

2022 Legislative Priorities

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa's mission is *“to empower community prevention efforts to provide safe and happy childhoods through collaboration with diverse partners, leading to a better future for Iowa.”*

We request consideration of the following legislative actions in support of Iowa's children and families.



Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

Enact legislation requiring schools to implement sexual abuse prevention practices. These include annual child sexual abuse prevention training for all school staff, including warning signs of child sexual abuse and boundary-violating behaviors; age-appropriate child sexual abuse prevention training for all students in grades pre-K-12, including healthy relationships, boundaries, and asking for help; and providing resources and information on child sexual abuse prevention to parents and caregivers, including warning signs of child sexual abuse, referrals and supports. Adopt legislation requiring mandatory background and reference checks for all employees serving minors if not already mandated.



Children's Mental Health

Adequate, sustainable, and predictable funding for the mental health system throughout the lifespan, through Medicaid or other avenues if the individual is ineligible for Medicaid or does not have insurance coverage. Every piece of the mental health service process, from counseling to prescriptions to hospitalization, must be covered. New services must be incorporated where there are gaps in either the child or adult system. Funding should be adequate for implementation of recommendations from the Children's Behavioral Health System State Board. Increase funding for evidence-based primary prevention efforts across the state.



Support for Families

Ensure funding support for programs that strengthen families and increase protective factors against child abuse and neglect. This includes expansion of First Five services to all 99 counties in the state, increasing access to childcare assistance to 185% of federal poverty level to match termination of services, increasing Earned Income Tax Credits for low- and moderate-income wage earners, and expanding Medicaid coverage for mothers to 12 months postpartum.



Support a Child Wellbeing System

Ensure that the Departments of Human Services and Public Health have the resources required to successfully enact recommendations previously made in child welfare system reviews. These include funding to maintain appropriate staffing levels and caseloads, employee retention policies and practices, and improvements to or replacement of the current data system to ensure workers have all information readily available for accurate and timely decision making.

PCAI recognizes certain isolated or marginalized communities or groups may be negatively impacted more significantly by legislation than Iowans as a whole. PCAI will study this legislation to determine the potential impact on the children and families we are committed to protect and upon the continued mission of PCAI.