

# 2018 Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

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DCFS  
Grant Management

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*(Based on Law (201)ILCS 505 /4a) (from Chapter 23, paragraph 5004a)*

**Introduction:**

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services was established on January 1, 1964, as the nation's first cabinet-level state child welfare agency. Until that time, the state's child welfare responsibilities were housed in the Department of Mental Health. The Department's history is steeped in a long tradition of service and innovation for the state's most vulnerable children. Illinois is home to the nation's first juvenile court, counts itself as the birthplace of social work with Jane Addams' Hull House, was among the first state to establish child protection laws, was an early signatory to laws mandating the reporting of child abuse and neglect and created one of the nation's first statewide child abuse hotlines.

Under new leadership, DCFS continues to be one of many state agencies that plan and coordinate primary, secondary and tertiary child abuse and neglect prevention programs and services. As such, The Department is charged to administer child abuse prevention shelters and service programs for abused and neglected children, or provide for their administration by not-for-profit corporations, community-based organizations or units of local government. DCFS is also legislatively empowered with the administration of the Illinois Child Abuse Prevention Fund that is supported through the statewide tax check-off option and a portion of proceeds from the sale of Illinois commemorative birth certificates.

In this past year DCFS continued its commitment to join with agencies and organizations to expand its focus, achieve common goals, and to facilitate supports to those with unmet needs, especially those in situations where the potential for abuse and neglect was heightened. These activities included expanding or enhancing community-based, prevention-focused programs and accessible, effective, culturally appropriate activities to strengthen and support families. Community Based Child Abuse Prevention and matching funds build upon existing strengths.

The annual State Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan is submitted on or before the first Friday in October of each year and addresses the following four areas:

1. **Identification and definition of priorities, goals and objectives;**
2. Identification and estimation of the **resources necessary to investigate or process reports** of suspected child abuse or neglect;
3. Provision of necessary **follow-up services** for child protection, family preservation, and family reunification in indicated cases; and
4. Proposals for the most effective use of **existing resources** to implement the plan, including recommendations for the optimum use of private resources, local public resources, and state and federal resources.

## **Identification of Priorities and Goals:**

The Department's priorities, goals and objectives are adequately reflected in the Department's Mission Statement, our Vision Statement and our adherence to the principals of children and family services that are listed in the annually revised Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 1355.25). The federal Administration for Children, Youth and Families-Children's Bureau (ACYF-CB) assures effective services for children, youth, and families by guiding States in developing, operating, and improving the continuum of child and family services through the Code of Federal Regulations.

**DCFS Mission:** To promote prevention, child safety, permanency and well-being. We bring the voices of Illinois children and families to the forefront, building trusting relationships that empower those we serve.

**DCFS Vision:** Communities strengthening families to ensure every child is safe, healthy and productive at home and in school.

### **DCFS Values:**

We value Trust

We value Compassion

We value Accountability

We value Responsiveness, Relationships and Respect

We value Empathy

We value Safety

These Goals and Objectives represent the overarching priorities for those serving children and families in Illinois.

1. Education and Self-Sufficiency
2. Moving from Institutional to Community-Based Care
3. Paying for Value, Quality and Outcomes
4. Prevention and Population Health
5. Data Integration and Predictive Analysis
6. Build Relationships and Effective Communications Streams internally and externally by Engaging Youth and Their Families.

### **Resources necessary to investigate or process reports:**

Investigation and processing of suspected child maltreatment begins with the **State Central Register** (Child Abuse Hotline), where DCFS staff urgently acts as necessary to protect the child in question. Protecting children involves a strong system of screening reports, a properly assessed "front end" investigation, effective use of investigative tools, and timely service delivery. To improve training for investigators, DCFS partnered with the local university in Springfield to

create a **Residential Simulation Lab House**, as well as a mock courtroom, which opened in February 2016 to give new investigators real-life experience in investigating maltreatment situations and in court testimony, with an ability to receive feedback.

In another resource to assist with investigations, in May 2016 DCFS began implementation of predictive analytics to identify the children at highest risk of death or serious physical injury that have had prior contact with the Department through an investigation. As part of this process, a review will be conducted on investigations that have the highest probability of having a poor outcome (serious harm or death) utilizing a tool that focuses on 9 critical practices. Through work with Eckerd, the Department is attempting to impact the rate of serious maltreatment reports to children previously known to the Department.

DCFS also partners with the **Multidisciplinary Pediatric Education and Evaluation Consortium (MPEEC)**, which primarily provides expert medical evaluations for abuse allegations of serious harm to children in Chicago. There are also other specialized medical programs located in Rockford, Peoria and Carbondale to assist child protection and law enforcement personnel in thorough forensic investigations of these incidents.

Enhancement to DCFS's **Human Trafficking** response was made last year with the establishment of a Human Trafficking Program Manager, who provides oversight to the training of investigative and casework staff, foster parents, residential staff, and others. She also collaborates with other agencies and stakeholders, including The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the FBI. She lends her expertise to updates of DCFS policy and procedures. A media campaign and prevention curriculum for youth has been developed around the message of "You Are Not for Sale."

The Department has established two human trafficking allegations for children that are victims of Human Trafficking. The allegations are #40/90. The Department supports the Human Trafficking Coordinator. The Human Trafficking Coordinator provides: Trainings, Support and Awareness to staff.

A significant contributor to overall systemic change to reduce child neglect and abuse is our partnership with the nine **Child Death Review Teams**. The Child Death Review Teams produce an annual accumulated report that summarizes findings from the teams and presents recommendations for improvement to the child welfare system. The document is presented to the Governor, the Illinois Legislature, and other interested parties every year in a continued effort to understand and reduce preventable child deaths in Illinois.

**Child Advocacy Centers (CACs)** play a critical role in the coordination of investigative activities utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach, providing a comprehensive response to child abuse in Illinois. CACs bring together child protective services, law enforcement, state's attorneys, medical and mental health providers to ensure thorough, victim sensitive interviews and interventions. CACs also provide support and services to families after the Initial victim contact and each CAC is an accredited chapter of the National Children's Alliance.

## **Follow-Up Services:**

Whenever needed, DCFS and its social service partners provide voluntary services that allow children to remain safely at home. When children must be removed from their home, services are also made available to aid in family reunification as quickly as possible. In 2016, DCFS established a workgroup aimed at reviewing, analyzing, and revising core permanency practice procedures to establish a standard of care and service provision that considers family engagement, shared parenting to empower birth parents, the child's sense of time in achieving permanency, and lifelong connections for families and children. Below is a partial list of services provided to Illinois families.

**Intact Family Services** are designed to make "reasonable efforts" to stabilize, strengthen, enhance, and preserve family life by providing services that enable children who are the subject of a founded abuse or neglect report to remain safely with their families. Intact family services are designed to promote permanency by maintaining, strengthening and safeguarding the functioning of families to: A) prevent substitute care placement, B) ensure the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children and, C) facilitate a safe, stable family environment. Adequately assessing the family's strengths and needs and assisting the family to achieve enhanced parenting skills are essential to the success of those efforts. Direct intervention and linkage to appropriate community services are provided with the goal being that families will demonstrate an increased capacity to provide for their children's needs.

The **Safe Families for Children** program was developed in 2002 by LYDIA, a Chicago based Christian social service agency, in partnership with churches, ministries, and local community organizations to offer voluntary placement arrangements to families whose children are at risk of being removed from their custody by child protective authorities. Safe Families for Children ("SFC") is a program oriented to prevent child abuse recurrence and removal into state protective custody by recruiting and overseeing a network of host families with whom parents can voluntarily place their children in times of need, families retain legal custody and voluntarily place their children with SFC host families. The families share decision-making authority, and SFC volunteers and paid staff serve as case coordinators for the birth parents and the host families.

The recent SFC statewide expansion has increased the agency's overall operations and service area across Illinois, enlarging the capability of providing temporary placement for children in need, while enhancing the support for the placing-parent and host families through volunteers such as family coaches, family friends, and resource friends. The development of additional host family recruitment trainings and collaboration with community faith based partners has brought new alliances and a stronger safety network to prevent child abuse and to ensure the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children and families throughout the State of Illinois.

Through the help of the seven **Crisis Nurseries**, thousands of families undergoing crises, stress and uncertainty utilize the 24-hour emergency shelter care program for children birth through six years of age, which provides a safe haven for children when their families are unable to care for them due to an emergency. The nursery provides both immediate help as well as longer term intervention/prevention family support to help stabilize the family. This support includes parent

education classes, parent support groups, individual therapy, crisis counseling, and access to after-care services. Through this resource, families are more likely to remain intact, achieve safety and stability, and develop the protective factors that promote the well-being of parents and children and reduce the risk for negative outcomes.

An additional resource for families is the **Family Advocacy Center** network. There are 23 Family Advocacy Centers (FAC) operated by eighteen service providers located throughout the state. Family Advocacy Centers maintain a prevention-focused, holistic approach that builds on a family's existing strengths. The FAC focus is to serve a combination of families who have already been involved with DCFS and families who may not have been involved with DCFS but who have children age 6 and under and may be at greater risk of abuse and neglect. The FAC's tailor their services to the unique needs of the communities they serve. In addition to traditional counseling, referrals and training services, the FAC's may also offer services including mediation services, after-school programs, parenting coaching, classes and mentoring services in both English and Spanish, as well as other programs.

In FY17, the Department continued its partnership with **Be Strong Families** (BSF), NFP whose role is serving child-welfare-involved families and youth & young adults by providing services that build the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors in families and children involved with the child welfare system. All services provided by Be Strong Families contribute to achieving child welfare goals. These include training workshops and cafes for both parents (Foster, Birth) and youth and young adults (teen parents / youth in care). Youth and young adult services also contribute to building the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Youth Thrive™ Protective / Promotive Factor framework.

**Norman Cash Assistance and Housing Locator Service** are programs operated by DCFS. Norman Services assist families who lack food, clothing, housing or other basic human needs that place children's safety at risk and would otherwise necessitate their removal from the family or would be a barrier to family reunification. The statewide program provides:

- Cash assistance to purchase items needed to care for the children that the family may not afford to purchase themselves;
- Assistance in locating housing; and
- Expedited enrollment for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) so that children in DCFS custody may be returned home within 90 days.

Abuse of alcohol and other drugs are frequent accompaniments to incidents of child abuse or neglect. The Department's intervention with **Substance-Affected Families** (SAF) is a collaborative effort between DCFS and the Department of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA). Department policies and procedures describing intervention and services to substance affected families establish requirements including completion of substance abuse screens for all adults, referrals for assessment and treatment when indicated, enrollment of preschool children into protective day care, and other measures.

DCFS attempts to keep children and families out of the court and foster care systems by providing intact, in-home services to strengthen families and protect children. The **Intact Family Recovery (IF/R)** program model was first developed by the DCFS Inspector General in response to child deaths and injuries in cases involving the birth of a substance exposed infant. The IF/R teams child welfare and alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) outreach workers together to provide comprehensive services to intact families during the process of recovery from alcohol and other drug abuse. The program targets families where an infant has been born exposed to controlled substances, and currently serves families in only Cook County.

The Department has established the **Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP)** program, which is intended to support foster care placements and reduce placement disruptions. CIPP uses a facilitated team decision-making process to identify and meet the appropriate intensity of service support for the youth and caregiver through creative and flexible interventions that preserve the youth's current connections within his/her home, school, and community. The CIPP's goal is to improve placement preservation and increase placement stability, improve the youth's well-being and functioning by building and maintaining connections to family, social supports and community, access to and use of local, community-based support services, and improve the timeliness of interventions, prior to placement disruptions.

The **Statewide Provider Database (SPD)** is an easily accessible online tool with searchable information on community based services for children and families. The SPD allows users to identify and locate DCFS-contracted and non-contracted service providers across Illinois, and includes detailed agency and program specific information. The information on each program is extensive and includes eligibility criteria, service features, evidence based practices, staff credentials, and more. The SPD supports the efforts of caseworkers by locating services in the catchment area in which the child has been placed, or near the school the child attended prior to removal from the home. The SPD is available to public and private agencies and may also be used to locate services as a preventative measure.

**Reunification Foster Care** creates a team including the parent, caregiver, caseworker and the child. A Family Reunification Support Special Service Fee provides reimbursement for caregivers who team with parents to work toward reunification in eligible activities. This specialized type of foster care is aimed at identification of caregivers who are prepared to support family reunification and providing them the training and tools needed. To achieve reunification, foster parents serve as partners, mentors, and role models for the family and are active participants in the process of reuniting a family.

In 2007, the Department, in collaboration with its African-American Advisory Council, the Illinois African-American Family Commission and Illinois State University, launched the **Permanency Enhancement Program Initiative (PEP)**. The purpose of the Initiative is to reduce and/or eliminate racial disproportionality and disparities of families and children of color in the Illinois Child Welfare System and thereby improve permanency outcomes. The methodology for the PEP is a systems approach to understanding how structural and/or institutional racism contextualizes child welfare practice in ways that create disparities in the determination of need and services for children and families of color. The disparities are created when services are presumptively

allocated, poorly provided or inadequate in addressing a family's identified need. Disparities are also created when differences in service delivery are not justifiable based on a family's identified need, available agency resources or other objective criteria.

### **Use of Existing Resources:**

The programs being funded through the Community-Based Child Abuse and Prevention (CBCAP) federal grant and matching funds are collectively diverse in population served and the types of primary and secondary prevention services offered. This promotes a wide variety of interests and collaborations across the state. These affiliations and cooperative agreements range from statewide child abuse prevention coalitions at the community level to the creation and professional growth of the Coalition for Crisis Nurseries of Illinois. The Coalition is made up of six independent non-profit organizations throughout Illinois. The nurseries provide short-term care for children aged six and under whose families are experiencing a crisis. Family support programs also help families after the fact. Two of the nurseries are "stand alone" agencies while four others are located within a larger child welfare agency.

Extensive child abuse and neglect prevention efforts in Illinois provided by Prevent Child Abuse Illinois (PCA Illinois) are heavily supported through the DCFS Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grant funds. Project staff members provide leadership and coordination for community-based **Child Abuse Prevention Coalitions**. Staff form new coalitions and support existing coalitions to address specific child abuse issues and needs within local communities. Staff members facilitate meetings and help plan events. They also coordinate the activities of the coalitions with other groups, including IDCFS, the Family Violence Coordinating Council, the Children's Mental Health Partnership, and others. Support includes identifying grants and funding sources, coordinating Child Abuse Prevention month activities, developing resources, and addressing local issues. PCA Illinois provides Child Abuse Prevention Coalitions with reduced registration fees for the PCA Illinois Annual Conference, and access to all PCA Illinois workshops, trainings and prevention education materials. When needed, PCA Illinois is available to act as a fiscal agent for coalitions receiving grant funds.

PCA Illinois' **Child Sexual Abuse Prevention** Program supports efforts in the state to help prevent child sexual abuse and its devastating effects on children, families, and the greater society. All four Prevention Specialists, the Healthy Families Associate and the Project Director are Authorized Facilitators of the evidence-informed *Stewards of Children* child sexual abuse prevention curriculum developed by the Darkness-to-Light organization. The PCA Illinois Northern Region Prevention Specialist is also an Authorized Instructor for the *Stewards of Children* curriculum allowing her to train others as Authorized Facilitators. The two-hour video-based training follows a 5-Step training model. These steps are: 1) Learn the facts; 2) Minimize opportunity; 3) Talk about it; 4) Recognize the Signs; and 5) React Responsibly. Each training participant receives a workbook that contains vital information and resources which supports continued learning and prevention efforts beyond the initial training. Individuals, programs, organizations, and communities are asked to examine their current policies and develop new policies which protect children and create an atmosphere where child sexual abuse is not tolerated. In addition to providing training, PCA Illinois staff provides the support needed to

develop and implement these new policies and take child safety to the next level. Darkness to Light reports that for each adult trained in the *Stewards of Children* curriculum, ten children are better protected.

In addition, the PCA Illinois Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program provides public awareness and educational materials and works in partnership with local and statewide Child Advocacy Centers and other agencies working on this issue.

Another collaborative event is the **Annual Prevent Child Abuse Illinois Statewide Conference**. The 2018 conference theme is: *Courage. Resilience. Healing. A Shared Commitment to Children*. This is the 24<sup>th</sup> year that DCFS and Prevent Child Abuse Illinois have held the premiere child abuse prevention conference. This two- day conference offers access to national speakers and cutting-edge information in the field of child abuse prevention, intervention and best practice. The conference features 3 plenary speakers, 24 breakout sessions and a special track of workshops designed specifically for home visitors. The conference rotates between the Chicago area and central Illinois and averages over 400 participants. This event is always well received by DCFS staff and professionals in other fields as well.

**Promoting Infant Care and Safety** includes several programs. Caring for a new baby can be a challenge even for the most experienced parent or caretaker. Some babies come with special challenges and often, best-practice recommendations on caring for an infant change from generation to generation. PCA Illinois works with parents, foster and adoptive parents, childcare providers, and professionals working with caregivers to understand the issues of safe sleep environments and infant crying, which has been known to trigger Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma) and other forms of abuse.

The *Happiest Baby on the Block* is a curriculum developed by Dr. Harvey Karp. This curriculum teaches participants five simple techniques for soothing a crying infant. Six PCA Illinois staff, including the project director, all four Prevention Specialists, and the Healthy Families Associate, are certified Happiest Baby Educators. The Happiest Baby Program also addresses safe sleep environments and the dangers of shaking an infant or young child. The class provides hands-on practice of the five techniques. Parents are given a parent kit which includes a take home DVD and infant soothing CD. PCA Illinois' Happiest Baby Program is made up of three base components which include providing parent training, assisting other programs and professionals to become certified Happiest Baby Educators, and providing resources for new and expectant parents.

Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma) is a medical term that describes the injuries that occur to infants who are violently shaken by an adult caregiver. The purpose of PCA Illinois' *Shaking a Baby Can be Deadly Campaign* is to provide public awareness and education throughout the state on Shaken Baby Syndrome and its prevention. Components of this campaign include literature and material distribution, parent and professional training, and area wide Train-the-Trainer events. This program also covers safe sleep environments and educates everyone on the dangers of co-sleeping.

**Addressing the Connection between Substance Abuse and Child Abuse** involves DCFS and substance abuse treatment providers. PCA Illinois coordinates and facilitates two established IDCFS/IDHS Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery workgroups in the Central and Southern regions, as well as provides cross-training and technical assistance between child welfare agencies and substance abuse treatment providers. Project staff help resolve referral issues and find needed treatment resources. They coordinate and provide community training on methamphetamine abuse and its impact on children, current drug trends, and other substance abuse issues. Staff serve on community anti-drug coalitions, partner with the Illinois State Police, the Drug Enforcement Association, local law enforcement agencies, substance abuse treatment providers, and others to address substance abuse issues. The Project Director chairs and coordinates the Metro East Methamphetamine and Other Drugs Conference annually which draws more than 400 attendees. Additionally, staff provides brochures and other educational material to professionals to help them work with families impacted by this issue.

DCFS supports PCA Illinois' work in close partnership with the Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council (IFVCC), other violence prevention initiatives, and local domestic violence shelters to **address the Connection between Family Violence and Child Abuse**. Project staff chair committees, provide support material and resources, coordinate and provide training and cross-training on the connection between family violence and child abuse, provide technical assistance, and help resolve referral and service issues. In addition, staff develops training curricula, provides resources on the impact of domestic and family violence on children, and serve on statewide committees and workgroups.

We have been fortunate that PCA Illinois has provided leadership for **Child Abuse Prevention Month Activities** for the past 19 years throughout Illinois. Activities include multiple launch events, media conferences, local community involvement, collaborative efforts with other groups, and a statewide calendar of events. This effort is in partnership with IDCFS and includes these additional components each year:

- Advisory Committee
- Regional Subcommittees
- Community Resource Packet
- Blue Ribbon campaigns
- Pinwheels for Prevention campaigns
- Social media campaigns
- Involvement of Child Abuse Prevention Coalitions

In addition, program staff conduct trainings, provide community workshops, organize Child Abuse Prevention month events, coordinate Child Abuse Prevention month committees, provide technical assistance, and distribute prevention materials.

PCA Illinois **addresses the Impact of Childhood Trauma** by providing education and awareness of the lifelong impact of childhood trauma and supports the development of trauma sensitive practices among the families and professionals of Illinois. Children who are exposed to complex

trauma, including child abuse and neglect, face numerous risks. Childhood trauma can impact brain development and traumatic experiences in childhood have been linked to increased physical and mental health issues that can last into adulthood. Project staff work with other agencies to develop a coordinated response to childhood trauma and trauma sensitive care, participate in and support the Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition, coordinate and provide training on childhood trauma, secondary trauma and resilience, provide education about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and assist others in accessing reference and resource materials in local communities across the state. Additionally, staff coordinate, provide screenings, and facilitate post-screening discussions of the documentary films *Paper Tigers* and *Resilience* for parents, professionals and communities. *Paper Tigers* is an intimate look into the lives of selected students at Lincoln High School in Walla Walla, WA. which is an alternative school that specializes in educating traumatized youth. The film examines how trauma informed communities can help youth struggling with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The film *Resilience* explains the science of ACEs and the movement to treat and prevent childhood trauma and toxic stress.

**Home Visitation** is a strategy that is essential to enhancing support for our country's youngest children. Project staff work with all types of home-visiting services including *Parents as Teachers*, *Early Head Start*, *Healthy Families Illinois*, *Nurse-Family Partnership*, and others. Staff serve on the Healthy Families Illinois Workgroup, its Executive Committee, and co-chair its Public Awareness Committee. Staff facilitate regional networking groups, provide training, and provide specific home-visiting workshops and other opportunities at the annual conference.