Child Welfare Fellows & Youth Homelessness Fellows

June 25-27, Nashville, Tenn.
About NCSL

• Bipartisan membership organization
  • All 50 states, District of Columbia and U.S. territories
    • 7,386 legislators
    • All legislative staff (30,000+)

• Goals:
  • To improve the quality & effectiveness of legislatures
  • To promote policy innovation and communication among legislatures
  • To ensure states, DC and territories a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system

• Research, education, technical assistance
• Voice of the states, D.C. and territories in the federal system
How NCSL Strengthens Legislatures

Policy Research
NCSL provides trusted, nonpartisan policy research and analysis

Connections
NCSL links legislators and staff with each other and with experts

Training
NCSL delivers training tailored specifically for legislators and staff

State Voice in D.C.
NCSL represents and advocates on behalf of states on Capitol Hill

Meetings
NCSL meetings facilitate information exchange and policy discussions
Why are we co-locating?

- Intersection of topics
- Exchange policy options, successes and challenges
- Foster relationships among more colleagues, more national experts and more NCSL staff
- More opportunities to consider how to apply what is learned here back home
Ground Rules & Expectations

Engage and participate

Approach with open mind and assume best intentions

Take advantage of each other, experts, NCSL staff and other resources

Modified “Vegas rules”
Who is in the room?
Introductions, aspirations and expectations
Thank You!
2023 Indy Legislative Summit

Aug. 14-16, 2023
Joint Opening Plenary

Melissa Merrick, PhD
President and CEO, Prevent Child Abuse America
All children and families live a purposeful and happy life with hope for the future.

NCSL Child Welfare & Youth Homelessness Fellows

June 26, 2023
**Mission:**
To prevent the abuse and neglect of our nation’s children.

**Vision:**
We envision a world where all children grow up happy, healthy, and prepared to succeed in supportive families and communities.
PCA America’s Work to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

Our approach works at two levels – boots-on-the-ground programs and actions that impact systems-level change.

State Chapter Network
50-state chapter network that drives regional initiatives and policies.

Home Visiting
Healthy Families America is one of the leading family support and evidence-based home visiting programs in the U.S.

Research
Elevate lessons learned from the field and advance knowledge of what works.

Public Policy
Mobilize national and state policy makers to adopt non-partisan policies that support families.

Public Awareness
Raise public awareness to increase individual and community action to prevent abuse.
A Child’s Health Affects All of Us

Stress and trauma can interrupt child development, putting children at risk for lifelong physical and mental health issues.

However, children with positive childhood experiences are more likely to become healthier, happier adults.

And healthy adults contribute to a more productive, prosperous, and flourishing society -- for all of us.
Evidence shows that stress and trauma can interrupt healthy child development, putting people at risk for lifelong health issues.
ACEs Can Accumulate and Their Effects Last Beyond Childhood

Toxic stress can disrupt **ORGAN, TISSUE, AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT**. Over time this can limit a person’s ability to process information, make decisions, interact with others, and regulate emotions. These consequences may follow a person into adulthood.
The Pair of ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Maternal Depression
- Emotional & Sexual Abuse
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence

Adverse Community Environments

- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Community Disruption
- Lack of Opportunity, Economic Mobility & Social Capital
- Homelessness
- Divorce
- Mental Illness
- Incarceration
- Violence
- Poor Housing Quality & Affordability

Public health is what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which (all) people can be healthy.

Institute of Medicine
Most parents want to be good parents, but overloads of stress, generational trauma, and systemic inequities can take their toll.

1 in 7 An estimated 1 in 7 U.S. children experience abuse or neglect annually.

80% 80% of child welfare cases are for neglect. Neglect is often confused with poverty, as it relates to access to food, housing, etc.

5x Rates of child abuse and neglect are 5x higher for children in families with low socio-economic status.

2x Black children are twice as likely as white children to be in foster care.
Unmarried parenting youth had a 200% higher risk of reporting homelessness.

Youth reporting annual household income of less than $24,000 had a 162% higher risk of reporting homelessness.

Approximately 1.1 million children had a young parent who experienced homelessness during the past year.

Black youth had an 83% higher risk of reporting homelessness.

Source: Voices of Youth Count, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
The Why
By **addressing root causes** of ACEs, we can prevent significant health issues, risky behaviors and foster healthier, more equitable communities.
WHAT IS PRIMARY PREVENTION?
Stopping abuse before it occurs.
Primary prevention activities are designed for the general population to provide support to prevent ACEs and minimize risks before they occur.

WHAT IS SECONDARY PREVENTION?
Targeted responses to at-risk populations.
Secondary prevention activities are targeted at families that have one or more risk factors associated with ACEs (such as substance use or mental health conditions) to prevent and minimize challenges.

WHAT IS TERTIARY PREVENTION?
Long-term responses to stop abuse and neglect and minimize consequences.
Tertiary prevention activities focus on families of children who have already experienced ACEs in order to minimize impact, prevent further harm and help families heal.

UNDERSTANDING PREVENTION
Preventing and mitigating Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) protects children, strengthens families and saves taxpayer dollars. Investing in prevention efforts upstream helps to prevent more serious problems in the future.
Roadmap to Child and Family Well-Being

- Maternal & Child Health
- Early Childhood Supports
- Economic & Housing Stability
- Mental Health Supports
- Community Education
WHAT ARE SOME OF THE POLICY OPTIONS THAT STRENGTHEN FAMILIES?

**Maternal & Child Health**
- Evidence-based Home Visiting
- Prenatal Care
- Enhanced primary care

**Economic & Housing Stability**
- Child Tax Credit
- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Minimum Wage
- Housing supports
- Paid Leave programs
- Nutrition programs

**Community and Education & Awareness**
- 1-800 warm lines
- Public education campaigns
- Family Resource Centers
- Child sex abuse prevention education

**Early Childhood Supports**
- Pre-K & Afterschool programs
- Parent support and education
- Quality and affordable childcare
- Childcare Subsidies

**Mental Health Supports**
- Accessible mental health services
- Behavioral parent training programs
- Trauma informed care in schools and childcare centers
Healthy Families America: Decades of research shows positive results and sustained impact with families.

- Reduced recurrence of maltreatment by 1/3
- 5x more likely to enroll in school or training programs
- 27% fewer families were homeless
- 48% fewer low-birthweight Infants
- 30% fewer intimate partner violence incidents resulting in injury
- 26% fewer children receive special ed services

For more information and citations, see HFA's Evidence of Effectiveness at https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/our-impact/evidence-of-effectiveness/
My Wish For You…

CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY IS PREVENTABLE.
Prevent Child Abuse America®
NATIONAL CONFERENCE
BALTIMORE, MD
TOGETHER FOR PREVENTION
AUGUST 22 – 24, 2023
Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor
You can be the difference that lasts a lifetime.

Contact PCA America
policyteam@preventchildabuse.org

Learn more
preventchildabuse.org