

April 10, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As national, state, and local organizations dedicated to the well-being of vulnerable children and families, we write to urge Congress to act immediately to provide crucial support to families facing the stress and disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, by equipping the child welfare system with the tools it needs to handle the crisis.

State and local leaders across the country are working hard to continue vital child welfare prevention and intervention services during these extraordinary times, but they face major challenges, so Congress must act now to address these needs. Funding is urgently needed to strengthen the state and local systems that prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect and that address the needs of children, youth, and families already in the foster care system. The impacts of COVID-19 are putting stress on families who are attempting to navigate new public health safety protocols, school closures, uncertain childcare arrangements, job losses, social isolation, and significant barriers to many critical support services.

Without interventions to support families, the kinds of stress that the COVID-19 pandemic is creating contribute to increased risk of child abuse and neglect. Strengthening the system to face these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the entire child welfare continuum. While we are grateful for Congress' bipartisan actions to respond to the pandemic so far, they have not yet addressed these specific challenges. Our organizations urge Congress to act swiftly to:

1. Support families to keep children safe from child abuse and neglect.

- **Increase funding to CAPTA Title II Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CB-CAP) grants by \$1 billion** to quickly deploy resources directly to locally-driven prevention services and programs. CB-CAPs provide community-based grants to all 50 states for the express purpose of preventing child abuse and neglect, including key services like state child abuse hotlines, voluntary home visiting programs, parent support programs, baby pantries, distribution of food and medication, family resources centers, and respite care services. This will target specific prevention services to communities where it is needed most, help state and local systems adapt to the unique challenges of serving families during this pandemic, and avoid waiting lists.
- **Increase funding to Title IV-B, Part 2, the MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (PSSF) by \$1 billion** to help eliminate the need for out-of-home placements, both to protect children and to prevent the child welfare system from being overwhelmed by the crisis. PSSF is a critical funding source for stabilizing families, supporting foster parents, and other prevention efforts for states during times of crisis.
- **Ensure the FMAP rate increase is provided to the new Title IV-E Prevention Program.** This is important to clarify because the Title IV-E Prevention Program is *not* currently reimbursed at the

FMAP rate, but instead is reimbursed at a 50% rate (it moves to FMAP reimbursement in 2027), so we recommend a total of 50% plus whatever is the final FMAP increase.

2. **Strengthen response and intervention systems to meet the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

- **Increase funding to kinship navigator programs by \$20 million** to ensure access to information and resources for older relative caregivers at acute risk of COVID-19, such as food, health and safety supplies, and other necessities. Grandparents and other relatives who step in to raise children keep them safely with family and out of foster care, saving taxpayers more than \$4 billion each year. These caregivers, who are often older, are struggling to access basic food, medicine, and supplies because it requires them to leave their home, increasing risk of exposure to the virus which could lead to incapacitating illness or death and no one else to care for the children.
- **Increase funding to CAPTA Title I by \$500 million** to ensure state and local child protection systems can adapt to these new circumstances while continuing to respond quickly to the reports of child abuse and address barriers to ordinary service delivery during the pandemic. This funding will ensure the child protection workforce has necessary technological and protective resources to prevent the interruption of vital support services to children and families amidst this crisis. In person investigations are being disrupted in ways that put children at risk of great harm.
- **Increase funding to the Court Improvement Program (CIP) by \$30 million** to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the functioning of child welfare courts. Court shutdowns, need for emergency investment in technology, and reduced staffing are already resulting in delayed hearings, and, ultimately, compromised child safety, delayed family reunification, and loss of accountability and critical support to child victims and their families. CIP is the only source of federal funding for state courts related to child welfare and is well-positioned to help address challenges in the administration of legal proceedings in this field.

3. **Address the needs of older youth already in, or transitioning out of, the foster care system.**

- **Increase funding to Title IV-E Chafee funds by \$500 million** to allow states additional funding to support young people in the transition from foster care to adulthood. This provides states with the necessary resources to ensure a flexible, rapid response to the emerging needs of transition-age youth and Chafee-eligible former foster youth, including financial assistance, housing, and employment assistance, in the face of this pandemic.

Further, we support the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Coalition request to increase funding to the Social Services Block Grant by several billion dollars to help states provide critical services and supports tailored to the needs of their community, including child protective services, child abuse prevention services, and foster care. These funds can fill in gaps not covered elsewhere and backfill many human services, given the flexibility of SSBG. This should also include a set-aside for Tribes, which does not currently exist.

It is crucial these targeted supports are provided to help families navigate this uncertain time, and vital to ensure children remain safe in their homes. Thank you in advance for partnering with us to support the well-being of vulnerable children and families.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

A World Fit For Kids!

African American Health Alliance

AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Medical Student Association
American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
American Psychological Association
Ascentria Care Alliance
Banner Health Care; SCAN Program
Bethany Christian Services
Boys Town
CASA Children's Intervention Services, Inc.
Center for Community Resilience
Center for Disability Rights
Center for the Study of Social Policy
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Child First, Inc.
Childhelp
Children and Family Futures
Children's Action Network
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Children's Rights
Children's Trust Fund Alliance
Children's Advocacy Institute
Choices Coordinated Care Solutions
Chord Equity
Circle of Parents Inc.,
Coalition on Human Needs
Committee for Children
Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
Epilepsy Alliance America
Every Child Matters
Families USA
Family Centered Treatment Foundation
Family Focused Treatment Association
First Focus Campaign for Children
First Place for Youth
Forum for Youth Investment
Foster America
Foster Care Alumni of America
FosterClub
Fostering Change Network Foundation
Friends of the Children
Futures Without Violence
Gay Parent Magazine

Generations United
George Junior Republic
GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Institute for Child Success
Jewish Women International
Justice Policy Institute
Juvenile Law Center
Kempe for Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect
Lambda Legal
Lutheran Social Services of Indiana
Marion County Communities of Shalom
MassKids - Enough Abuse Campaign
Monique Burr Foundation for Children, Inc.
NAACP
NASW
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA)
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National CASA/GAL Association for Children
National Center for Child Abuse Statistics and Policy
National Center for Children in Poverty
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Center for Youth Law
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Child Abuse Coalition
National Children's Alliance
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
National Crittenton
National Education Association
National Family Support Network
National Foster Parent Association
National Foster Youth Institute
National Foundation to End Child Abuse and Neglect
National Network for Youth
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization of Counsel for Children
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
National Respite Coalition
National Youth Advocate Program, Inc.
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
North American Council on Adoptable Children

Nurse-Family Partnership
Parents Anonymous, Inc.
Parents as Teachers
Partnership for America's Children
Pressley Ridge
Prevent Child Abuse America
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
RaiseAChild
Ray E. Helfer Society
Redstone Center for Prevention and Wellness
RESULTS
Rights4Girls
Saint Francis Ministries
Service Alternatives
Sisters of Charity Federation
Sisters of Charity, BVM
SparkAction
Starr Commonwealth
StepStone Family & Youth Services
Stop It Now!
The Adoption Exchange, Inc.
The Forum for Youth Investment
The Ounce of Prevention Fund
The Trevor Project
Thrive a Work
Treatment Communities of America
True Colors United
Union for Reform Judaism
Voice for Adoption
YMCA of the USA
Youth Law Center
Youth Villages
ZERO TO THREE

State Organizations:

Alabama

Addiction Prevention Coalition
Alabama Lifespan Respite
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children
Alfred Saliba Family Services Center
Autauga County Family Support Center
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Birmingham
Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Alabama
Black Belt Fatherhood Initiative

Child Abuse Prevention Services of Tuscaloosa
Child Care Resource Center, Inc.
Children's Trust Fund of Alabama
Circle of Care
Dallas County Family Resource Center
East Alabama Mental Health
Family Guidance Center of Alabama, Inc.
Family Service Center (Bay Minette)
Family Services Center (Huntsville)
Family Services Center of Calhoun County, Inc.
Family Success Center of Etowah County, Inc.
FIRST Family Service Center
Friend of the Court/CASA of Shelby County
HOPE PLACE Family Resource Center
Jasper Area Family Services Center, Inc.
Kid One Transport System, Inc.
Loving and Learning Parent Program
Madison County Elementary Loving and Learning Parents Club
Parents And Children Together (PACT)
Pickens County Family Resource Center
Prevent Child Abuse Alabama
Shepherd's Cove In School Bereavement Program
Sowing Seeds of Hope, Inc.
Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement, Inc.
Teens Empowerment Awareness with ResolutionS, Inc. (TEARS)
The Children and Family Connection of Russell County, Inc.
Tuscaloosa's One Place
United Ability
United Cerebral Palsy of NW Alabama
United Methodist Inner City Mission
VOICES for Alabama's Children
YWCA Central Alabama

Alaska

Alaska Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Association
Alaska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Alaska Children's Alliance
Alaska Children's Trust
Bristol Bay Native Association
Catholic Community Service, Inc.
CCS Early Learning
Fairbanks Youth Advocates
Kids Corps, Inc.
Mat-Su Health Foundation
Nine Star Education & Employment Services
Nine Star Enterprises
Onward & Upward
Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc.
Southeast Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children

Stone Soup Group
The Carol H. Brice Family Center
Thrivalaska Head Start Birth to Five
Unalaskans Against Sexual Assault & Family Violence
VOA Alaska
YWCA Alaska

Arizona

Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Arizona Council of Human Service Providers
Casa de los Ninos
Child & Family Resources, Inc.
Children's Action Alliance

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Methodist Family Health

California

Advokids
Alliance for Children's Rights
Association of Community Human Service Agencies
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California CASA Association
California Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics
California Family Resource Association
California Federation of Family Child Care Associations
Cardenas Group
Central American Resource Center --CARECEN SF
Child Abuse Prevention Center
Children Now
Children's Bureau of Southern California
Children's Defense Fund - California
Children's Law Center of California
Compass Family Services
Courage to Change, Inc.
Edgewood Center for Children and Families
Family Connections Centers
Foster Care Counts
Hathaway-Sycamores
Homeless Prenatal Program
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Legal Services for Children
North Star Family Center
Phenomenal Families
Prevent Child Abuse California
Public Counsel
Safe & Sound
San Mateo County Private Defender Program

Seneca Family of Agencies
Side by Side
Stanford Sierra Youth & Families
Tarzana Treatment Centers Inc.
The Children's Partnership
The San Francisco Family Resource Center Alliance
YMCA of San Diego County, Youth and Family Services

Colorado

American Academy of Pediatrics Colorado
Colorado Association of Family & Children's Agencies (CAFCA)
Colorado CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)
Family Resource Center Association
Fostering Colorado
Tennyson Center for Children

Connecticut

Center for Children's Advocacy
Children in Placement - CT, Inc.
Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families
Connecticut Children's Alliance
Plymouth FRC
True Colors, Inc. Sexual Minority Youth and Family Services of Connecticut

Delaware

Prevent Child Abuse Delaware

District of Columbia

Children's Law Center

Florida

ChildNet, Inc.
Children's Home Network
Children's Home Network-Kinship
Children's Network of SWFL
Directions for Living
Eckerd Community Alternatives Florida
Florida Coalition for Children
Florida Network of Youth and Family Services
Florida's Children First
Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services, Inc.
Jewish Adoption and Family Care Options
KidSafe Foundation
LifeStream Behavioral Center, Inc.
Lutheran Services Florida
Neighbor To Family, Inc.
SOS Children's Villages Florida
St. Augustine Youth Services

Georgia

Family Ties Enterprises, Inc.
Georgia Association of Counsel for Children
Wellroot Family Services

Hawaii

Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Idaho

Idaho Children's Trust Fund/Prevent Child Abuse Idaho
Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Idaho Relatives as Parents
Relatives As Parents Inc.

Illinois

Allendale Association
Bethany for Children & Families
Child Abuse Council
Children's Home & Aid
ChildServ
Glenwood Academy
Illinois Association of Court Appointed Special Advocates
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Illinois Collaboration on Youth
Illinois-Iowa Center for Independent Living
Lawrence Hall
The Center for Youth and Family Solutions

Indiana

Bauer Family Resources Inc.
Children's Bureau Inc.
Crisis Center Inc. a Youth Service Bureau-Alternative House
Dockside Services
Families First Indiana, Inc.
Family and Community Partners
Family Ark, Inc.
Family Community Connections, INC
Family Focus, Inc.
Family Time, Inc.
Gibault Children's Services
Indiana Association of Resources and Child Advocacy
Interact Family Services
Lutheran Social Services of Indiana
Marion County Commission On Youth, Inc.
Open Arms Family and Educational Services
Open Door Youth Services
Paddock View Residential Center, Inc
SCAN, Inc. (Stop Child Abuse and Neglect)
Stepping Stone Therapy Center

The Phoenix Institute
The Youth Service Bureau of Jay County, Inc.
United Methodist Youth Home, Inc.
Youth Services Bureau of Huntington County
The Villages of Indiana, Inc.

Iowa

Amani Community Services
Child and Family Policy Center
Coalition for Family & Children's Services in Iowa
EMBARC
Every Child Matters in Iowa
Iowa Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Lutheran Services in Iowa
Prevent Child Abuse Iowa
Youth Emergency Services & Shelter of Iowa
YSS

Kansas

Child Advocacy Center of Sedgwick County
Kansas Children's Service League
The Children's Shelter

Kentucky

Children's Alliance of Kentucky
Family Connection, Inc.
Holly Hill Child & Family Solutions
Hope Hill Youth Services
Kentucky Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Kentucky Youth Advocates
Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky
Ramey-Estep Homes, Inc.
Re-group
Seven Counties Services
Transformations: Hope for Today's Families, LLC
Volunteers of America Mid-States

Louisiana

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Information Center of Louisiana
Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families
Louisiana Supreme Court-Division of Children and Families

Maine

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program
American Academy of Pediatrics, Maine Chapter
Community Concepts, Inc
Maine Children's Alliance
Maine Children's Trust
New Beginnings Inc.

Spurwink Services
Volunteers of America Northern New England

Maryland

Addiction Connections Resource
Adoptions Together
Center for Children
Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maryland Chapter, National Association of Social Workers
Maryland Essentials for Childhood
Maryland State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCCAN)

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Citizens for Children
Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Michigan

Michigan Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Michigan Children's Trust Fund
Michigan's Children
Northern Family Intervention Services, Inc.
Seeds for Success
Voices for Children

Minnesota

AspireMN
Children's Defense Fund - Minnesota
Family Alternatives
Foster Advocates
Main Street Family Services
Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Minnesota Communities Caring for Children
Therapeutic Services Agency, Inc.
West Central Initiative

Mississippi

Children's Defense Fund - Southern Regional Office
Mississippi Center for Justice
Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Mississippi Family Caregiver Coalition

Missouri

Cornerstones of Care
FosterAdopt Connect
Great Circle
Kids Win Missouri
Missouri Children's Trust Fund

Missouri KidsFirst
Saint Louis Crisis Nursery

Montana

Billings Exchange Clubs' Child Abuse Prevention Center - The Family Tree Center
ChildWise Institute
Partnership for Children
Prevent Child Abuse Montana
Zero to Five Montana

Nebraska

American Academy of Pediatrics, Nebraska Chapter
Children and Family Coalition of Nebraska
Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska
Nebraska Appleseed
Voices for Children in Nebraska

Nevada

Children's Advocacy Alliance
Foster Kinship

New Hampshire

CASA of New Hampshire
Family Support New Hampshire

New Jersey

Acenda Integrated Health
Caregivers of New Jersey
CARES Institute, Rowan Medicine
Family and Children's Services
Jewish Family Service of Atlantic & Cape May Counties
New Jersey Association of Mental Health & Addiction Agencies, Inc.
New Jersey Parents Caucus, Inc.
Pinwheel Place
The Family Resource Network
Visions and Pathways

New Mexico

Equality New Mexico

New York

Assemblyman Andrew D. Hevesi, 28th A.D.
Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth
Bridge Builders Community Partnership
Children's Defense Fund - New York
Citizens' Committee for Children of NY
Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies
Empire Justice Center
Family Enrichment Network

JCCA
Kinship Care Support Initiative
Leadership Training Institute
NY Council on Adoptable Children
NYS AAP - Chapter 2
NYS AAP Chapter 3
NYS Kinship Navigator
Prince of Peace Church
Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship and Training
The Children's Agenda
The Neighborhood Center, Inc.
We All Rise
Westchester Children's Association

North Carolina

Benchmarks
Child Care Services Association
Children's Home Society of NC
Children's Law Center of Central North Carolina
Coastal Horizons
Communities In Schools of Durham
Criminal Justice Alternatives
Equality North Carolina
NC Child
NC Pediatric Society
Partnership for Children of Wayne County
Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina
Strong Able Youth Speaking Out (SaySo)
The Arc of Union/Cabarrus, Inc

North Dakota

North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Ohio

Children's Defense Fund - Ohio
Groundwork Ohio
Kinnect
Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Ohio Children's Alliance
Ohio Council of Churches
Providence House
Public Children Services Organization of Ohio
Schubert Center for Child Studies at CWRU
The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Services Providers

Oklahoma

CREOKS Health Services

EB Consulting
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy
Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness
parentPRO PAT-Great Plains

Oregon

Children's Institute
Happy Valley Montessori School
Oregon Alliance
Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries
Oregon Montessori Association
Our Children Oregon
Prevent Child Abuse Oregon
Trillium Family Services

Pennsylvania

Columbia County Family Center
Mercer County Family Center
Moms Offering Moms Support
Montgomery County Community Action Development Commission
Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Prevent Child Abuse Pennsylvania
The Kindness Project

Rhode Island

Adoption Rhode Island
Parent Support Network of Rhode Island
Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

South Carolina

Children's Trust of South Carolina
Fostering Great Ideas
HALOS
Parent Advocate
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Sisters of Charity Foundation of SC

South Dakota

First Circuit CASA Program
Northern Hills Area CASA
Seventh Circuit CASA Program

Tennessee

ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) Awareness Foundation
Memphis Against Sexual Harassment and Assault (MASHA)
Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee
Tennessee Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Texas

Buckner Children and Family Services, Inc.
McCulloch County Child Welfare Board
Texans Care for Children
Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services
Texas Pediatric Society
TexProtects, Prevent Child Abuse Texas
The Children's Shelter
The SAFE Alliance
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas
Upbring

Utah

American Academy of Pediatrics, Utah Chapter
Children's Service Society of Utah
Prevent Child Abuse Utah
Protective Factors For Utah Families
Voices for Utah Children

Vermont

American Academy of Pediatrics, Vermont Chapter
Prevent Child Abuse Vermont
Vermont Parent Child Center Network
Voices for Vermont's Children

Virginia

Alexandria/Arlington CASA
Blue Ridge CASA for Children
CASA of Central Virginia
Families Forward Virginia/Prevent Child Abuse Virginia
FOCUS on Youth / CASA
Greater Richmond SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Now)
Healthy Families Partnership, Inc.
Healthy Start
Impact Living Services
Institute of Forgiveness
Lutheran Family Services of Virginia
Nolef Turns Inc.
NRV CARES
SCAN of Northern Virginia
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Voices for Virginia's Children

Washington

Children's Home Society of Washington
Faith Action Network - Washington State
Foster Parent Allies of Washington State

Legal Counsel for Youth and Children
Makah Tribal Council Seniors Program
Makah Tribal Kinship Program
Parent Trust for Washington Children
Partners for Our Children, University of Washington
The Mockingbird Society
Washington Association for Children & Families
Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid
YMCA of Greater Seattle

West Virginia

Burlington United Methodist Family Services
Cabell County Family Resource Network
Cammack Children's Center
Children's Home Society of West Virginia
Communities of Shalom Coalition
Nicholas County Empowerment Corp.
Ohio County Family Resource Network
Planned Parenthood South Atlantic
Pleasants County Committee on Family Issues
Preston / Taylor Parents as Teachers Program
Preston County Caring Council
Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia
Regional Family Resource Network
Step by Step Inc.
Stepping Stone, Inc.
TEAM for West Virginia Children
United Way of Marion and Taylor Counties
Upshur County Family Resource Network
West Virginia Council of Churches
West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services
WV Citizen Action Group
WV FREE

Wisconsin

Kids Forward
Supporting Families Together Association
Wisconsin Association of Family & Children's Agencies
Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

Wyoming

CASA of Natrona County
Wyoming Community Foundation
Wyoming Kids First