

# PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA CHAPTER NETWORK: POLICY AFFINITY GROUP

## PAID FAMILY MEDICAL & SICK LEAVE

## PUBLIC POLICY TOOLKIT

This Policy Toolkit was developed in partnership with the Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) Chapter Network’s Policy Affinity Group. This groups is made up of representatives from 15 PCA America chapters centered on a common interest in furthering the knowledge and capacity to address specific policy strategies within the PCA chapter network, beginning with paid family, medical, or sick leave (**paid family leave**) as a policy lever in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

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## OVERVIEW

This toolkit is a product of the Prevent Child Abuse (PCA America) Chapter Network Policy Affinity Group's work across the policy area of paid family, medical or sick leave (**paid family leave**) as a strategy in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. This toolkit focuses on paid leave policies and their relationship with child well-being and parenting, regardless of what they are called or how they are bundled with other types of leave, and is designed to provide an overview of strategies, tools, and resources for the PCA America chapter network. It contains sample legislation, communication strategies, successes, challenges, outcomes, and other helpful information for PCA America chapters to utilize in their prevention work – including a high-level overview of paid family leave in *Appendix A*.

*Purpose: To provide information and resources for PCA Chapters interested in engaging in public policy to support families through Paid Family Leave.*

This toolkit is aimed towards those PCA America chapters interested in learning more about paid family leave and to support the advancement of these family-friendly workplace prevention focused policies and practices. It is intended to provide PCA America chapters the information and content necessary to **lead** or **lean into** this policy area. It is a collection of adaptable resources for PCA America chapters that enables them to learn more about paid family leave and identify approaches to address the issue.

## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Financial insecurity is a common source of parental stress, which in turn leads to [greater likelihood of child maltreatment](#). Concrete supports to families in times of need, particularly economic supports, is a critical policy to support the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Publicly funded paid family leave programs can take on a variety of forms of time off from work that doesn't jeopardize economic security. These programs ultimately allow workers to continue to earn a portion of their pay while they take time away from work to address a serious health condition, care for a family member with a health condition, recover from childbirth, and care for and bond with a newborn. Paid family leave has shown improvements in both parental and child health and household financial well-being, at least in the short-term. Advancing these workplace benefits is a significant lever for preventing early childhood maltreatment.

# THE ROLE OF PAID FAMILY MEDICAL & SICK LEAVE IN PRIMARY PREVENTION

Family-friendly workplace benefits, such as paid family, medical or sick leave (**paid family leave**), can help employees meet their personal and family health care needs while also fulfilling work responsibilities. Paid family leave policies, which can take a variety of forms (see Table 1), allow workers to continue to earn a portion of their pay while they take time away from work to address a serious health condition, care for a family member with a health condition, and care for family members (including a newborn, adopted, or foster child). Paid leave policies allow much-needed time for healing, bonding with family members, and other adjustment before a worker returns to work without jeopardizing their economic stability. Yet only 17% of workers in the U.S. have access to any paid family leave through their employers.<sup>1</sup>

**Paid family leave** policies in this resource refer to partially or fully compensated time away from work for specific and generally significant family caregiving needs, such as the arrival of a new child, serious illness of a close family member, or to attend to one’s own health.

In states without paid family leave, the only access to leave is through the federal **Family and Medical Leave Act** (FMLA), which requires eligible employers to provide *unpaid, job-protected* family leave with continuous health coverage. FMLA was created to provide employment protection for workers who need to take time-off due to personal medical reasons or to care for a family member. This coverage has limitations as it generally only applies to private employers with at least 50 employees. Furthermore, only about 60% of private-sector workers are eligible, and of those, 46% report struggling to afford unpaid time off.<sup>2</sup>

<b>Family (maternity or paternity) Leave</b>	To care for and bond with a new child at childbirth, adoption, or fostering of a new child
<b>Family Care</b>	To care for a family member (usually an immediate family member) with a serious health condition
<b>Medical</b>	To attend to one’s own serious health condition
<b>Sick</b>	To recover from a less severe, short-term medical condition

*Source: AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave*

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). [Access to Paid and Unpaid Family Leave in 2018](#).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rwif.org/en/library/research/2019/03/paid-family-leave-policies-and-population-health.html>

However, the United States does not have any national standards on *paid* family or sick leave, despite growing public support. Expanding paid family leave policies within states by allowing parents protected paid time off is a critical support to families and can substantially improve child and family well-being.

Families are often forced to choose between tending to a newborn or caring for a spouse or parent with an unexpected medical emergency, or keeping their job and health insurance. Studies show that paid leave improves worker retention and reduces turnover costs. New mothers who take paid leave are more likely than mothers who take unpaid leave or no leave to return to work after childbirth<sup>3</sup> and return to the same employer.<sup>4</sup> Paid leave is also associated with reductions in child abuse and neglect, hospitalizations for abusive head trauma, higher rates of successful breastfeeding and maternal health, and lower rates of family stressors and risk factors. For example, a 2016 study found that California's PFL policy was associated with a reduction of pediatric abusive head trauma admissions.<sup>5</sup> There are a number of factors to suggest that expanding paid family leave is more viable now than ever before. These include:

- **Robust evidence base:** The availability of a robust research base is significant in helping advocates make the case for the enactment or expansion of paid family leave laws at the state level. For PCA America chapters, the connection between paid family leave policies and improved outcomes for children and their families is clear.
- **Growing public support for paid family Leave:** Recent years have seen growing public support for paid family leave. Mothers are working (and earning) more than ever before, and men's attitudes toward work-life issues have changed (see, for example, [this report](#) by the Urban Institute).
- **Momentum at the state and local levels:** State and local progress has demonstrated that enacting paid family leave is possible, even in the face of strong opposition, and that these policies have good outcomes for employees and are not burdensome to businesses. Up until recently, paid family leave efforts had only been successful in states with more progressive policies. The passage of a paid leave policy in Arizona and other areas demonstrates that this issue is receiving more bipartisan support.
- **COVID-19:** Most recently, the COVID pandemic has exposed the need for workers to have paid time off to quarantine or care for a sick family member. Given the pandemic's disproportionate impact on low-income workers, it is important that any paid leave strategy place these vulnerable families at the forefront.

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<sup>3</sup> Houser, L., & Vartanian, T. P. (2012). [Pay matters: The positive economic impact of paid family leave for families, businesses and the public.](#) Center for Women and Work.

<sup>4</sup> Laughlin, L. (2011). [Maternity leave and employment patterns of first-time mothers: 1961-2008.](#) U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>5</sup> Klevens, J., Luo, F., Xu, L., Peterson, C., & Latzman, N. E. (2016). Paid family leave's effect on hospital admissions for pediatric abusive head trauma. *Injury Prevention*, 22(6), 442-445. <https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2015-041702>

### \* **Federal developments**

The United States is the only developed nation without a national paid family leave policy.<sup>6</sup> Passage of the FMLA in 1993, which mandated *unpaid* leave for larger companies, represented a significant step forward, but since then little progress has been made towards *paid* leave at the federal level. FMLA does allow states to set standards that are more expansive than federal FMLA, and many states have chosen to do so by expanding the categories of people eligible and/or the duration of the leave.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, Congress enacted emergency legislation to temporarily give many Americans access to paid leave if they need to take time off work because of the virus. Through the Families First Coronavirus Act and the CARES Act passed by Congress, emergency paid leave and paid sick days provisions are included; however, this only covers about 25% of the workforce. A few states have also temporarily broadened access to paid sick leave in response to the impact of the coronavirus, but no permanent, broad paid sick leave measures have been adopted nationally. (More information [here](#)).

On August 10, 2020, the Office of Personnel Management issued an [interim final rule](#) in the Federal Register that clarifies when and how federal employees can use paid parental leave authorized under the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2020. The act enables federal employees to substitute 12 weeks of paid leave for the same amount of time of unpaid leave authorized under FMLA. These policies, while important, are illustrative of the patchwork of policies and programs that characterize the paid family leave policy in the United States, which unfortunately leaves those furthest from opportunity without access to any type of paid leave.

### \* **State developments**

Today there are nine states and the District of Columbia that have enacted laws to require paid family leave, including California, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington, plus the District of Columbia. Ten additional states—Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, North Carolina, New Mexico, Tennessee and Virginia—have enacted more narrowly defined policies to provide paid family leave to some or all state employees. And at least a quarter of states have introduced paid leave legislation over the past two years.

Each state’s approach is slightly different in terms of how the law was enacted (by the legislature,

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<sup>6</sup> The United States and Papua New Guinea are the only countries in the world without paid family leave.

ballot measure, or other means) and the particular details of the measure (what employers apply, duration of leave, mechanism for financing, etc.). An up-to-date resource on paid family leave policies can be found [here](#). In addition, some states have also taken action to expand paid family or sick leave in response to the coronavirus pandemic, although these expansions are time-limited.

## MODEL LEGISLATION

Paid family and medical leave policies can take a variety of forms. Some paid family leave policies are paid for through an insurance mechanism that employers and/or employees pay into, while others are funded through governmental dollars. Details such as which employees are considered eligible, which companies are required to participate, and the duration of paid leave benefits are also important considerations that can vary across proposals.

Although there is no one “right” approach, the research on paid family leave points to key elements of existing policies that seem to produce the greatest health impacts for employees and those for whom they are caring:

1. **Paid leave of more than 12 weeks** maximizes benefits to children.<sup>7</sup>
2. **Paid leave reimbursement levels** that allow for all families, including those with low incomes, to take advantage of the policy.
3. **Paid leave and job protections** increase leave usage. When leave is paid *and* job-protected, employees are more likely to take leave, and the benefits for children are greater.<sup>8</sup>

The National Partnership for Women and Families has prepared an excellent resource to guide the development of model paid leave legislation, available [here](#). State examples of proposed and enacted legislation are available [here](#).

7 (out of 10) States have adopted a paid family leave program of a minimum of 6 weeks following the birth, adoption, or placement of a child into foster care.

States may introduce legislation several times, over several years, before adopting a policy and it may take even more time to fully implement any program. And while there are similarities between state paid leave policies, the differences point to the opportunities for state legislators to craft policies appropriate to their own state. Table 2 includes information on state legislation and ballot measures shared from the PCA America chapter network.

<sup>7</sup> International Labor Organization (2000). Recommendation concerning the revision of the Maternity Protection Recommendation, 1952. Available at [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312529](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312529)

<sup>8</sup> Gomby, D. & Pei, D.J. (2009). Maternity leave, early maternal employment and child health and development in the U.S. California: The David and Lucille Packard Foundation.



**Table 2: Examples of paid family leave legislation and ballot measures**

Legislation	Status	Summary
<b>California</b> <a href="#">SB1383</a>	Enacted	California Family Rights Act (CFRA) was recently revised to expand the scope of the state’s family and medical leave coverage. This new law, effective January 2021, requires California employers with five or more employees to provide family and medical leave to their employees under a new version of the CFRA. This law also will expand the definition of "family members" for whom a covered employee can seek leave, will eliminate certain use restrictions, and will entitle some employees to up to 24 weeks of unpaid protected leave in a 12-month period.
<b>Colorado</b> <b>Ballot Measure</b> <a href="#">Proposition #118</a>	Approved	Proposition 118 is a measure that will create paid family and medical leave in Colorado. It will provide up to 12 weeks of leave and covers parental leave to care for a new child, including adoption and foster care, medical leave for one’s own personal illness or injury, caring for a family member who is seriously ill, needs related to a family member’s military deployment, and leave for survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault. It applies to small businesses and could mean that 2.6 million Colorado workers will no longer have to choose between paying their bills and caring for a newborn, themselves, or a seriously ill family member. The program will begin collecting premiums in January 2023. Workers will be able to apply for the benefit beginning in January 2024.
<b>Kentucky</b> <a href="#">Bill Request 344</a>	Pre-filed	Kentucky’s Bill Request 344 is a pre-filed 2021 proposed bill that would allow employees of the Commonwealth of Kentucky a paid leave of absence of 12 weeks for the birth or adoption of a child and to establish requirements for the paid leave of absence.
<b>Maryland</b> <a href="#">SB539/HB 839</a>	Introduced	Maryland Time To Care Act: This bill, introduced on February 3, 2020, establishes a Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program through which employees may take up to 12 weeks of paid leave from their jobs to care for new children, other family members with serious health conditions or disabilities, or themselves.
<b>New York</b> <a href="#">SB7506/AB 9506</a>	Enacted	New York State's new paid sick leave law (NYSSL) took effect on September 30, 2020, requiring employers to allow employees to begin accruing paid sick leave benefits immediately. Employees may use their accrued leave under the NYSSL starting January 1, 2021. Employees may use NYSSL for (1) a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition of an employee or the employee's family member; (2)

		the diagnosis, care or treatment of an existing health condition of, or preventive care for, an employee or an employee's family member (or a ward for whom the employee is the guardian); or (3) an employee or an employee's family member who is a victim of domestic violence, a sexual offense, stalking, or human trafficking in order to avail themselves of services or assistance as a result of such incidents.
<b>North Carolina</b> <a href="#">HB696</a>	Filed	The NC Families First Act would set up a shared insurance pool to provide paid family leave for working North Carolinians. Employers and employees would each pay about \$2 per week into the insurance pool. Then when an employee needed leave, they could draw replacement wages from the insurance. The employer could use that worker's wages to hire a temporary replacement or increase the hours of other employees to do the needed work. Employees would be eligible for wage replacement of up to 90 percent of their weekly wages, with the total benefit being capped at the average weekly wage for all of North Carolina. It would cover up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for a child or family member. Eligibility would extend to 18 weeks for a personal serious health condition. Those caring for someone injured in military service would be eligible for 26 weeks of leave. ( <a href="#">Source</a> )
<b>South Carolina</b> <a href="#">HB5137</a>	Failed	This legislation includes 12 weeks of paid leave for state employees due to birth, adoption, or foster care of child. <i>This bill did not pass, however it did have the support of the Governor and likely would have passed if the session was not cut short because of COVID-19.</i>

## MESSAGING TACTICS

As is the case for any advocacy effort, messaging strategies that are tailored to the specific perspectives of stakeholder audiences are critical to the success of advocacy regarding paid family leave. Following are examples of messages, including links to example one-pagers and talking points, which have resonated with a variety of audiences on how paid family leave can contribute to a decrease in child abuse and neglect and family stress.

- [MomsRising talking points and state-specific information on Paid Family Leave](#)
- [PL+US messaging brief](#)
- [Public opinion on paid leave](#)

### ✿ **The Family Case**

A families' financial stability not only reduces parental and family stress, it allows children's basic needs to be satisfied. Financial insecurity leads to increased parental stress, which could be a trigger for abuse and neglect; providing families with stronger household financial security reduces this stress and therefore the incidences of abuse and neglect. Furthermore, we know that stability is necessary for healthy childhood development. Expanding paid family leave policies within states by allowing parents protected paid time off is a critical support to families and can substantially improve child and family well-being in the United States. Paid family leave allows parents the flexibility to provide care and nurturance to their families and does not force parents to choose between employment and care.

### ✿ **The Business & Economic Case**

Because businesses represent such an important stakeholder group for paid family leave advocacy, it is important for advocates to tailor their messaging to bring along the perspectives of business leaders or, if that is not possible, to be able to respond to concerns from the business community. As noted above, the research on paid family leave shows that these policies are good for business—several leading companies such as Etsy, Facebook, Google and Virgin have pioneered very progressive paid family leave policies because they believe it helps them attract talent—this may be surprising to some stakeholders. [This brief](#) from the National Partnership for Women and Families has more information on this topic.

Advocates may also find public service announcements to be helpful, particularly to help businesses and employees understand how paid family leave would impact them. This is the case even for states that have passed paid family leave programs, as gaps in public awareness can often lead to gaps in program usage: over a decade after the California program started, general program awareness continues to be low, and misinformation about its eligibility requirements and the application process is widespread. Lack of public awareness has also been shown to impede take-up rates in New Jersey and Rhode Island.

- Resource for engaging businesses on paid family leave: [Family Forward NC](#)
- Resources for employers: [EPIC](#)

### ✿ **The PCA America Chapter Case**

Paid family leave is closely aligned with the missions of many PCA America chapters, and therefore it may be a logical priority to take on as an organization. Clear messaging articulating the link between

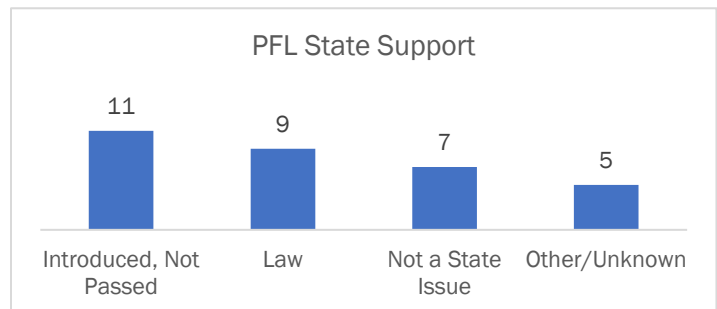
paid family leave and child and family well-being can be especially helpful for advocacy efforts in your state.

- Op-ed written on supporting the need for [family-friendly work policies in West Virginia](#)
- See *Appendix B* for an op-ed written by Sharon Hirsch, President & CEO, PCA NC
- See *Appendix C* for broad talking points on Paid Family Leave
- [Telling a Story About Families and Opportunity](#): Increasing support for Paid Family and Medical Leave policies among key audiences
- Illuminate Colorado's [blog](#) on Proposition 118 Paid Family & Medical Leave

## SUCCESS STORIES

### \* Prevent Child Abuse Chapter Engagement in Paid Family Leave

In a survey of the PCA America chapter network in 2020, over a third of the responding chapters (34%, n=11) reported that paid family leave legislation has been introduced in their state but not passed. Approximately a quarter of responding chapters (28%, n= 9) said that their state has passed laws supporting paid family leave, however three state PCA America chapters (Idaho, Kansas, and South Carolina) noted that these laws only apply to state government employees. Conversely, 22% of PCA America chapters (n= 7) stated paid family leave is not an issue their state is addressing at this moment. The five remaining chapters (about 16% of responding chapters) fall into the “Other” category, which includes chapters reporting that there are other organizations advocating for paid family leave policies, but they do not partner with these entities, their state is focusing on expanding FMLA throughout the state, or they are unaware of any paid family leave work happening in their state.



### \* Prevent Child Abuse Chapter Successes

Paid family leave policies have been advanced or enacted in several states with PCA America chapters, and chapters have been involved in the advocacy efforts around paid family leave to varying degrees. Washington fully implemented paid family leave starting in January 2020 and Oregon’s paid family leave policy goes into effect in 2022 (with benefits accessible in 2023). Some states have not passed a paid family leave law, but through administrative action paid family leave has been extended to some state employees.

In North Carolina, PCA NC has played a critical role in advancing paid family leave legislation, which would create a statewide insurance program that both employees and employers pay into.

Chapters have found it useful to highlight the many resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including its [Essentials for Childhood](#) initiative, all of which list paid family leave as a critical support to families to prevent child abuse and neglect. Educating lawmakers and other stakeholders on the five protective factors can be useful in making the case for paid family leave, as paid leave policies help to increase protective factors for families.

### \* **Prevent Child Abuse America Chapter Challenges**

PCA America chapters can play a leadership role in articulating the link between paid family leave and child maltreatment. Chapter leaders cautioned, however, that there may be times when this messaging is not always helpful for the movement. For example, even though the research shows that paid family leave is associated with a reduction in abusive head trauma, advocates do not wish to give the impression that without paid leave parents will be led to cause abusive head trauma in their infants. Instead, messaging around family support and building protective factors may be more impactful, and PCA America chapters also noted that, in addition to drawing the connection to child maltreatment and family well-being, they work with their partners to combat misinformation about the paid leave proposals, particularly their impacts on businesses (and small businesses in particular).

In some states, paid family leave has garnered strong bipartisan support, which may make the decision to engage in easier. In other states, where paid family leave is perceived as a partisan issue, it may be a more difficult decision to become involved, if there is a risk of the organization being perceived as partisan. On the other hand, PCA America chapters may lend bipartisan credibility to paid family leave coalitions.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PREVENT CHILD ABUSE CHAPTERS**

The experience of PCA America chapters who have been heavily engaged in paid family leave advocacy raises several key considerations for PCA America chapters to consider when beginning their work on paid family leave.

- 1. What are the reasons our organization wants to take this on? How does paid family leave support our organizational mission, and how does it fit into our other policy priorities?**

Paid family leave is closely aligned with the missions of many PCA America chapters, and therefore it may be a logical priority to take on as an organization. For chapters that have not been engaged in paid family leave in the past and are considering advocating for such policies, it may be useful to

clarify as a team the reasons why this policy area should be prioritized. Some specific questions to explore could be:

- What is the intended impact of the bill/initiative?
- Will the bill/initiative close gaps in child/family outcomes and expand opportunities for all children and families?
- Which protective factors does the bill/initiative impact? Is there evidence that connects this policy with building or harming protective factors?
- If this bill/initiative is rooted in prevention/protective factors, which level of prevention is this bill/initiative working at? Are the desired results focused on closing gaps facing children?
- Would our organization add unique perspective, expertise, and/or broaden the issue?

Identifying these areas of alignment and affirming the ways in which paid family leave aligns with the organization's mission will help to drive the messaging and strategy of the advocacy.

## **2. Who are the key partners and coalitions working on this issue in our state?**

In many states there are already organizations and/or leaders taking the lead around promoting paid family leave policy. In North Carolina, for example, MomsRising has been a key coordinator of advocacy efforts and serves as the central hub of resources and messaging. In Oregon, Family Forward has played a central role. Before embarking on paid family leave, it may be very helpful to get to know who else is already engaged and how your organization's unique voice and expertise can be most helpful to the efforts.

## **3. What is the role my organization can play in elevating this issue? What unique voice do we bring to the conversation?**

As noted above, PCA America chapters can play a critical role in elevating the importance of paid family leave policies for child and family well-being, and the connections between paid family leave and child maltreatment, when appropriate. PCA America chapters may also bring bipartisan credibility to paid family leave advocacy. Understanding these potential contributions may be helpful both for focusing your organization's advocacy efforts and communicating these contributions to the board and other stakeholders.

## **4. What materials and resources do we need to articulate our perspective and unique voice? What research can we draw upon to help us make the case?**

PCA America chapters may find it helpful to draw upon research demonstrating the connection between paid family leave and child and family well-being. Examples include:

- CDC [Essentials for Childhood](#) Framework
- CSSP [Protective Factors Framework](#)

- Illuminate Colorado summarized many of the benefits of paid family leave to children and families in [this blog post](#)
  - North Carolina advocates have access to [Child Data Cards](#), which show key measures of child and family well-being by county
  - National Partnership for Women and Families [webpage](#) of research on paid family leave
  - Appendix D: Paid family leave in the U.S. and child maltreatment
- 5. If a policy has already been proposed in my state, what aspects of that policy do we need to better understand as an organization?**

Key elements of paid family leave policies that you will need to be familiar with include the funding mechanism, who is eligible, the duration and amount, and who the key decision-makers are (policymakers, the public, a governor, etc.). These aspects will help to drive your advocacy strategy.

The Alliance for Justice's [Bolder Advocacy](#) web page features a range of highly relevant and useful information on how nonprofits can maximize their impact in advocacy. This includes information about ballot initiatives, communications and messaging,

#### PFL Equity Considerations:

- Paid family leave policies can be lifelines for many workers, but a major weakness is that they only provide a portion of a worker's wages. For example, California guarantees workers 55% of their wages, and New Jersey guarantees 65%.
- Currently, higher wage jobs are more likely to provide paid family leave than low-wage jobs.
- Research suggests that low-income and other disadvantaged groups stand to benefit the most from paid family leave policies, but that many employees opt to use paid vacation, personal, or sick leave rather than family leave because the wage replacement is not enough to support their families for up to 12 weeks.
- In a survey of workers by the Pew Research Center, almost 80% reported that they cut back on spending while they were on leave, and half used savings to cover lost wages. In that same survey, the majority of workers with household incomes under \$30,000 said they accrued debt to deal with the lost wages.
- American families are structurally complex and diverse. A family definition that allows workers to care for a broad range of their loved ones – and not just those to whom they are biologically or legally related – is an important piece of any effective paid leave policy.

## CONCLUSION

Paid family leave is a significant national and state primary prevention policy issue which has garnered the attention of public interest in recent years. While there has been national interest in paid family leave, including a new policy set to take effect in October 2020, which will provide *federal* employees 12 weeks of paid family leave, the movement for paid family leave will likely continue to be centered on state and local policies or those voluntarily adopted or negotiated by employers. Given that all employees will need time off during their working lives to care for a personal or family illness, or to bond with a new child, this issue will continue to be a relevant concern for working families across the country in the years to come. Importantly, this policy solution could support millions of families to better follow public health guidance to curb the spread of COVID-19.

PCA America promotes federal and state laws that provide family medical and sick leave for all workers. This would include providing at least 12 weeks of paid medical and sick leave with reimbursement levels that allow for all families, including those with low incomes, to take advantage of the policy.

## RESOURCES

Following are a list of resources that may be helpful as you consider the issue of Paid Family and Medical Leave in your own state as well as your role in the policy area.

- \* [Appendix E: Primary Prevention One-Pager](#)
- \* [Appendix F: Primary Prevention Talking Points](#)
- \* [Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center: Paid Family Leave](#)
- \* [Paid family leave's effect on hospital admissions for pediatric abusive head trauma](#)
- \* [The Paid Family and Medical Leave Opportunity: What Research Tells Us About Designing a Paid Leave Program that Works for All](#)
- \* [Paid Leave Fact Sheets](#)
- \* State Level Resources to Share:
  - o [Paid Family Leave in North Carolina: An Analysis of Costs and Benefits](#)
  - o [North Carolina Child Data Card](#) (this resource was developed as a data card to highlight key indicators of child well-being)



## APPENDIX A: HIGH-LEVEL OVERVIEW OF PAID FAMILY MEDICAL & SICK LEAVE

### THE ROLE OF PAID FAMILY MEDICAL & SICK LEAVE IN PRIMARY PREVENTION

Children and families thrive when we create conditions that support their well-being. Family-friendly workplace policies, such as publicly funded paid family, medical, or sick leave (paid family leave) programs, provide a critical support to families through helping employees meet their personal and family health care needs while also fulfilling work responsibilities. Expanding paid family leave policies within states allows parents protected paid time off time from work without jeopardizing their economic security. This concrete support to families in times of need is a critical policy lever in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

**Paid Family Leave** policies in this resource refer to partially or fully compensated time away from work for specific and generally significant family caregiving needs, such as the arrival of a new child, serious illness of a close family member, or to attend to one's own health.

**Studies show** that paid family leave improves worker retention and reduces turnover costs, citing that new mothers who take paid leave are more likely than mothers who take unpaid leave or no leave to be working again after childbirth<sup>1</sup> and return to the same employer.<sup>2</sup> Paid family leave programs has also been associated with reductions in hospitalizations for abusive head trauma, higher rates of successful breastfeeding and maternal health, and lower rates of family stressors and risk factors. For example, a 2016 study found that California's paid family leave policy was associated with a reduction of pediatric abusive head trauma admissions.<sup>3</sup>

#### **The Business & Economic Case**

Working parents are an essential part of many businesses. Family-friendly workplaces have a competitive advantage: they attract and retain more top talent, and their employees are more productive and more committed. Plus, family-friendly employers benefit from reduced employee health care costs, a healthier work environment, and fewer employee absences. The findings on paid family leave shows that these policies are good for business.

Several leading companies have pioneered very progressive paid family leave policies because they believe it helps them attract talent.

- ✓ The company Patagonia has in place family friendly policies, including paid family leave, and 100% of new mothers return to work after maternity leave.
- ✓ Of Nestlé's U.S. employees, 97.6% who used any form of parental leave were still active within Nestlé six months after their return.
- ✓ Employee engagement and retention is the number one human resource problem according to Deloitte's 2015 Global Human Capital Trends report.
- ✓ The cost to replace a lost employee is roughly 20% of an entry-level annual salary, at a minimum, and often much larger when lost productivity is considered.

In a 2019 report the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation stated that “they are dedicated to strengthening America’s long term competitiveness.”<sup>4</sup> And “now more than ever, providing support for working parents with young children is key to attracting and retaining high-quality employees.” A 2018 report shows the US economy loses an astounding \$57 billion per year in revenue, wages, and productivity as a result of issues related to childcare.<sup>5</sup>

### \* The Family Case

Supportive policies that strengthen economic supports yields significant benefits to an organization, individual, and their family. When families face unseen financial hardships, it sets the stage for increased parental stress, which could be a trigger for abuse and neglect. Boosting family incomes

Yet, only 17% of workers in the U.S. have access to any Paid Family Leave through their employers.

through paid family leave can relieve pressure, helping to head off childhood adversity before it happens.

Furthermore, we know that stability is necessary for healthy childhood development.

### Federal Family Medical Leave Act:

In states without paid family leave, the only access to leave is through the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which requires eligible employers to provide *unpaid, job-protected* family leave with continuous health coverage. This coverage has limitations as it generally only applies to employers with at least 50 employees – providing access to only 17% of employees in 2018.<sup>i</sup>

However, the United States does not have any national standards on *paid* family or sick leave, despite growing public support. Expanding paid family leave policies within states by allowing parents protected paid time off is a critical support to families and can substantially improve child and family well-being while preventing child abuse and neglect.

### States Are Stepping up to Address the Problem:

Several states have developed their own paid family leave programs. State and local progress has demonstrated that enacting paid family leave is possible and that these policies have good outcomes for employees and are not burdensome to businesses. The passage of a paid leave policy from California to Arizona and North Carolina demonstrates that this issue is possible across red and blue states.

Today there are nine states and the District of Columbia that have enacted laws to require paid family including, **California, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island and Washington, plus the District of Columbia.** Ten additional states—**Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, North Carolina, New Mexico, Tennessee and Virginia**—have enacted more narrowly defined policies to provide paid family leave to some or all state employees. And, at least a quarter of states have introduced paid leave legislation over the past two years. Each state’s approach is slightly different in terms of how the law was enacted (by the legislature, ballot measure, or other means) and the particular details of the policy (what employers apply, duration of leave, mechanism for financing, etc.).

Some paid family leave policies are paid for through an insurance mechanism that employers and/or employees pay into, while others are funded through governmental dollars. Details such as which

employees are considered eligible, which companies are required to participate, and the duration of paid leave benefits are also important considerations that can vary across proposals.

**Conclusion:** There is room for public policy to make paid leave more widely available. Paid family leave policies have benefits for parents, children, and the economy.

<sup>1</sup> Houser, L., & Vartanian, T. P. (2012). [Pay matters: The positive economic impact of paid family leave for families, businesses and the public](#). Center for Women and Work.

<sup>2</sup> Laughlin, L. (2011). [Maternity leave and employment patterns of first-time mothers: 1961-2008](#). U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>3</sup> Klevens, J., Luo, F., Xu, L., Peterson, C., & Latzman, N. E. (2016). Paid family leave's effect on hospital admissions for pediatric abusive head trauma. *Injury Prevention*, 22(6), 442-445. <https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2015-041702>.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2019\\_BuildingBridges\\_PrintableFinal.pdf](https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2019_BuildingBridges_PrintableFinal.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Sandra Bishop-Josef and others, "[Want to Grow the Economy? Fix the Child Care Crisis](#)," Ready Nation, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, The Economics Daily, [Access to paid and unpaid family leave in 2018](#).

## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OP ED ON PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Sharon Hirsch  
President & CEO  
Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina  
919-451-7893

### **Paid Family Leave Builds Connections**

All of us are spending too much money on a preventable problem: child abuse and neglect. We are paying too much on interventions and treatment after children have been abused or neglected. Child abuse and neglect cases in 2015 alone will cost the United States more than \$428 billion dollars, according to a [new study](#).

As the leader of the state's only child abuse prevention organization, I know that it doesn't have to be this way. Recent advances in the science of early childhood development tell us that the early years are a time when the brain is building itself from the ground up, much in the way a house is built with each level forming either a sturdy or a weak foundation for all the development that follows. And it is the relationships and experiences that children have early in life that are the building blocks. When children have stable, responsive relationships with caring adults at home and in the community, children get off to a good start with a strong foundation for future development.

When children don't have these experiences, because of child abuse or neglect, exposure to violence, untreated parental mental illness, or other chronic challenges that produce what is now known as "toxic stress," children suffer—and we put our future well-being as a state at risk. That's why investing in programs proven to strengthen families and assist today's changing workforce is so important.

Studies show paid family leave as a critical policy that can prevent child abuse and neglect. Researchers examined the implementation of paid family leave (PFL) in the state of California in 2004 to determine whether this policy resulted in reductions in hospital admissions for abusive head trauma compared to states without such a policy. Results indicate that PFL was associated with declines in hospital admissions for abusive head trauma for children (1 year, >2 years) even after controlling for unemployment and education level.

Bart Kilka, Chief Research and Strategy Officer at Prevent Child Abuse America says that research is beginning to suggest that easing the economic challenges faced by so many through policies such as PFL may hold promise in preventing abusive parental behavior.

Concrete supports to families in times of need, particularly economic supports, are a proven protective factor. When parents are not stressed about putting food on the table, paying their rent, or affording the new expenses of parenthood, it is less likely that abuse and neglect will occur.

We know that too many moms in NC are returning to work after giving birth as soon as two weeks postpartum. The science is also clear that the early weeks of life are critical to parent-child attachment and the creation of the nurturing, responsive relationships that babies need to build a strong foundation for life-long brain development, learning, and good health.

That's why we are so hopeful since a study conducted by the Duke Center for Child and Family Policy was released in March recommending that NC consider a Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance program. Among other economic benefits, the study concluded that 26 infant lives in North Carolina would be saved per year under a PFLI proposal that simulates a statewide 12-week paid leave model with 80 percent wage replacement. Saving 26 infant lives would reduce the North Carolina infant mortality rate to 7.1 per 1,000, from its current 7.3 per 1,000, among the worst in the nation.

North Carolina's future prosperity requires the healthy development of our children. North Carolina will lead in innovation, resiliency, and economic development when we invest in building strong communities. Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance is one of many investments that are good medicine, good public policy, and good for business.

## APPENDIX C: PAID FAMILY LEAVE TALKING POINTS

### Paid Family Leave:

- At some point everyone needs to take time away from the job to deal with a personal or family illness or to take care of a new child.
- The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) has been instrumental in helping employers balance running a business with responsibility to their employees. FMLA provides unpaid *unpaid, job-protected* family leave with continuous health coverage.
  - FMLA doesn't apply for 40% of workforce and is unpaid.
  - FMLA doesn't offer protection for employees or business owners who cannot afford to take the time off.

### Studies Find:

- Paid family leave contributes to fewer low birthweight babies, fewer incidents of pediatric abusive head trauma, fewer infant deaths and higher rates of breastfeeding. For example, a 2016 study found that California's PFL policy was associated with a reduction of pediatric abusive head trauma admissions.<sup>9</sup>
- Paid family leave is linked to children having better developmental outcomes, including fewer behavioral problems and better cognitive attainment.
- Good things happen for babies when fathers take leave. Studies of two-parent, opposite-sex households show a number of positive outcomes:
  - Fathers who take two or more weeks off after the birth of a child are more involved in that child's direct care nine months after birth than fathers who take no leave.
  - Involved fathers also promote children's educational attainment and emotional stability.
- Most employed women do not have access to paid maternity leave. Of private sector workers, only 35% are employed at worksites that offer paid maternity leave to most female employees, and only 22% are employed at worksites that offer paid maternity leave to all female employees.
- Most employed men do not have access to paid paternity leave. Of private sector workers, 11% are employed at worksites that offer paid leave to most male employees, and 9% are at worksites that offer paid leave to all male employees.

### The Family Case

- Paid family leave boosts worker morale and other productivity-related factors. Paid family leave is a catalyst for an employer through greater employee satisfaction and reduced turnover.
- Paid family leave is associated greater income stability for families.

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<sup>9</sup> Klevens, J., Luo, F., Xu, L., Peterson, C., & Latzman, N. E. (2016). Paid family leave's effect on hospital admissions for pediatric abusive head trauma. *Injury Prevention, 22*(6), 442-445. <https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2015-041702>

- The time after the birth or adoption of a baby is an essential time of development for babies and families. Because early relationships nurture early brain connections that form the foundation for all learning and relationships that follow, parents and caregivers are on the front line of preparing our future workers, innovators, and citizens.
- Most working parents do not have access to paid family leave. Many parents must make the impossible choice between unhurried time to bond with their babies and losing their jobs or economic security.
- Having time to care for their babies helps parents catch developmental problems early. This is especially important for caregivers of infants who are considered at high risk, such as babies born preterm or at low birth weights and those who have illnesses or identified disabilities.
- A families' financial stability not only reduces parental and family stress, but it allows children's basic needs to be satisfied. Financial insecurity leads to increased parental stress, which could be a trigger for abuse and neglect; providing families with stronger household financial security reduces this stress and therefore the incidences of abuse and neglect. Furthermore, we know that stability is necessary for healthy childhood development.

#### **The Business Case:**

- Paid family and medical leave laws level the playing field for small businesses by allowing small business owners to provide this critical service to their employees and to themselves without the risk of going into financial ruin. It allows small businesses to compete with large corporations and attract talent.
- Paid family leave actually is a lever for local economies and a hedge for savings in the state budget.
- Now more than ever, providing support for working parents with young children is key to attracting and retaining high-quality employees. 70% of nonworking Americans who live below the poverty line and have young children cite "taking care of home/family as the reason they're not in the workforce."
- Studies show that paid leave improves worker retention and reduces turnover costs, citing that new mothers who take paid leave are more likely than mothers who take unpaid leave or no leave to be working again after child birth and return to the same employer.
  - The company Patagonia has in place family friendly policies, including paid family leave, and 100% of new mothers return to work after maternity leave.
  - Of Nestlé's U.S. employees, 97.6% who used any form of parental leave were still active within Nestlé six months after their return.
  - Employee engagement and retention is the number one human resource problem according to Deloitte's 2015 Global Human Capital Trends report.

- The cost to replace a lost employee is roughly 20% of an entry-level annual salary, at a minimum, and often much larger when lost productivity is considered.<sup>10</sup>
- Yet, only 17% of workers in the U.S. have access to any paid family leave through their employers.

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<sup>10</sup> Danielle Paquette and Peyton M. Craighill, "[The surprising number of parents scaling back at work to care for kids](#)," The Washington Post, August 6, 2015.



## APPENDIX D: PAID FAMILY LEAVE AND CHILD MALTREATMENT

### **Paid family leave in the U.S. and child maltreatment**

**Lindsey Rose Bullinger, Ph.D.**

**School of Public Policy**

**Georgia Tech**

Child maltreatment is a pervasive problem in the United States with significant economic, health, and human capital consequences. However, child maltreatment does not affect all children equally. Children under age one experience the highest rates of child abuse and neglect, and the greatest likelihood of fatality due to maltreatment-related causes, including shaken baby syndrome. Furthermore, children living in poverty are at a significantly higher risk of child maltreatment than children living in better economic conditions (Sedlak et al., 2010). Publicly funded paid family leave (PFL) programs offer parents of newborns paid time off from work to recover from childbirth and care for and bond with a newborn. These programs may hold promise for preventing early childhood maltreatment.

Several states have developed their own PFL programs. Most research from the U.S. context is based on California's PFL program, in part because it was the first program, implemented in 2004. PFL in California has affected parents in a variety of ways. For example, this program

- increased leave-taking among parents of newborns (Rossin-Slater et al., 2013)
- raised breastfeeding rates (Hamad et al., 2018; Huang & Yang, 2015; Pac et al., 2019)
- improved parental mental health (Bullinger, 2019), and
- improved the amount and/or quality of time parents spend with children, including time spent reading with children (Bailey et al., 2019; Bullinger, 2019; Trajkovski, 2019).

Increasing parental investments in children and improving parental mental health likely has many other implications for children, including potentially on child maltreatment.

Paid family leave also affects the financial well-being of families. In the short-run, paid family leave in California increased maternal employment (Baum & Ruhm, 2016; Byker, 2016; Rossin-Slater et al., 2013), though evidence on maternal employment in the long-run is mixed (Bailey et al., 2019; Baum & Ruhm, 2016; Rossin-Slater et al., 2013). Perhaps due to increased employment, one study found that the implementation of PFL was associated with both increases in family income and reductions in family poverty, especially for those who were single, less educated, and had low incomes (Stanczyk, 2019). Other policies that increase household incomes have been shown to reduce child maltreatment, particularly for younger children (Berger et al., 2017; Biehl & Hill, 2018; Cancian et al.,

2013; Klevens et al., 2015, 2017; Raissian & Bullinger, 2017; Rostad, Klevens, et al., 2020; Rostad, Ports, et al., 2020).

Finally, child well-being has also been influenced by paid family leave programs. For example, a 2016 study found that California's PFL policy was associated with a reduction of pediatric abusive head trauma admissions, but the effect took several years to manifest, suggesting the potential for other factors at work (Klevens et al., 2016). Other research shows the program improved infant health (Bullinger, 2019; Pihl & Basso, 2019), and that these improvements persist through elementary school (Lichtman-Sadot & Bell, 2017). These studies further find stronger health improvements among children from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

Although direct evidence connecting PFL on child maltreatment is scarce, PFL has shown improvements in both parental and child health and household financial well-being, at least in the short-term. As these characteristics are predictors of child maltreatment, there is likely a connection between PFL and child maltreatment.

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## APPENDIX E: PRIMARY PREVENTION ONE-PAGER

The Policy Affinity Group felt that it was important to frame the conversation of paid family leave in primary prevention. To that end, a one-pager on primary prevention was developed to share broadly within the PCA America chapters to aid in conversations with partners, stakeholders, policymakers, and funders. This Primary Prevention one-pager is a template that can be customizable for each of the chapters where a chapter logo, state specific prevention strategies, and relevant data can be added.



STATE CHAPTER LOGO

### PRIMARY PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All children need safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments to thrive. Achieving this goal requires **bold** strategies that support parents and caregivers to create the conditions for positive child development.

**Child abuse and neglect are common**  
MILLIONS OF CHILDREN ARE ABUSED  
AND NEGLECTED EACH YEAR.

**1 in 7 Children**  
HAVE EXPERIENCED CHILD ABUSE  
AND/OR NEGLECT IN THE PAST YEAR.<sup>1</sup>

#### Child maltreatment is costly.

A recent study estimates that **each victim of child abuse and neglect incurs expenses in excess of \$830,928 over their lives** in treating the short- and long-term consequences associated with the abuse.<sup>2</sup> Child maltreatment alone cost **X STATE** an estimated **\$XXM** in total state and local Child Protection Services expenditures for SFY2016.<sup>3</sup>

#### Yet, child maltreatment is preventable.

**Greater focus on preventing child abuse and neglect before happening in the first place yields significant cost reductions** later while simultaneously improving outcomes for children and families. These approaches are known as **primary prevention**.

**Primary prevention** includes approaches that aim to avert child abuse or neglect *before* it occurs. These include such strategies as family strengthening and parent education programs, child maltreatment public awareness campaigns, and increasing economic supports for families.

**Primary prevention** approaches do not focus on the treatment of children and families *after* child abuse or neglect has occurred (i.e. child protective services, mental health & substance abuse programs).

### CREATING A PRIMARY PREVENTION SYSTEM

Primary prevention programs promote healthy child development through strengthening parenting skills and reducing stress, which is a risk factor for child maltreatment. **Early and effective primary prevention is more cost effective than fixing the adverse effects of child maltreatment after it has occurred (e.g. child protective services).**

#### Key Primary Prevention Strategies:

- Voluntary evidence-based home visiting (e.g. HFA)
- Quality funded child care and early education
- Parent support, training and education
- Family Resource Centers
- Evidence-based child sexual abuse prevention programs
- Family-friendly workplace policies (e.g. paid family leave)
- Economic supports for families (e.g. Earned Income Tax Credit)
- Banning corporal punishment in public institutions
- Positive fatherhood engagement

<sup>1</sup> Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. A., Shattuck, A., & Hamby, S. L. (2015). Prevalence of childhood exposure to violence, crime, and abuse: Results from the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169(6), 748-754.

<sup>2</sup> Kilka, J.S., Rosenzweig, J., & Merrick, M. (2020). *Economic burden of known cases of child maltreatment from 2016 in each state*. Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 37, 227-234.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CWFSReportSFY2016\\_ChildTrends\\_December2018.pdf](https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CWFSReportSFY2016_ChildTrends_December2018.pdf)

WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP CREATE NEIGHBORHOODS, COMMUNITIES, AND A STATE IN WHICH EVERY CHILD CAN THRIVE.

## APPENDIX F: PRIMARY PREVENTION TALKING POINTS

### Facts about child abuse and neglect:

- In the United States, at least one in seven children experience child abuse and/or neglect annually.<sup>11</sup>
- Every day, an estimated four to eight children die from abuse and neglect.<sup>12</sup> Children who die from abuse and neglect are overwhelmingly young; approximately one-half are less than a year old, and 75% are under three years of age.
- Abuse and neglect of children in the early years negatively impacts the formation of pathways in the brain that are essential to later learning and growth. Victims of child maltreatment are at high risk for a host of adverse short and long-term outcomes, including chronic health problems, mental health issues, developmental delays, substance abuse, poor educational well-being, and future involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems.
- A recent study estimates that each victim of child abuse and neglect incurs expenses in excess of \$830,928 over their lives in treating the short- and long-term consequences associated with the abuse. These include areas such as child welfare, juvenile justice, special education, and productivity losses.<sup>13</sup>
- The high costs of child abuse and neglect include increased use of foster care and child welfare costs, increased short- and long-term health and mental health care costs, and long-term costs in areas including juvenile justice and later adult criminal justice.
- Child abuse and neglect impacts everyone – it occurs across the socioeconomic and geographic spectrum. 37%, or nearly 4 out of 10 children, will experience a child protection services (CPS) investigation by the age 18.<sup>14</sup> And, an estimated 674,000 children were determined to be victims of child maltreatment with millions of children having reports of abuse and neglect each year.<sup>15</sup>
- Protective factors, such as concrete supports, nurturing parenting skills, and parental employment, buffer families from child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect occurs in all socio-economic backgrounds of our country. There are ways to decrease it and there are strategies that can stop intergenerational abuse. Prevention is possible.
- Evidence-based home visiting programs that provide parenting information and education, such as Healthy Families America, improve both child and parental well-being, which leads to long

<sup>11</sup> Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. A., Shattuck, A., & Hamby, S. L. (2015). Prevalence of childhood exposure to violence, crime, and abuse: Results from the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169(8), 746-754.

<sup>12</sup> Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities. (2016). [Within our reach](#): A national strategy to eliminate child abuse and neglect fatalities. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

<sup>13</sup> Klika, J.B., Rosenzweig, J., & Merrick, M. (2020). Economic burden of known cases of child maltreatment from 2018 in each state. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 37, 227-234.

<sup>14</sup> Kim, H., Wildeman, C., Jonson-Reid, M., & Drake, B. (2017). Lifetime Prevalence of Investigating Child Maltreatment Among US Children. *American journal of public health*, 107(2), 274-280. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303545>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/media/press/2019/child-abuse-neglect-data-released>

term improvements in a child's ability to learn and process information. This strategy encourages the lifelong relationship between a parent and a child and helps solidify the importance of early childhood development efforts that reach into adulthood.

**Primary Prevention:**

- Primary prevention approaches (i.e. programs, policies, or other strategies) aim to stop child abuse or neglect before it occurs (i.e. child maltreatment public awareness campaigns, family strengthening programs, increasing economic supports for families).
- Some of the evidence-based prevention programs include home visiting, quality funded child care and early education, parent support, training and education, family resource centers, evidence-based child sexual abuse prevention programs, family friendly workplace policies, economic supports for families, banning corporal punishment and positive fatherhood engagement.
- If you never get upstream – or ahead of the issue – the needle will never move. We know that evidenced based and research based prevention programs and policies highlighted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have an impact and help to prevent child abuse from occurring in the first place, helping families while also being cost effective in the long-term.
- A public health approach to the prevention of child abuse and neglect requires strategies that address the conditions and contexts in which children and families live. Primary prevention programs promote healthy child development through strengthening parenting skills and reducing stress, which is a risk factor for child maltreatment. Early and effective primary prevention is more cost effective than fixing the adverse effects of child maltreatment after it has occurred (e.g. child protective services).
- All parents want to be good parents. Increasing parental knowledge regarding child development, while also linking parents to needed resources can provide them with the tools and strategies to be the best parent they can be.
- Every parent wants to be good at parenting. But, we know that circumstances, undoubtedly, determine just how difficult it can be as a parent – And, depending on past and current experiences some parents and caregivers may be more prepared than others when it comes to creating nurturing environments for children.
- With the right tools and resources parents, caregivers and communities can promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children.

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, The Economics Daily, [Access to paid and unpaid family leave in 2018](#).