

ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Vision Statement

All children in Indiana deserve to grow up free from experiencing physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, neglect and witnessing family violence.

THE CHILDREN'S COALITION OF INDIANA WILL ADVOCATE AND SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING:

Advocacy

- ◆ Education and family support services to *prevent* child abuse and neglect and family violence, made available and accessible for all parents and caregivers.
- ◆ Minimize the over-representation of minority children in the child welfare system.
- ◆ Improve parental access to quality legal representation in all cases of child abuse/neglect.
- ◆ Improve relatives' ability to gain better access to legal representation and resources in cases where they may be able to take the child.
- ◆ Enforcement of emotional abuse statute to ensure the effect of the abuse on the child's development is considered.

Legislative Action

- ◆ Promote policies that draw from research and existing knowledge about effective child welfare practice.
- ◆ Ensure the expansion of the child welfare workforce includes adequate recruitment, training and retention mechanisms to ensure that the quality of staff is not lost in the focus to increase quantity of staff.

Administrative Action

- ◆ Monitor development of the Department of Child Services to ensure the policies and procedures reflect the best interest of children and families. Specific actions to support:
 - ✓ Ensure the expansion of the child welfare workforce includes adequate recruitment, training and retention mechanisms to ensure that the quality of staff is not lost in the focus to increase quantity of staff.
 - ✓ Ensure continuity of family case managers for families involved with DCS services.
 - ✓ Ensure services to maintain children in the home, or to reunify children, are available, timely, and easily accessible to all families in Indiana.
 - ✓ Ensure the practice reform model, such as screening tools and family teamings, continues to follow all standards established by the Casey Foundation, as the model is expanded in DCS offices across the state
 - ✓ Support a Domestic Violence system that protects both the adult victims of family violence and children who witness family violence.

Implications of Non-Action

- ◆ Child abuse and neglect can be predictors of increased risk for adult criminality and violence; lowered academic and occupational achievement; greater likelihood for significant health problems and greater health care utilization; homelessness; and long-term (often life-long) psychiatric disorders.
- ◆ Exposure to violence is a key factor in the development of emotional and behavioral disorders in children.
- ◆ Inadequate workforce development within the child welfare system creates an inadequate system of service delivery, thereby reducing the likelihood of realizing the goal of keeping Hoosier children safe.
- ◆ Inconsistent service provision prevents children from accessing the services they need to either remain in their homes safely or to establish permanency if they cannot remain at home.
- ◆ Children whose parents are not represented by legal counsel in court on matters related to child abuse/neglect remain in foster care for longer periods of time.
- ◆ Domestic Violence Services that lack a combined focus on both adult victims and children, who witness domestic violence, place additional blame on adult victims for their abuse and/or eliminate opportunities to address the serious needs of children who witness family violence.

RATIONALE: ABUSE AND NEGLECT/VIOLENCE

Rates of Child Abuse and Neglect:

*Rates of Child Abuse and Neglect in the US in 2009 **

- ◆ 3.6 million children were the subjects of abuse or neglect investigations
- ◆ 702,000 children or 9.3 children per 1,000 were victims of child maltreatment
- ◆ 1,770 children died from abuse or neglect.

*Rates of Child Abuse and Neglect in Indiana – 2009*¹*

- ◆ 110,431 children were reported as potential victims of abuse or neglect
- ◆ 27,754 of these reports were substantiated
- ◆ 46 children died from abuse or neglect in Indiana in SFY 2008

Other Trends:

- ◆ Each year, approximately 10 million children are exposed to some form of domestic violence in their own homes.
- ◆ Minority children represent approximately 1/3 of the general population, but they represent approximately ½ of the children in foster care.
- ◆ The children of parents who abuse drugs and/or alcohol are nearly three times more likely to be abused by their parents and four times more likely to be neglected. Although substance abuse is a treatable problem, almost half of parents with substance abuse problems, who are involved in the child welfare system, are neither offered nor provided substance abuse treatment services.

Connection Between Child Abuse/Neglect and Family Violence:

- ◆ 70% of men who frequently assault their wives also frequently assault their children².
- ◆ Child protection intervention with children, who are exposed (this includes witnessing) to family violence, often results in placement of children in foster care with a substantiated allegation of neglect against the abused mother, with little or no services provided to the adult victim to protect her or to end the family violence.
- ◆ The U.S. Department of Human Services emphasizes the need for children to be included in the definition of domestic violence, as children who witness abuse suffer emotional and developmental difficulties similar to children who are the direct victims of abuse.
- ◆ Of the 5,319 children served by Indiana residential treatment and foster care providers in 2005, 30.5% had witnessed domestic violence.³

Direct Costs of Child Abuse and Neglect:

- ◆ Expenses associated with hospitalization and medical services to treat injuries resulting from abuse, child protective services (CPS), or police investigations.
- ◆ Long term costs for medical and/or mental health services for adults who were victims of child abuse or neglect.
- ◆ Foster care and other out-of-home placement services for maltreated children.
- ◆ Family preservation, rehabilitation, and treatment programs.
- ◆ Investigational and prosecutorial costs for offenders.

¹ U.S. Department. of Health and Human Services, 2009

* Indiana Department of Child Services Demographic Trends Report 2008

² Volpe, J. (2004). *Effects of domestic violence on children and adolescents: An Overview*. American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress.

³ Wall, J. R. & Koch, S. M (2006). *The IARCCA outcome measures project: Executive summary report for calendar year 2005 and cross-year comparisons*. Indianapolis, IN: IARCCA.