



Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act

ACTION

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

HISTORY

CAPTA is the only federal legislation exclusively dedicated to the continuum of child maltreatment services and supports—prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

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 infrastructure and innovations in state child protective services (CPS) and community-based preventive services, as well as research, training, data collection, and program evaluation.

In 2002, the House of Representatives passed two versions of CAPTA reauthorization, and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions adopted its own version. Congress failed to resolve the differences between these two versions before adjourning. One of the major issues discussed in the 107th Congress was how to deal with cases in which a child is born with fetal alcohol syndrome or neonatal abstinence syndrome. Later versions of CAPTA reauthorization required states to have policies and procedures for referring newborns and their families to community services that can assess their comprehensive needs. This issue may be raised again in 2003.

State Grants

Title I of CAPTA authorizes discretionary grants to the states to help improve their CPS systems. Funding for these grants has not grown much over the past several years. In fiscal year 2002, CAPTA state grants were funded at \$22 million.

CAPTA imposes no income or other eligibility requirements for people receiving assistance, and the program is intended to keep children of any age safe from harm. States use these grants to develop innovative approaches to improve CPS systems. States must meet eligibility requirements, such as having mandatory reporting laws, preserving victim confidentiality, appointing guardians ad litem, and establishing citizen review panels.

Discretionary Grants

CAPTA discretionary funds support state efforts to improve their practices in preventing and treating child abuse and neglect. 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 Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment, and the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect. FY 2002 funding for these discretionary grants was \$26 million.

Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program

The Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program was created in 1996 by combining the 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 their efforts to develop, operate, and expand 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 to prevention and family resource activities. The governor designates the state's funding recipient, which must be an existing entity, with priority consideration for children's trust funds or other entities that leverage a mix of funds for prevention activities. The Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program was funded at \$33.4 million in FY 2002.

KEY FACTS *

- In 2000, state and local CPS agencies received an estimated 2.8 million reports of abuse and neglect by family members, professionals, or other citizens who were concerned about children's safety and well-being. CPS agencies investigated more than 1.7 million reports, representing an estimated 2.9 million children.
- After follow-up assessments, officials were able to substantiate that 879,000 children had been abused or neglected.
- An estimated 1,236 children died as a result of abuse and neglect in 2000.
- Of the children who were victims of abuse and neglect in 2000, 62.8% of victims suffered neglect, 19.3% were physically abused, 10.1% were sexually abused, and 7.7% were emotionally or psychologically maltreated.
- More than 83% of these child victims were maltreated by at least one parent. The most common pattern of maltreatment was a child victimized by a female parent acting alone (40%).

SOURCE

- * U.S. Children's Bureau. (2002). *Child maltreatment 2000: Reports from the states to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System*. Available online at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cmreports.htm. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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