frustration. To reach a large number of new parents, information may be provided through videos in addition to direct service, in settings from a maternity hospital to the home. For more information, see [CDC's Guide to Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome](#). Two examples of programs that work to prevent shaken baby syndrome are the [Upstate New York Shaken Baby Syndrome Education Program](#) and the [Period of PURPLE Crying](#).
2. *Adult-focused strategies to prevent child sexual abuse* build adult and community responsibility for protecting children. Most strategies include training professionals who work with children and parents/caregivers to recognize risk factors and warning signs, and to understand and respond appropriately to healthy sexual development in children. Efforts may include a community action focus to mobilize grassroots support for policy changes that protect children. One (Stop It Now!) also includes strategies to help potential perpetrators avoid acting on urges to sexually abuse a child. Emerging evidence of program effectiveness shows promise at least for reaching intermediate goals; more rigorous evaluation is urgently needed to determine impacts on preventing child sexual abuse. Some examples of specific programs with evidence of effectiveness include Darkness to Light's [Stewards of Children](#), the [Enough Abuse Campaign](#), and [Stop It Now!](#)
3. *Group-based programs for children* work directly with children, typically in classroom settings, to build protective skills and encourage children to report abuse to a trusted adult. Programs may use role-plays, games, and other engaging strategies to teach safety concepts. Many programs also include training for all teachers or staff, and some offer training for parents and caregivers. Some programs focus on preventing child sexual abuse while others cover multiple forms of child maltreatment and broader health and safety issues, including bullying and dating violence. Examples include the [Safe Child](#) program of the Coalition for Children, [Child Assault Prevention Program](#) of the International Center for Assault Prevention, and the [SAFE-T](#) program of Prevent Child Abuse Vermont.

The majority of states have enacted legislation related to prevention education on Shaken Baby Syndrome, including public awareness campaigns, promoting awareness in schools, education, and training for child care providers and hospital-based training.

4. *Parent Mutual Self-Help and Support Groups* offer a non-judgmental setting where parents can openly share and get support to handle the challenges of parenting. Programs are based on concepts of shared leadership, mutual respect, shared ownership, and inclusiveness. Groups may be parent-led or professionally facilitated. Two examples are [Circle of Parents®](#) and [Parents Anonymous, Inc.®](#).
5. *Parent Education and Training* programs are typically group-based interventions that strengthen the parent-child relationship and reduce dysfunctional interaction patterns between parents and children by promoting key parenting skills. Programs may serve parents with children of any age, and may include corresponding groups for children, particularly those with behavioral problems. Examples include the [Incredible Years®](#) program, [Triple-P](#), and the [Nurturing Parenting Program®](#). Parent training may also be conducted individually, such as with [Parent-Child Interaction Therapy](#) and [SafeCare®](#).
6. *Perinatal Home Visiting* strategies engage parents during pregnancy or at the birth of a child to offer support and education to parents during their child's earliest years of life. In addition to preventing child maltreatment, home visiting has been shown to strengthen the parent-child relationship, child health, and child development including school readiness. Federal funding for home visiting is available to states via the [Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting](#) program of the Health Resources and Services Administration. As of this writing, 13 models meet the federal funding criteria, with the most widely implemented being [Early Head Start®](#), [Healthy Families America®](#), [Nurse Family Partnership®](#), and [Parents As Teachers®](#). The main differences between home visiting models include eligibility criteria for families and educational background of staff, with more subtle differences in primary program goals (e.g., child health, school readiness, infant mental health, etc.) and operational procedures.

Healthy Families America is Prevent Child Abuse America's prevention initiative to help parents of newborns get their children off to a healthy start. **Healthy Families America** is a nationally recognized, evidence-based home visiting model designed to work with overburdened families who are at-risk for adverse childhood experiences, including child maltreatment. Launched in 1992, **Healthy Families America** has over 609 **Healthy Families America** home visitation sites in 40 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada.

It is a home visiting model equipped to work with parents who may have histories of trauma, and who may experience intimate partner violence, mental health and/or substance abuse issues. The initiative promotes positive parenting and child health and development, with the goal of preventing child abuse, neglect, and poor child health outcomes. Services are initiated prenatally or right after the birth of a baby and are offered voluntarily, intensively and over the long-term, for a minimum of three years after the birth of the baby and in many cases up to the child's fifth birthday.

7. *System and community change efforts* work by changing the community instead of or in addition to direct service to families, such as increasing system-level or community-level supports for families, and improving coordination of services. Examples include [Help Me Grow](#) which provides a centralized system to identify and refer children at risk; the [Safe Environment for Every Kid program](#) which trains

health professionals to systematically screen and refer at-risk parents to needed services; and [Strong Communities](#) which increases community coordination and responsibility for protecting children.

Additional Resources for Prevention Strategies

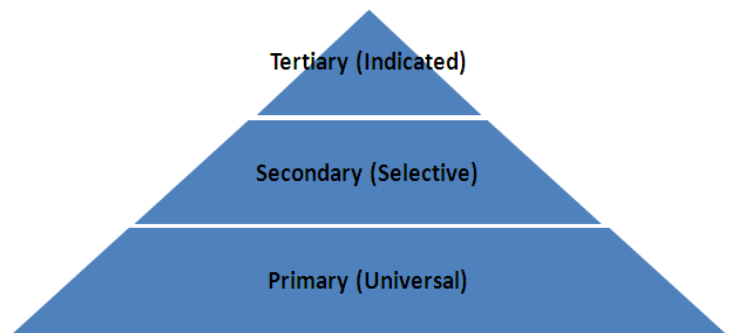
- The [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) details many evidence-based strategies for family-focused child abuse prevention services.
- There are a number of registries that rate programs related to child maltreatment prevention, for a listing, click [here](#).
- A recent report (Rosenzweig, 2013) on child sexual abuse prevention programs and strategies is a good resource for members of the Healthy Families America and Prevent Child Abuse Chapter Networks (available on request).

Organizing Your Prevention Efforts

Organizing prevention strategies is a helpful approach when trying to be clear in your message around the prevention of child maltreatment. Frameworks that give order to prevention strategies help to clarify how to address the many pathways of risk that can lead to child maltreatment. Below are two examples to consider when talking about the large number of prevention strategies discussed.

1. Levels of Prevention

There are two widely used approaches to categorizing levels of prevention: 1) primary, secondary, and tertiary, and 2) universal, selective, and indicated. Though there are some conceptual differences, their use in practice is nearly interchangeable.



Levels of prevention are defined by the intended audience for the service – such as the general public, groups at higher risk, or individuals who have already experienced abuse or neglect. The same intervention may be useful at multiple levels of prevention, such as family support through home visiting for families at risk (selective) and those who have already experienced maltreatment (indicated). There are service goals of programs in each level of prevention, which correspond with the service intensity (higher risk audience = higher intensity service) and needs of the intended audience, as shown in table 1 below.

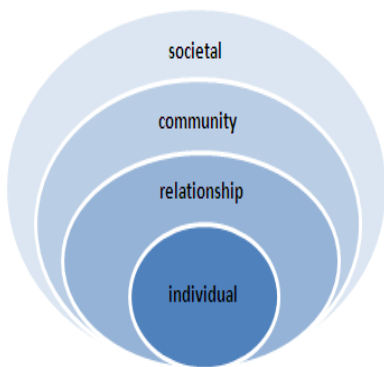
Table 1: Levels of Prevention

Level of Prevention	Intended Audience	Service Goals
Primary (Universal)	Prevention services target a broad low-risk audience, such as the general public.	These activities raise public awareness and educate policy-makers. They may also provide broad support to all individuals in a defined group, such as all new parents. Some examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public service announcements on the radio or television encouraging parents to use nonviolent forms of discipline • Parent education programs and groups teaching parents age-

		<p>appropriate expectations; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public awareness campaigns informing citizens how and where to report suspected child abuse and neglect.
Secondary (Selective)	Prevention services target groups or individuals with identified risk factors, such as teen parenting, depression, or economic stress.	<p>These activities focus efforts and resources on children and families known to be at higher risk of maltreatment. Secondary prevention programs may direct services to individuals or communities that have a high incidence of risk factors. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent education programs for teen mothers; ● Substance abuse treatment programs for parents; ● Respite care for families who have special needs children; and ● Family resource centers offering information and referral services to families living in low-income neighborhoods.
Tertiary (Indicated)	Intervention services are designed for groups or individuals who have already experienced child maltreatment.	<p>These activities focus efforts on families where abuse or neglect has already occurred. The goal is to prevent maltreatment from recurring and to reduce the negative consequences associated with maltreatment. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intensive family preservation services with trained mental health counselors for families with substantiated maltreatment; ● Mutual self-help groups for parents who have abused or neglected their children; and; ● Mental health services for children and families affected by maltreatment.

2. The Social-Ecological Model

Another important framework for prevention efforts is the social-ecological model. This approach considers risk factors for child maltreatment at individual, relationship (family, peers), community, and societal levels. There is a complex interplay between these levels. How a culture values children, and whether it views them as property or as individuals with rights of their own, sets the stage for individual behavior as well as the level of



community investment in protecting and nurturing their youngest members. Community violence and poverty breed social isolation and parenting stress. To prevent child maltreatment, therefore, efforts must be directed at multiple levels.

For each level in the social-ecological model, table 2 describes the general aims of prevention efforts, gives examples of child maltreatment risk factors, and prevention efforts that address these risks.

Table 2: Social-ecological model

Level of Prevention	Examples of Risk Factors	Examples of Prevention Efforts
Individual: aimed at creating attitudes, knowledge, behaviors that prevent violence	Lack of parenting skills or knowledge, social isolation Poverty, unemployment	Home visiting, parent education classes, support groups Adult education, job training, public aid, parent support, home visiting
Relationship: aimed at creating healthy relationships, reducing conflict	Domestic violence	Shelters and domestic violence intervention services, parent support & education, fatherhood support groups, anger management, social-emotional learning programs for children, healthy relationship skills programs for teens
Community: aimed at changing systems and policies to promote healthy individuals and relationships	Neighborhood poverty, violence	Community mobilization, economic development, neighborhood watch, regulation of gun access
Societal: aimed at changing cultural norms and policies to promote healthy individuals and relationships	Social acceptance of violence Norms and policies treating children as property	Public awareness campaigns to reduce violence on television and other media, promote non-violent parenting strategies Public awareness campaigns, community mobilization efforts, social norms change campaigns, legislative action

Prevent Child Abuse America simply defines prevention, as the abuse or neglect never occurring. That position has been taken to promote the healthy development of all children by diminishing the potential for childhood adversities like maltreatment to occur.

Why Prevention Matters?

Across the nation there has been great progress in work to improve the health and well-being of children. But the turbulent economy and the budget cutting that has come with it threaten to derail efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect at a moment when it is needed most. If the work that has done so much for children is to continue and to grow, it is important to show that it yields benefits on many levels – for children, their families, and their communities. Consistent decisions to support the needs of children are at the heart of a bright future.

Following are six separate articles, written for Prevent Child Abuse America, that build the case for why prevention matters.

- [Dollars and Lives: The Economics of Healthy Children](#)
- [Prevention Programs and Strategies: State Legislative Experiences](#)

- [A Better Future for America's Children: Strengthening our Capacity to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- [Prevention Creates the Future by Transforming Culture](#)
- [The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study: Child Abuse and Public Health](#)
- [Better Lives for Children Lead to a Better Climate for Business](#)

The Economic Case for Prevention

It is important to establish the economic value of preventing child maltreatment in your advocacy efforts. Being prepared with accurate information on the short and long-term financial impacts of child maltreatment can help advocates make their case to funders and policymakers. Key stakeholders must understand the financial toll of child abuse and neglect on society and that prevention programs represent a cost-effective use of limited resources.

Attention to the problem of child maltreatment has increased due to research which produced estimates of the economic burden of child maltreatment (Daro, 1988; Fromm, 2001; Miller, Cohen, & Wiersema, 1996; Wang & Holton, 2007). A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control (Fang et al., 2012) estimates the total lifetime estimated financial costs associated with just one year of confirmed cases of child maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and neglect) are **approximately \$124 billion**. Further, the estimated average **lifetime cost per victim of nonfatal child maltreatment is \$210,012**, including \$32,648 in childhood health care costs; \$10,530 in adult medical costs; \$144,360 in productivity losses; \$7,728 in child welfare costs; \$6,747 in criminal justice costs; and \$7,999 in special education costs¹.

Additional studies have confirmed the economic impact of child maltreatment. Research conducted by Prevent Child Abuse America estimates that implementing effective policies and strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect can save taxpayers **\$80 billion per year**; over \$33 billion in direct costs and \$47 billion in indirect costs, with approximately \$220 million in daily costs (Gelles & Perlman, 2012). The cost of not doing this is measured in increased costs for foster care services, hospitalization, mental health treatment and law enforcement, as well as loss of individual productivity and expenditures related to chronic health problems, special education and the justice system. Compared with other health problems, the burden of child maltreatment is substantial, indicating the importance of prevention efforts to address the high prevalence of child maltreatment. The benefits of prevention efforts far outweigh the costs for effective programs in light of the significant economic toll of child maltreatment.

Facts about Child Abuse and Neglect

To put a finer point on this, following are facts about child abuse and neglect nationwide, including the number of children affected by maltreatment as well as the number of child fatalities due to child abuse or neglect that will equip you with up-to-date information on the impact of child maltreatment, and where needed allow you to further support your message.

¹ Fang, X., et al. (2012). The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Volume 36, Issue 2, pages 156–165.

State and national child maltreatment statistics based on data reported by state Child Protective Services systems to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) are published annually, typically near the end of the following year. For example, the next report on 2013 child abuse and neglect is expected to be released in late 2014. Except where otherwise noted, the information below is taken from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2013), [Child Maltreatment 2012](#) report, based on child populations for the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. This report is updated annually; check here for a link to the latest report:

https://www.childwelfare.gov/can/statistics/stat_natl_state.cfm.

In 2012, an estimated 3.4 million referrals of abuse and neglect were received by Child Protective Services (CPS). These referrals represented approximately 6.3 million children and over 2.1 million of these children were screened in² and received a CPS response of investigation³ or alternative response⁴. Of these reports, CPS confirmed that approximately 686,000 children were victims of child maltreatment. This represents 9.2 out of every 1,000 children. Nearly three-quarters (73%) were first-time victims of maltreatment. These numbers have fluctuated only slightly over the past five years.

Following is the breakdown of confirmed cases of abuse in 2012 by the type of abuse (*Note: Percentages do not total 100% since some children experienced multiple forms of maltreatment*):

- 18.3% physical abuse
- 9.3% sexual abuse
- 78.3% neglect
- 8.5% psychological maltreatment
- 10.6% other forms of maltreatment

The rates of child maltreatment have shown a decline. The Fourth National Incidence Study (NIS-4) shows a decrease of 19% in the total number of maltreated children between 1993 and 2005 (Sedlak et al, 2010). When thinking about this decrease, it is also useful to consider the rate of abuse, which adjusts for changes in the population size of children over time. Taking this factor into account, the NIS-4 shows a decrease of 26% in the rate of maltreatment, from 23.1 to 17.1 victims per 1,000 children.

Similar studies have confirmed the decline in the rate of maltreatment. Finkelhor, Jones, and Shattuck (2013) found substantial declines using the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System as their data source. Their latest summary shows nationwide declines over about 20 years from 1990-2011 of 11% for neglect rates, 56% for physical abuse rates, and 63% for sexual abuse rates.

² Child Maltreatment 2012, p. 5 includes an explanation of criteria to screen out referrals: 1) Reasons that referrals are screened out include: did not meet State's intake standard, did not concern child abuse or neglect, not enough information for CPS response to occur, response by another agency was deemed more appropriate, referred children were the responsibility of another agency or jurisdiction (e.g., military installation or tribe), and, referred children were older than 18.

³ Child Maltreatment 2012, p. 5, indicates that an "investigation...determines whether a child was maltreated or is at-risk of maltreatment and establishes if an intervention is needed."

⁴ Alternative response is determined by state policy; it "focuses primarily upon the needs of the family and usually does not include a determination regarding the alleged maltreatment(s)." (page 110). In some states, families receive an alternative response without being screened in.

Any decrease should be celebrated, but this decrease is small enough that the argument for continued efforts for prevention remains critical. Specifically, a focus on the 'referrals' of abuse and neglect that never became 'reports' of maltreatment in the Child Protection System; the devastating toll that neglect, still the most common form of maltreatment, takes on a child's long term development; and, the importance of a strong network of community resources to support children and families is important to consider when evaluating the role of prevention efforts. For more information on understanding the *Child Maltreatment* report and how the annual changes in the maltreatment rates were tracked, see *Appendix A: Understanding Child Maltreatment 2012 Report*.

While there has been a reduction in child maltreatment, unfortunately, the rate of child fatalities due to abuse and neglect have remained constant in recent years. Data on child maltreatment fatalities estimate that in 2012, 1,640 children died from abuse or neglect, a rate of 2.20 deaths per 100,000 children in the population (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). Over the past five years, this rate of child abuse fatalities has remained relatively the same.

Young children are at a higher risk for loss of life. Nearly three-quarters (70.3%) of children who were killed were younger than 3 years of age. Children under the age of one accounted for approximately 44.4% of child fatalities. The majority of child fatalities involved neglect (69.9%), and physical abuse (44.3%) either exclusively or in combination with other types of maltreatment.

Following are some attention grabbing talking points on the extent and impact of child maltreatment.

- In 2012, child protective services agencies received approximately 3.4 million referrals of abuse and neglect. Of these reports, approximately 686,000 children were confirmed to be victims of child maltreatment; this represents 9.2 out of every 1,000 children.
- On average, more than four children die every day in the U.S. from child abuse or neglect.
- Neglect accounts for more fatalities than physical abuse; 69.9% of child fatalities involve neglect.
- About 1 in 10 children under 18 is sexually abused, including 1 in 7 girls and 1 in 25 boys.⁵

In Your State: Child Maltreatment Statistics

Child Maltreatment 2012, provides information on the number of maltreated children, maltreatment rates, and the number of child fatalities reported to Child Protective Services in your state. The following information indicates the location of this specific information in [Child Maltreatment 2012](#):

- The number of child maltreatment victims per state is provided in Table 3-2, titled "Children Who Were Subjects of a Report"
- The number of child fatalities by state over the past five years can be found in Table 4-2.
- Please check Appendix D, [State Commentary](#) for assistance interpreting individual state data

⁵ Townsend, C. & Rheingold, A.A. (2013). Estimating a child sexual abuse prevalence rate for practitioners: A review of child sexual abuse prevalence studies. Charleston, S.C., Darkness to Light. Retrieved from www.D2L.org/1in10.

Chapter 3: Legislative Advocacy

Your advocacy efforts are an important factor in helping to shape public policy. There are several forms of advocacy, each representing a different strategy in the way change is brought into society. The following chapters will focus on a variety of these approaches, beginning with legislative advocacy.

The ability to communicate the importance of a law or policy issue to decision-makers is legislative advocacy. This involves working towards positive change for children and families through the law-making processes of local, state and federal legislative systems. This form of advocacy includes actively participating in the legislative process, at varying levels, by explaining and advancing the importance of preventing child maltreatment. It gives a focus to your issue by bringing it to the attention of those directly responsible to make change.

This chapter includes the following information:

- A review of the legislative process;
- How to engage in and influence the legislative process;
- Understanding the role of legislative staff;
- The legislative budget process; and
- How to continue and strengthen your advocacy efforts throughout the year when the legislature is not in session.

The Legislative Process: How a Bill Becomes a Law

Often, legislative action – when a bill becomes a law – is one of the most effective means to move a cause forward. Understanding your local, state and federal legislative systems is an integral part of becoming an effective advocate. This section provides an overview of the legislative process and how a bill becomes a law. While this overview highlights the state legislative process, it is important to understand and become familiar with both federal and local legislative systems.

Every state, with the exception of Nebraska, has a bicameral legislature, which consists of two separate legislative chambers. The smaller of the two chambers is referred to as the Senate and these members represent more citizens and typically serve for longer terms than members of the larger chamber, generally four years. In 41 states the larger chamber is called the House of Representatives. In the remaining states, this larger chamber is called the House of Delegates or the Assembly. The members of the larger chamber usually serve for two year terms.

The United States Congress consists of two chambers; the House of Representatives and the Senate. Two Senators are elected from each state for a total of 100 Senators and they serve six-year terms. Each congressional district elects a Representative. The numbers of districts is based upon state population and are configured every ten years after the US Census is completed. Currently there are 435 Representatives divided among the 50 states and they serve in office for two years.

The steps outlined below provide a broad overview of the legislative process. Additionally, there are suggestions for how you, as an advocate, can influence the process during the various stages in the legislative process, such as proposing an idea for legislation, speaking with your legislator or legislative aides on your support or opposition of a bill, or engaging fellow advocates in the process.

Step 1: Introduction of the Bill

The lawmaking process begins with the introduction of a bill by either a member of the House of Representatives or the Senate. An idea for a policy proposal or a bill might come from constituents or interest groups of a legislator. These proposals might address an unmet need and attempt to create a new law, make a change in an existing law or create a new program. The member who introduces the bill is the bill's sponsor and each introduced bill is usually assigned a consecutive number, based on its order of introduction.

How Can I Influence the Process?

- Propose an idea or point out an unmet need to a policymaker or committee member interested in child abuse prevention efforts.
- Get to know those legislators that have a particular interest in your issue.

Step 2: Referral to Committee and Committee Action

Committee action is one of the most important phases of the legislative process as state legislatures usually operate through committees when considering proposed bills. Once a bill is introduced in the House of Representatives or Senate, it is usually referred to the appropriate standing committee to examine and recommend any further action to the full House or Senate.

Each committee is set up to consider bills relating to a particular subject. Therefore, each bill is addressed by a group of members who have special knowledge of its subject. For example, a bill related to child protection laws might be assigned to the House Human Service or related committee. Some members of the legislature have knowledge of particular subjects of legislation and are normally placed on committees to take full advantage of their expertise. For this reason, the legislature often accepts the final recommendations of its standing committees; however, members of either house can also ignore the committee's recommendations.

During the committee hearing the author presents the bill to the committee and testimony can be heard in support of or opposition to the bill. These public hearings offer other legislative members as well as the public the opportunity to record the views of experts, other public officials, supporters and opponents. Testimony at these hearings can be provided in person or submitted in writing.

After the hearings are completed and the bill has been examined, the committee can pass, reject, or take no action on the bill. The committee is the first opportunity to make changes, edits and amendments to the proposed bill. The committee may reject the bill and "table" it, meaning it is never discussed again. Or, if most committee members vote in favor of the bill, it is sent back to the Senate and the House for debate.

Step 3: Second and Third Readings

Bills passed by committees are read a second time on the floor in the house of origin and then assigned a third reading. Oftentimes, a bill analysis is prepared to the third reading and explained by the author, discussed by the members and then voted on.

Once a bill has passed in the House or the Senate, the bill is sent to the other chamber and goes through the same process. Separately, the Senate and the House debate the bill, offer amendments and cast votes. It is important to remember that the other chamber can approve the bill in its current form, modify the bill, reject the bill, or consider its own version of the bill. However, if amendments are made in the other house, the house of origin must approve the changes.

Getting the Results You Want

- As the process starts over in the other chamber, continue efforts at the committee and full chamber levels by calling, writing, emailing, or visiting legislators and staff.
- Communicate with members of the House and Senate leadership and their legislative aides to encourage support of the preferred version of the bill.
- Contact the appropriate aide in the Governor's Office to voice your support or opposition to the bill.

Then the bill goes before the full Legislature for a vote. If a majority of both the Senate and the House votes for the bill, leaders in both chambers sign the bill and it goes to the Governor for approval.

In instances where differences between the house and senate versions of a bill cannot be reconciled, a conference committee may be requested. A specific number of members from each chamber are appointed to serve on the committee. The role of the conference committee is to reconcile any differences between the two chambers, reach an agreement, and submit a report to both chambers for approval or disapproval. Should the proposed compromise remain unacceptable to either chamber, it may be returned to the same conference committee for further deliberation or the appointment of a new conference committee may be requested. If the conference committee report is acceptable to both chambers, the bill is signed by both presiding committee officers and sent to the governor.

A bill can go through a number of versions during this process and state legislatures refer to these differently. Some common dispositions of a bill can include engrossed, enrolled, adopted, failed or enacted.

How to Get the Results You Want

- Once a relevant bill has been introduced, contact members of the committee, their legislative aide or the appropriate budget analyst to make them aware of your opinions. Communication can be through calls, mail, email, or personal visits.
- Contact your legislators and request that they co-sponsor the bill. The more co-sponsors a bill has the more likely it is to gain support and move through the legislative process.
- Develop an "action alert" for your members and partners indicating how they can get involved in supporting or opposing the legislation. Include directions to contact legislators and the position of the organization.
- Be prepared to provide alternative language for the legislation and ideas for strengthening the bill.
- Indicate under which circumstances you support or oppose the bill. Be clear as to how you would like the legislature to vote.
- Provide testimony (written or oral) before the committee or subcommittee as an advocate for children and families, and child abuse prevention. Be brief; be concise; be clear. One page handouts help ensure the information is read.

Step 4: Final Actions

The piece of legislation moves to the Governor for approval once both the House and Senate have endorsed the bill. The Governor has three choices. The Governor can sign the bill into law, allow it to become law without his or her signature, or veto it. A governor's veto can be overridden by a two thirds vote in both houses.

Understanding Your State's Legislative System

The legislative process varies somewhat by states, but generally follows the same basic steps as the federal legislative process. The state House of Representatives, Senate and Governor act in a similar capacity as the U.S. House of Representatives, Senate and President. It is important to understand your state and local legislative processes and to be advocates at the state and local levels of government. To find out more about your state legislature, contact your local or state chapter of the *League of Women Voters* or visit the *National Conference of State Legislatures* at:

League of Women Voters
1730 M. Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
202-429-1965
www.lwv.org

National Conference of State Legislatures
7700 East First Place
Denver, CO 80230
303-364-7700
www.ncsl.org

Making Your Engagement Count in the Legislative Process

We can all play an important role in the legislative process, whether or not the bill becomes a law. Working with and getting to know lawmakers and familiarizing them with your concerns can make them into advocates for your cause. Establishing personal relationships with legislators is probably the best manner to give you credibility with other lawmakers and with the community at large (On the local level, the same is true for City Councilors, County Commissioners, or chairs of town boards). There is more time to establish these relationships when the legislature is not in session; waiting until a bill is being discussed doesn't necessarily allow the time to establish the relationship that helps you become the kind of advocate you wish to be. Additionally, depending upon your issue, you may even find yourself surrounded by business and corporate leaders, officials of national organizations, and others who can be important allies in your advocacy efforts. Building coalitions is a year-long activity and is critical to success.

Just like you, policymakers are public servants interested in specific issues. They are elected to represent their constituents' interests and hearing from you is important to them. There are a number of ideas for engaging with policymakers, including calling, writing, visiting, or testifying. In all of these efforts, it is important to be strategic about when these communications will have the most significant impact. Additionally, in whatever format you are communicating with your legislator, you will have a limited amount of time to convey your message, so be prepared to sum up your point clearly and concisely.

Calling your Legislator

Elected officials and public policy decision-makers take notice when constituents make the effort to call and convey their views on particular issues. Calling may be especially suited for those who are politically shy, as calls are often answered by a legislative aide (who is an important ally!). In this communication, let the person know concisely: who you are and that you are a constituent of a public official, what you are calling about, and what action you would like to see taken (for example, support for or opposition to a bill or action on a proposal).

Writing your Legislator

Writing a letter or emailing your legislator is another method to get your point across. You can write to a legislator to voice support for or opposition to a piece of legislation, inform them of a problem in your community, share your expertise or knowledge with them, or thank them for their vote on a certain measure.

Letters or emails to policymakers should always:

1. Include the correct spelling of their name and address.
2. State your purpose in the first paragraph.
3. Be short, to the point and legible (no more than 1 to 2 pages). Be informative and polite.
4. Be personal and avoid form letters whenever possible.
5. Always be respectful; even when you disagree....there is always a way to make your point without being disrespectful.

If you are writing or emailing about a specific bill or policy, you should:

1. Cite the bill by number or the policy by name.
2. State your position (whether you are for or against the bill or policy) and why you hold that position.
3. Be honest and speak from your own experiences and your own perspective

See Exhibit 3-1 for a sample letter to a legislator.

Visiting your Legislator

Meeting face-to-face with your local, state and federal policymakers can be an effective way to convey your message and a significant way to develop relationships. Elected officials can be visited on the job, (in Washington, the State Capitol, the City Council chambers) in their local offices, or wherever they are engaged in public business.

Who Represents Me?

It is important to understand who represents you in the legislature. Information for state representatives can be found on your state legislative website (see Appendix C for more information). And, information for federal representatives in both the House and Senate can be found on their main webpages, *U.S. House of Representatives* and *U.S. Senate*. Since state and federal legislators often have multiple offices, it may be beneficial to contact both their local (or district) office as well as their state or national office.

For more information on the legislative resources in your state, including when your state legislature is in session and how to track pending legislation, see Appendix C.

Testifying Before a Committee

Another strategy for participating in the policy-making process is to provide testimony during a committee hearing whether in Congress or your state legislative body. Testimony is a useful and effective method to communicate your position to legislators and can be submitted in written form or can be given in person before the committee. Hearings may be held for legislators to get information they need to draft laws, determine if legislation is needed, or to inform the public about issues. This is a critical time for policymakers to learn more about an issue they may not be that familiar with and an important time for you to share your position and beliefs, supported by statistics and knowledge of the issue.

In some cases, you will be invited to testify in-person before the committee, but you should be proactive about getting that invitation. To show your interest you can:

- *Show your support.* Write a letter in support of the bill to the committee members indicating your interest in working with the committee on the bill and your interest in providing testimony; concisely explain the consequences of passing or not passing the bill and offer evidentiary support for your statements.
- *Contact the committee.* Contact the staff of the committee with jurisdiction as soon as you learn that hearings are scheduled to take place.
- *Get invited.* Secure an “invitation” to testify through the bill’s sponsor or committee members. When you are preparing to testify, find out the committee’s procedural rules including length of statement, format of panels, and number of packets required. Be sure to find out how far in advance written materials need to be submitted to committee staff.

Written Testimony

Your written statement for testimony purposes should include the following:

- Title page
- A clear presentation of your position
- Factual arguments and data as evidence to support your position. Consider including research data, news articles, and Prevent Child Abuse America developed resources;
- Identify unintended consequences of the bill, and
- A conclusion that reviews your basic position

Oral Testimony

Keep in mind that your written statement will become part of the official record and can be longer than your oral statement. Your oral statement is an opportunity to summarize your written testimony. Effective oral testimony includes the following elements:

- An easily understood, jargon-free, five to seven minute statement, focused on the issue before the committee;
- The basic facts, including who you represent and your involvement in the issue;
- A clear statement of your points of agreement or disagreement with what is being discussed;

- Changes you would like made in the pending legislation;
- Real examples of people who will be affected by the matter being discussed and how they will be affected; and
- A rebuttal of the opposition's main argument.

Remember your objective...to get your position understood. A common error often made by advocates is to provide too much testimony so that the focus is lost. It's better to be brief than long-winded. Provide time for questions from the legislators, because they need to understand your position; you already know your position!

Tips to keep in mind when communicating with lawmakers

1. Introduce yourself and the agency, if any, that you are representing. Indicate you are a constituent or represent constituents from the legislator's district.
2. Thank the Chair and members of the committee for their time and consideration.
3. Keep your statement brief. Legislators are incredibly busy with lots of new information being shared with them daily. It is important to keep your statement concise and to the point. This will keep the attention of the legislators and also convey the most vital aspects of your issue.
4. Provide a one-page summary. A high-level overview of your testimony is important to distribute, especially to reinforce any new information or critical facts that are shared.
5. Anticipate the opposing arguments so you are prepared to respond. More than likely, you will receive questions or comments on your statement that are not always positive. If you do not know the answer to a question, admit it. Tell your legislator that you don't know, but that you will follow-up and will get back to him or her with the information. However, be sure that you follow-up after the hearing with a response to the committee or legislator.
6. Get other groups to sign on to your testimony to strengthen the impact of the statement.
7. Ask committee members to vote in support of your position.

Don't Underestimate the Value of Legislative Staff

Legislative staff are the link to the policymaker and are valuable people to know as they can become your biggest support. These individuals work closely with legislators and can be very helpful throughout the process. Not all offices have the same staff positions and different titles may be used for substantially similar jobs. The following highlights the common key staff members for most congressional offices:

- *Chief of Staff* is the highest-ranking legislative staffer in a congressional office and reports directly to the member of Congress. Some chief of staffs may be charged with personnel decisions and policy initiatives.
- *Legislative Director, Senior Legislative Assistant or Legislative Coordinator* monitors the legislative schedule, determines legislative priorities, and directs the work of legislative staff.
- *Legislative Assistants* are responsible for a variety of issues and meetings with constituents. Depending on the responsibilities and interests of the legislator, an office may include a different Legislative Assistant for health issues, environmental matters, and child welfare.
- *Press Secretary or Communications Director* is responsible for building and maintaining open lines of communication between the legislator, his or her constituency, and the general public. The Press

Secretary is the liaison for the local and national press and is expected to be the expert on print and electronic media and on how to most effectively promote the legislator's views on specific issues.

- *Appointment Secretary, Personal Secretary or Scheduler* is responsible for allocating a Congress member's time among his or her many commitments and demands from congressional responsibilities, staff requirements, and constituent requests. This person may also be responsible for coordinating travel arrangements, speaking events, etc.
- *Legislative Correspondents* are responsible for addressing constituents' comments and questions and also have general responsibilities for a few legislative issues.
- *Caseworkers* are assigned to help with constituent requests and resolve problems presented by constituents related to government agencies (e.g. Social Security, Medicare).

The Legislative Budget Process

Becoming familiar with the budgeting process at both the state and federal levels is important as this is another area where you can be active as an advocate for children and families. It is within the budget process that spending policies for public programs are laid out and debated between the executive, legislative and administrative branches. While each state has their own budget process, below is a broad overview a state's budget process.

See Appendix D for an overview of the federal budget process.

Agency Budget Preparation

The budget cycle typically begins when the state budget office provides guidance to state agencies to submit their budget requests. That guidance typically includes financial assumptions such as spending targets, and guidance on the governor's policy priorities. Guidelines generally are distributed to agencies in the summer months and requests from agencies are then submitted to the governor in the fall.

Over half of the states operate on an annual budget cycle and appropriations are provided for one fiscal year. The rest of the states use a biennial budget cycle, including two (Kansas and Arizona) that employ a combination of biennial and annual cycles, and the budget is developed for the upcoming two fiscal years (Snell, 2011).

Budget Review

Once agency budget requests are submitted to the governor, the budget office begins their review. The review is quite extensive and often involves economic analysis, program and management evaluations, and an examination of demographic and caseload data. Throughout the review process the budget office staff will typically meet with the agency staff and advocates for clarification of the budget request. In some states, agencies have the opportunity to review the recommendations of the budget office prior to completion of the budget proposal.

The Governor's Decision

After reviewing all agency budgets, the budget office staff makes recommendations to the governor on the entire budget proposal. Any additional recommendations by the governor are incorporated into the budget

proposal and then typically presented to the legislature during a state-of-the-state message to be considered by the legislature. Any particular priorities are stressed by the governor during this message.

Legislative Action

Legislative committee hearings take place to review the agencies' budget requests, in the context of the governor's budget proposal. Typically, each chamber of the legislature approves its own version of the budget and any differences between the two versions are resolved through an appointed conference committee.

Budget Execution

The last step in the budget process for a state is for it to be adopted and executed. This occurs before the beginning of the state fiscal year; fiscal years for most states begin on July 1⁶. The budget may be adopted with vetoes by the governor, depending on the governor's veto powers.

See Appendix C for contact information to find out more about your state's budgeting process.

Being Active Outside of the Legislative Session

As you can see, so much of the legislative advocacy process is about communicating with your legislators. This is true at both the state and federal levels. Much of what needs to be done revolves around building relationships with your policymakers. And while there is certainly no formula for effectively forming relationships, there are things that you can do towards this end.

Ideally, as a child abuse prevention advocate your relationship with your policymakers will become a reciprocal one. You have the opportunity to become a resource for your legislators – they can call you when they need information about child abuse issues or prevention strategies. Building strong relationships takes time and effort. It doesn't happen overnight. But there are things that you can start doing now to begin this process.

- Schedule meetings or lunches with legislators in their hometowns or home states. Utilize the Prevent Child Abuse America network and board members to identify people who know legislators. These individuals can set up and participate in meetings and be your “in” to establishing a relationship. Meetings with legislators should be informative. Taking the time to meet with your legislators before you need their assistance puts you in a better position to ask for assistance down the road. You should provide information about your organization's mission and goals. Let them know that you are available as a resource. Always follow up your meeting with a thank-you letter.
- Invite legislators to attend a program site, for example, Healthy Families America or another prevention program. This provides an opportunity for policymakers to see first-hand how their decisions directly impact individuals. There is no better way to advocate for our programs! The best way to arrange a visit is to contact the legislator's local office and ask to speak to the person in charge of that legislator's schedule.
- Invite legislators to your meetings and events. Add legislators' names to your mailing list to ensure that they receive invitations to open houses and conferences. Also include them on your newsletter mailing

⁶ There are four states that do not begin their fiscal year on July 1. These include: Alabama (begins on October 1), Michigan (begins on October 1), New York (begins on April 1) and Texas (begins on September 1).

list or the mailing list of other publications. This is a great way to keep policymakers updated on what kinds of things are going on with your organization, what needs are being met, and what obstacles with which you are faced.

- Invite legislators to speak at meetings, open houses and conferences. This is another great way to involve policymakers in the organization. You can also ask legislators to write an article for your newsletter or other publication. These kinds of invitations force legislators to think about the issues that interest you.
- Consider honoring those legislators who have supported child and family policies with an award or by highlighting them in your newsletter. This gives your “champions” recognition and support, and shows appreciation for their work to help children and families. This is a great way to thank legislators and keep your organization in the forefront of their minds.
- Send thank-you letters. Write thank-you letters to legislators when they are not in session thanking them for their work in the previous session. This keeps you in touch with legislators without always asking for something from them.

This list is just a sample of the many activities in which you can involve your legislators when they are not in session. The important point here is to continue developing these relationships throughout the year – not just when you need their help with something. It’s a long-term commitment with long-term benefits.

Example of Legislative Advocacy

The 1996 Louisiana state legislative session was a “fiscal-only” session, meaning that only legislation related to taxes or fiscal matters could be introduced. Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana took advantage of this time to raise awareness of child abuse prevention in the legislature and throughout the state.

Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana partnered with several child welfare organizations throughout the state to initiate a “doll campaign.” They enlisted volunteers to create cloth dolls for every single legislator in the state of Louisiana. Each doll included a story about a child who had died from a preventable cause or who had survived as a result of prevention efforts. Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana had arranged with the Speaker of the House and the Senate President to have the dolls placed at every Representative and Senator’s desk. On the designated morning, legislators in both chambers arrived to find these cloth dolls waiting for them with a story to tell. By including a personal story, each legislator gained a deeper understanding of the value of prevention efforts. This is not an easy thought to dismiss.

This campaign was coordinated to coincide with the state’s Child Death Review Panel report to a legislative committee. They received the dolls the same day that this report was presented, thereby strengthening the impact of both the doll campaign and the results of the Child Death Review Panel report. While the idea was not to pass any specific legislation, this grabbed the attention of the legislators and the media, and forced state policymakers to think about child fatalities and the importance of prevention policies and programs.

Chapter 4: Advocacy During Election Years

First, and most importantly, nonprofit organizations *can* conduct advocacy during an election year. In fact, an election year offers a unique opportunity to influence the agendas of our future policymakers by educating the candidates running for public office about child abuse and neglect prevention strategies.

While advocacy during an election year is permissible and advisable, it is important to know the legal limitations nonprofits must adhere to when conducting this work. Fundamentally, nonprofits are not allowed to engage in what is termed “electioneering.” This means that nonprofits are *not* permitted to express or imply support or opposition to any candidate (Schadler, 2012).

The tactics outlined in this section – mailing campaigns, attending candidate events, staging candidate forums, asking candidates to respond to questionnaires, interviewing a candidate, and post-election advocacy strategies – can be used at the local, state and national level and should all be considered tools for making candidates, and the public, more attuned to the issues of child abuse and neglect.

It is important to have a focused advocacy effort and a well-defined advocacy agenda. When working with candidates, it is imperative to be clear about what it is that you are promoting. The more specific you are about what you want from your candidates, the more likely it is that you will get a positive response. Often a larger coalition will have an established children’s advocacy agenda, which may include a piece on child abuse and neglect prevention. If you are working on your own, it is important to develop a clear advocacy agenda from which to apply the tools described in this chapter.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the following advocacy activities are generally more effective when organized and sponsored by a coalition of child advocates rather than by any single organization. Look to working with your larger, statewide or regional coalitions for children and families. There is strength in numbers! See Chapter 8 on Building Coalitions for more details.

Writing Campaign

Candidates for public office – including city councils, state legislators, and Members of Congress – depend on their constituents for support and for votes. Thus, as a constituent, you have the right and the obligation to communicate your concerns and expectations to the candidates who will ultimately be serving you! Candidates need to know what is on the minds of their constituents.

One way to communicate with your candidates is through the mail. Initiating a letter-writing campaign will help ensure that your candidates hear your voice. In general, it is inexpensive, relatively efficient, and easy to organize. The primary goals of a letter-writing campaign are:

- To encourage candidates to create a children’s agenda; and
- To let candidates know that a large, broad constituency is concerned about the health and safety of children and the support of families.

Guidelines for writing letters to candidates are very similar to those guidelines for writing letters to local, state or federal elected officials (see Chapter 3 on Legislative Advocacy). As a constituent, you have the right and the obligation to communicate your concerns and expectations to the candidates who will ultimately be serving you! Following are some suggestions for writing to a candidate. (Please note, for the remainder of this section, the term “message” will be substituted for email/letter.)

- Make sure that the writer’s complete name and street address appear on the letter or in the email. It is very important to include the zip code, particularly when writing to Congressional or local candidates.
- Hard copy letters may be typed or written in longhand. Longhand is every bit (and maybe even more) effective as long as letters are legible!
- Writers should individualize their messages by using their own words, this is especially important when sending an email. Candidates’ staff members will recognize a form email and will dismiss it.
- Messages should be clear, concise, direct and straightforward. The purpose should be stated in the first paragraph. The rest of the message should be brief.
- Messages should explain why the issue matters to the writer – make it personal!
- Writers should tell candidates that they are concerned voters. Remember, if a writer is representing your organization, they cannot state that they will/will not vote for a particular candidate as this would be considered electioneering.
- End the message by thanking the candidates for considering the points raised.
- Make certain that the letters are signed and include contact information including a phone number. If sending an email, this information should be included in the signature line.

**See Exhibit 4-1 for an example of a letter to a candidate.*

Helpful Steps in your mailing campaign:

1. Compile a mailing list of all municipal, county, state, and national candidates’ campaign headquarters with physical addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. You can do this by contacting your local voter registrar’s office or your local Democratic and Republican headquarters.
2. Distribute this list to your organization’s mailing list along with instructions of what to do with the list.
3. Consider setting up tables to organize a postcard or letter-writing campaign. Seek permission to have tables at offices, local shopping centers or the lobbies of public buildings. Make it easy for people to sit down and write a letter while their attention is focused. Once they walk away, they may not take the time to write.
4. Set up postcard and letter-writing campaigns in conjunction with other activities with which you or your coalition may be involved – such as voter registration drives and candidate forums.

Attend a Candidate Event

Often called “Bird-dogging,” being at a candidate event and asking some tough questions is a good way to get some *real* answers. These events also give us the opportunity to show candidates that we, their constituents, care strongly about certain issues. This is especially important when it comes to kids issues. Children have no vote, no voice. We have to provide that voice. So, here are some tips for effective bird-dogging:

1. *Find an event.* You can follow the candidates on Facebook or Twitter, sign up for email alerts from the campaign’s sites, or check your local paper.
2. *Bring some back-up.* While one person can make a big impact at these events, it’s good to have some reinforcement. With more people there, the chances are greater that you’ll get your question(s) asked and even be able to follow up on each other’s questions. But spread out, because if you’ve been called on, it’s unlikely that the person sitting next to you will be.
3. *Write your questions in advance and practice asking them.* Here are some sample questions that are okay to ask if you work for, or are representing, a non-profit:
 - a. If elected, what would you do to ensure the safety and well-being of children?
 - b. If elected, what would you do to protect every child who is at risk of abuse and how would you work to prevent future abuse and neglect?
4. *Arrive early* to get good seats or places to stand. Up front is almost always best.
5. *Get the speaker’s attention.* If you can, make eye contact with the speaker or the person calling on the audience members for the speaker. Get your hand up first, fast, and high! Don’t wait for the second or third opportunity.
6. *Get in the handshake line.* This line represents yet another opportunity to ask your question. Don’t let go of the candidate’s hand until you have an answer. Use the handshake as a photo op.
7. *Get quoted.* Talk to the media and get them to cover your question(s) and the answer(s). Prepare your quote just as you prepared your question. Go to them; they generally won’t come to you. Keep them focused on what you want to talk about.

Candidate Forums

A candidate forum gives you the opportunity to bring together candidates and voters to discuss children’s issues. A variety of formats can be used that give voters the opportunity to question candidates, and candidates the opportunity to communicate their views on children’s issues. Candidate forums also provide an opportunity to invite the media to raise awareness of the issues being discussed (see Chapter 5 on Media Advocacy for tips on working with the media). The goals of a candidate forum are to:

- Educate voters on the candidates’ platforms for children;
- Encourage candidates to commit to a children’s agenda for which they may be held accountable; and
- Encourage forum attendees to become more involved in community action for children.

Getting Started:

Your organization or coalition, if you are working with a broader network of organizations, should create a team responsible for organizing the forum. This steering committee should appoint a forum coordinator, whose duties may include:

- Developing a timeline;
- Facilitating and scheduling steering committee meetings;
- Serving as a liaison to all involved organizations;
- Serving as point person for negotiating with candidates and/or campaigns;
- Acting as media spokesperson for the steering committee;
- Maintaining adherence to deadlines;
- Coordinating activities;
- Assisting as other concerns arise;
- Ensuring attention to legal guidelines; and
- Documenting and archiving all activities for evaluation and future forums.

The team should create an organizational structure from which to work and from which to assign responsibility. It is helpful to divide responsibilities to ensure that the diverse talents of the various members will be utilized and that the burden will be shared. The table below identifies matters to consider when planning a candidate forum:

Facilities	Site selection; Furniture and technical requirements; Videotaping requirements; Accessibility for disabled persons; and Immediate needs on the day of the event
Program	Moderator, panelists, opening and closing speakers; Written confirmations of attendance and thank you notes; confirm details of the program; requirements for the day of the event, and timekeeper
Media	Press releases; Talk radio, news stories and events calendars; Editorial board meetings; Commitments for pre/post media coverage of children's issues; and Live broadcasts.
Audience	Format/rules for participation; Questions to ensure a broad range of issues are addressed; Invitations to experts to ask substantive questions; Volunteer enlistment and training; Translators if the community is predominantly non-English speaking; and Sign language services.
Candidates	Invitations and thank-you notes; Recruiting candidate participation; Terms of participation; Briefings on the issues; Written commitments; Candidates' needs the day of the event; and Rules for candidate materials.
Issues for Discussion	Questions for candidates; and Pre-forum issues survey for candidates.
Research	Audience evaluation of the forum; and Pamphlet on children's issues/supportive data.
Finance	Budget; and Fund-raising strategy.
Outreach	Video distribution in the community.

Legal Legal advice from experienced attorney.

Oversight aspects Legal approval for candidate selection, format, publications, speakers and other forum aspects.

Selecting a Format:

There are several different formats from which you can choose for your candidate forum. Regardless of which format you decide works best for your forum, remember that the purpose is to promote a dialogue about the issues with which you are concerned. As such, the questions presented to candidates should be very clear and concise to keep the candidates focused on the present issues. The following list provides a brief overview of several different formats:

- **Equal Time Format:** An impartial moderator and panelist question candidates, who are all granted an equal response time. Candidates are usually unaware of the exact questions ahead of time, but do know the general focus of the forum. Questions to the candidates need not be the same, as long as each candidate is given equal time to present his or her viewpoint.
- **Follow-Up Format:** The moderator and panelists ask the candidates the questions. Follow-up questions are permitted to prevent evasive answers by candidates. These follow-up questions force candidates to provide exact answers to the questions at hand.
- **Town Meeting Format:** Members of the audience pose all of the questions, but the moderator has the discretion to screen questions to avoid redundancy. One way to facilitate comprehensive questioning is to invite experts in child abuse prevention and related child welfare issues to attend and participate in the forum. This helps educate candidates about their constituents' concerns.
- **Pro and Con Format:** The moderator begins the forum reading a statement or position on an issue. Sponsoring organizations and/or candidates may submit positions ahead of time, and the planning team selects a representative sampling of all issues. Each candidate responds, either pro or con, detailing his or her position on the statement. The opponents have time for rebuttal. This format allows only three or four propositions and encourages prepared or rehearsed responses. To create some spontaneity, you may allow candidates to question each other.
- **Prepared and Spontaneous Format:** Before the forum, you give candidates several prepared questions constructed to elicit specific, detailed responses. You then ask a selection of these questions at the forum. In addition, you allow panelists, opponents or the audience to ask some questions which candidates will respond to spontaneously.
- **Equal Opportunity Format:** Questions are presented to all candidates. Each candidate can choose to answer, pass, or simply indicate agreement or disagreement. By their choice, candidates may have differing amounts of time to express their positions.
- **Discourse Format:** A strong nonpartisan moderator is essential for this forum design. The moderator asks a question, and then candidates discuss the issue. The moderator must be comfortable and able to control candidates who try to dominate the discussion. The idea is to hear every candidate's views in a discussion format.
- **Feedback/Hearings Format:** Focus the forum on your coalition's agenda or on the agenda of your organization if you are organizing the forum independently. For each of your agenda items have an expert or a family present concerns and suggest solutions. After an expert-family presentation, the moderator or panelists will ask the candidates to respond with specific program proposals to address the presented concerns. Allow candidates to make closing remarks after discussion of all agenda items. This is an opportune time to educate candidates about program initiatives such as Healthy Families America.

Forum Site Selection:

Location, location, location! Where you hold your forum event can determine the forum's success. Legally, you must select your forum site based on non-political considerations. For example, you should not choose to hold your forum on the grounds of an organization that is affiliated with a political party. Here are some considerations when deciding on your location:

- **Accessibility:** Convenient access for the physically disabled, public transportation and parking.
- **Size:** You need a space big enough to comfortably accommodate the numbers you expect.
- **Layout:** A forum is designed to be participatory. You want to ensure that the physical layout of the space is conducive to audience participation and that there is adequate space for audience and media viewers.
- **Neutrality:** You should choose a location in which the community near the site favors no particular candidate.
- **Miscellaneous:** Necessary security, insurance, reception area, rest rooms and furniture.

Selecting the Moderator and Panelists:

Your moderator and panelists will largely set the tone for the forum. It is very important to give this careful thought when making your selection. The moderator's responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the format works fairly for all candidates;
- Managing the time;
- Enhancing the discussion during lulls or tense moments;
- Enforcing rules of the forum; and
- Coping with the unexpected.

When selecting your moderator, you should look for someone who:

- Is very comfortable in front of large groups of people;
- Possesses audience appeal;
- Has extensive knowledge of the issues;
- Is acceptable to the participating candidates;
- Has no partisan affiliation;
- Is flexible; and
- Has broadcast experience.

When selecting your panelists, you should look for people who:

- Are confident in front of an audience;
- Are skillful at posing questions;
- Are credible and acceptable to candidates and the audience;
- Represent a broad range of points of view;
- Exhibit independence in questioning candidates;
- Know the issues; and
- Adhere to the guidelines.

Incorporating Your Audience:

The format you choose for your forum will determine the kind of participation you will get from your audience. You want to make sure that the candidates hear the views of their constituents. Thus, you want to encourage audience participation as much as possible. Here are some tips for encouraging participation:

- Ask co-sponsors or coalition members to submit the names of potential speakers.
- Consider tickets or reservations if seating space is limited.
- Promote outreach to a broad-based audience with diverse political perspectives, which ensures that you do not appear partisan.
- Instruct the audience members who want to ask questions during the forum to write and submit them. This allows you to screen them for a broad array of topics and to avoid endorsements of or attacks on candidates. Return the questions to the audience members to indicate that they can ask them.
- Consider distributing a printed program providing information on the issues to be discussed. Members of the audience can refer to this when considering the candidates' platforms. The program can also provide community recognition for sponsoring agencies and serve as a resource for those interested in making future contacts, either for volunteering or further information.
- Enlist volunteers to collect written questions and evaluations, to staff literature tables and to be ushers, greeters and ticket takers. Volunteers should not wear campaign buttons from individual candidates or otherwise express support for or opposition to candidates.

Approaching the Candidates:

It is important for your planning committee to develop written criteria for inviting the candidates to participate in the forum. If there are several announced candidates for a particular office, you must invite all viable candidates of all parties. One standard for determining a "viable candidate" is one who has at least 5% in major public opinion polls.

As soon as you have determined the date, time and format of the forum, you should contact the candidates. First, send a formal invitation. It is then advisable to meet with the candidates or their staffs in person to present the details of the forum. Here are some other things to consider:

- **Forum Topic:** The topics should be specific enough to make certain that the candidates have the opportunity to describe their points of view or solutions to a problem.
- **Schedule:** Be as flexible as possible about the date, recognizing that candidates have full schedules during an election season.
- **Negotiations:** Selecting a balanced format from the beginning will help you avoid needless negotiations. Doing so protects the interests of all candidates and provides equal opportunity for each to state his or her views.
- **Agreement:** Once the candidates have agreed on the details, have them all sign an agreement document. A written agreement will help avoid most last-minute complaints.
- **Partisan Literature:** Avoid background material and voting records that describe candidates' positions unless all candidates have an equal chance to provide their own literature.

**See Exhibit 4-2 for a sample letter to invite candidates to participate in a forum and Exhibit 4-3 which provides a sample thank-you letter to the candidate.*

Providing Documentation:

Provide the moderator and panelists with a general outline of the topics you wish to cover during the forum. The topics should be specific enough to make certain that the candidates have the opportunity to describe their points of view or solutions to a problem. You might also consider the following suggestions for providing information to both your candidates and audience:

- Many candidate forums provide nonpartisan publications on the issues for the audience. You may want to prepare a pamphlet including child abuse statistics and local prevention efforts.
- Prior to the forum, develop a simple candidate questionnaire and send it to the candidates. You may be able to distribute the results at the forum, space for notes may help participants if they want to record the stated positions of the candidates.
- Sponsoring organizations may display nonpartisan literature about their agencies or programs. This will give the audience a chance to contact you for more information.
- Any written information available to the audience should also be made available to the candidates, moderator and panelists. Consult with your attorney first to make sure that all information meets legal requirements.
- Ask members of the audience and the planning committee to complete an evaluation survey to provide you with feedback.

Timeline for Planning the Forum:

How much time you need to prepare for your forum depends largely on who will be included in the forum. Consider the following:

- Look at the number of offices you'll include, as well as the level of the office(s) and the number of candidates seeking office. In any case, allow four to six months to plan and implement the forum.
- If the forum will be held before the primary election, invite candidates as soon as they announce their intentions to seek the office. If the candidate forum will target the general election, invite candidates as soon as you know the results of the primary election.

Regulations for Nonprofits:

Nonprofit organizations are free to invite candidates to meetings or public forums in order to get the candidates' views on relevant issues. The invitation should be extended to all serious candidates. It is best to invite them all simultaneously and to use identical language in the invitations. The nonprofit should not state its views or comment on those of the candidates. If there is a question-and-answer component, each candidate should be given adequate time to answer.

Helpful Steps to Take for Planning a Forum:

1. Bring together a coalition of diverse and politically savvy child-focused agencies to sponsor the candidate questionnaire. This will show candidates the broad community interest in their positions on children's issues, it is best for the sponsor of the questionnaire to have a broad focus.
2. Design a questionnaire for each race (senate, governor, school board, President, etc.) selected by the sponsoring coalition. Limit your questionnaire to between five and eight questions.
3. Define the issues. Draft and redraft the questions. Ask candidates to give their positions on the issues that are in the domain of the office that they are seeking. Give the same questionnaires to all candidates running for the same office.

4. Compile a list of campaign headquarters for declared candidates, using information available at the registrar of voters.
5. Write a cover letter for the questionnaire, explaining to the candidates its purpose and intended use in the community. Be sure to include information on what your organization plans to do with the results of the questionnaire.
6. Send out the questionnaire, then follow up to make sure candidates received it. This will encourage their response. If you distribute the questionnaire prior to the candidate registration deadline, be sure to send it to any candidates who register later.
7. Keep a careful log of each contact you make with a candidate's office. Record the date and time of each call, and the name of the person with whom you spoke. Should you not receive responses from all candidates, it is good to have this record to demonstrate that you made a "good faith effort" to secure all responses.
8. Compile the results. Format results in an easy-to-follow format and print them. Do not indicate approval or disapproval of candidates' responses.
9. Publish the results and disseminate the publication. Mail it to your newsletter mailing list, newspapers and other press, and distribute it at candidate forums.

Candidate Questionnaires

Candidate questionnaires provide a way to let constituents know how their candidates feel about certain issues – for our purposes, issues affecting children and families. The goals of creating a candidate questionnaire are:

- To help voters distinguish among candidates' views on child and family issues;
- To make issues concerning children and families influence the voting choices of a growing number of citizens;
- To persuade candidates to consider (and hopefully commit to) these issues; and
- To lay the foundation for holding elected officials accountable on decisions affecting children and families.

Timeline for Candidate Questionnaires:

You should begin preparing the questionnaire and dissemination strategy up to six months before the election. Four months before election or immediately following the primary election, send questionnaires to the candidates. Give a specific deadline for returning responses.

For nonprofits with a narrow focus, candidate questionnaires pose some problems. The Internal Revenue Service feels that a narrowness of focus implies endorsement of those candidates who reply favorably to the questions asked. Therefore, it is advised that if your focus is narrow, you should avoid disseminating the results of candidate questionnaires. If you want to publish the results of your questionnaire, it is best to send the questionnaire under a broader coalition instead of a single organization.

**For an example of a candidate questionnaire and cover letter, see Exhibit 4-4.*

Helpful Hints for a Candidate Questionnaire:

- In your cover letter, be sure to alert the candidate to how his/her responses to the questionnaire will be published (i.e. website, social media, print, etc.)
- In your published results, you may note a candidate's failure to complete a questionnaire

- List the candidates' campaign headquarters' phone numbers, so citizens can call and inquire further about the candidates' platforms.
- Avoid questions on "candidate experience with children's issues." These answers tend to be self-serving.
- If a candidate does not respond, list the questions in full and note "no response" for that candidate.

Candidate Interviews and Briefings

Meeting face-to-face with candidates is one of the most effective ways to communicate with candidates about the child and family issues on which your organization or coalition is focused. The candidate interview is a meeting between the candidate and a small group of advocates, service providers or volunteers. The purpose of the interview is to question the candidate on his or her views of child abuse prevention and to raise the "child awareness" of the candidate's campaign. The candidate briefing is similar to the candidate interview, but usually consists of a larger group of advocates who lead the dialogue on the critical issues of child safety and protection. The goals of a candidate interview or briefing are:

- To educate candidates for local, state, or federal offices on issues important to children and their families; and
- To encourage candidates to include children's issues in their campaign literature.

Steps to Take for Interviewing a Candidate:

1. In following nonpartisan policies, for races in which there are several candidates for office, you should interview or brief all of the candidates, or at least the major ones.
2. Form a team of advocates who will plan and conduct the candidate meetings. If you are part of a broad-based children's coalition (concerned with children's issues beyond child abuse and neglect), you will probably want to include at least one advocate from each area of concern – such as child poverty, education, health, and abuse and neglect.
3. Decide what issues you want to address with your candidates. Questions should be prepared and a spokesperson designated.
4. Get names, addresses and phone numbers of the candidates' campaign headquarters, as well as the names of the scheduling secretaries and campaign managers.
5. Call candidates' campaign headquarters, explain the event you are planning, and ask to speak with the scheduling secretary.
6. Explain that your group would like to meet with the candidate to discuss his or her views and positions on issues of concern to children and their families.
7. Agree on a date, time, and place for the meeting and who will attend. Let them know that the meeting will last no longer than an hour.
8. Follow up your phone calls with emails of invitation. Ask the scheduler for the email address of the candidate and the local campaign manager, then cc all parties on the email. Content should consist of the following:
 - Date, time and place of the meeting;
 - Restatement of the purpose of the meeting;

- List of the issues to be discussed. Do not send the candidates the actual questions you plan to ask;
 - A statement of whether all comments will be “off the record” or “on the record.” “On the record” means that you can use the candidate’s response in the media;
 - List of the participants who will be present and their titles; and
 - Attach a single fact sheet on the status of children in your community or state.
9. Call campaign or scheduling secretaries a few days before interviews to confirm appointments. This is a good opportunity to ask if there are any questions about the meeting.
 10. Call campaign or scheduling secretaries the morning of the events to reconfirm.
 11. Call the other advocates a few days before the briefing to confirm their attendance. Ask them to arrive 15 minutes early. Your group should use the following as ground rules to convey a sense of unity and organization:
 - Decide on the lead spokesperson;
 - Anyone may ask follow-up questions;
 - All must speak with a single voice on public policy issues; and
 - After priority issues have been discussed, feel free to open the discussion to other state or local issues.
 12. Foster a friendly atmosphere. Never threaten and do not become upset by a certain amount of disagreement. It is healthy and to be expected. If you sense hostility around an issue, try a different approach or move on to another subject. You want to keep the door open between candidates and your advocacy community.
 13. Try to cover as many issues as possible in the time you have scheduled. Do not hesitate to politely interrupt a candidate who begins to ramble, skirts an issue or switches to a different topic.
 14. If you don’t feel comfortable or competent about some of the questions or issues, skip them. But remember to skip the same ones and ask the same set of prepared questions of other candidates.
 15. Always send candidates and their staff a thank-you note.

Timeline for Candidate Interviews and Briefings

It’s best to conduct the interviews/briefings early in the candidates’ campaigns to encourage them to call on you for more information as the campaign progresses and to increase the chances that they will speak out on your issues during the campaign. It is also easier to gain access to the candidates early in the campaign. It’s also a good idea to allow three weeks prior to the activity to prepare the spokespersons that will represent the issues.

**See Appendix E for a Voter Resource Guide to assist your networks in becoming informed, active participants during election years.*

Helpful Hints When Interviewing A Candidate:

- Know the issues and the candidates' previous statements or activity on children's issues.
- When planning interviews or dialogues, allow plenty of time for issues to be discussed and developed in some depth.
- Your meeting team should rehearse some key points prior to your interviews or briefing:
 - Prepare opening statements and pointed follow-up questions;
 - Decide who will handle introductions;
 - Assign someone to restate what will happen with the information given by the candidate and the goals of the meeting;
 - Decide who will ask what questions and follow-up questions; and
 - Assign someone to watch the time.

Post-Election Advocacy Strategies

The months following an election present an ideal time for you to develop relationships with newly elected officials and their staff members. This is a great time for you to introduce your organization to policymakers (if you have not already done so) and strengthen these alliances. As has been mentioned before, so much of your legislative advocacy work depends on establishing relationships. By making the effort early in your public officials' term, you have the opportunity to firm-up these connections before you show up with a specific request. Spending time with your legislators and their staff in low-pressure settings helps to create strong ties that can go a long way down the road. Many of these suggestions overlap with those in Chapter 3, Legislative Advocacy, in the section on Being Active Outside of the Legislative Session.

- Set up a meeting with your newly elected official to introduce yourself and your organization. Offer yourself as a resource on child abuse and neglect, and encourage your newly elected official to call you with questions.
- Provide information on child abuse and neglect, and your organization's prevention efforts. Send organizational materials to your newly elected officials. Providing something in writing helps officials remember who you are and what your organization does for the community.
- Add newly elected officials to your mailing list for periodic newsletters and other mailings. This will provide continuous information on your organization and your efforts in child abuse prevention.
- Invite your newly elected officials for a site visit of one of your prevention programs. This is a great way to educate policymakers about your organization.

Chapter 5: Media Advocacy

In this section you'll find a crash course on media advocacy and the best ways you can utilize today's modern media in order to sell your organization and advance your cause.

What do we mean when we refer to “the media?” There are two basic types; the “traditional” media such as print and broadcast journalism, and “social” media such as Facebook, Twitter, the blogosphere, and other crowd-based information sources. It's important to note that both of these forms of media are equally powerful but are leveraged in different ways.

For example, in print journalism, magazine audiences differ from newspaper audiences, and radio news is different from TV news. Similarly, Twitter is utilized differently from Facebook and LinkedIn. Each of these entities provides different opportunities to reach different audiences with a specific message. Understanding how to use these entities is crucial for today's advocate, and this chapter will address how to most effectively make the media work for you, including how to:

- Cultivate a relationship with members of the press
- Build and maintain an active social media profile
- Prepare a press briefing kit
- Write news releases, letters to the editor, and Op-Eds
- Hold news conference and increase your chances of having press attend
- Participate in radio, television, and online interviews

Cultivating Relationships with the Press

Advocacy and relationship building go hand in hand. This is especially critical when you're working with the press. A reporter whom you spoke to and reached out to in the past is more likely to cover your event. By creating and *maintaining* good press relationships, you're more likely to be the first person called for a quote or listened to when pitching story ideas.

While relationship building is certainly an organic process, that doesn't mean you have to sit and wait to be noticed. Below are several catalysts that can help you with building an initial press list:

- *Research*: Often times, websites for your local paper or broadcast outlet will have a staff directory or other way of finding reporter contact information. Look for the “About Us” or “Contact Us” tab on the homepage of these sites (the placement varies, but you'll almost always find these on the bottom of the webpage). This is a great jumping off point.
 - Do you know who covers family or child issues? Find that person on this page and grab their contact information. If not, do some searching on the site and see if you can find someone who writes about these topics often.
 - Always grab the desk info if you can. This is *critical* for when you send out media blasts. Not only does this give you a catchall point to send media releases to, but when the email gets routed

properly and an interested reporter contacts you, you now have a new *specific* contact to add while beginning a relationship with a blind shot. Typically desk emails are in the form of news@yournewspaperhere.com or desk@localtvstation.com (but of course, the style will vary from outlet to outlet).

- Don't be afraid to reach out. If you can't find specific contact information, then give the outlet a call and see if they can route you to the correct person. Again, this is a good first step on the path to building those all-important relationships while at the same time growing your contact list.
- When you do hold an event, provide a sign-in sheet for the attendees. Those who cared enough to attend are likely the friendlier contacts in your area. Make sure to follow up after an event with a thank you note and offer of an open-door should the reporter need more information, whether for the current story or any in the future.
- *Share*: If you know of a partner organization or other coalition member who has a better press list, don't be afraid to ask (and don't hesitate if they do!). This is a great way of getting info for friendly contacts with a minimal hassle.
- *Follow*: The best way to build a list involves something you likely already do every day. When you read articles or listen to stories that are about your issue, take note of what reporter did the piece and get their contact information later.

Building an Active Social Media Profile

Social media relationship building is different from the above in that there will be a lot less research, but a lot more grunt work. The keys to social media are to be engaging, open, and prolific.

- *Engage*: One of the first things you should do with your profile (whether it's Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr, or something else) is to find others on the site who shares your interests. Follow partner organizations, their staff, and look to their lists of followers/ees in order to build your own. However, simply clicking "follow" or "like" is barely the first step. Make sure that you're actively engaging with your audience: share their posts, comment on them, and respond to comments that come your way. Whether someone mentions you in a positive or negative light, it's important to make it clear that you are there and are listening.
- *Be open*: There's nothing worse than a generic profile that has no specific information, or, worse, actively tries to hide information. Social media is an inherently transparent medium, so embrace that. One major thing to shy away from is creating a profile and then giving it away to an assistant or intern. Take, for example, twitter. You don't want to put your name on something and then give it away to someone else to update with rote information and formulaic tweets. You want it to be personal and authentic, so don't be afraid to show some passion or humor.
- *Be prolific*: Actually, there is something worse than generic profiles: stagnant ones. It takes a lot of work to create a social media profile that actually reaches people, and it's a slow process. The temptation to cease tweeting or updating will be there, but just ignore it and redouble your efforts. If you keep updating your social media presence, listeners will find you. The greater the information flow, the more people will take note.

Preparing a Press Briefing Kit

Before you make and send a press briefing kit, you need to have someone to send it to! Find the reporters in your area who cover family and child issues. You can do this by looking at a staff directory, or searching for recently written articles on topics like parenting or family events. In this initial phase, getting the "right"

reporter isn't as important as getting contact information; your message will likely get routed to the correct person. When building your press list, remember to add newspaper reporters, newspaper editors, TV contacts, and radio correspondents.

Once you've built an initial contact list a good next step is to send a briefing kit, by both regular mail and email. A comprehensive briefing kit is a crash course for the reporter on the cause and should include:

- An introductory cover letter: Tell the press who you are and why they should care about your issue.
- A fact sheet with updated statistics and attention-grabbing details: For example, "over the past X years, abuse rates have declined by Y thanks to the success of Z."
- List of key concerns: These include the issues which you want the press to cover the most. Explain these concerns in ways that appeal to a reporter (e.g. mention a local angle).
- Include testimonials and human interest pieces: This could include stories from a mother about how Healthy Families America helped her and her family.
- Recent publications, both scholarly and civilian: You want to show the range of appeal and interest in your cause.
- Contact information and names: This is easily the most important part of the whole kit. The press needs to know who to contact and how. If you've designated a press contact, make sure to list that person as such.

At the end of this chapter, please find Exhibit 5-1, an example of Prevent Child Abuse America's background information and Exhibit 5-2, a sample fact sheet. These are examples of the kinds of things you should include in your press kit.

Ten Tips for Effective Media Advocacy

1. **Stay local.** Don't forsake local news outlets in favor of national ones. One strong article in your hometown newspaper is worth just as much as an article in the New York Times.
2. **Build relationships.** Good advocacy requires good relationships. Get to know the reporters who cover family and child issues: send them an email introducing yourself and offering your resources to them. Relationships take time, but are worth it!
3. **Keep it focused.** Every advocate has many issues about which they are passionate and want to bring to the media's attention. However, stick to one topic at a time or else they will all get buried.
4. **Make your clippings work double.** A good article can have a long life. Make sure to send press clippings to legislators (both state and federal), coalition partners, and other stakeholders.
5. **Just the facts.** Stick to what you know and don't exaggerate. It's far easier to get back to a reporter with accurate information than trying to correct something after it's already gone to press.
6. **Don't just say it, show it.** A demonstration or real-life testimonial goes a long way to not only illustrate your point, but gives a reporter more information to work with and craft a narrative around.
7. **Make media advocacy a priority.** Media advocacy isn't something to save for Child Abuse Prevention Month or for when you really want a story published. Success comes with effort so make media a year-round function.

8. **Social media is a two-way street.** Don't just generate a Twitter or Facebook profile to create an online soapbox. Make sure that you're engaging people and encouraging dialogue with your followers. If relationships are important for the press, they are ten times as important for social media.
9. **Don't hide from critics.** Social media will inherently open up more channels for critics to voice their dissent. Don't delete or ignore comments, instead engage the critic directly. Take the time to respond to their requests and concerns. Even if you don't change the person's mind completely at the end of the day, you've shown that you're willing to try which can be worth just as much.
10. **Appoint a spokesperson.** Having one main point-of-contact for the press is a huge benefit. Not only does it reduce internal confusion, but press members will have one person who they can reliably connect with and who is always on-message. Having too many contacts can create difficulties with messaging and ease-of-access.

Writing for the Press

Writing for the press is a great strategy that is often overlooked as a way to get your message in the media and to reach a larger audience. Following are ideas for communicating with the press through letters to the editor, opinion editorials (Op-Eds), and news releases, which are all important means to communicate your message to the public.

Letters to the Editors

While Letters to the Editor are specifically meant to respond to certain articles, there are creative ways to get your message in the media even if there's no article to which your message perfectly fits. They are also a good way to re-direct or change the focus of the conversation.

Here are some items to consider when crafting Letters to the Editors:

- *Be concise.* There's a lot of competition for small space, and letters that are written coherently while remaining brief have a better shot at making the cut. As a general rule, keep your letters to 300 words or less. If you get too verbose, your letter may be edited in such a way that the most important points have been removed.
- *Include a reference.* Letter to the Editors that are stand-alone have a much more difficult chance of making it in the paper. However, if you reference an article that was written recently (within the last couple of days) your chances increase greatly.
- *Be fast.* Don't wait a week to write a letter. Don't wait a day! If you read something that you felt the need to respond to, do so quickly. The closer your letter is to the article you're referencing, the better chance it has of getting published.
- *Include contact information.* As a rule, most papers will not publish letters that are anonymous or don't have enough contact information. Include everything from your address to your cell-phone number.
- *Be catchy.* Instead of "I'm writing to respond to the Star Tribune editorial of August 3rd," try "As a gun owner, the August 3rd editorial left me wondering if Star Tribune editorial writers live in the real world."
- *Don't overuse statistics.* Stats are helpful, but not when the reader is inundated with them. Use one major statistic when you're writing a letter that requires them (and don't think that every letter requires them).
- *Make your work go farther.* A published Letter to the Editor can keep working for you even after it's been inked. Clip it and send it to members of Congress, your state legislature, and the state government. Newspaper clippings help policymakers realize what's being discussed by their constituents.

**See Exhibit 5-3 for an example of a Letter to the Editor.*

Op-Ed Letters

Op-Eds serve a similar purpose to Letter to the Editors, but are different in scope and execution. Typically, Op-Eds are written by an expert in a field or someone with a more public position. If there's someone in your local chapter who might fit the bill, don't hesitate to ask them, or offer yourself up.

When writing an Op-Ed, always remember to:

- *Write conversationally.* While an Op-Ed is more authoritative than a Letter to the Editor, you're not presenting a thesis to other experts. Make your writing more accessible to the general public by avoiding excessive jargon or overly-complicated stats or studies.
- *Write with authority.* Just because you're having a conversation doesn't mean you forsake your background. Make it clear you know what you're talking about.
- *Be passionate.* Augment your expertise by making your writing more personal. A reader is much more likely to take to heart an article that is both well-reasoned and heartfelt.
- *Be local.* As with Letter to the Editors, staying local is a critical point. Establishing a thread that ties your advocacy back to the community served by the paper is hugely important, both for your chances of getting published and for your desire to affect the thinking of your fellow citizens.

**See Exhibit 5-4 for an example of an Op-Ed letter.*

New Releases & News Advisory

When you communicate with the press and produce written pieces, there are three basic templates you'll be using: statements, news releases, and media advisories. A *statement* is a short reaction to a specific news item, the "official stance" of the organization on a specific event. A *news release* is a news item unto itself; written like an article with quotes already included, a news release is an attempt to get coverage of something that the media may have missed. A *media advisory* is a notification of an event, and should be written in a What, Where, When, Who, Why format. It is your chance to explain and sell your event to reporters to try to entice them to attend.

While these three differ in use, all three share some commonalities in their templates. Always include:

- At least one headline. For news releases and advisories, you may want two or three headlines.
- A release date.
- Contact information. For statements, make sure it says something to the effect of "Statement by Johnny B. Good, Position Title (email address, cell phone number)"
- Include some boilerplate history of your organization at the bottom. Very briefly explain who Prevent Child Abuse America is, when the organization was founded, and its mission.

Here are some tips to maximizing the effect of each of these three types of communication:

- *Statements*
 - Be very timely. The ideal time for releasing a statement is within one or two hours of a story hitting the media. If it's more than a day later, your chances of getting quoted in subsequent stories drop considerably.
 - Statements are short and are essentially a collection of quotes. Keep this in mind when writing. The more quotable it reads, the more times you'll be quoted. Write in the first-person.
 - The first sentence is critical. Make sure your lead is both attention-grabbing and sets up the rest of the statement.
- *News releases*
 - Releases are your chance to highlight something that the media missed. Make sure it's written like an article (avoid the first person and include relevant statistics)
 - Include quotes. "A news release needs to include quotes," said Zach Hiner, External Communications Manager at Prevent Child Abuse America. "This is the best way to frame the release in the way you want while maintaining the journalistic style."

- The subjects for news releases are much more ranging than for statements. Write about your upcoming conference or an event that you're not necessarily putting on but want to promote.
- *Media advisories*
 - Always follow the What, Where, When, Who, Why format. The first three are going to be the biggest factors in whether or not the press decides to attend your news conference. The Why section gives you a chance to write what is essentially a news release explaining the reason for your news conference.
 - Advisories are where leveraging your relationships come in handy. Make sure to send them to the specific contacts you've acquired and include a personal appeal at the top urging them to come.
 - The object of the advisory isn't to get quoted, but to get a body at your event. However, it's important to include quotable information in case the press can't make it but do want to run a story.

**For examples of each of these communiques, see Exhibits 5-5: Sample Statement, 5-6: Sample News Release, and 5-7: Sample Media Advisory.*

Editorial Board Meetings

One of the most powerful ways to win support for your issue – both in terms of public support and legislative priority – is to gain the support of your local newspaper's editorial board.

Here are some tips on how to do this, from setting up the meeting to following up:

1. *Set up the meeting:*
 - a. Begin by calling the publisher, editor-in-chief, managing editor, editorial/opinion page editor, and editorial staff writers. Describe your issue and explain why it is important for the newspaper to support the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Depending on the size of the newspaper, you'll want to make contact a week to ten days prior to your desired meeting date.
2. *Before the meeting:*
 - a. Gather old clippings of positions taken by the editorial board in the past. Make use of the newspaper's web archives to find these.
 - b. Remember your press briefing kit. Make enough copies so that everyone who will be present at the meeting will have one.
3. *During the meeting:*
 - a. Introduce yourself, the organization, and your position. Explain the current situation, what you hope to accomplish, and your ideas about possible solutions.
 - b. Remind the board of their newspaper's coverage on this issue in the past (this is where those clippings come in handy). Explain why building on this coverage for the future is important and share ideas on how they can achieve this (i.e. mention an upcoming event and extend an invitation).
 - c. Bring (at most) two or three prominent spokespeople (such as community leaders, local experts, leaders from your local chapter) and have them present information on why this topic is important and let the board question them. A key is to explain why the general public would be interested in child abuse and neglect prevention and what that means for the newspaper.
 - d. Be prepared for difficult questions, but don't feel bad about getting stumped. Admit that you don't know the answer and make sure to send an answer promptly (preferably that same day or the next, while the meeting is still fresh).

- e. Hand out the briefing kit and contact info for yourself, your spokespeople, and others to contact for interviews.
 - f. Ask them to cover you. It seems simple, but you'll be so wrapped up on selling your issue that you may forget what you basically came for. Make sure to specifically ask the board for their help.
4. *After the meeting:*
- a. Follow up promptly with a thank you note. Be genuine, but not sappy.
 - b. If the paper ends up writing something favorable, thank them (and the writer, specifically) again. If they don't write an article on abuse prevention, don't be discouraged. Ask again, or ask them to consider an editorial or an Op-Ed.

Holding a News Conference

You've written your advisory, sent it to the media and made a special appeal to a few reporter friends. Now you need to pull off a successful news event! Events should be held around significant developments (the creation or launch of a new program, creation of a coalition, etc.) or major news items (such as specific legislative activity).

Before the event:

1. Pick a date and time. Timing is everything, but unfortunately it isn't an exact science. Try to make sure there isn't a major event with which to compete or other big news story that will take attention away from your event. This is where having closely monitored the press will give you a big leg-up.
 - a. The time should be around mid-day, between 10 am and 2 pm. Try to avoid having them too late in the day in order to better your chances of getting coverage by that evening or the next morning.
2. Pick a location. Somewhere notable and that relates to your event or organization. A local community center or your organization's headquarters would be a good place to get a room. If you're using a space such as this, make sure you get a room with enough chairs, but make sure it's not so large that the room appears empty.
 - a. Don't shy away from doing an event outside! For example, doing an event about new legislation that promotes children's health while standing in front of a children's hospital provides a great visual backdrop for TV cameras and helps frame the story locally.
3. Write and send the advisory. Make sure that you send the advisory several days in advance, but the most critical times to send it again are the day before and the early morning of your event. The latter is especially critical as that is when most newsrooms are determining assignments for the day, and if you hadn't followed up they may have forgotten about you.
 - a. Make phone calls to the newsroom and your specific contacts on the morning of your event. Ensure that they got your release and take a minute to sell them on it.

4. *During the event:*

- a. Have someone pre-selected to give the opening remarks, introduce the other speakers (if there are any), and field questions. Too many faces talking at one time can really ruin any chances of getting (especially) television coverage, so keep the conference organized and flowing.
- b. Be brief. You don't have to rush, but you're not delivering a lecture. The point of the event is to get the media intrigued and asking questions, so make sure there are things for them to ask about.
- c. Distribute your press briefing kits. You should have these available any time you meet with a press contact. Also, make sure you have business cards to hand out, and give them out like candy at a parade.
- d. Don't forget your sign-in sheet. Do your best to get reporters to sign up before the event as tracking them down afterwards may be problematic.

5. *After the event:*

- a. Follow up. Call the reporters who showed up and thank them for attending and ask if they had any other questions that you didn't adequately respond to at the conference.
- b. Update your lists. Go through those business cards and update any old contact information or add new contacts to your list.

Interviewing on TV and Radio

TV and Radio interviews are an important and effective way to deliver your message to a very broad audience. Not only does a good interview increase your credibility with stakeholders, but it also gives the average person a good idea of what preventing child abuse looks like and how they can be instrumental in the cause.

Here are some tips on the way to make the most out of your interview:

- **Familiarize yourself with the program.** Make sure you know the nature of the show, the name of the host, and details about the audience (i.e. Chicago Tonight caters to a different audience than TMZ). Also, make sure you understand the format. Will it be a one-on-one interview or a panel debate? The format will greatly influence the way that you both talk to the journalist and aim your message.
- **Remember your briefing kit.** These are critical to have in any interaction with the press. Don't forget to bring a few.
- **Prepare, prepare, prepare.** Make sure to write a list of the top three priorities you have for the interview. While it's unlikely you'll be able to give each point the lip-service its due, be prepared to talk at length about anyone. Practicing with a partner is a big help.
- **Appearance matters.** Dress well, but not flashy. Avoid the big earrings or ostentatious tie, but make sure you look professional and are comfortable. The more natural you are, the better the interview will go.
- **Avoid using notes.** While these are a certain no-no in TV interviews, even in radio they can make your voice seem halting or disrupt your pacing and make you self-conscious. Be confident in your preparation.
- **Don't get trapped.** Reporters are very good at asking questions to throw you off balance or message, or they may ask questions about a topic you're not prepared (or don't want) to discuss. While trying to avoid being obvious, always frame your responses in reference to your overall message. If you're at the interview to talk about the importance of home visiting, don't get caught up in a conversation about mandatory reporters, but find creative ways to work questions about a tangential topic back to your main point of view.

Chapter 6: Regulatory Advocacy

In Chapter 3, you became familiar with legislative advocacy and how you, as an advocate, can influence the law-making process. In this chapter you'll learn another equally important approach for moving your issue forward, regulatory advocacy. Federal, state, and local regulatory and administrative entities play an important role in setting policy, administering programs, and interacting with the public. The regulatory process provides an excellent opportunity for child advocates to influence outcomes of the deliberations of these agencies. This chapter provides a brief overview of the regulatory process and describes how you can participate in this practice.

The information in this chapter will cover the federal regulatory process. These procedures are drawn largely from the federal Administrative Procedure Act, the federal statute that specifies the guidelines that federal agencies must follow in making rules. Most states have their own versions of the federal Administrative Procedure Act, which are usually very common to the federal version.

What is a Regulatory Body? While legislative bodies determine general program scope and program funding levels, regulatory agencies have the responsibility for operationalizing programs and regulations – they are the ones who implement the programs authorized by the legislature. It is critical as advocates to be aware of activities within these regulatory agencies. The work done in these agencies can significantly modify and change enacted legislation.

Why a Regulatory Agency Acts

There are three basic reasons why an agency decides to take regulatory action:

1. *Congressional Mandate or Executive Order.* Sometimes Congress or a state legislature determines that an agency must address a particular issue. Congress will then enact legislation that requires the agency to draft, implement and enforce rules regarding the issue. The agency is bound by law to follow the dictates of that requirement, whether or not the agency agrees or disagrees with the congressional or Executive provision. Thus, even if the agency has no particular interest in the issue at hand, it is required by law to act.
2. *The Agency's Own Authority.* The agency may determine on its own that a regulation is needed to address a particular issue. As long as the issue is within its jurisdiction or general responsibilities, as defined by Congress, an agency can act on its own initiative and begin the regulatory process described below.
3. *The Public May Petition an Agency.* Any individual or group has the right to petition an agency to issue, amend or repeal a rule. The agency must act promptly when responding to such a petition and must provide its reasons if it denies the request.

Influencing the Agency Rule-Making Process

There are essentially five steps that agencies must follow in order to develop rules. This process, as well as highlights of some of the things you can do as an advocate throughout the specific steps, is outlined below.

Step 1: Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule-Making

At the federal level, agencies publish notices of rule-making activity in the Federal Register. The Federal Register is a document published daily that reports activities of the Federal Government; most states have similar publications. In addition to being in the Federal Register, the notice is available from the agency's public affairs office. You can find this information [here](#).

The first notice an agency publishes announces to the public that the agency will begin a rule-making process on a given issue. At the federal level, this notice is called the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule-Making (ANPR). The ANPR explains the agency's rationale for the rule-making and requests comments from the public. This is an excellent time for advocates to influence the process. The comment period generally lasts from 30 to 90 days.

Ideas to influence the process during this first step:

- This is one of the earliest opportunities for advocates to be involved. The earlier you get involved, the more you help shape the direction of the regulatory processes.
- Develop individual relationships with agency leadership and staff.
- Prepare written comments for the regulatory agency. Your comments will be taken into account as initial proposed rule language is introduced.
- Encourage colleagues and partner organizations to provide comments – the more individuals and organizations weighing in the better.

Step 2: Notice of Proposed Rule-Making

After further review of the issue and consideration of comments received as part of the ANPR, the agency drafts a proposed rule. This Notice of Proposed Rule-Making (NPR) is published in the Federal Register along with the agency's rationale for moving forward with the rule-making. The public then has the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule, again usually for a period of 30 to 90 days. The agency reviews all comments and submissions to the official record - the docket - and makes any necessary changes to the proposal. While the agency is not required to actually make suggested changes, it is required to demonstrate that it at least has considered all comments received.

Ideas to influence the process during the NPR phase:

- This again is a time when advocates have the opportunity to provide technical comments based on their expertise in issues affecting children and families.
- Call on the agency to provide public forums for experts and advocates to share their knowledge.

Step 3: Notice of Public Hearing

Although federal and state agencies often are not required to hold public hearings, agencies can provide public forums at their discretion. This provides another opportunity for advocates to articulate their position. Hearings

can be held either before or after the NPR. Opinions expressed at public hearings are recorded, transcribed, and become part of the official record along with all the written comments that are received.

Ideas to influence the process during the public hearing step:

- Testify at a public hearing.
- Provide a written statement if you are unable to attend the hearing.

Step 4: *Notice of Final Rule*

After the public hearings, the public comment period, and reg-neg (see the section below on Federal Advisory Committees for clarification of “reg-neg”) have taken place, the Final Rule is published by the agency in the Federal Register. Keep in mind that even after the final rule is published, any interested party may petition the agency to repeal or amend the final rule.

Ideas to influence the process after the public hearings:

- Commend the agency if you are pleased with the outcome of the rule.
- Write and visit the agency leadership and staff if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the rule; provide background and substantive data and evidence to support your position.
- Share the results of the rule-making process with colleagues and partner organizations to help generate action.
- Petition the agency to reconsider the rule.
- Remain involved in the process!

Step 5: *Agency Implementation and Enforcement*

Each agency is charged with the responsibility of implementing and enforcing its rules. If determined that a regulated industry or entity is not complying with the enacted rules, the agency has the authority to impose a penalty.

Ideas to influence the process during the last step:

- Monitor the implementation and enforcement of the rules, acting as a watchdog to ensure that the agency is doing its job.
- Involve the media in investigating implementation and enforcement by writing a letter to the editor or holding a press event.
- Draw together the connection between the regulatory and legislative processes by encouraging legislators to be active participants in the regulatory oversight.
- Call on the agency to impose penalties and fines for violators, and repeal or reassess a particular rule if it proves inappropriate or harmful to the safety and well-being of children and families.

Federal Advisory Committees

Agencies are increasingly pursuing a variety of methods to elicit early input from the public into the rule-making process. One format that is being utilized is called regulatory negotiation or “reg-neg.” Reg-neg brings together various interest groups and stakeholders to create what is called a Federal Advisory Committee. Federal laws apply to Federal Advisory Committees to ensure open proceedings and adequate representation of

diverse stakeholders. In a reg-neg, the Federal Advisory Committee plays an active role in drafting the proposed rule and in resolving points of contention.

These forum and stakeholder meetings offer excellent opportunities for advocates to impact policies affecting children and families. Federal Advisory Committees can also be utilized for virtually any other purpose where an agency desires advice from outside experts.

If an agency calls for public input by forming a Federal Advisory Committee, below are some ideas for you to influence the process:

- Represent a stakeholder position by participating in and speaking before the Federal Advisory Committee.
- Contact the agency and indicate your interest and willingness to participate in the Federal Advisory Committee process.
- Even if you are not officially involved in the Federal Advisory Committee process, attend the hearings and participate in the period dedicated to public comment.
- Establish a relationship with those individuals and organizational stakeholders representing your issues and interests in the process.

Advocacy at the administrative/regulatory level is often overlooked. To ensure that programs and policies are carried out as intended when passed by the legislature, it is crucial to be involved throughout this process. Regulatory agencies operate year-round and should be monitored regularly – this is a great place to focus your effort when the legislature is not in session. Keep in mind that advocacy at the regulatory level creates an opportunity for you to effect great change! And as always, remember the importance of developing relationships with those members of regulatory agencies. After all, it's all about relationships!

Chapter 7: Organizing Your Advocacy Efforts

This chapter provides you with information about ways to organize your advocacy efforts. There has been much reference throughout the guide to working with others to help you achieve your goals. Two of the best ways to collaborate with others are through coalition building and grassroots organizing. This chapter is broken down into two sections, one dealing with each of these organizing methods.

Part 1: Building Coalitions

Working in collaboration with other organizations enhances your advocacy efforts. While some Prevent Child Abuse America state chapters already may be involved in local, regional or statewide coalitions, some of you may not. Many of the advocacy strategies discussed in this guide can be used by your individual chapter alone, but may be more effective when used by a larger, broad-based coalition.

The following sections provide an overview on what a coalition is, why being part of a coalition is important, and how to form a coalition.

What is a Coalition?

Webster's dictionary defines a coalition as "a temporary alliance of distinct parties, persons, or states for joint action." A coalition is simply a group of organizations and individuals working together for a common purpose. Coalitions may have a "one issue" focus or a "multi-issue" focus. Most likely, many of you are involved in coalitions with a multi-issue focus, with many issues relating to child and family well-being. Therefore, your coalition may not specifically focus on child abuse and neglect prevention per se, but may focus on broader issues, including child welfare, child and maternal health, child poverty, child safety and healthy child development.

The Importance of a Coalition

There is power in numbers! By joining forces with others with similar priorities, you are likely to get more accomplished than you would alone. The advantages of a coalition are that they:

- Can achieve more widespread reach within a community than any single organization could attain.
- Have greater credibility than individual organizations alone due to the broader interest and breadth of coalitions. This reduces the suspicion of self-interest.
- Create a public perception of tangible, broad community support.
- Offer increased access to policy-makers and connections to influential decision-makers through a strong united voice.

- Create networking and partnership opportunities for your organization and programs.
- Provide economies of scale and cost efficiency, thereby conserving resources for each member organization.
- Have the potential to increase media attention and public profiles which member organizations may not otherwise achieve.
- Offer access to greater expertise by calling on a range of organizations and individuals.

Forming a Coalition

If you are not a member of a broad-based children’s coalition, or if there is not one in your state or region, you may want to consider starting one. For example, for Healthy Families America services, a broad-based coalition representing organizations and interests throughout your state will demonstrate the strength and breadth of support for home visitor services in your state and can help Healthy Families America work towards its national advocacy agenda. While the thought of creating a coalition may seem daunting, these guidelines should help you get started.

Step 1: Identify Potential Allies

To demonstrate broad support for your issues, work to cultivate support from a variety of groups and individuals. Throw the net wide! Think outside of the box of “likely suspects” and look to those groups or professions that are affected by child abuse and neglect and those which have a mission to promote child and family well-being and youth development. You are encouraged to think beyond the child welfare organizations in your community and include representatives of health care agencies, school systems, the courts, law enforcement, religious and business leaders. It is important to start reaching out – or continue to expand your efforts – to those who will share their knowledge, experience, and resources in health and children’s issues. Some of the best and most effective coalitions have unlikely partners working in harmony for the same cause. Seek representatives from all sectors so that the coalition reflects the community politically, ethnically and geographically.

Use the coalition as an opportunity to build bridges and form new alliances. To develop your list of potential allies, start by considering the following questions:

- Who is affected by issues surrounding children and families, including child abuse and neglect prevention?
- Which groups and individuals have the most influence over key elected officials – local, state or federal?
- How do we gain the support of these key groups and individuals?
- Whom have we supported in the past that might now support our issues?
- Who are our opponents and how do we neutralize them?

After answering these questions and going through your entire list of potential contacts, start calling. For cold contacts (with those groups or organizations with which you have no previous relationship), consider starting your outreach efforts by mailing participants a brief, one-page overview on the chapter and what you are trying to accomplish. Follow up with a phone call inviting them to a coalition planning meeting.

Step 2: Define your Goals

Determine your long- and short-term goals for the coalition. Why are you forming this coalition and what do you hope to accomplish? You need to come to agreement on some general guiding principles for the coalition's work. Begin by creating a mission statement or a shared vision on which your coalition members agree. As the coalition is developing its goals, keep in mind that goals should be:

- **Believable:** They should describe situations or conditions that the coalition believes can be achieved.
- **Attainable:** It should be possible to achieve the goals in the designated time frame.
- **Tangible:** The goals should be concrete and capable of being fully understood.
- **On a Timetable:** A completion date should be included in the goal statement.
- **Win-Win:** The goals should allow all members of the coalition to experience some level of success.

Address issues up front, so that all perspectives can be brought to the table. Remember that this is a collaborative effort and that means acknowledging and respecting differences, and being able to resolve those differences by referring back and reflecting on the common mission or shared vision statement. Each meeting should end with tasks clearly assigned, benchmarks clearly delineated and target deadlines realistically established.

It's also important to determine how often, when and where your coalition will meet, and who will attend each meeting. Once these logistics are worked out, consider announcing your coalition to the public. By releasing a joint statement or holding a press conference, the coalition can make policymakers and the general public aware of its existence.

Step 3: Take Action and Keep the Momentum Alive

The advocacy coalition should meet regularly to coordinate strategies. Each member will contribute different strengths and it is important to capitalize on those strengths. You need to keep all coalition members informed about the ongoing advocacy efforts, so that they feel a sense of involvement and investment in the coalition. Summarizing each meeting with a one-page "summary" of major topics, action steps and attendance is a good way to keep all members informed.

The key to successfully mobilizing your coalition around a common agenda is to develop an action plan that is specific, measurable, achievable, and focused directly on your goals. Your action plan should include a clear road map for:

- *What?* Decide what actions need to take place step by step. Consider your resources and time-frame for action to achieve measurable results.
- *When?* Develop a timetable for achieving each task and illustrate the tasks on a planning calendar with deadlines, which you distribute to all members of the coalition.
- *Who?* Assign someone to each task you need to accomplish and keep records of who does what. Also evaluate who has access to or relationships with key decision-makers.
- *Where?* Decide where activities will take place strategically and where you will meet to monitor progress and plan next steps.
- *How?* Decide how you will be most likely to reach your goals, recruit activists, communicate, and maximize resources in the most cost-effective manner possible.

All of the strategies discussed throughout this tool-kit (such as legislative advocacy, campaign-year advocacy, regulatory advocacy and using the media) are viable advocacy options for your coalition. In fact, most of these strategies work best when used by a coalition! You can't do it alone. By cultivating relationships and encouraging the involvement of other individuals and organizations, you will be able to make significant gains in improving the lives of children and families.

Elements for a Successful Coalition

- *Common Goals or Shared Vision:* The expressed need and the desired change should be understood by all involved in the coalition.
- *Communication:* Use common language that everyone can understand. Avoid professional jargon. Each member needs to know what is taking place and what is expected.
- *Each Member is Important to the Coalition:* Each participant should be able to perceive him- or herself as an important part of the whole, contributing to its success.
- *Opportunity to Participate:* Each member should have input into goals, methods and decisions.
- *Ownership:* By encouraging members to participate in the decision-making process, members feel a part of the coalition and feel responsible for action.
- *Delegation:* Consider delegating to each entity a part that they can control. This provides an opportunity for individual accomplishments and contributes to the overall success of the coalition.
- *Efficient, Effective Meetings:* Keep the meetings moving toward the agreed upon goals. Each meeting should update members on the progress towards these goals, so that members leave with some sense of accomplishment.
- *Process and Pattern:* Establish a format for conducting meetings and the decision-making process early in the development of the coalition.
- *Shared Leadership:* While one organization or individual may be responsible for initiating the coalition, it is important that several persons or groups share leadership responsibilities throughout the life of the coalition.
- *Broad-Based Membership:* Expand your membership to include organizations and individuals with diverse focuses and varying areas of expertise. This strengthens the coalition and allows you to reach a broader audience.

Additional Considerations

Once you have established the groundwork in building a successful coalition, a number of logistical or capacity concerns will need to be addressed. By being aware of these in the beginning, and creating a plan to deal with them as they develop, you will be better able to ensure your coalition's continued success.

1. Be prepared to identify a point person(s) who will be responsible for the dissemination of information or develop some alternate plan to offset this need.
 - a. As you begin amassing materials, and holding regular active meetings, you will find that the task of sending communications and working to find meeting times that will fit with your members' increasingly overloaded schedules will likely become increasingly cumbersome. By recognizing

this need in the beginning, and either raising funds to hire a part time individual to manage these needs; or creating a plan of action that might include rotating this responsibility among members, and/or requiring each subcommittee to assume this responsibility, you will find that you will be able to devote your time to the goals and outcomes the coalition has identified rather than the day to day minutiae of scheduling and emails.

2. Consider creating a listserv for the group that will allow members to exchange information with one another freely. This will eliminate the “middle man” and create less work for the coordinating organization.
3. Use social media to facilitate the sharing of information with members and the public.
 - a. The creation of a Facebook page and/or a Twitter account (or other social media medium) dedicated to the coalition will allow you to broadcast your shared activities to the public as well as keep your members up to date and informed.
4. Work together to establish coalition ground rules regarding how decisions will be reached, how member organizations’ names and logos will be used, and how disagreements will be settled. Having a plan to deal with these issues before they occur will go a long way toward ensuring the longevity of your coalition.
 - a. Some questions to consider include:
 - i. Will unanimous consent of the membership be required for all actions, or will a percentage be sufficient?
 - ii. Will the name/logo of each member organization appear on all materials developed by the coalition, or will a coalition logo be developed? If the latter, what will be the process for attaining membership approval of materials?
 - iii. If there is disagreement among members, how will these be mediated?
5. Establish guidelines for the bringing on of new members. These should include the mission of the coalition and expectations of members. An example can be found below.

Member Organization Guidelines

To be considered for membership in Our Coalition, organizations must meet the following criteria:

1. Have the well-being of children as a primary goal/mission or one of their primary goals/missions
2. Be a 501c3 (nonprofit) entity, a coalition of nonprofits or a foundation/philanthropic entity.
3. Commit to attending and actively participating in bi-monthly phone meetings and quarterly in person meetings held in Our City, Our State.
4. Make a further commitment to disseminating information and materials developed during meetings of the national movement to the member’s organizations network as appropriate.

In turn, Our Coalition pledges to:

1. Never disseminate materials using its members’ logos, names, or other identifying information without explicit permission.
2. Work to engage and seek input from all members equally, regardless of size, capacity or length of involvement.
3. Create an environment that fosters respectful and productive discussions of ideas and opinions.

Part 2: Community Mobilizing

Next, we turn to another important skill for an advocate – community mobilization. Community mobilization, or sometimes referred to as grassroots organizing, is the organizing and convening of a constituency of diverse stakeholders including parents, business leaders, social service organization members, and the faith community to create and cultivate an agenda for change within a community.

There's no question that organizing those people who most care about the prevention of child abuse into a working group of informed partners is a critical element for Prevent Child Abuse America. In this section, the purpose of grassroots organizing, the goals of a grassroots movement and steps on how to build this movement will be addressed. Also, the influence of new technology, especially social media, on the way that grassroots organizing takes place, and the methods that we can use to leverage these advancements into success for our own movement, will be explored.

What's the Purpose?

Grassroots organizing is typically done in order to advance a specific public policy. While there are many positive aspects to having a grassroots movement, the most noticeable and effective is the ability to ensure that influential and innovative programs, policies, and laws are in place at every level to protect the children in our communities and to provide supports to the parents raising those children. Grassroots advocacy tends to:

- Create awareness among the collaborators and consumers of how government systems work,
- Empower individuals to participate in systems change,
- Enhance the knowledge and personal responsibility of individuals and communities that is transferred to state, local, and individual action,
- Create a community norm that the well-being of children and their families is the mutual responsibility of all members of the community, and
- Advocate for public policy and legislation that ensures the protection and nurturing of children and the support of families.

What's the Goal?

Critical to the success of a grassroots movement is engaging both individuals and organizations to become part of the movement. Creating a community-based coalition is the basis of advocacy efforts at the grassroots level. With that in mind, the following list describes some of the goals you may hope to accomplish:

- *Provide information:* Up-to-date and accurate information is vital to any advocacy campaign, and the grassroots movement can help disseminate the facts.
- *Educate legislators:* Make sure elected officials both have and understand this information and why it matters to their constituents.
- *Creation of a movement:* A grassroots network can be turned into a movement merely by uniting around one particular issue (i.e. home visiting).
- *Strengthen relationships:* The more people involved, the stronger the links to branches of government and a greater chance to work with the executive and the legislative branches whenever possible.

How do I Build this Movement?

Following is a basic blueprint for the creation of a grassroots movement:

1. *Attract supporters:* Meeting like-minded individuals through public education activities, public relations events, and other community-based events is a good way to begin building your movement.
 - a. Make sure to work closely with other organizations in order to ensure that there is continuity within the field and avoid duplicating efforts.
 - b. The most important supporters are going to be the parents and families in the community you're organizing. Make sure that their experiences and aspirations help guide and drive the community's vision for change.
2. *Gain the support of business:* Local businesses have a big role in grassroots movements.
 - a. Businesses are critical for providing an alternate perspective on issues, as well as bringing new stakeholders to the table and providing greater access to business leaders' expertise and resources.
 - b. Encourage local businesses to adopt child and family friendly positions by asking them to support local children's initiatives.
3. *Gain the support of faith communities:* Faith communities are the backbone of many communities and have a special connection with children and families.
 - a. Educate faith leaders about the well-being of children in local communities.
 - b. Host a series of breakfast meetings to strategize the role that the faith community can play in influencing policymakers on issues that affect the lives of children and families in your community.
4. *Focus your efforts.* By sharing information throughout your grassroots network you can identify the immediate needs of children in your community.
 - a. Discuss programs that provide quality services to children, including home visiting programs, and create your focused advocacy agenda.
 - b. Remember, this agenda should be created from the people in your own community – the grassroots!

Grassroots Organizing in the 21st Century

Reaching out to others within your community has been made exponentially easier with the introduction of new mobile technologies and the extreme popularity of social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and many others. By tapping into these networks and utilizing today's technology to the fullest, the advocate's ability to communicate with members of the movement and find other interested people is greatly enhanced.

Why use social media to talk about preventing child abuse?

It is important to understand social media as it can play a critical role in advancing your grassroots organizing. Following are three reasons why social media can help in your efforts:

1. **Pace.** Imagine being able to talk to 100 different people in one day without having to leave your home. Your pace of "people work" will increase greatly through social media. Not only are you maximizing your time, but your connections will grow much faster. Everything written in the previous section about gaining supporters is still valid, but can be augmented by your use of social media.

2. **Message.** As social media makes it easier to reach out to people, it also makes it easier to control your message. Create hashtags on Twitter (for example, #pinwheels or #prevent #childabuse), or make pages on Facebook for your supporters to “Like.” The messages you send out using these channels won’t just be seen, they’ll be shared and usually in the exact words you used.
3. **Ubiquity.** Social media allows you to connect with people and organizations throughout the country (and, indeed, the world) with ease. Being able to connect and liaise with these people whom reaching previously would have been physically impossible not only adds numbers to your cause, but also gives you a great diversity of opinion. Someone in California may have seen home visiting work in a different way than someone in New Jersey, but both narratives are useful.

See Chapter 5: Media Advocacy, *Building an Active Social Media Profile*, for more information on how to use social media to influence your grassroots efforts.

How to get started

Dozens of social media sites exist. Some are more useful for an advocate than others, but that shouldn’t let you shy away from joining a specific site. For example, Pinterest is a site that is typically used to showcase new outfits or weekend plans, but just because it wasn’t made strictly for communication doesn’t mean it’s not useful. That said, we’re going to focus in this section on three different networks.

Twitter

Twitter is typically referred to as a “micro-blog,” in that you send out very short messages (140 characters or less) on your own page that people can then follow. It seems silly at first, but there’s no denying that Twitter is powerful; look at the role it played in the [Arab Spring](#) if you’re skeptical.

- *Create a profile.* The first thing you need to choose is a name. Either use your real name or your organization’s name, the transparency will be noticed and appreciated. Choose a picture for your profile that is representative of you, and make the background reflect the organization.
- *Follow!* Twitter is all about following others. You’re not going to get many people to follow you (initially) unless you’re following others. Search around for professionals in the field that you know or for sister organizations and follow them. Their list of followers can also give you more tips as to who to follow.
- *Interact!* Forget what I just said; Twitter is all about interaction. You need to be active in your engagement with those who follow you and who you follow. If someone asks you a question, respond in a timely fashion: this is especially important for Twitter which is a “medium of the moment,” as compared to something like LinkedIn which is far slower. Re-tweet (basically Twitter’s version of sharing) things you agree with or that mention you in a positive light. The key here is making sure you have varied and consistent interactions.
- *Pay special attention to hashtags.* This is how you follow conversations on Twitter. For example, if you click on #blackhawks during the National Hockey League playoffs, you can see what everyone across the globe is saying at that moment about the Blackhawks. Apply this analogy to your movement and think of buzzwords or common phrases and search them, you may find connections you never even thought of!

Facebook

Facebook is the most well-known social media site out there. This network fosters personal and professional communications in a straightforward way, but is utilized differently than Twitter.

1. *Create your page.* Unlike Twitter where there is only one type of profile, Facebook gives you the option of creating a profile page for yourself, a company page for your organization, or a fan page for a cause. If you're going to be using Facebook as you, then create the personal profile. If you're going to be using Facebook as PCA STATE, then create the company page.
 - a. Let's clarify some differences between the types of pages mentioned above. Facebook has recently been streamlining content so profile pages, business pages, and fan pages all look very similar. The differences come in when using the search function.
 - b. Profiles show up as connections to those you already know. If you don't know the person, you may not be able to see the entirety of their page.
 - c. A fan page is typically wholly public and will show up in search AFTER profile pages. One of the only aesthetic differences between fan pages and profile pages is that the former will not have the left navigation bar that profile pages do which list personal information (i.e. addresses, education)
 - d. A business page is, for all intents and purposes, the exact same as a fan page. However, you would consider creating a business page if you're planning on utilizing Facebook's advertising in the future. If you don't plan on purchasing ads, the extra steps to create a business page are essentially useless.
 - e. You'll likely only be using either a profile page or a fan page, which differ mostly in terms of the way they show up in search results. A good first step would be to search some of your friends or other organizations so you can get a feel for the overall look and then set out creating your own page!
2. *Find others, like pages.* Like Twitter, you need to be active in finding others to interact with. While Facebook makes it far easier for others just to find your page and "like" your cause, you can't just wait for people to come to you. Since Facebook is used by a larger percentage of the population than twitter, finding jumping off points and like-minded individuals should be relatively easy.
3. *Create conversations.* Facebook is less about 1 on 1 conversation than Twitter. One really effective way to keep those who like your page engaged is to post questions which they can discuss (i.e. "What do you do every day to help prevent child abuse?"). Basically, you're creating a place for people to discuss your issue amongst themselves instead of going out and discussing it yourself. Obviously, you want to remain open to communication and respond to questions and criticisms, but always be thinking of ways to keep your fans engaged with each other.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the Facebook for business. It is explicitly meant to be used to connect professionals with other professionals, jobseekers with employers. So how is this useful to the grassroots advocate? It connects you easily and quickly to business leaders in your area.

- *Profile or resume?* LinkedIn profile pages read like a resume, with previous work and education history, a place to list skills and achievements, and other similar sections. You're not going to create a page for your organization on LinkedIn, it should just be you.
- *Meet business leaders.* Growing a LinkedIn page is not as easy as a Facebook page, nor does the conversation tend to be as rapid or whimsical as on Twitter. Make your connections and try to specifically find leaders in the area you're trying to organize. One helpful feature of LinkedIn is that it contains a section for people to list what causes they're interested in. One click and you can find all the business leaders in your area interested in Children's Issues. Now you have a jumping off point!
- *Set up meetings.* You don't really ever have your LinkedIn interactions take place on LinkedIn (or at least, not publicly). You're going to want to introduce yourself to people and see if you can get any meetings set up. You can also use LinkedIn as a way to get introduced to someone before you go visit

their store or office downtown. In this way, LinkedIn is a great way to help you connect with those in your community who have resources that you can try to tap into.

These are just three social media sites of the many that exist. For each, it's important to understand the format before you dive in, but every social media site, from Reddit to Tumblr, serves a purpose. Once you discover how to make the site work for you, you'll find yourself a better organizer and a more efficient advocate.

Chapter 8: Lobbying Regulations for Non-Profit Organizations

There is a common misconception that non-profit organizations cannot participate in lobbying activities. This chapter provides information on what kinds of activities constitute “lobbying,” how much lobbying is permitted for non-profit organizations, and details on lobbyist registration requirements.

What is Lobbying?

Most of the Prevent Child Abuse America network organizations are classified as 501(c)3 organizations according to federal tax code and often referred to as *Charitable Organizations*. These organizations are allowed to engage in lobbying activities, however, the current federal tax law does place limits on the amount of lobbying activities allowed as discussed below⁷. If your organization is a government entity, it is important to remember that the state government, or its appropriate agencies, have policies regarding employee contact with government officials. State government employees may participate in the public policy process but because the facts of each situation may vary, this information may need to be supplemented by consulting legal advisors.

As a government entity, you can inform, educate and answer questions but not urge members to vote for or against a certain policy, program or appropriation. It is important to know how your state defines lobbying and lobbyist. You can reference the National Conference of State Legislatures’ 50-state chart [here](#). All states recognize certain exceptions for activities including testifying at committee hearings, meetings, writing letters and casual conversations that might otherwise be construed as “lobbying.” For the purposes of this guide, lobbying activities are broken down into two types: direct lobbying and grassroots lobbying.

Direct Lobbying is defined as “any attempt to influence local, state or federal legislation by contacting any member of a legislature, legislative staff or government employee to persuade him or her to propose, support, oppose, change, or otherwise influence legislation.”

Examples of direct lobbying include:

- Writing legislators;
- Calling legislators;
- Meeting with legislators in person; and
- Presenting testimony to a legislative committee or subcommittee.

Grassroots lobbying are activities that reach a larger audience. To be considered grassroots lobbying, an activity or communication must meet both of the following criteria:

1. Express a view for or against a specific piece of legislation; and
2. Encourage the public to take action regarding that legislation.

⁷ See IRS Political and Lobbying Activities report for 501(c)(3) organizations: <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Political-and-Lobbying-Activities>.

Examples of grassroots lobbying include:

- Legislative alerts that inform readers about pending legislation and urge them to contact legislators about it;
- Advertisements in newspapers and other media urging the public to take action on legislation;
- Reports and analyses that support or oppose a specific measure and contain a call to action; and
- Meetings, demonstrations, and other public events to encourage the public to support or oppose legislation.

It is important to note the difference between these two forms of lobbying as it pertains to membership organizations. If an organization communicates with its members and urges its members to take actions on a particular issue, this is considered direct lobbying. However, if the communication asks its members to urge other people outside of the organization to contact legislators, it is considered grassroots lobbying.

How Much Lobbying is Allowed?

There are two ways to determine how much lobbying your nonprofit is allowed to do through a substantial part test and an expenditure test.

Substantial Part Test

Under this methodology, the organization is required to show that lobbying does not make up a “substantial part” of its total activities. Unfortunately, the IRS does not provide much guidance on what “substantial part” really means. Most groups interpret this to mean that if lobbying expenditures make up less than 5% of an organization’s total expenditures, then this is not substantial.

Under this methodology, grassroots and direct lobbying are included together and not distinguished from one another.

Expenditure Test

This alternative is much more explicit about exactly how much a nonprofit can lobby. In order for an organization to use the expenditure method, the organization must “elect” to do so with the IRS. To elect, the organization simply files with the IRS the one-page [IRS Form 5768](#), “Election/Revocation of Election by an Eligible Section 501(c)3 Organization to Make Expenditures to Influence Legislation.” Once the organization elects this option, it is entitled to use a special formula to determine its allowable lobbying expenditures. This formula works as follows:

- Your organization is allowed to spend up to 20% of its first \$500,000 of total yearly expenditures on lobbying activities.
- Of the second \$500,000 of such total expenditures (\$500,000 - \$1,000,000), your organization can spend up to 15% on lobbying activities.
- Of the third \$500,000 of total expenditures (\$1,000,000 - \$1,500,000), you can spend up to 10% on lobbying activities.
- Of total expenditures greater than \$1,500,000, you can spend up to 5% on lobbying activities.

- An organization's total lobbying expenditures cannot exceed \$1 million per year.
- Only 25% of your organization's total allowable lobbying amount can be used for grassroots lobbying.

Organizations that make this election also receive further clarification about what is and what is not a lobbying activity. For those organizations, the following activities are allowed and not subject to lobbying limits:

- Contacts with Executive Branch employees or legislators in support of or opposition to proposed regulations are not considered lobbying. For example, if your organization is trying to get a regulation changed, you may contact members of the Executive Branch as well as legislators to urge them to support your position on the regulation. This is not considered lobbying.
- Lobbying by volunteers is only considered a lobbying expenditure to the extent that the organization incurs expenses associated with volunteers' lobbying activities.
- An organization's communications to its members on legislation, even if it takes a position on the legislation, is not lobbying as long as the organization does not ask its members to take action.
- An organization's response to written requests from a legislative body for technical advice on pending legislation is not considered lobbying.
- Self-defense activities, such as lobbying legislators (but not the general public) about matters that may impact the organization's existence, powers, tax-exempt status, and other such matters, are not considered lobbying.
- Making available the results of "nonpartisan analysis, study or research" on a legislative issue that presents a sufficiently full and fair exposition of the pertinent facts to enable the audience to form an independent opinion, is not considered a lobbying activity. Analyses are not required to be neutral or objective in nature to qualify for this exclusion. This exclusion is available to research and analyses that take direct positions on legislation, as long as the facts are fully and fairly presented, the material is generally available, and the report does not include a direct call to the reader to contact legislators.
- Efforts are not considered to be grassroots lobbying if an organization urges the public, through the media or other means, to vote for or against a ballot initiative or referendum. This is considered direct lobbying because the public becomes the legislator in this situation.

For organizations that have not made this election, the distinction between exactly what is and what is not a lobbying activity remains unclear. For this reason, along with the explicit dollar limit provided by the election, it is generally viewed as beneficial for a non-profit to make this election.

Lobbyist Registration

The [Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995](#), as amended by the [Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007](#), requires that you register with the federal government if:

1. Your organization has at least one employee who devotes at least 20% of his or her time to lobbying activities in any three month period, or
2. Your organization exceeds \$12,500 of its total expenses for lobbying activities during a quarterly period.

Additionally, each registrant must file a quarterly report of lobbying expenditures⁸.

In addition to federal requirements, many states have lobbying registration requirements. Check with your state for requirements. *See Appendix C for state contact information.*

⁸ See the Lobbying Disclosure Act Guidance that outlines the Act as amended by the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007: <http://lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov/ldaguidance.pdf>.

Chapter 9: Federal and State Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Policy Initiatives

Being familiar and understanding both federal and state policy initiatives that affect the prevention of child maltreatment is important in all advocacy efforts. The implementation and delivery of child protection, child welfare, and adoption programs and services are impacted by federal and state laws and understanding the significant pieces of legislation and programs will help guide and target your efforts. This chapter will provide an overview of the policies that impact the prevention of child maltreatment, including the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act; national coalitions and initiatives targeted at the prevention of child maltreatment; state policy initiatives; and child maltreatment prevention funding.

Federal Policy Initiatives

The prevention of child abuse and neglect is supported in a variety of laws that have been enacted over the past several decades. Congress has passed significant legislation that supports the States' duty and power to act on behalf of vulnerable children. A substantial piece of legislation influencing the prevention of child maltreatment, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, has recently been amended. This central piece of federal legislation, as well as others that address the protection of maltreated children, is highlighted below.

Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act

The [Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act](#) (CAPTA) of 1974 (P.L. 93-247) is significant federal legislation that addresses child abuse and neglect. The law was established to ensure that victimized children are identified and reported to the appropriate authorities. The Act has gone through a number of amendments and revisions over the years and was most recently reauthorized by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-320). The legislation reauthorized CAPTA for fiscal years 2011 through 2015; it authorized funding at \$1.039 billion over the five year reauthorization period. This reauthorization includes the following:

- Minimum standards for definitions and reports of child maltreatment. CAPTA strongly encourages states to review their state laws, practices, policies, and procedures to ensure children are protected;
- Federal funding to states supporting the prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities;
- Provides grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations, including Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, for demonstration programs and projects;
- Provides assistance to States to develop child abuse and neglect identification and innovative programs aimed at preventing and treating child maltreatment;
- Authorizes limited government research into child abuse prevention and treatment;
- Creates the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; and
- Creates the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information.

Additional noteworthy pieces of legislation enacted to support and protect children include:

Family Preservation and Support Services Program enacted as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-66) provides funding for prevention and support services for families at risk of maltreatment and also for services for families experiencing crises to assist in keeping their family intact.

Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-177) focuses on improving the criminal justice system's ability to provide timely, accurate criminal-record information to agencies engaged in child protection, and enhancing prevention and law enforcement activities.

Federal Funding Received by the States

Federal funding and federal laws offer support and guidance to states. However, states have flexibility in the way they develop and manage their child welfare policies. This is why there is great variation in state child welfare policies as well as financing of services.

Federal laws have a significant impact on how States fund and deliver child protection, child welfare, and adoption programs and services. These and other pieces of legislation provide for a variety of funding streams to states, particularly grant programs, which support prevention and treatment services for children and families.

The funding authorized by CAPTA is quite significant to States. These federal funds are administered by the Children's Bureau in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Funds are awarded to States on a formula, fixed-grant basis to assist States in improving child protective services and child maltreatment prevention programs. Programs include the CAPTA State grants, Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, and CAPTA discretionary grants. These funds to states support a number of activities including:

- Training for child protective services workers and mandated reporters;
- Programs and procedures for the identification, prevention, and treatment of child abuse and neglect; and
- Development and implementation of procedures for collaboration among child protection services, domestic violence, and other agencies.

The funding provided to States in 2012 through CAPTA includes:

- CAPTA state grants were funded at \$26 million. These were awarded to all 50 States, the District of Columbia and five territories. Grants are based on an initial allocation of \$50,000 per State with additional funds distributed in proportion to the State's population of children under the age of 18.
- CAPTA Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grants were funded at \$41.5 million. These are provided to a lead State agency to disburse funds for community-based child abuse and neglect prevention activities. Funds are used to develop, operate, expand and enhance community-based efforts to strengthen and support families.
- CAPTA discretionary grants were funded at \$27 million. These are awarded to State, Tribal, agency, and university grantees for Child Abuse Discretionary Activities through CAPTA. These funds support a number of research and demonstration grants and contracts that seek to expand the evidence base for child welfare programs with the goal of improving child outcomes as lessons learned are adopted by communities across the country.

Additionally, there are legislatively mandated child maltreatment or child welfare grant programs available to State entities that meet certain eligibility requirements including:

- **Basic State Grants** provide funds for States to enhance their child protective services systems and to develop and strengthen child maltreatment prevention, treatment, and research programs.
- **The Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program** supports the development of comprehensive networks of community-based, prevention-focused family resource and support programs.
- **Child Welfare Services** assist State public welfare agencies in delivering child welfare services (including preventive interventions, alternative placements, and reunification services) with the goal of keeping families together.
- **Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program** (formerly called the Family Preservation and Support Services Program) supplies funds to States to provide family support, family preservation, time-limited family reunification services, and services to promote and support adoptions. These services are aimed at preventing the risk of abuse as well as promoting nurturing families, assisting families at risk of having a child removed from the home, promoting the timely return of a child to his or her home, and, if returning home is not an option, placing a child in a permanent setting with services that support the family.

Where to look in State and local government for potential partners and/or funding

Department of Health

- Identify the office managing the Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) Funds disbursed by the Centers for Disease Control to each state. Read about the RPE funds [here](#), and find your state contact [here](#).
- Identify the coordinating body receiving federal maternal and child health funds. Learn about the maternal and child health bureau [here](#).

Child Protective Services

- Identify the specialists in child sexual abuse and/or any unit charged with prevention. Find your state's Child Protective Service agency [here](#).

Departments of Law, Justice or Juvenile Justice

- Crime Prevention initiatives may focus on sexual abuse or sexual assault prevention.

Department of Education

- Find the office charged with bullying prevention or sexual harassment prevention; a good start may be with the liaison to a "Safe Schools/Healthy Students" grant; find the grantee in your state [here](#).

Other potential partners

- Many governors have convened task forces or committees on sexual violence, domestic violence, human trafficking, and commissions on women. Any of these groups may have a policy agenda with issues overlapping with child sexual abuse prevention.
- Find a list of federal funding sources relevant to violence prevention [here](#).

Local Level

- Potential local partners in the public sector include the maternal and child health specialists in the public health department and local level groups comparable to those named above.

Key National Coalitions

There are a number of national and state coalitions targeted at the prevention of child maltreatment. Becoming familiar with these partnerships and using them as a resource in your advocacy efforts is another important strategy. Below are some examples of national coalitions with the mission of improving the lives of vulnerable children and families.

[Prevent Child Abuse America](#) is a nonprofit national organization whose mission is to prevent the abuse and neglect of our nation's children. It defines prevention as the abuse or neglect never occurring and has chapters in each of the 50 states to assist states and communities to implement prevention strategies and services.

[National Coalition for Child Protection Reform](#) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improve the system that serves our most vulnerable children by addressing policies that concern child abuse, foster care, and family preservation that includes some of the leading experts in child welfare.

[National Child Abuse Coalition](#) is committed to coordinating federal advocacy efforts on behalf of abused and neglected children and is a resource for advocacy and for leadership and strategy on federal legislative issues in child maltreatment.

[Center for the Study of Social Policy](#) is an organization that works in partnership with federal, state and local public agencies and with private sector organizations, foundations and community members to help improve the lives of vulnerable children and families.

[Child Welfare League of America](#) is one of the oldest and largest organizations devoted entirely to the well-being of America's vulnerable children. It is a coalition of private and public agencies that helps to advance policies, best practices and collaborative strategies that result in better outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and families in all 50 states.

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Exhibit 3-1: Sample Letter to a Legislator

The Honorable _____
House of Representatives
Anywhere, State 12345

Dear Representative ____:

I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of House Bill #__, to expand home visiting programs as a nationwide effort.

There's nothing more important for the future of our nation than to ensure that children and families in every community have the support they need to thrive. We know that programs, such as home visiting programs, are shown to help increase school readiness and healthy child development, and are important in reducing the adverse childhood experiences that contribute to things like disease and lost work productivity in the future.

In 2014, there were over 3 million reports of child abuse and neglect throughout the nation. Our children are our country's most vulnerable citizens and deserve a happy and healthy childhood. Home visiting programs for at-risk families can help alleviate the stresses of parenting by educating and supporting parents. By making this a national effort, we can potentially provide better starts for thousands of children.

The future of America depends on what we do for our children today. Therefore, we need you to support this proposal. I am looking forward to hearing from you on your views on the issue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ima Advocate
1234 W. Proactive Way
Anytown, USA 12345

Note: When writing to policymakers or public officials, it is important to use the proper salutation (*same for both federal and state legislators) and address as follows.

**To Senators:*

The Honorable (insert full name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

**To Representatives:*

The Honorable (insert full name)
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator (insert last name):

Dear Representative (insert last name):

Exhibit 4-1: Sample Letter to Candidates

A Note about letters or postcards to candidates: Individualized, hand-written letters tend to be most effective with candidates because they realize that these letters take more time and effort on the part of citizens. However, pre-printed letters or postcards are easy and can force candidates to think about children's issues. These can be very simple and effective when sent in large quantities. The following is an example that might be adapted and sent to your candidates.

Sample Letter

(Date)

(Name of Candidate)

(Title of Candidate)

(Street Address)

(City, State, Zip Code)

Dear *(Insert Candidate's Name)*:

We as a nation must commit ourselves to addressing the needs of children and families. In order to create the brightest future possible, we must invest the programs that promote the healthy development of children at an early age.

In considering for whom I will vote in this election, I am requesting a copy of your children's platform. Please email me your detailed plans for safeguarding the health and safety of our children and the support of families in need.

Sincerely,

Ima Advocate
1234 W. Proactive Way
Anytown, USA 12345

Sample Email

(Date)

(Name of Candidate)

(Title of Candidate)

(Street Address)

(City, State, Zip Code)

Dear *(Insert Candidate's Name)*:

{Use first part of email to include personal story. This may be a survivor story, a story from a direct service provider, or simply a story about how you could have used additional resources as a parent. }

As my story above accounts, I firmly believe as a nation we as a nation must commit ourselves to addressing the needs of children and families. In order to create the brightest future possible, we must invest the programs that promote the healthy development of children at an early age.

In 2014, there were over 3 million reports of child abuse and neglect throughout the nation. [If writing to state candidates, include state data here. That can be found using this link:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>]

In considering for whom I will vote in this election, I am requesting a copy of your children's platform. Please email me your detailed plans for safeguarding the health and safety of our children and the support of families in need.

Sincerely,

Ima Advocate
1234 W. Proactive Way
Anytown, USA 12345

Exhibit 4-2: Sample Letter to Invite Candidates to Participate in a Candidate Forum

(Date)

(Name of Candidate)

(Title of Candidate)

(Street Address)

(City, State, Zip Code)

Dear *(Insert Candidate's Name)*:

According to a recent poll, American voters ranked issues affecting children as their first and second priorities in deciding how to cast their votes, and we want to know where you stand on these important issues. We would greatly appreciate your participation in an upcoming candidate forum on *(insert date and time)* sponsored by *(insert the name of your organization and other forum sponsors)*.

Voters in *(insert name of community or state)* are eager to learn about *(insert name of office)* candidates' commitment to our children. The forum will be open to the public and widely publicized *(if this is in fact the case)*. The forum will be publicized on *(name of organization)* web sites, which receive an average of more than *(insert number)* hits each week. Invitations to the forum have been sent to:

- Local and statewide media *(print, radio and television)*
- Employees of *(sponsoring organization and partners)*
- *(Include all groups who will be invited)*

(Name of organization) in *(city, state)* and *(names of other forum sponsors)* are working together to ensure voters in *(name of community or state)* are fully aware of your position on a range of issues impacting children. The candidate forum will give you an opportunity to address children's needs in a range of areas, including *(insert areas that you plan to focus on in forum)*.

We are looking forward to working with you. *(Name of contact)* from *(name of organization)* will be calling you to follow up, answer any questions you may have, and confirm your participation in the forum. *(Name of community or state)*'s voters are eager to learn about your positions on the range of issues that affect America's children. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Organization CEO Organization Board Chair Coalition Chair

Exhibit 4-3: Sample Thank-You Letter for Candidates' Participation in Candidate Forum

(Date)

(Name of Candidate)

(Title of Candidate)

(Street Address)

(City, State, Zip Code)

Dear *(Insert Candidate's Name)*:

On behalf of *(name of organization and other sponsors)*, thank you for your participation in the children's issues *(name of office)* candidate forum. Your expressed views help voters make a much more informed decision about which candidate they will support in the upcoming elections.

Our public access cable station recorded the event and will re-broadcast the forum throughout the election cycle. In addition, *(name of newspaper)* will reprint the transcript of the forum in an upcoming, special election edition. Throughout the broadcasts and the printed transcripts, voters in *(community or state)* will be made fully aware of your positions on the issues that affect our *(nation's, state's, community's)* children.

Thank you again for your participation in the children's issues *(name of office)* candidate forum and for helping voters better understand your position on the range of issues that impact our children.

Sincerely,

Organization CEO Organization Board Chair Coalition Chair

Exhibit 4-4: Sample Candidate Questionnaire and Cover Letter

Sample Cover Letter to Send with Candidate Questionnaire

[This was used by Prevent Child Abuse America for Presidential Campaign 2008]

Dear President Obama,

Prevent Child Abuse America is a nonprofit whose sole mission is to prevent the abuse and neglect of our nation's children. We are sending the attached questionnaire to both major party Presidential candidates, as well as candidates for national and state offices across the nation to highlight their positions on children's issues and share the information with voters. The sole purpose of this effort is to educate voters about the views of candidates. This project will not rate or endorse candidates.

Prevent Child Abuse America would like to include your platform in our voter education effort. We are asking all candidates to respond to the attached questionnaire. Your responses will be posted on our website which receives 10,000 unique visitors per month along with the array of social media platforms we utilize, including our Facebook fan page which has 60,000 plus fans, our blog which exceeds 10,000 page views per month, and our Twitter account which has 7,000 plus followers.

Our hope is to share the responses with the media and post them on our website no later than October 25. We are asking each candidate to return the questionnaire to us no later than 5:00 p.m. ET October 20.

You can email your responses to the survey questions to Marissa Morabito (mmorabito@preventchildabuse.org) and/or Ben Tanzer (btanzer@preventchildabuse.org). You may also mail them to Ben Tanzer at the address below. Thank you!

If you have any additional questions about this project, please feel free to contact Marissa Morabito, Senior Director of Public Policy at mmorabito@preventchildabuse.org or 843-814-3769.

Sincerely,

Prevent Child Abuse America
228 South Wabash Avenue
10th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Sample Candidate Questionnaire

This is Prevent Child Abuse America's 2008 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire and accompanying cover letter.

Prevent Child Abuse America is asking all Presidential and Congressional candidates to respond to the questionnaire regarding the healthy development of all children and their families below.

Prevent Child Abuse America believes that the likelihood of healthy development of children and their families is greatly enhanced when child abuse and neglect does not occur in the first place. And research supports this assertion. Evidence shows certain protective factors can buffer families from child abuse and neglect. Each candidate's responses will be posted on the Prevent Child Abuse America website.

Parental Resilience

Parents need to be resilient enough to parent effectively despite stress and other challenges that may happen to anyone. Parental resilience can be fostered by schools and programs that encourage parental leadership, promote effective parenting strategies, and help parents address depression and other barriers to their success.

If elected how would you ensure that parental resilience is fostered through all child and family services?

Social Connections

Extensive research shows that a network of friends and families is important for health, education, jobs, and child abuse and neglect prevention. Investments in parks, community centers, libraries and schools can all help create opportunities for families to build important connections that will help their children succeed.

If elected, how would you promote continued public investment in community assets that foster social connections?

Concrete Support in Times of Need

Basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care are essential for families to provide an adequate environment for their children's development. When families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.

*If elected, how would you ensure all families are able to meet the basic needs for their children?
What would you do to provide families in crisis necessary supports and services?*

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development. Parents who experienced harsh discipline or other negative childhood experiences may need extra help to change the parenting patterns they learned as children.

If elected, what plan do you have to ensure all parents have access to timely, accurate information about parenting and child development and opportunities to develop positive parenting skills?

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

A child or youth's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers as well as their success in school and in life. Challenging behaviors, or delayed development, create extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance for both parents and children can head off negative results and keep development on track.

What would you do to help parents and other caregivers gain the skills and support they need to help children develop social and emotional skills?

If elected, what would you do to ensure that all children, and their families, have access to supports and services that quickly identify children's challenging behaviors or delayed development and provide support to both children and their parents?

Exhibit 5-1: Background Information on Prevent Child Abuse America

Overview

Prevent Child Abuse America, founded in 1972 in Chicago, works to ensure the healthy development of children nationwide. The organization promotes that vision through a network of chapters in 50 states and nearly 609 sites in 40 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Commonwealth of the Marianas, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, and Canada. A major organizational focus is to advocate for the existence of a national policy framework and strategy for children and families while promoting evidence-based practices that prevent abuse and neglect from ever occurring.

Chapter Network

Founder Donna Stone recognized that a strong presence at both the state and national levels was essential to leading child abuse prevention efforts. Thus, Prevent Child Abuse America established state chapters across the country. In 1976, the first chapter was formed in Kansas and today, Prevent Child Abuse America has a network of 50 state chapters which involves more than 120,000 active volunteers who organize and implement direct service child abuse prevention programs.

The aim of each chapter is to be the child abuse prevention leader within the state. Every chapter is involved with various activities to raise public awareness and education. State chapters are also involved in advocacy by influencing legislation. Some chapters help to make primary prevention programs available to their communities, while other chapters serve as an information source, offer 1-800 help lines, or have training programs for professionals and parents.

The result of Prevent Child Abuse America's training, technical assistance and education activities has been the growth and strengthening of the Chapter Network. Prevent Child Abuse America's goal is to have a chapter in every state.

Healthy Families America

Healthy Families America (HFA) is a nationally recognized evidence-based home visiting program model designed to work with overburdened families who are at-risk for adverse childhood experiences, including child maltreatment. It is the primary home visiting model best equipped to work with families who may have histories of trauma, intimate partner violence, mental health and/or substance abuse issues. HFA services begin prenatally or right after the birth of a baby and are offered voluntarily, intensively and over the long-term (3 to 5 years after the birth of the baby).

The HFA model, developed in 1992 by Prevent Child Abuse America, is based upon 12 Critical Elements derived from more than 30 years of research to ensure programs are effective in working with families. These Critical Elements are operationalized through a series of best practice standards that provide a solid structure for quality yet offer programs the flexibility to design services specifically to meet the unique needs of families and communities. Model fidelity is illustrated through a comprehensive accreditation process.

Currently there are nearly 609 affiliated HFA sites in 40 States, DC, and five US territories: Guam, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, the Northern Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands, the American Samoa and Canada. Each Healthy Families America site is implemented on the local level by public and private partnerships, including business and community leaders, faith groups, healthcare providers, local and state governments, and social service agencies.

Research

The National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research was established in 1986. Pioneering early efforts included the first annual collection of data on number of maltreatment reports and fatalities, and an annual public opinion poll that documented a substantial shift in the public's understanding and attitude about child abuse prevention over our organization's history.

The Center's work focuses on promoting well-being and preventing child maltreatment across all levels of the social-ecological model (i.e., individual, relationship, community, society). Our projects include interpreting and synthesizing scholarly research, and promoting utilization of research for policy and practice. We also monitor the quality and success of a variety of prevention efforts such as Healthy Families America home visiting programs and child sexual abuse prevention strategies.

Throughout our networks, we promote research-practice collaboration and the use of participatory research methods, engaging all stakeholders in the research process, to ensure that research yields new knowledge with relevance and value to practitioners and decision makers, and ultimately, improves the well-being of children, families, and communities.

Public Awareness

At its inception in 1972, Prevent Child Abuse America's focus was on public education. An early partnership with the Advertising Council allowed Prevent Child Abuse America to get its prevention message out to the general public. The first of many educational pamphlets, "What Every Parent Should Know," was produced and disseminated. In 1995, Prevent Child Abuse America established a toll-free telephone number, 1-800-CHILDREN, to increase public awareness about child abuse prevention.

Public opinion polls have indicated that the percentage of people aware of the problem of child abuse has increased greatly over the years, growing from 10% at our inception to now knowing that 90% of the public views child abuse as a serious issue. Prevent Child Abuse America plays an important role in changing public attitudes toward child abuse and neglect.

Prevent Child Abuse America's public awareness efforts include a variety of initiatives that provide the public with a broad education about the problem of child abuse and neglect and the innovative solutions we support. The earliest vehicles to accomplish this were our national media campaigns, which were developed in conjunction with the Ad Council. Early campaigns focused on the existence of the problem and gave reasons for focusing on prevention. Later public awareness efforts addressed how parents under stress could help themselves, and encouraged the public to call 1-800-CHILDREN to learn how they could get involved in child abuse prevention in their communities.

More recently, Prevent Child Abuse America has utilized social media to further expand the impact of the organization's public awareness efforts, including the utilization of blogging through our blog "Changing The Way We Think About Prevention," Facebook, and Twitter.

In addition to our national media campaigns, Prevent Child Abuse America produces and maintains a library of more than 70 publications through the organization's partnership with Channing-Bete.

Since 1983, April's Child Abuse Prevention Month has become a national event in which all 50 state chapters conduct some form of programming to inform and engage the public on healthy child development and child abuse prevention.

In April 2008, Prevent Child Abuse America introduced the pinwheel as the new national symbol for child abuse prevention in the United States through the Pinwheels for Prevention® campaign. The pinwheel, by its very nature, connotes the healthy and carefree childhoods all children deserve. What began as a grassroots effort in Georgia, Florida and Ohio has now grown into a true national effort with more than 3.5 million pinwheels sold since 2008, campaign activity in every state and the galvanization of professionals in the field and concerned citizens alike around this common symbol.

Advocacy

Prevent Child Abuse America supports its more than 50 state chapters by providing training and technical assistance for their advocacy efforts. In addition, Prevent Child Abuse America collaborates on the federal level with over 30 national organizations, which comprise the National Child Abuse Coalition. Through these partnerships, Prevent Child Abuse America is able to advocate for critical resources and a continuum of services — starting with prevention — to support children and their families.

Beginning in 1979 with our Kansas chapter, Prevent Child Abuse America took the lead in helping to establish Children's Trust Funds in nearly all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Using both public and private revenue sources, these trust funds serve as a continuous funding mechanism for child abuse prevention efforts at the state and community levels.

Over the years, Prevent Child Abuse America has been instrumental in ensuring that the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) is reauthorized and that funding is continued for localized child abuse prevention efforts through Community-Based Resource and Support grants. We also worked to ensure the safe passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, which reauthorized the Family Preservation and Family Support grants, renamed Safe and Stable Families.

In March 2000, Prevent Child Abuse America, with the support of its chapters in Texas and Ohio, helped pass the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement (CAPE) Act. This new law gives state and local officials the flexibility to use existing Department of Justice program funds to prevent child abuse and neglect, and to intervene and protect children who have been maltreated. Recent advocacy efforts have focused on creating effective and informed citizen participation in community efforts to protect children from abuse.

In addition to providing training and seminars, Prevent Child Abuse America, along with the Child and Family Policy Center, developed and distributed guidelines for states as they begin planning for, and implementing, citizen review panels. These panels will provide oversight and reviews of state child protective service systems, as outlined in CAPTA.

Currently, Prevent Child Abuse America is looking at a variety of national funding streams to support prevention efforts, including the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant, Medicaid, the new Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and revenue from the tobacco settlements. To achieve these aims, Prevent Child Abuse America communicates with chapters and Health Family America sites through action alerts, legislative updates and analysis, and monthly bulletins.

Resource Development

Prevent Child Abuse America has been fortunate to garner a broad base of support from corporations, foundations, associations and workplace campaigns. Their support over the years has enabled Prevent Child Abuse America to achieve dramatic results. Among our most significant corporate and foundation supporters are Kappa Delta Sorority and Foundation, Sigma Delta Tau Sorority, National Basketball Association, General Federation of Women's Clubs, The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Verizon Wireless, Ms. Foundation,

Macy's, Kohl's, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Foundation, America's Charities, Robert and Mayari Pritzker Family Foundation and the Pritzker Early Childhood Foundation.

Exhibit 5-2: Facts about Child Abuse and Neglect

Key Facts on Child Abuse & Neglect

- In 2012, child protective services agencies received approximately 3.4 million referrals of abuse and neglect. Of these reports, approximately 686,000 children were confirmed to be victims of child maltreatment; this represents 9 out of every 1,000 children.
- More than four children die every day in the U.S. from child abuse or neglect.
- Neglect accounts for more fatalities than physical abuse; 69.9% of child fatalities involve neglect.
- About 1 in 10 children under 18 is sexually abused, including 1 in 7 girls and 1 in 25 boys.⁹

⁹ Townsend, C. & Rheingold, A.A. (2013). Estimating a child sexual abuse prevalence rate for practitioners: A review of child sexual abuse prevalence studies. Charleston, S.C., Darkness to Light. Retrieved from www.D2L.org/1in10.

Exhibit 5-3: Sample Letter to the Editor

The following are examples of letters to the editor. These letters to the editor are written in support of a fictitious early childhood advocacy coalition and are examples of how to use the media to advance a new frame about early childhood development and policy.

To The Editor:

The Tribune's recent coverage of the latest child abuse case ("Investigation Continues into Abuse of Siblings") caused me to reflect on how a sound investment in our community's future requires that all children have the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially and emotionally.

Science now tells us that toxic stressors in a child's environment (the kind of stress caused by long-term, persistent factors such as maternal depression, extreme poverty and abuse or neglect) can affect the architecture of the developing brain. This means that interventions in the lives of children who are experiencing toxic stress should not be delayed. Partnerships for Parents has high-quality programs that offer supportive structures and relationships to families experiencing toxic stress. If all children and families had access to these effective programs, we would lay solid foundations for children's development and prevent more serious problems from developing later — and that would be beneficial for all of us.

Nancy Smith, M.D.
Three Oaks Pediatric Clinic

To The Editor:

As a family court judge, I believe it is important to attend to new findings about child development that should be used to improve systems that serve children. We now know that early adversity has life-long effects on learning, behavior and health. Science tells us that "toxic stress" — like exposure to family violence — literally damages the brain's architecture. We don't have to worry about tolerable stress (falling off your bike, or getting a shot at the doctor's office). But toxic stress lasts longer, is more severe, and leads to lifelong problems in learning, behavior and health. I have seen this in my courtroom, but it doesn't have to be that way.

We need to provide better prevention and intervention resources throughout our state, so that judges are able to refer families to supportive programs as early as possible. We can turn that toxic stress into tolerable stress. Our future depends on it.

The Hon. Joseph J. Jones
Family Court Judge, District 4

Exhibit 5-4: Sample Op-Ed Letter

The following is a sample guest opinion-editorial.

Today, we have a very special opportunity to consider the best path to a prosperous future for our community, by giving all children the experiences they need to become leaders tomorrow. This is what End Child Abuse Awareness Day is all about. For the past ten years, our coalition of businesses, faith communities, community-based programs and concerned individuals has been engaged in understanding, and then sharing with others, what it means to create a community that enables all of its children to develop — socially, emotionally and cognitively.

What does development, and specifically brain development, have to do with ending child abuse? Plenty. Science tells us that the experiences children have early in life actually build the architecture of their developing brains. Brains are built over time, just like houses. And just as a well-built house requires a strong foundation, our children's brains also need a strong foundation for all of the development that comes after. Experiences of abuse and neglect damage this foundation, harm brain development, and diminish our community's future.

Science also tells us that certain environments produce “toxic stress “ — or chronic conditions such as extreme poverty and abusive situations — that can compromise the brain's architecture and destabilize that foundation, derailing later development. Fortunately, the research also tells us what types of environments ensure healthy brain development, what types of environments produce toxic stress, and what communities, health practitioners, teachers and ordinary citizens can do to ensure that all of our children have the solid foundations they need for healthy development.

First, while it's vitally important to provide children with opportunities to develop their cognitive abilities, we must pay equal attention to their social and emotional abilities. That's because all of the developmental domains work together, each affecting and affected by the other. This development happens in an environment of relationships, where children have the opportunity to develop interactions with caregivers in a “serve and return” fashion, much like in a game of tennis or volleyball. When an infant or child reaches out for interaction with a caregiver, and that caregiver responds consistently and appropriately, critical neural pathways in children's brains are built. Healthy pathways are not built in the brains of children who are living in environments of abuse and neglect, which has a negative impact on children's development — in the short and long term.

Secondly, children need environments free of toxic stress, or the kind of chronic, serious stress caused by experiences such as violence, abuse or neglect. This toxic stress literally damages children's brains by releasing chemicals in the brain that stunt cell growth. This even impairs their physical health because children develop an exaggerated stress response that weakens their defense system against later illness, from heart disease to diabetes and depression.

In order to support healthy brain development in all children, we need to maintain a comprehensive set of programs to protect children from exposure to toxic stress, and encourage strong “serve and return” interactions with their caregivers. One way to do this is by supporting our [name of program], which provides free home visits from public health nurses to all newborns in our community. These voluntary visits allow nurses to identify which families are experiencing the conditions that can cause toxic stress, such as extreme poverty, maternal depression and other mental health concerns, and family violence. Once

identified, the program can connect these families to the community supports they need to buffer this toxic stress, increasing the likelihood of healthy outcomes.

The program we have currently reaches some, but not all, of the families in our county who need it. Last year, 251 babies were born in our county, but only 125 received a home visit. It's as if we had a vaccine that prevents a serious childhood disease, but only half of all children were protected.

Our Coalition's goal is to ensure that more children have the opportunity they deserve to thrive by bringing this effective program to every family in the county who could benefit. Certainly, trying to change behavior or build new skills on a foundation of brain circuits that were not wired properly in the first place is more difficult than getting it right the first time. Our partners at the county social services office tell us that of the families that received assistance through the home visiting program in the past five years, less than 3 percent have been reported for later neglect and abuse of their children. Home visits to newborns offer an opportunity to lay a strong foundation right from the very start of life.

On the tenth anniversary of End Child Abuse Awareness Day, let us celebrate that many parts of our community are coming together to create positive, healthy environments that support children's development. With additional private and public funds, we can continue working together to support this cause by extending our effective nurse home visiting program. Please join us in supporting this vital initiative to end child abuse in our community, and create a more prosperous, positive future for all of us.

Exhibit 5-5: Sample Statement

STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: BEN TANZER

(W): 312-663-3520 X823

(C): 312-806-4066

Preschool in its earliest form.

CHICAGO, IL, May 22, 2013 – It’s always exciting when the media reports on innovative programs and initiatives that are aimed at the healthy development of families and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. It’s even more thrilling when they report on proven approaches like the home visiting model we developed, Healthy Families America.

This past Monday’s Washington Post contains a well written profile titled [“Home visiting programs are preschool in its earliest form.”](#) It discusses the huge impact that home visiting programs can have on the lives of children and their families and highlights their role in a national plan for universal preschool...another strategy that is good for our nation.

We believe in the importance of home visiting and commend any effort to increase the visibility of home visiting programs such as Healthy Families America and highlight the ways that these programs can augment the formative years of our nation’s children.

Yet despite the profound successes of home visitation services, many myths continue. Discussions such as a “government takeover of the family,” or home visitation is a service intended to “subsidize people who make lousy choices,” still exist. But let’s talk about what home visiting really is.

Home visiting services are designed to:

- Help parents initiate and maintain a life-long relationship with their child;
- Promote child-child respect even at the toddler stage to decrease the likelihood the child subsequently develops bullying or domestic violence behavior;
- Help new parents address the overwhelming sense of responsibility and importance in raising a child to transition into adulthood as a contributing member of the community;
- Support parents in completing their education and obtaining gainful employment; and
- Most importantly, help families feel connected to their community, a community they live in, and a community which is filled with wonderful community services to help parents be the parents they want to be.

Further, home visitation services are completely voluntary and open to parents of all demographics, ages, and locations.

Our national goal is to create the best environment possible for children in America. We know that the annual cost of child abuse is well over \$80 billion. That’s more than \$200 million a day spent on something that is

preventable. Services like Healthy Families America save taxpayer money and as importantly strengthen the very core of our society...families.

But it's not just the money that's important. What's important is that these families are better equipped to deal with the stresses of parenthood, better informed on the best ways to nurture their child and help them grow, and better able to respond to challenges without harming their child in any way.

So, we're pleased that the Washington Post helped spread the word about Healthy Families America, but you don't have to take their word for it, visit healthyfamiliesamerica.org to read testimonials from parents and learn more about how the money to fund the program is spent. After that please share what you've learned in your communities and talk to your local media about the importance of home visiting.

“We believe in services like Healthy Families America because they're proven to build stable, nurturing, and knowledgeable families,” said James M. Hmurovich, President & CEO, Prevent Child Abuse America. “The healthier our families are, the healthier our communities and our nation. We also applaud the parents who are taking steps to do everything they can for their child and the Washington Post for recognizing this as well. My question therefore focuses not on how we make our nation stronger, we know how. My question is why everyone wouldn't want to make our families stronger, our communities more vibrant, our economy more competitive, and our people more happy. It seems simple to me.”

Exhibit 5-6: Sample News Release

Prevent Child Abuse America and Miss America 2013 Mallory Hagan to Turn the 'Big Apple' into the 'Big Pinwheel' on April 16

Ben Tanzer, Prevent Child Abuse America
(312) 806-4066
btanzer@preventchildabuse.org

Prevent Child Abuse America and Miss America 2013 Mallory Hagan to Turn the 'Big Apple' into the 'Big Pinwheel' on April 16

Event to call people to action in support of healthy child development through massive display of pinwheels, the new national child abuse prevention symbol, in Times Square

April 16, 2013 (New York, NY) – Prevent Child Abuse America will turn the "Big Apple" into the "Big Pinwheel" today with a display of more than 5,000 pinwheels – the new national symbol for child abuse prevention – in Times Square to call people to action in support of healthy child development and to mark Child Abuse Prevention Month. This will be the signature event of the national Pinwheels for Prevention® campaign, which has seen nearly 3 million pinwheels distributed since its launch in 2008. Miss America 2013 Mallory Hagan, who hails from New York and whose personal platform is child sexual abuse prevention, is event spokesperson, and "Extra!" Correspondent, A.J. Calloway, will emcee. Participating sponsor Hedge Funds Care – Preventing and Treating Child Abuse, and promotional partners NBA Cares, Manhattan Magazine, www.ties.com and SparkAction, are providing support. Over 250 volunteers will participate to help create the display.

“As Miss America, I have the opportunity to share my family’s personal story of child sexual abuse. I have witnessed firsthand the need to stop the abuse of children before it starts and I am proud to work with wonderful organizations such as Prevent Child Abuse America to call attention to this very important subject. Together, we can shine a national spotlight on this issue that needs and deserves our attention,” said Miss America 2013 Mallory Hagan.

To support the campaign, the public can:

“Sponsor” pinwheels in the Big Pinwheel Garden at www.pinwheelsforprevention.org/give;

Donate \$10 by texting PINWHEEL to 20222* (powered by www.givebycell.com);

Purchase a tie from Prevent Child Abuse America’s Collection at www.ties.com, inspired by NBA stars Chris Paul, Chris Bosh, Kevin Love and Ronny Turiaf, and Pro Football Player Lawrence Jackson;

Volunteer for a Prevent Child Abuse America state chapter; or,

Become more informed or purchase pinwheels by visiting www.preventchildabuse.org.

“Each and every one of us can and must play a role when it comes to ensuring the healthy development, and prevention of the abuse of, our nation’s children,” said Prevent Child Abuse America President and CEO, James M. Hmurovich. “If 90% of the public knows that child abuse is a serious issue, then let the Big Pinwheel Garden serve as our reminder that not only must we act for the future of our nation, but we must act now.”

The Big Pinwheel Garden is a grander version of what is and has been done by Prevent Child Abuse America chapters nationwide throughout April. From a botanic garden in Virginia to "palm trees and pinwheels" in Florida to the capitol lawn in multiple states to "painting the town blue" in Indiana, pinwheels are blowing in the breeze from coast to coast, standing as a symbol for the healthy and happy childhoods all children deserve.

Volunteer and additional promotional support provided by Kappa Delta, Sigma Delta Tau and the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Exhibit 5-7: Sample Media Advisory



****MEDIA ALERT**MEDIA ALERT**MEDIA ALERT****

**MISS AMERICA TO HELP TURN THE 'BIG APPLE' INTO THE 'BIG PINWHEEL'
FOR PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA ON APRIL 16TH**

*Times Square Event to Promote Healthy Child Development and
Pinwheel as New National Child Abuse Prevention Symbol*

WHO: Miss America 2013 Mallory Hagan; Prevent Child Abuse America; "Extra!" Correspondent, A.J. Calloway, as emcee

WHAT: On April 16th, 2013, Prevent Child Abuse America will present a signature event for the national Pinwheels for Prevention® campaign, encouraging the public to support healthy child development by turning Times Square into a display of more than 5,000 pinwheels—the new national child abuse prevention symbol.

Miss America 2013 Mallory Hagan, and Prevent Child Abuse America's President and CEO, James M. Hmurovich, will be teaming up with over 250 community volunteers to hold symbolic pinwheels in New York City's iconic Times Square to create a spectacular and memorable display. New York City's Big Pinwheel Garden represents the pinwheel gardens planted by state chapters of Prevent Child Abuse America across the nation throughout April's Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Big Pinwheel Garden Participation Options:

- 1) Pinwheels can be sponsored at www.pinwheelsforprevention.org/give.
- 2) One hundred percent of proceeds from five special ties on www.ties.com, inspired by NBA Stars Chris Paul, Chris Bosh, Kevin Love and Ronny Turiaf, and Pro Football Player Lawrence Jackson, will benefit Prevent Child Abuse America
- 3) \$10 donations can be made by texting PINWHEEL to 20222* (powered by www.givebycell.com)

Prevent Child Abuse America, founded in 1972 in Chicago, works to ensure the healthy development of children nationwide. Since the launch of Pinwheels for Prevention in 2008, nearly 3 million pinwheels have been distributed and all 50 states have participated in the campaign.

Hedge Funds Care—Preventing and Treating Child Abuse is participating sponsor; NBA Cares, *Manhattan Magazine* and Ties.com are promotional partners. The Big Pinwheel Garden also supported by organizational partners Kappa Delta, Sigma Delta Tau, General Federation of Women's Clubs and SparkAction.

WHEN: Tuesday, April 16, 2013
9:20am to 10:00am EDT **Media check-in at 9:00am EDT**

WHERE: Broadway (between 46th & 47th Streets)
New York, NY 10036

PRESS CONTACT:

Bryan Pierce

Team Epiphany

212-884-1507 (o) | 646-525-7344 (m)

*A one-time donation of \$10.00 will be added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. Donor must be age 18+ and all donations must be authorized by the account holder (e.g. parents). By texting YES, the user agrees to the terms and conditions. All charges are billed by and payable to your mobile service provider. Service is available on most carriers. Donations are collected for the benefit of the "Prevent Child Abuse America" by the Mobile Giving Foundation and subject to the terms found at www.hmgf.org/t. Message & Data Rates May Apply. You can unsubscribe at any time by texting **STOP** to shortcode 20222 powered by www.givebycell.com; text **HELP** to 20222 for help.

Understanding Child Maltreatment 2012

Prepared by:

Janet F. Rosenzweig MS, PhD, MPA

Vice President for Research and Programs

January 2014

Executive Summary

Child Maltreatment 2012 is the 23rd edition of a report on the status of child maltreatment in the United States published by Administration for Children Youth and Families, Children's Bureau (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This is a relatively high profile report, so the national office of Prevent Child Abuse America developed this analysis to support the state chapter and the Healthy Families America networks in understanding the contents of the report, applying the findings to their community and using the findings to support prevention services.

General Observations:

The report indicates that there were 686,000 unique, unduplicated cases of child abuse or neglect throughout the United States. "Nationally, four-fifths (78.3%) of victims were neglected, 18.3 percent were physically abused, 9.3 percent were sexually abused and 8.5 percent were psychologically maltreated."¹⁰

In a press release announcing this report, ACF highlighted a **decline in child abuse**. This decline is based on a decrease in the estimated rate of abused children per 1,000 children in the population. This analysis provides the methodology to calculate this number for a specific state. The press release also reports an **increase in child fatalities**. This may be due to the fact that some states are implementing recommendations to expand sources of data on child fatalities based on a 2011 study by the US General Accountability Office (GAO).

As has been the trend for several years, **neglect is still the most common form of maltreatment**, and one that may be most amenable to secondary prevention services. The report also indicates that the younger the child, the higher the rate of victimization and that **there is not a decline in child neglect**.

A study commissioned by Prevent Child Abuse America estimates the national cost of child maltreatment at more than \$80 billion annually. A study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates the lifetime cost of a single case of non-fatal child maltreatment at \$210,012. **This paper contains a table applying these highly credible cost figures to the CPS child maltreatment data in each state.**

¹⁰ Child Maltreatment 2012, page ii

Policy Considerations

Child Maltreatment 2012 is derived from a dataset created by compiling Child Protective Services (CPS) data from all reporting states. In 2012, 22 states and jurisdictions submitted all requested information with the most common missing data elements being descriptions of individual child and family risk factors such as substance abuse or disability. The lack of uniform definitions of child maltreatment is a weakness in using this report as an indicator of anything beyond Child Protective Services activity in 2012. This is particularly true for child sexual abuse where the age of, or relationship to an alleged perpetrator is a factor in being classified as a CPS case, another practice that varies widely among states. In addition, the findings of the report are limited due to:

- ✚ The variation in state definitions of child maltreatment;
- ✚ Then number of states that reported changes in policy or technology rendering it unwise to use their data to assess trends; and
- ✚ The variations in practice of coding “differential response.”

Data in this report can be used as descriptive data for advocacy or public education efforts, but it is recommended that a state’s data representative be contacted as identified in Child Maltreatment 2012 before using it for technical analyses.

Even with the limitations of the report, there are several implications for the prevention mission:

- ✚ Meaningful prevention planning and implementation is more likely to occur when a national strategy is developed, supported with consistent metrics uniformly measuring crucial indicators of child and family well-being.
- ✚ This need for community based prevention strategies through family support services. This is based upon the observation that more than one million children were ‘referred’ to CPS but did not become ‘reports.’ The majority of these children are most likely at risk. The raw number of ‘referred’ children as well as the rate per 1,000 children in the population is increasing over time.
This report shows the methodology to calculate this number for a specific state.
- ✚ No child should ever be maltreated, and if maltreated, should never be victimized again. Prevention in both human suffering and economic costs provides a greater return on investment than responding to something that should never have occurred in the first place.

Understanding Child Maltreatment 2012

Prepared by:

Janet F. Rosenzweig MS, PhD, MPA

Vice President for Research and Programs

January 2014

Understanding Child Maltreatment 2012

Introduction

This paper presents findings from a review of the report [Child Maltreatment 2012](#), the 23rd annual report on child maltreatment incidence, published by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children Youth and Families, Children's Bureau.

Part I: What these numbers mean

◆ What is the source of data for this report?

The information in this report is derived from data voluntarily submitted by each state's Child Protection Services (CPS) system to a federal database entitled The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data Set, or NCANDS. "NCANDS collects case-level data on all children who received a CPS agency response in the form of an investigation response or an alternative response." (Page x)¹¹ This dataset does not record "screened out" referrals, that is, those referrals that do not meet each state's legal standard to warrant an investigation.

◆ Is this report really a measure of CPS activity rather than child maltreatment?

The data used to develop this report come from CPS data systems and therefore are national data describing child abuse and neglect known to CPS agencies. There are many more cases that never come to the attention of CPS for multiple reasons. "Each State has its own definitions of child abuse and neglect that are based on standards set by federal law." (Page ix). This variation renders it impossible to consider NCANDS all inclusive; a case that may be counted by one state's definition could be eliminated by another.

Sixteen states indicated that changes in either policy, practice or data systems make it unwise to use their 2012 data to show a trend from prior years.

[Attachment 4](#) lists states offering this explanation. If your state indicates an issue with using data for trends, consider contacting the NCANDS data expert for your state. The Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4), a project which uses multiple sources of data concluded "...that CPS investigated the maltreatment of only 32% of children who experienced Harm Standard maltreatment

¹¹ Page numbers refer to the publication [Child Maltreatment 2012](#) (accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cm2012.pdf>)

and of 43% of those whose maltreatment fit the Endangerment Standard."¹² The NIS provides estimates according to two standards: "Under the Harm Standard, children must have experienced some harm or injury from maltreatment. The Harm Standard definitions specify, for each category of maltreatment, the severity of harm or injury needed for the child to be counted. Under the Endangerment Standard, children in any category of maltreatment are counted as long as they are regarded as endangered by the abuse or neglect."¹³

A survey conducted in 2012 indicated that at least half of our Prevent Child Abuse America chapters are working with child sexual abuse and inconsistencies in counting are magnified in this area. Offenses against children perpetrated by other youth or non-family members may not be counted by some CPS systems and be counted by others. Dr. David Finkelhor spoke of the difficulties of counting child sexual abuse cases at the first conference on child protection held at Penn State in 2013. A video of that presentation which covers this issue in depth can be seen at this [link](#).¹⁴

- ◆ **The headline in the [ACF Press Release](#)¹⁵ announcing [Child Maltreatment 2012](#) claimed a decline in the national incidence of child abuse; how can I calculate that same number for my state?**

The figures used to support that conclusion are interpreted below:

"The report estimates there were 686,000 cases of child abuse or neglect across the country in 2012. While this indicates a steady decrease since 2007, when there were approximately 723,000 reports of abuse, it also serves as a reminder that there is more work still to be done."¹⁶

- The estimate of 686,000 unduplicated or unique child victims for 2012 is derived from an estimated rate of 9.2 unique victims¹⁷ per 1,000 children in the population¹⁸. Exhibit 3-C, below offers this explanation:

*The national victimization rate was calculated by dividing the number of unique victims from reporting states by the child population of reporting states and multiplying by 1,000. Because fewer than 52 states reported data in a given year, the national estimate of victims was calculated by multiplying the national victimization rate by the child population of all 52 states and dividing by 1,000. The result was rounded to the nearest 1,000.*¹⁹

¹² NIS 4 page 16 accessed at

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nis4_report_exec_summ_pdf_jan2010.pdf 12/201399

¹³ <https://www.nis4.org/DefAbuse.asp>

¹⁴ Remarks about this issue begin @ the 10:30 minutes: seconds time stamp. full link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-fVw7Uuxs&feature=youtu.be>

¹⁵ ACF Press release, Attachment 1

¹⁶ ACF Press release, Attachment 1

¹⁷ "Unique victims" means that each child is counted only once, even if involved in multiple CPS reports

¹⁸ Page ii and page 19

¹⁹ Child Maltreatment 2012, page 19

**TREND IN VICTIMIZATION RATES AS PUBLISHED IN
CHILD MALTREATMENT 2012**

Exhibit 3–C Child Victimization Rates, 2008–2012

Year	States Reporting	Child Population of Reporting States	Unique Victims from Reporting States	National Victimization Rate per 1,000 Children	Child Population of all 52 States	National Estimate of Unique Victims
2008	50	74,398,024	704,714	9.5	75,411,627	716,000
2009	50	74,495,280	693,485	9.3	75,512,062	702,000
2010	51	74,151,984	688,157	9.3	75,017,513	698,000
2011	51	73,921,000	676,545	9.2	74,783,810	688,000
2012	51	74,150,798	678,810	9.2	74,577,451	686,000

The national victimization rate was calculated by dividing the number of unique victims from reporting states by the child population of reporting states and multiplying by 1,000. Because fewer than 52 states reported data in a given year, the national estimate of victims was calculated by multiplying the national victimization rate by the child population of all 52 states and dividing by 1,000. The result was rounded to the nearest 1,000.

- The figure of 723,000 is an estimate of unique child victims in 2007 as published in the report Child Maltreatment 2011.²⁰ Different figures were published in Child Maltreatment 2007²¹ and adjusted after states offered additions and corrections to their NCANDS files.²² For this reason, it is difficult to construct the same trend used in the press release (2007 – 2012) for each state.

²⁰ Please see [attachment 3](#) 'correspondence with ACF' for an explanation of the 2007 estimate of 723,000 unique child victims

²¹ Child Maltreatment 2007 <http://archive.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm07/cm07.pdf>

²² See attachment 3

**TREND IN VICTIMIZATION RATES AS PUBLISHED IN
CHILD MALTREATMENT 2011**

Exhibit 3–D Child Victimization Rates, 2007–2011 (unique count)

Year	States Reporting	Child Population of Reporting States	Unique Victims from Reporting States	Victimization Rate	Child Population of all 52 States	National Estimate of Unique Victims
2007	49	71,886,504	690,849	9.6	75,342,238	723,000
2008	50	74,398,024	704,714	9.5	75,411,627	716,000
2009	50	74,495,280	693,485	9.3	75,512,062	702,000
2010	51	74,157,309	688,157	9.3	75,022,478	698,000
2011	51	73,946,999	676,569	9.1	74,810,766	681,000

The decline described in the press release is based on a change in the rate of unduplicated number of children for whom a report was accepted for investigation per 1,000 children in the population.

To find the analogous number for your state for 2007:

The original 2007 state-level data is presented in Table 3-3 on page 37 of [Child Maltreatment 2007](#); that table is reproduced in this document as [attachment 6](#) and will show your state’s rate per 1,000 children in 2007. Please be mindful that an adjusted total for 2007 was published in 2008 and your state may be one of the states submitting revised numbers. Revised state level data is not available so if the change for your state seems unusually large or small, consider contacting the NCANDS data expert from your state using the contact information for each state found in the State Commentary section beginning on page 130 of [Child Maltreatment 2012](#).

To find the analogous number for your state for 2012:

Table 3-4 in [Child Maltreatment 2012](#) provides a trend in rates per 1,000 children for each state and is reproduced in this document [attachment 7](#). While the press release compares 2007 to 2012, we recommend using the trend data from 2008 – 2012 as presented in Table 3-4 on [Child Maltreatment 2012](#), unless there is a specific need to use the same time frame as the press release.

- ◆ **The headline in the [ACF Press Release](#)²³ announcing [Child Maltreatment 2012](#) claimed a small increase in the number of child fatalities; how can I calculate that same number for my state?**

Before using NCANDS fatality figures to determine a trend for your state, it is helpful to be aware of an important policy issue. In 2009, Congress asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a technical analysis to "obtain more information about the quality of national data on child fatalities and near fatalities

²³ ACF press release, Attachment 1

from maltreatment"²⁴ The Government Accountability Office is an "independent, nonpartisan agency that works for Congress. Often called the "congressional watchdog," GAO investigates how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars." ²⁵

In a [report published in 2011](#), the GAO concluded:

"More children have likely died from maltreatment than are reflected in the national estimate of 1,770 child fatalities for fiscal year 2009. Undercounting is likely due to nearly half the states reporting to NCANDS data only on children already known to CPS agencies—yet not all children who die from maltreatment were previously brought to the attention of CPS."... "24 states reported in our survey that their 2009 NCANDS data did not include child fatality information from any non-CPS source" ²⁶

The GAO recommended:

"Synthesizing information about child fatalities from multiple sources—such as death certificates, state child welfare agency records, or law enforcement reports—can produce a more comprehensive picture of the extent of child deaths"

In 2012, certain states expanded their sources of child fatality data in response to the GAO report. Please refer to your state commentary beginning on page 130 of [Child Maltreatment 2012](#).

To find the annual number of fatalities reported in your state from 2008 to 2012, see Table 4-2 on page 57 of Child Maltreatment 2012, reproduced in this paper as [attachment 10](#).

Sixteen states indicated that changes in either policy, practice or data systems make it unwise to use their 2012 data to show a trend from prior years.

[Attachment 4](#) to this report lists states in this situation. If your state indicates an issue with using data for trends, consider contacting the NCANDS data expert for your state.

◆ **Is minority over-representation still an issue nationally? In individual states?**

Overall, victims of African-American, American Indian or Alaska Native, and multiple racial descents had the highest rates of victimization at 14.2, 12.4, and 10.3 victims, respectively, per 1,000 children in the population of the same race or ethnicity. The overall rate was 9.2 per 1,000 children.

To find the comparable state numbers see Table 3-7 on page 37 of [Child Maltreatment 2012](#).

²⁴ GAO report number GAO-11-599 entitled 'Child Maltreatment: Strengthening National Data on Child Fatalities Could Aid in Prevention', released on July 12, 2011. Accessed 12/23/2013 at <http://www.gao.gov/assets/330/320778.html>

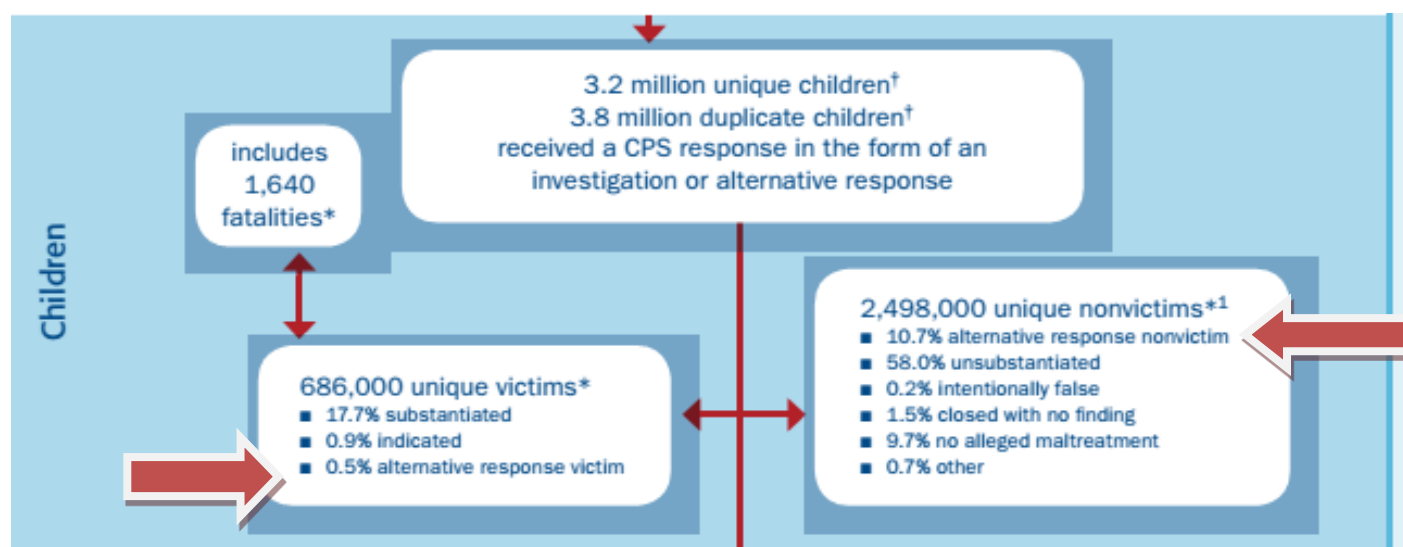
²⁵ <http://www.gao.gov/about/index.html>

²⁶ <http://www.gao.gov/assets/130/126580.pdf> Page 2

◆ **What is the impact of 'alternative or differential response' on the numbers cited in this report?**

“An increasing number of reports are handled by an alternative response, which focuses primarily on the needs of the family. CPS systems that include both an investigation response and an alternative response are often referred to as differential response systems.”²⁷ The excerpt from the case flow chart below shows that cases receiving alternative response may be counted as either victims or non-victims, further effecting the total count.

The increasing use of alternative or differential response can have an impact on the trend data. “Variations in how states define and implement alternative response programs continue to emerge.”²⁸ **Readers are once again cautioned to refer to the State Commentary; states report both increases and decreases in their overall service numbers due to specific handling of alternative response cases.**



²⁹ Children receiving an alternative response from CPS can be classified as either non-victims or victims
(Red arrows added for emphasis)

Part 2: Implications for Prevention

◆ **Prevention programs work.**

The Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4), a project which uses multiple sources of data, estimated a decrease in the number of maltreated children, with a significant decline in abuse between NIS-3 in 1996 and NIS-4 in 2006, but not neglect.³⁰ When considering both the trends reported in the

²⁷ Child Maltreatment 2012, page 5

²⁸ Child Maltreatment 2012 page 17

²⁹ Child Maltreatment 2012, page xiii

³⁰ NIS 3 1996 harm standard estimate 1,553,000; NIS 4 2005 harm standard estimate 1,256,600 The number of children who experienced Harm Standard abuse declined significantly, by 26%, from an estimated 743,200 (11.1 abused children per 1,000) in the NIS-3 to 553,300 (7.5 abused children per

series of Child Maltreatment reports and the NIS-4, an argument can be made for a decline in abuse. Prevention programs may be part of the reason.

◆ **Prevention is cost efficient.**

We can pair the data in this report with the two major national studies on the cost of child maltreatment.

- [A cost analysis commissioned by Prevent Child Abuse America](#)³¹ found that the national cost of child abuse and neglect exceeds \$80 BILLION annually.
- [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)³² estimates that each case of non-fatal child maltreatment will cost the economy \$210,012 over a lifetime.

[Attachment 9](#) provides two methods to estimate the potential cost of child maltreatment to your state.

- ◆ The table allocates the annual cost of \$80,260,411,087 as established by Prevent Child Abuse America proportionally by each state's number of victims.
- ◆ That table also shows the results of multiplying the number of victims in 2012 by the CDC estimated lifetime cost of \$210,012.

◆ **Prevention has life-long benefits.**

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) studies are widely accepted as having demonstrated the lifetime damage caused by adverse childhood experiences, including child maltreatment. Experiencing ACE's mean lifetime costs and effects. Detail can be found at www.AceStudy.org.

◆ **But we need more prevention programs!**

There is an increase in the number of children and families being screened out of CPS systems.

Child Maltreatment 2012 provides details of how each state handles initial calls, called '**referrals**,' either screening them out or accepting them into the system as '**reports**.' States then respond to those reports with investigations or services. In 2012, more than one-third (38%) of calls (referrals) to CPS agencies were screened out and never considered reports. **This represents more than one million children with some indication of potential risk; both the estimated number of screened out cases and the rate per 1,000 children is increasing as shown on the table below.**

1,000 children) in the NIS-4. The incidence of Harm Standard neglect showed no statistically reliable changes since the NIS-3, neither overall nor in any of the specific neglect categories (physical, emotional, and educational neglect).

³¹

http://www.preventchildabuse.org/images/research/pcaa_cost_report_2012_gelles_perlman.pdf

³² <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213411003140>

Exhibit 2–A Referral Rates, 2008–2012

Year	States Reporting	Child Population of Reporting States	Screened-In Referrals (Reports)	Screened-Out Referrals	Total Referrals		Child Population of all 52 States	National Estimate of Total Referrals
			Number	Number	Number	Rate per 1,000 Children		
2008	44	59,829,217	1,617,623	900,063	2,517,686	42.1	75,411,627	3,175,000
2009	47	64,780,672	1,715,604	978,463	2,694,067	41.6	75,512,062	3,141,000
2010	47	64,432,752	1,707,805	1,011,296	2,719,101	42.2	75,017,513	3,166,000
2011	47	64,263,576	1,767,236	1,057,136	2,824,372	43.9	74,783,810	3,283,000
2012	46	63,709,356	1,820,892	1,116,160	2,937,052	46.1	74,577,451	3,438,000

Screened-out referral data are from the Agency File and screened-in referral data are from the Child File.

This table includes only those states that reported both screened-in and screened-out referrals. This is the first report for which states that reported 100.0 percent of referrals as screened in were included in this analysis.

The national referral rate was calculated for each year by dividing the number of total referrals from reporting states by the child population in reporting states. The result was multiplied by 1,000. The national estimate of total referrals was based upon the rate of referrals multiplied by the national population of all 52 states. The result was divided by 1,000 and rounded to the nearest 1,000.

A list of possible reasons for being screened out is provided, ranging from "allegation did not contain enough information to enable a CPS response to occur" to "alleged victim was older than 18 years."³³ Detailed information on these 1,116,160 screened-out cases is not provided, but 2012 state data can be found in [attachment 8](#).

This point supports the need for community based prevention services reaching families not served by the public CPS system. (E.g. "Who is serving the 40% of people who called and were not eligible for services from their states CPS system? Even if half the calls were for general information, that leaves a lot of families in distress who need support.")

◆ The impact of neglect

Neglect continues to comprise the largest proportion of the CPS caseload; accounting for almost 80% of victims and almost 70% of child fatalities.³⁴ Both NCANDS data and the National Incidence Studies (NIS) show a stable rate of child neglect. While abuse is decreasing, neglect is not. Chapters could consider identifying interventions known to promote protective factors and reduce risk factors associated with neglect. For example, Healthy Families America sites can highlight their ability to identify and address risk factors for neglect such as isolation and maternal depression.

Conclusion

The decline in the maltreatment rate touted in the headline of the press release is a small decrease between two estimates. Any decrease should be celebrated, but this decrease is small enough that the argument for continued efforts for prevention remains critical, specifically a focus on:

³³ [Child Maltreatment 2012](#) page 5

³⁴ [Child Maltreatment 2012](#), page ii

- The increasing number, now more than 1.1 million of 'referrals' that never became 'reports';
- The devastating toll that neglect, still the most common form of maltreatment and one that is NOT declining, takes on a child's long term development;
- The financial cost of child maltreatment, compared to the cost of prevention; and,
- The importance of a strong network of community resources to support children and families.

No child should ever be maltreated, and if maltreated, should never be victimized again. Prevention in both human suffering and economic costs provides a greater return on investment than responding to something that should never have occurred in the first place. The release of this report provides is an opportunity for prevention advocates to remind the public what everyone can do to prevent child maltreatment and promote healthy families

Appendix B: What it Means to be Trauma-Informed

Introduction to Trauma

Traumatic experiences in childhood – such as child maltreatment, family and community violence, life threatening accidents and disasters – cause stress, may disrupt healthy child development, and increase the need for health care services and more. As we have learned from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (Centers for Disease Control, 2013), childhood trauma has consequences well beyond childhood. Trauma, including child abuse and neglect, can set off a sequence of negative events later in life, and can lead to a cycle of violence and trauma for future generations. Childhood trauma is all too common, according to the Adverse Childhood Experiences study, with two-thirds of adults experiencing at least one adverse childhood experience. Many of the parents who engage in programs to prevent child maltreatment bring a personal history of trauma to their role as parents.

Definition of Trauma

What then is a trauma-informed system? The [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#) (NCTSN), a national program funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), defines a trauma-informed system as: “A trauma-informed child- and family-service system is one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system including children, caregivers, and service providers. Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies. They act in collaboration with all those who are involved with the child, using the best available science, to facilitate and support the recovery and resiliency of the child and family.” This definition takes us beyond service recipients and considers all those around them who are involved in their care, including service providers themselves. Being trauma-informed applies throughout an organizational culture.

Improving Practice

Created in 2000, NCTSN is a collaboration of direct service providers, researchers, and families who are committed to improving the standard of care and access to services for all children and families affected by childhood trauma. NCTSN’s vision is to:

1. Increase public awareness and knowledge about the impact of traumatic stress and the range of effective trauma assessment strategies and interventions which exist.
2. Build strategic partnerships with national organizations that can assist with the dissemination of information, products, and training tools.

3. Provide trauma-focused education and skill-building for front-line staff, clinicians, and administrators within and across key child-serving systems in order to change practice.

[NCTSN](#) has developed and compiled a variety of resources for professionals and organizations, including public education resources, policy guides, and products and service models that are available to help improve practice within your organization and system. Below are more resources for developing trauma-informed organizations.

- Through [The Learning Center for Child and Adolescent Trauma](#), NCTSN offers online and in-person training and multi-media presentations, and opportunities for additional study through Learning Collaboratives and Learning Communities.
- The [Sanctuary Model](#) takes a holistic approach to developing a trauma-informed organizational culture. This approach helps organizations create a trusting, positive, collaborative environment, with the goal of providing more effective services to those who have experienced trauma. The Sanctuary Leadership Development Institute offers on-site services for organizational change.

Appendix C: State Legislative Resources

The information below can be found on the National Conference of State Legislature, [State Legislative Website Directory](#).

State	Page Name	Summary
Alabama		
	Alabama Legislature	Official Website of the Alabama Legislature.
Alaska		
	Alaska Legislature	Homepage of the Alaska Legislature
	Alaska State Legislature's House Majority	The 26th Alaska State Legislature.
	House Democratic Legislators	House Democrats Home Page.
American Samoa		
	About American Samoa Fono	Info from this Triposo Site: As of March 2006, the American Samoa Fono remains the only state or territorial legislative body that does not have an official website.
Arizona		
	Arizona House of Representatives	Arizona House of Representatives' Home Page.
	Arizona Senate	Arizona State Senate's Home Page
	Arizona State Legislature	Arizona State Legislature's Home Page of the 49th Legislature.
Arkansas		
	Arkansas General Assembly	Home page of the Arkansas 87th General Assembly.

California

[Assembly Home Page](#)

California Assembly Home Page.

[California Legislature Portal](#)

Gateway to California's Legislative web sites.

[California Senate](#)

California State Senate Home Page

[Legislative Counsel's Home Page](#)

Official site for California legislative information. This site is maintained by the Legislative Counsel of California, pursuant to California law.

Colorado

[Colorado General Assembly](#)

Colorado General Assembly's Home Page. Includes links to Colorado legislator's individual home pages.

Connecticut

[Connecticut General Assembly](#)

Connecticut General Assembly's Home Page

[Connecticut General Assembly Staff Offices](#)

Connecticut General Assembly Staff Offices' Home Page.

[Connecticut House Democrats](#)

Connecticut House Democrats' Home Page

[Connecticut House Republicans](#)

Connecticut House Republicans' Home Page

[Connecticut Senate Democrats](#)

Connecticut Senate Democrats' Home Page

[Connecticut Senate Republicans](#)

Connecticut Senate Republicans' Home Page

Delaware

[Delaware General Assembly](#)

145th Delaware General Assembly's Home Page.
*

District of Columbia

[District of Columbia](#)

Official Web site of the Council of the District of Columbia.

Florida

[Florida House of Representatives](#)

Florida House of Representatives Home Page.

<u>Florida Legislature</u>	Online Sunshine: Official Internet Site of the Florida Legislature.
<u>Florida Monitor (OPPAGA)</u>	A service of the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA).
<u>Florida Senate</u>	Florida Senate Home Page.
Georgia	
<u>Georgia General Assembly</u>	The official web site of the Georgia General Assembly.
Guam	
<u>Guam Legislature</u>	Home page for the 30th Guam Legislature.
Hawaii	
<u>Hawaii</u>	Hawaii State Legislature Website.
Idaho	
<u>Idaho Legislature</u>	Idaho Legislature's Home Page.
Illinois	
<u>Illinois General Assembly</u>	Illinois General Assembly's Home Page.
<u>Illinois House Democrats</u>	Illinois House Democrats Home Page
<u>Illinois House Republican Caucus</u>	Illinois House Republican's Home Page.
<u>Illinois Senate Democratic Caucus</u>	Illinois Senate Democrats' Home Page.
<u>Illinois Senate Republican Caucus</u>	The Official Home Page of the Illinois Senate Republican Caucus.
Indiana	
<u>Indiana General Assembly</u>	Indiana General Assembly's Home Page.
<u>Indiana House Democratic Caucus</u>	Indiana House Democrats' Home Page.
<u>Indiana House Republican Caucus</u>	Indiana House Republican's Home Page.

Iowa

[Iowa General Assembly](#)

Iowa General Assembly's Home Page.

[Iowa House Democrats](#)

Home page of Democrats in the Iowa House.

[Iowa House Republicans](#)

Iowa House Republicans' Home Page.

[Iowa Legislative Services Agency](#)

Home page of Iowa's Legislative Services Agency.

[Iowa Senate Democrats](#)

Iowa Senate Democrats' Home Page.

[Iowa Senate Republicans](#)

Home page of Republicans in the Iowa Senate.

Kansas

[Kansas House of Representatives](#)

Kansas House of Representatives' Home Page

[Kansas Legislature](#)

Kansas Legislature's Home Page.

[Kansas Senate](#)

Kansas Senate Home Page.

Kentucky

[Kentucky Legislature](#)

Kentucky Legislature's Home Page.

Louisiana

[Louisiana House](#)

Louisiana House of Representatives' Home Page.

[Louisiana Legislature](#)

The Web Portal to the Louisiana State Legislature.

[Louisiana Senate](#)

Louisiana State Senate's Home Page.

Maine

[Maine Legislature](#)

Maine Legislature's Home Page.

Maryland

[Maryland General Assembly](#)

Maryland General Assembly's Home Page.

Massachusetts

[Massachusetts](#)

The General Court of Massachusetts' Home Page.

Michigan

[Michigan House](#)

Michigan House of Representatives' Home Page

[Michigan Legislature](#)

Michigan Legislature's Home Page.

[Michigan Senate](#)

Michigan State Senate's Home Page.

Minnesota

[Minnesota State Legislature](#)

Minnesota State Legislature's Home Page.

Mississippi

[Mississippi Legislature](#)

Mississippi Legislature's Home Page.

Missouri

[Missouri General Assembly](#)

Missouri General Assembly's Home Page

[Missouri House](#)

House of Representatives' Home Page

[Missouri Senate](#)

Senate's Home Page

Montana

[Montana Legislature](#)

Montana Legislative Branch Home Page.

Nebraska

[Nebraska Unicameral Legislature](#)

Nebraska Unicameral Legislature.

Nevada

[Nevada Legislature](#)

Nevada Legislature Web Site.

New Hampshire

[New Hampshire General Court](#)

New Hampshire General Court's Home Page.

New Jersey

[New Jersey Legislature](#)

New Jersey State Legislature's Home Page.

New Mexico

[New Mexico Legislature](#)

New Mexico Legislature Web Site.

New York

[New York State Assembly](#)

New York State Assembly's Web Site.

[New York State Senate](#)

New York State Senate's Home Page.

North Carolina

[North Carolina General Assembly](#)

North Carolina General Assembly's Home Page.

North Dakota

[North Dakota Legislative Branch](#)

North Dakota Legislative Branch Home Page.

Northern Mariana Islands

[Northern Mariana Islands Commonwealth
Legislature](#)

Home Page for the Northern Mariana Islands
Commonwealth Legislature.

Ohio

[Ohio General Assembly](#)

128th Ohio General Assembly

Oklahoma

[Oklahoma Legislature](#)

Oklahoma Legislature's Home Page.

Oregon

[Oregon State Legislature](#)

Oregon State Legislature's Home Page.

Pennsylvania

[Pennsylvania General Assembly](#)

Pennsylvania General Assembly's Home Page.

[Pennsylvania House Democratic Caucus](#)

Pennsylvania House Democratic Caucus Web
Site.

[Pennsylvania House Republican Caucus](#)

Pennsylvania House Republican Caucus Web
Site.

[Pennsylvania Senate](#)

Senate of Pennsylvania Home Page.

[Pennsylvania Senate Democratic Caucus](#)

Pennsylvania Senate Democrats' Web Site.

[Pennsylvania Senate Republican Caucus](#)

Pennsylvania Senate Republican News

Puerto Rico

[Puerto Rico House of Representatives](#)

Puerto Rico House of Representatives home page.

[Puerto Rico Senate](#)

Puerto Rico Senate Home Page.

Rhode Island

[Rhode Island General Assembly](#)

Rhode Island General Assembly's Home Page.

South Carolina

[South Carolina General Assembly](#)

This is the home page for the South Carolina General Assembly. The information on these pages comes from Legislative Printing, Information and Technology Systems and Legislative Council.

South Dakota

[South Dakota Legislature](#)

South Dakota Legislature Home Page.

Tennessee

[Tennessee General Assembly](#)

Tennessee General Assembly's Home Page.

Texas

[Texas House](#)

Texas House of Representatives' Home Page.

[Texas Legislative Budget Board](#)

Texas Legislative Budget Board's Home Page.

[Texas Legislative Reference Library](#)

Texas Legislative Reference Library's Web Site.

[Texas Legislature](#)

Texas Legislature Online.

[Texas Senate](#)

Texas Senate's Home Page.

[Texas Sunset Advisory Commission](#)

Texas Sunset Advisory Commission's Home Page.

Utah

[Utah State Legislature](#)

Utah State Legislature's Home Page.

Vermont

[Vermont Legislature](#)

Vermont Legislature's Home Page.

Virgin Islands

[Virgin Islands](#)

Home Page of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands.

Virginia

[Virginia General Assembly](#)

Virginia General Assembly's Home Page.

Washington

[Washington State Legislature](#)

Washington State Legislature's Home Page.

West Virginia

[West Virginia Legislature](#)

West Virginia Legislature's Home Page.

Wisconsin

[Wisconsin Assembly Chief Clerk](#)

Wisconsin Assembly Chief Clerk's Home Page.

[Wisconsin Legislature](#)

Wisconsin State Legislature's Home Page.

[Wisconsin Senate Chief Clerk](#)

Wisconsin's Senate Chief Clerk's Home Page.

Wyoming

[Wyoming State Legislature](#)

Wyoming State Legislature's Home Page.

Appendix D: Federal Budget Process

Following is a general overview of the federal budget process, which is a complex system guided by a set of specific procedures laid out in the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

Step One: The President's Budget Request

On the first Monday in February every year, the President submits the Administration's budget request for the upcoming year. The federal government's fiscal year is from October 1 through September 30 of the following year. To meet this February deadline, the President's Administration must begin preparing its budget request during the previous spring and summer – nearly a year-and-a-half prior to the start of the fiscal year!

First, this request provides Congress with details on what the President recommends for overall federal fiscal policy, as established by three main components: (1) how much money the federal government should spend on public purposes; (2) how much it should take in as tax revenues; and (3) how much of a deficit (or surplus) the federal government should run. Second, this budget request outlines the President's priorities for federal programs, such as defense, education, health, etc. Thirdly, the budget request signals to Congress what spending and tax policy changes the President recommends.

The President's budget includes both discretionary and mandatory spending. Discretionary spending is subject to an annual approval by Congress and there is less control by legislators over mandatory spending, which is devoted to entitlement programs, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Step Two: The Congressional Budget Resolution

After receiving the President's budget request, the Senate and House Budget Committees hold hearings to receive testimony from Administration officials, experts from academic and business communities, representatives of national organizations, members of Congress and the general public. Next, the House and Senate budget committees propose budget resolutions to set targets

for spending and tax revenue which are sent to the House and Senate floors. All members of the Senate and House then have an opportunity to alter the work of the Budget Committees by offering amendments to the budget resolution as it is debated on the floor of each chamber.

Step Three: Budget Appropriations

In this step, the House and Senate appropriations committees allocates funding among each of their 12 subcommittees. Each subcommittee holds hearings and puts together an appropriation bill, which is then submitted to the full committee.

Step Four: Budget Execution

Lastly, the budget process is complete and agencies are allowed to use their appropriated funds when the President has signed all 12 appropriations bills and the fiscal year begins on October 1st. However, Congress is not always able to complete action on the 12 separate appropriations bills by the start of the fiscal year, especially if certain spending bills cause lengthy debate or there is a threat of a presidential veto. In these cases, Congress must pass a continuing resolution to maintain funding until appropriations work can be completed.

Appendix E: Voter Resource Guide

Below is a list of online references that will help to assist your networks in becoming informed, active participants during elections years.

Voting Information

1. [*Nonprofit Vote*](#): Provides up to date information regarding each state’s voter registration requirements and deadlines; also has tools for Election Day that allows voters to find their polling place and learn about any ID laws that have been passed in their state.
2. [*Ballotpedia*](#): Billing itself as “An interactive almanac of state politics”, this site provides voters with information regarding local, state and Congressional candidates. It also includes a state by state guide of measures that will appear on November ballots.
3. [*Vote411.org*](#): From the League of Women Voters, Vote411 provides a tool that allows voters to enter their address to find their polling place, and learn more about who is running in their local, state and federal elections. Also allows voters to “build” a ballot that they can print out and take to the polls with them.
4. [*Election Protection*](#): This site provides voters with tools to ensure their voting rights are protected. Includes information about voter ID laws, as well as a toll free number to call if they encounter problems on Election Day; this organization has also developed an Election Day app that will allow voters to register to vote and verify their registration, look up their polling place, review key voting regulations and rules for their state, see what kind of machine they will be voting on and contact the organization on Election Day to report problems at the polls.

To Learn More about the Candidates

1. **National (Presidential)**
 - a. [*Know My Candidate*](#): Allows you to easily compare each Presidential candidate using information taken directly from their respective campaign sites and statements.
2. **Congressional**
 - a. [*Congress.org*](#): This website from Congressional Quarterly offers a nonpartisan overview of all the candidates running for Congress throughout the US, with tools to allow voters to easily find and research who is running in their district.
3. **State Elections**
 - a. [*Election Assistance Commission*](#): Features a US map that allows voters to easily find and research who is running for state and local office in their jurisdiction.

To Help Cut Through the Hype

1. [*Fact Check.org*](#): This site, run by the Annenberg Public Policy Committee, is a nationally recognized nonpartisan leader in analyzing campaign rhetoric to provide voters with solid facts about key issues.
2. [*Politifact*](#): This Pulitzer Prize winning site uses an easily understood “Truth Meter” to rate statements made by candidates running for office in terms of their factual accuracy.

To Learn More About Who’s Funding the Campaigns

1. [*The Sunlight Foundation*](#): This non-partisan site provides a breakdown of money that’s being spent by Super PACs, a new campaign funding vehicle made possible by the Supreme Court decision Citizens United. The Sunlight Foundation has also developed a free app called “Ad Hawk” that allows users to instantly discover the source of funding for the barrage of political ads during the 2012 election season.
2. [*Open Secrets*](#) and [*Follow the Money*](#): These two sites provide users with a breakdown of donors to every national and state political campaign in the nation.