



Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act

ACTION

- Reauthorize and increase funding for the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) programs.

HISTORY

Since 1974, CAPTA has been part of the federal government's effort to help states and communities improve their practices in preventing and treating child abuse and neglect. CAPTA provides grants to states to support innovations in state child protective services (CPS) and community-based preventive services, as well as research, training, data collection, and program evaluation.

Congress will reauthorize CAPTA this year. This reauthorization will offer an opportunity to explore the need for a stronger federal role in providing resources for preventing and treating child abuse and neglect and establishing stronger mechanisms for federal oversight and accountability to monitor state and county CPS efforts. The reauthorization will also be an opportunity to examine some of the changes established by the 1996 amendments, including the narrower definition of child abuse and neglect and the new requirement for states to establish at least three citizen review panels to examine CPS policies and procedures. Another issue for review will be clarifying methods to preserve confidentiality of child abuse and neglect records, including the use of open court hearings in abuse and neglect hearings.

State Grants

Title I of CAPTA authorizes discretionary grants to the states to help improve their CPS systems. Funding for these grants has remained level over the past several years at \$21 million. CAPTA imposes no income or other eligibility requirements for persons receiving assistance, and the program is intended to help children of any age. These grants are used to develop innovative approaches to improve CPS systems. States must meet eligibility requirements, such as having mandatory reporting laws, preserving victims' confidentiality, appointing guardians ad litem, and establishing citizen review panels.

Discretionary Grants

CAPTA discretionary funds are intended to enable states to improve their practices in preventing and treating child abuse and neglect. These funds support program development, research, training, technical assistance, and the collection and dissemination of data to advance the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. These funds also support the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, the only federal data collection effort to determine the scope of child abuse and neglect. CAPTA funds also support other national initiatives, such as the national incidence study of child abuse and neglect, the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment, and the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect. FY 2001 funding for these discretionary grants was \$44.7 million.

Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program

The Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program was created in 1996 by combining the authority for the existing Community-Based Family Resource Programs, the Temporary Child Care for Children with Disabilities and Crisis Nurseries Program, and the Family Support Program. The consolidated program provides grants to states to support state efforts, through formula grants, to develop, operate, and expend a network of community-based, prevention-focused family resource and support programs that coordinate resources among a range of existing public and private organizations.

Funding is allocated to states by a formula based on the number of children in a state's population and on the amount of funds directed through the grant recipient for prevention and family resource activities. A state's funding recipient is designated by the governor and must be an existing entity with priority consideration to a Children's Trust Fund or other entity that leverages a mix of funds for prevention activities. The Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program was funded at \$32.8 million for FY 2001.

KEY FACTS *

- In 1998, an estimated 2,898,000 children were reported and referred for investigation to state and local CPS agencies because family members, professionals, or other citizens were concerned about their safety and well-being.
- After follow-up assessments, officials were able to substantiate 903,000 of these cases.
- An estimated 409,000 of these child victims received post-investigative services. An additional estimated 211,000 children who were subjects of unsubstantiated reports also received post-investigative services. The median response time from report to start of post-investigative services was 29 days.
- An estimated 1,100 children died as a result of abuse and neglect in 1998; 38% of those children died before reaching their first birthday.

* Source: Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2000). *Child maltreatment 1998: Reports from the states to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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