

# NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE COALITION

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November 10, 2009

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

Dear Director Orszag:

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

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

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

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

- Alternative response offers potential for a major system reform within child protection with a more flexible approach for addressing child maltreatment reports. The alternative response offers an opportunity to engage families and to introduce more prevention services. The results of a randomized control trial on an alternative response approach implemented in Minnesota included the following outcomes: improved child safety, improved family well-being, reduced recurrence of maltreatment, positive long-term outcomes, and cost savings. A follow-up report concluded that the approach is both cost effective and cost beneficial: system costs declined and the goal of protecting children was achieved.
- Family group decision-making (FGDM) refers to a collection of approaches in which family members come together to make decisions about caring for their children and to develop a plan

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

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

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

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

Alliance for Children and Families  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Children's Residential Centers  
American Humane Association  
American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children  
American Psychological Association  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
CHILD, Inc.  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children and Family Futures  
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption  
Every Child Matters Education Fund  
Family Violence Prevention Fund  
First Star  
Foster Family-based Treatment Association  
Kids Hope United  
Lutheran Services in America  
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds  
National Association of Counsel for Children  
National Association of Social Workers  
National CASA Association  
National Children's Alliance  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
National Respite Coalition  
Prevent Child Abuse America

Stop It Now!  
Voices for America's Children

### **State and Local Organizations**

Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention  
Prevent Child Abuse Alabama  
Children's Action Alliance (AZ)  
Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence  
Family Service Agency (North Little Rock, AR)  
Prevent Child Abuse California  
Crossroads Treatment Centers, Inc. (CA)  
EMQ Families First (Campbell, CA)  
Paradise Oaks Youth Services (Citrus Heights, CA)  
Rebekah Children's Services (Gilroy, CA)  
East Bay Agency for Children (Oakland, CA)  
Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services (Pasadena, CA)  
River Oak Center for Children (Sacramento, CA)  
Peacock Acres Inc. (Salinas, CA)  
Family Care Network, Inc. (San Luis Obispo, CA)  
Redwood Children's Services, Inc. (Ukiah, CA)  
Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies  
Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families  
Turning Point Center for Youth and Family Development, Inc. (Fort Collins, CO)  
Alternative Homes for Youth, Inc (Greeley, CO)  
Prevent Child Abuse Connecticut  
Safe Shores -- The DC Children's Advocacy Center  
Prevent Child Abuse Delaware  
Children & Families First (Wilmington, DE)  
Healthy Families Florida  
Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida  
Prevent Child Abuse Florida  
Healthy Families Alachua/Columbia/Union and Bradford Counties (Gainesville, FL)  
Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children  
Prevent Child Abuse Georgia  
Families First, Inc. (Atlanta, GA)  
Healthy Families Gainesville (Gainesville, GA)  
Prevent Child Abuse Hawaii  
Idaho's Children's Trust Fund  
Prevent Child Abuse Idaho  
Child Care Association of Illinois  
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois  
Chicago Children's Advocacy Center (IL)  
Lawrence Hall Youth Services (Chicago, IL)  
Methodist Youth Services, Inc. (Chicago, IL)  
Bethany for Children & Families (Moline, IL)  
The Baby Fold (Normal, IL)  
Child Abuse Council (Rock Island, IL)  
Prevent Child Abuse Indiana  
Family Service of Central Indiana  
Children's Bureau, Inc. (Indianapolis, IN)  
TRI-CAP Dubois-Pike-Warrick Economic Opportunity Committee, Inc. (Jasper, IN)  
Family Connections (Versailles, IN)  
Prevent Child Abuse Iowa  
Bethany for Children & Families (Davenport, IA)  
Kansas Children's Service League

Prevent Child Abuse Kansas  
Youthville (Wichita, KS)  
Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky  
Children's Alliance (Frankfort, KY)  
Bellewood Presbyterian Home for Children (Louisville, KY)  
Boys and Girls Haven (Louisville, KY)  
Family & Children's Place (Louisville, KY)  
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth (Nazareth, KY)  
Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana  
Prevent Child Abuse Maine  
Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth  
Prevent Child Abuse Maryland  
Children's League of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund  
Massachusetts Citizens for Children, Inc.  
Prevent Child Abuse Massachusetts  
Prevent Child Abuse Michigan  
Child and Family Services of Northwestern Michigan  
Holy Cross Children's Services (Clinton MI)  
Catholic Social Services of Wayne County (Detroit, MI)  
Eagle Village, Inc. (Hersey, MI)  
Child and Family Resource Council (Kent County, MI)  
Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota  
Minnesota Center Against Violence & Abuse, University of Minnesota  
Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies  
The City, Inc. (Minneapolis, MN)  
Therapeutic Services Agency, Inc. (Pine City, MN)  
Children's Home Society & Family Services (St. Paul, MN)  
Prevent Child Abuse Missouri  
The Children's Place (Kansas City, MO)  
Montana Children's Initiative  
Prevent Child Abuse Nevada  
New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund  
Prevent Child Abuse New Hampshire  
New Jersey Alliance for Children, Youth and Families  
Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey  
Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc. (NJ)  
Robins' Nest Inc. (Glassboro, NJ)  
New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children  
Prevent Child Abuse New York  
Parsons Child and Family Center (Albany, NY)  
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (Albany, NY)  
Green Chimneys Children's Services (Brewster, NY)  
Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network, Inc. (Buffalo, NY)  
Child and Family Services (Buffalo, NY)  
Healthy Families Cayuga/Seneca (NY)  
The Children's Village, Echo Hills (Dobbs Ferry, NY)  
Coalition Against Child Abuse & Neglect (Garden City, NY)  
Family Service League (Huntington NY)  
Public Health Solutions (New York, NY)  
Spectrum Human Services (Orchard Park, NY)  
Behavioral Health Services North (Plattsburgh, NY)  
Hillside Family of Agencies (Rochester, NY)  
CARRT (Children At Risk Response Team) Center (Schoharie, NY)  
Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc. (Spring Valley, NY)  
Andrus Children's Center (Yonkers, NY)

Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota  
Public Children Services Association of Ohio  
Voices for Ohio's Children  
Summit County Children Services (Akron, OH)  
The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers (Columbus, OH)  
Lucas County Children Services (Toledo, OH)  
Prevent Child Abuse Oklahoma  
Prevent Child Abuse Pennsylvania  
Children's Home of York (PA)  
Family Service Assn. of Bucks County (PA)  
PathWays PA (Holmes, PA)  
United Way of Beaver County (Monaca, PA)  
KidsPeace (Orefield, PA)  
Methodist Home for Children (Philadelphia, PA)  
Pressley Ridge (Pittsburgh, PA)  
The Children's Home of Reading (Reading, PA)  
Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island  
Rhode Island Council on Residential Programs for Children and Youth Inc.  
Neighborhood Alliance of Pawtucket (RI)  
The Children's Trust of South Carolina  
Circle of Parents Tennessee  
Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee  
Healthy Start/Healthy Families of Anderson County (TN)  
Goodwill Homes Community Services, Inc. (Memphis, TN)  
Youth Villages (Memphis, TN)  
The Center for Family Development (Shelbyville, TN)  
Prevent Child Abuse Texas  
Center for Public Policy Priorities (Austin, TX)  
Buckner Children and Family Services, Inc. (Dallas, TX)  
Child Abuse Prevention Center (Dallas, TX)  
DePelchin Children's Center (Houston, TX)  
Prevent Child Abuse Utah  
Child & Family Support Center of Cache County, Inc. (Logan, UT)  
Prevent Child Abuse Vermont  
Prevent Child Abuse Virginia  
Prevent Child Abuse Hampton Roads (VA)  
Children, Youth & Family Services (Charlottesville, VA)  
West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund  
National Association of Social Workers, West Virginia Chapter  
Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia  
TEAM for West Virginia Children  
Wisconsin Association of Family and Children's Agencies  
Wisconsin Children's Trust Fund  
Adoption Resources of Wisconsin  
Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin  
Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin  
Word of Hope Ministries (Milwaukee, WI)  
St. Rose Youth & Family Center (Milwaukee, WI)  
Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming

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