## A PATH FORWARD: POLICY OPTIONS FOR PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT FATALITIES

2016 Strengthening Families Training Institute

## Child Abuse Fatalities

#### **Opportunities for Prevention**

- Focus attention on issue
- Spur concern
- Can be catalyst for change

#### **Challenges for Prevention**

- Desire to assign blame
- Narrow focus on particular event / circumstances
- Responses are often punitive
- Fundamental attribution error



### Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities



- Established by the Protect Our Kids Act of 2012 to develop a national strategy and recommendations for reducing child fatalities resulting from abuse and neglect.
- Beginning in 2014, twelve Commissioners, appointed by the President and Congress, began two-year process of holding public hearings in 11 jurisdictions.
- Recommendations to be issued March 17.



Alliance Recommendations to the Commission:

- 1. Invest additional resources for prevention.
- 2. Importance of strong prevention infrastructure and using public health approach for prevention.
- 3. Realign child welfare financing.
- 4. Enact policies with studies showing impact on child maltreatment rates and risk factors.
- 5. Take research-based action-oriented approach to preventing child neglect.

## 3 challenges identified by CECANF

- Lack of sustained leadership and accountability at the federal, state, and local levels.
- 2. Lack of evidence-based research and clear data about number of children who die each year and the circumstances of those deaths.
- 3. Lack of cross-system collaboration places too much of the onus on CPS for identifying children at risk and preventing abuse before it happens.

## **Commission Findings**

- An estimated four to eight children die each day from abuse and neglect.
- Children who die from abuse and neglect are very young; approximately half are less than a year old, and 75% are under 3 years of age.
- A call to a CPS hotline is best predictor of a child's potential risk of injury death before age 5.
- Many fatalities were not known to CPS, but were seen by other professionals (e.g., health care), highlighting importance of coordinated and multisystem efforts.

## Commission Findings (con't.)

- Access to real-time information about families is vital to child protection efforts, but legal and policy barriers prevent this from occurring.
- Do not know exact number of children who die from abuse and neglect, but it's critical to have this data to understand what works.
- Can identify what puts children at risk, but Commission notes few promising solutions shown to reduce fatalities.

### **CECANF Expected Recommendations**

- Immediate actions intended to begin saving children's lives right away.
  - Review fatalities in recent years
  - Review screening processes particularly for very young
- 2. Elevate Children's Bureau to report to Sec. of DHHS
- 3. Requirement that states implement plans for preventing child abuse and neglect fatalities.
- 4. Changes to create redefined "child welfare system of 21st century" including a public health approach to prevention.
- 5. Increased flexibility for use of child welfare funds.
- 6. Improved data collection and data sharing across systems

## **CECANF** Report

- Report will be released tomorrow (March 17)
- Lack of consensus as deliberations concluded.
- Minority Report is likely.
- Disagreement on whether to recommend \$1 billion in new funding for CAPTA.
- Report and Commission recommendations have been criticized prior to its release.



### The River Story

#### **A New River Story**

Keynote Address – Friends Action Network

Washington DC, April 17, 2012

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Old River Story→	Contemporary River Story→	New River Story
Action	Science-Action	Spirit-Science-Action
First Generation Prevention	Second Generation Prevention	Third ('New') Generation Prevention
Action and message oriented	Evidence-based	Spirit 1 <sup>st</sup> - then Science- leads Action
"GET UPSTREAM"	"GET EFFECTIVE"	"GET WET"
"What should we do or say to prevent harm, reduce illness, injury or death?"	"What does the science indicate would be most effective?"	"How do we build on what we know while honoring cultures to nurture solutions in our communities?"
Acting earlier through policy and programs	Evidence-based Comprehensive Strategies	Community engagement and participation
Deficit View	Social Ecological View	Holistic & Comprehensive View
"We're okay, you're at risk"	"People living in risky environments"	"The Solutions Exist in the Communities"
Focus on Raising Awareness	Professional Services to Address Risks	Balancing Concern AND Hope
Linear Logic Models	Understanding Context	Complex systems thinking: humility nurtures respect
One Size Fits All	Cultural Competence	Cultural Humility
"Tobacco Will Kill You…"	"Tobacco Makes You Unattractive and Harms Those Around You "	e.g., Focused message for native teens in Montana :"Keep Tobacco Sacred…"
Change	Broader Change	Change AND Transformation

What policies <u>are</u> linked with reductions in child abuse and neglect?

## **Essentials for Childhood**

Research from Joanne Klevens, MD, MPH, PhD Policy Approaches to Prevent Child Maltreatment and Assure Safe, Stable Nurturing Relationships and Environments



### Focusing on the conditions in which people...



### Potential policy targets

- 1. Reduce poverty
- 2. De-concentrate poverty
- 3. Increase residential stability
- Increase accessibility & continuity of affordable high quality childcare
- **5.** Increase accessibility to high quality pre-K
- 6. Facilitate children's access to health care
- 7. Facilitate parents' access to health care, including mental health care



# A few words of caution on the "best available evidence"

- Often only one study
- Most studies are observational (i.e., not randomized controlled trials) – association does not mean causation
- If more than one and inconsistent results, excluded
  - Color code:
    - Policies associated with reductions in child maltreatment
    - Policies associated with reductions in risk factor for child maltreatment
    - Policies suggested by consultants but no evidence found (yet)

### 1. Reduce poverty

- Mechanisms: poverty increases number of negative life events<sup>1</sup>, parents' stress<sup>1-3</sup>, parental depression<sup>3</sup>, & partner conflict<sup>3</sup>; income supplements are associated with decreased child behavior problems thru improved Parenting<sup>4</sup>
- Potential policy options
  - /TANF benefit level, lifetime limits, family cap,<sup>5</sup> work requirements<sup>6</sup>
  - Minimum wage is livable wage<sup>7</sup>
  - Tax Credits: Earned Income Tax Credit<sup>8</sup>, Child tax credit<sup>9</sup>
  - In-kind support<sup>9</sup> (e.g., food stamps<sup>11</sup>,WIC<sup>11</sup>, housing vouchers)
  - Child support passed through<sup>12</sup>
  - Raise state tax threshold or reduce tax rate for lower income families

<sup>1</sup>Gershoff, Aber, Raver, & Lennon, 2007; <sup>2</sup>Mistry, Vandewater, Huston, & McLoyd, 2002; Slack Holl, McDaniel, Yoo, & Bolger, 2004; <sup>3</sup>Yeung, Linver, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002; <sup>4</sup>Costello et al, 2003; <sup>5</sup>Paxson & Waldfogel, 2003; <sup>6</sup>Fein & Lee, 2003; <sup>7</sup>Neumark, & Adams, 2003; Bhatia & Katz, 2001; Forget, 2011; <sup>8</sup>NBER, 2008; Strully et al., 2010; Marr et al., 2014; <sup>9</sup>Milligan, & Stabile, 2011;<sup>10</sup> Wimer et al., 2013; <sup>11</sup>Lee & Mackey-Bilaver, 2007; <sup>12</sup>Cancian, et al., 2013

### 2. De-concentrate poverty

- Mechanisms: increases child maltreatment by increasing parental depression<sup>1</sup>, reducing social capital <sup>2</sup>, increasing social disorder which leads to a lack of social controlson behaviors<sup>3</sup>, or decreased access to resources and formal supports.
- Potential policy options
  - Conditional housing vouchers<sup>4-5</sup>
  - Use Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) to fund projects with > set asides for affordable homes in low poverty neighborhoods
  - Inclusionary zoning ordinances for set asides

<sup>1</sup> Mair, Diez Roux, & Galea (2008); <sup>2</sup> Zolotar & Runyan,(2006); <sup>3</sup>Freisthler, Merritt, & LaScala 2006 <sup>4</sup>Cove et al.,(2008); Ludwig et al. (2011); Ludwig et al. (2012); Kessler et al. (2014); Sanbonmatsu et al.,(2012); <sup>5</sup>Guide to Community Preventive Services (2001)



### 3. Increase residential stability

- Mechanisms: increased risk of maltreatment among families with difficulties paying rent, doubling up, evicted<sup>1</sup>or homelessness<sup>2</sup> perhapsthru increased parental stress or disruptions in social support network. Stable shelter also responds to children's physical needs.
- Potential policy options:
  - Housing vouchers<sup>3</sup>
  - Trust fund to build and maintain affordable homes
  - LIHTC extending period of affordability or tenant to owner conversion
  - Statutes preventing subprime mortgages and mortgage fraud

# 4. Increase accessibility & continuity of affordable high quality childcare

 Mechanisms: lack of childcare affects parents' ability to work and earn sufficient income ( a poverty)<sup>1</sup>; high-quality care reduces problem behaviors<sup>2</sup> which may trigger abusive parenting or neglect

#### Potential policy options:

- Meet demand (no wait lists)<sup>3</sup>
- Increase coverage of Early Head Start<sup>4</sup>
- Child care subsidies (eligibility, amount in line with market, longer redetermination periods)
- Reduce co-pays
- Improve quality thru tiered reimbursement, quality improvement grants, professional development scholarships, and/or higher wages for better trained workforce

<sup>1</sup>Schulman & Blank, (2004); Klein (2010); <sup>2</sup>Vandell et al. (2010); <sup>3</sup>Klevens et al. (2014); <sup>4</sup>Green et al. (2014)

# 5. Increase accessibility to high quality pre-K – with parental involvement

- Mechanisms: increased maternal education, fewer family problems, decreased school mobility (*residential* stability?), & decreased social isolation; interactions between parents and children in school may improve parent-child relations<sup>1</sup>
- Potential policy options:
  - Increase slots for Head Start<sup>2</sup>



- Increase slots for State pre-K with parents involved
- Increase quality of state pre-K:have early learning standards, degree and training requirements for teachers; higher pay for teachers; limits on class size; minimum staff-child ratio; health and support services provided; conduct site visits to enforce standards

<sup>1</sup>Mersky, Topitzes, & Reynolds (2011); <sup>2</sup>USDHHS/ACF (2005); Garces et al. (2002)

# 6. Facilitate children's access to health care, including mental health care

 Mechanisms: uninsured children are less likely to receive health services in a timely manner<sup>1</sup> which might lead to medical neglect; anticipatory guidance and screening and referral to evidence-based treatment (~TripleP)<sup>2</sup>

#### Potential policy options:

- Medicaid or State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP): eligibility, presumptive eligibility, continuity<sup>4</sup>
- Extension of evidence-based services for children at risk or with challenging behaviors (and their parents) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act PartC



# 7. Facilitate parents' access to health care, including mental health care

 Mechanisms: health insurance associated with reduced parental depression and stress<sup>1</sup>; facilitates access to family planning &, prevents unwanted pregnancies<sup>2</sup>; opportunity to enroll in home visitation program & screen for IPV, depression, and substance abuse and link to intervention (SEEK) which reduces child maltreatment.<sup>3-4</sup>



- Potential policy options:
  - Expand Medicaid eligibility & its coverage of contraception by applying for a family planning waiver<sup>5</sup>; include SEEK as preventive service with no co-pay in insurance plans

<sup>1</sup>Aumann & Galinsky, 2009; <sup>2</sup>Frost et al., 2013; <sup>3</sup>Dubowitz, Lane, Semiatin, & Magder (2012); <sup>4</sup>Dubowitz,Feigelman, Lane & Kim. (2009); <sup>5</sup>Yang & Gaydos (2010); Lindrooth & McCullough (2007)

### Other available evidence

- Bans on corporal punishment associated with less use of corporal punishment<sup>1</sup>
- Access to contraception reduces unplanned pregnancies<sup>2</sup>
- Family-friendly work: paid maternity leave increases breast-feeding<sup>3</sup> and regular well child care<sup>3</sup> and reduces child mortality<sup>4</sup>, maternal depression<sup>5</sup>, and children's externalizing behaviors<sup>3</sup>; paid sick leave, paid vacation, and flexible work reduce parental stress & depression<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Zolotor & Puzia, 2010; <sup>2</sup>Frost, Zolna, & Frohwirth, 2013; <sup>3</sup>Berger, Hill, & Waldfogel, 2005; <sup>4</sup>Ruhm, 2000; <sup>5</sup>Chatterji & Markowitz, 2005; <sup>6</sup>Aumann & Galinsky, 2009

### Policies associated with impacts on child maltreatment

- Higher benefits; no family cap, time limits or work requirements in TANF
- No wait list for child care
- WICor SNAP
- Early Head Start
- Child-Parent Centers (preK with parental involvement)
- Continuity in eligibility for S-CHIP

### Policies associated with impacts on risk factors of child maltreatment

- Increased minimum wage
- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing vouchers
- Head Start
- Medicaid coverage of teens
- Bans on corporal punishment
- Access to family planning services
- Family-friendly work

### What we know?

- Behavior theory
- Importance of improving context, environment, etc.
  so children and families can thrive
- Public Health approach across social ecology
- Building Protective Factors is critically important

## Additional Policy Opportunities

- Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA)
- Hatch-Wyden Family First Act
- Every Student Succeeds Act

### Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

- Scheduled for reauthorization in 2016.
- Created in 1974 to address child maltreatment and was nation's first recognition of importance of protecting children from abuse and neglect.
- Appropriations are well below authorization levels.
- CAPTA Discretionary State Grants support state efforts to improve their child protective practices in preventing and treating child abuse and neglect.
- Funds National Child Abuse & Neglect Data System.

### Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

- Title II of CAPTA authorizes Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grants (CB-CAP).
- FY 2014, CBCAP funded at \$40 million, (half of federal authorization cap of \$80 million).
- Supports variety of community-based, preventionfocused family support programs.
- 70% funding based on child population.
- Remaining 30% based on leveraged funds.

## Hatch Wyden Family First

- Goal to keep children safe and supported at home.
- Support services for families with child at risk of entering the child welfare system.
- Provide mechanism for Title IV-E funds for child welfare to be used for prevention services:
  - Substance abuse prevention,
  - Mental health services,
  - In-home parent skills-based programs, including parent training and individual and family counseling.

## **Every Student Succeeds Act**

Student Support & Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Grants can be used for:

- Child sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs or activities;
- Bullying and harassment prevention programs;
- Reducing exclusionary discipline practices;
- Professional development and training for drug and violence prevention;
- School-based mental health services;

## **Every Student Succeeds Act**

- Improve instructional practices and safety through recognition and prevention of coercion, violence, or abuse;
- Implementation of school-wide positive behavioral supports;
- Training for school personnel related to suicide prevention and trauma-informed practices in classroom management;
- Designating site resource coordinator at a school or school district to provide a variety of services, such as:
  - Establishing partnerships within the community to provide resources and support for schools; and,
  - Strengthening relationships between schools and communities.





# **Top Secret**


# You don't have to answer the question.

### Identify 3 talking points and stick to them like glue!

#### Your talking points are your "Islands of Safety"



When you get off your island, you may be swimming with the sharks.

#### Your talking points are your "Islands of Safety"



Use "bridges" to move reporter's questions to your talking points.

#### Bridging can be used to

- Return to "islands of safety"
- Deal with difficult questions
- Stay on the subject

#### **Common Bridges**

- Again...
- The key point here is...
- Let's take that a step further...
- Let me add...
- That's important, but the real issue is...
- You should also know that...

# What if you can't avoid the question? Touch briefly on the topic then BRIDGE.

Practice Bridging Reporter Traps The Negator Reporter Traps The Paraphraser Reporter Traps The Silent Lamb Reporter Traps The Intruder Reporter Traps The Phantom

## **Other Tips**

- Know how your interview will be used.
- Don't fight narrative with numbers.
- If they give you a portrait, bridge to a landscape.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Choose your messengers carefully.

## How do you build a movement?



#### For More Information

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