

Funding to Implement Family First Act

Funding to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect



Fully Fund Title IV-B Programs to Implement the Family First Act.

Congress passed the Family First Prevention Services Act (PL 115-123) this year. The legislation has great potential to expand services that can prevent the placement of children into foster care. It challenges states to reduce the number of children and youth in congregate placements. This is an important goal of the Family First Act, but it is a challenge to states to build the capacity and access to services (mental health, substance use, and in-home services) and to build the infrastructure of services and providers. Congress must fully fund *Child Welfare Services* from \$269 million to ***\$325 million*** and *Promoting Safe and Stable Families* from \$99 million to ***\$200 million in appropriations***; increase funding to the *Adoption Opportunities Act* to ***\$60 million***; and fully fund the annual *Adoption and Kinship Incentives Fund* at ***\$75 million***.

Starting in FY 2020, the Family First Act allows states to draw funds for services to assist children and families at risk of foster care placement. Only evidence-based models will be allowable to families that need intervention, post-adoption, and reunification services. In some instances these in-home programs are limited by evidence and research.

For state child welfare agencies to qualify for these funds they need to identify programs and practices that qualify as well-supported, supported, and promising programs with at least half of the funding spent on well-supported programs. To accomplish this and to safely reduce the number of children in institutional care states need to build up research-based programs and create partnerships and collaborations between families, youth, communities and residential providers to make sure that the Family First Act is successfully implemented and sustained and positive outcomes for children and their families are accomplished.

Child Welfare Services (Title IV-B part 1) and Promoting Safe and Stable Families (Title IV-B part 2) have slightly different missions, but these two programs can help develop more well-supported family support and family preservation services and help increase support for relative caregivers. Current funding can be spent on family preservation, family support, adoption services and reunification services. All target services for an effective Family First Act Implementation.

The Adoption Opportunities Act, as well as the Adoption and Kinship Incentive Fund, help in the recruitment of adoptive families, the development of post-legal adoption services, and the building of programs that may qualify for Family First Act-eligible services. There is a great need to provide, enhance, and develop these post adoption services.

Prevent Child Abuse: Fund the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and the Community-Based Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Act (CB-CAP).

Child abuse and neglect affects over 1 million children every year. Child abuse and neglect costs our nation \$220 million every day through increased investigations, foster care, health care costs, and behavioral health costs and treatment.¹ Additional costs may include special education, juvenile and adult crime, chronic health problems, and other costs across the life span. This same research shows that we paid \$80 billion to address child abuse and neglect in 2012.² We need to prevent child abuse before it happens by funding key programs that focus on the *prevention of child abuse*. Congress must fully fund the ***Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)*** at ***\$120 million*** and the ***Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect program (CB-CAP)*** at ***\$80 million***.

Investing in prevention is less costly to society and the government than trying to treat problems later. Successful prevention of child maltreatment means better outcomes for children and can build stronger families and prevent the need for future intervention services and foster care.

In 1974, Congress passed CAPTA and helped establish national standards for reporting and response practices for states to include in their child protection laws. CAPTA is the only federal legislation exclusively dedicated to the continuum of child maltreatment services and supports, including preventing, assessing, identifying, and treating child abuse and neglect.

Another key prevention program authorized with CAPTA is CB-CAP, which provides funds to states to support, develop, operate, and expand a network of community-based, prevention-focused family support programs. Funds coordinate family resources among a range of local public and private organizations. CB-CAP grants help to expand networks of community-based, prevention-focused family programs with 70% of the funding distributed to states based on the child population. The remaining 30% is distributed to the states based on the amount of private, state, or other non-Federal funds leveraged during the year.

In 2016, according to the National Resource Center for CB-CAP, FRIENDS, these public-private funded CB-CAP activities served more than 295,000 adults and caregivers; 289,000 children and 200,000 families including those with disabilities. Over 29.4 million families were reached through public awareness activities funded by CB-CAP. These services included 21,697 parents and 19,710 children with disabilities.

Together, CAPTA and CB-CAP help provide a continuum of services, develop local partnerships, and involve several target populations and providers. But both programs are vastly underfunded, and we need to do much more in preventing child abuse before it happens. Congress just added some funds to CAPTA this past February—the first increase since 2005. 2005 was the last time that CB-CAP was increased. Now we need to fully fund both prevention-of-child-abuse programs.

¹ *The Estimated Annual Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect*, Prevent Child Abuse America, Stats and Facts, Taken from the internet: <http://preventchildabuse.org/resource/the-estimated-annual-cost-of-child-abuse-and-neglect/>

² Ibid.