



Prevent Child Abuse Illinois Policy Agenda

2025 - 2027

Prevent Child Abuse Illinois envisions an Illinois in which all children grow up in healthy, nurturing homes and communities free of abuse, neglect, violence, or endangerment of any kind. We work to prevent child abuse by providing statewide leadership through education, public awareness, support for community initiatives, and advocacy.



We know from our own families that children's early experiences, both positive and negative, impact them throughout their lives. When children are raised in stable and nurturing families and communities, they are much more likely to be happy, independent, and contributing adults. The best way to keep children safe and happy is to provide families with a full range of early supports they need to prevent child abuse and neglect from happening in the first place.

Evidence shows that when Illinois invests strategically in upstream programs designed to strengthen families, children experience better outcomes, communities thrive, and the state is able to save critical taxpayer dollars on more costly interventions down the road. In partnership with policy makers and other government and community partners, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois is committed to advancing a range of policies and services that are proven to support families and prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs.

Prioritizing and investing in the following prevention policies is everyone's responsibility and an important step in ensuring that all Illinois families have the opportunity to thrive.



Raise Public Awareness and Support for Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention in Illinois.

With the right policy supports, preventing child abuse and neglect is possible. Building sustained investments in effective family support programs begins with widespread public awareness about what is really at stake for children, families, and communities. Prevent Child Abuse Illinois is committed to working with policy makers to educate parents, teachers, child care providers, faith-based leaders, coaches, neighbors and other community stakeholders about how early childhood development, home visiting, quality health and mental health care, workforce development, and economic supports are working to keep children safe and help them thrive.



Increase Funding for the Primary Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Primary prevention encompasses many different upstream strategies designed to connect children and families to the supports they need before they face a crisis. To ensure these services are accessible to every family that needs them, additional funding is needed to replicate community-based prevention programs across the state, expand early intervention and family support services, and provide affordable, high-quality child care.



Expand Access to Evidence-Based Home Visiting and Other Programs to Support Families and Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect.

Home visiting is a voluntary program, and home visitors work with parents on practical parenting skills as well as family bonding before birth and as children grow up, promoting healthy parent-child attachment. Research shows that a range of coordinated evidence-based programs work together to produce better outcomes for children and their families. These include early childhood interventions such as Early Head Start, home visiting services, and quality child care. Evidence-based home visiting has been shown to prevent child abuse and neglect. Fostering and funding home visiting programs will help to ensure broader access for all families.



Raise Awareness and Support Policy on Reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Building Protective Factors.

Today, too many children and families in the child welfare system are involved in the system because of poverty related challenges — parents who are working multiple jobs, have inadequate housing, and limited access to high-quality early childhood programs and care. When families receive adequate resources—such as access to affordable childcare, mental health services, parenting education, and financial assistance—they are better equipped to provide a stable and nurturing environment for their children. Early intervention through supportive policies can address the root causes of neglect, such as poverty, stress, or lack of access to basic services, before they escalate into situations where children are at risk.



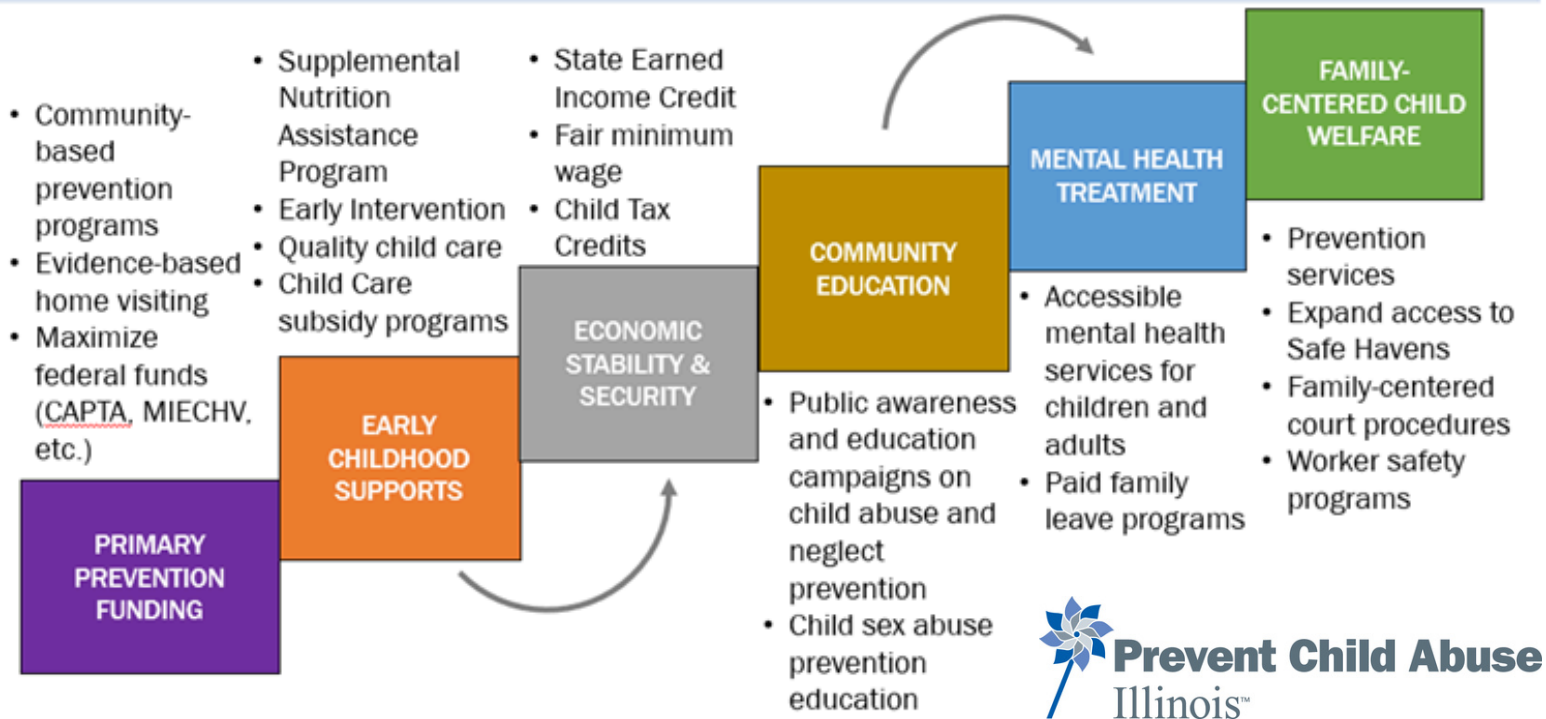
Invest in the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse.

Building a comprehensive strategy for the prevention of child sexual abuse requires policies as well as the implementation of evidence-based programs for educating adults and children about creating environments where the opportunities for child sexual abuse are minimized. Continuing to support policies like Public Act 102-610, which mandates school districts to incorporate child sexual abuse components into their policies and offer age-appropriate curricula from pre-K through 12th grade, empowers both children and adults to identify, respond to, and report inappropriate behaviors, creating a safer environment for all children.



CONTINUUM OF POLICY OPTIONS TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN ILLINOIS

Research shows that with the right policies and programs, we can prevent child abuse and neglect and ensure that every child and family has the support they need to thrive.



Developed in partnership with our friends at

Start Early
 Brightpoint
 We, The Village
 Raising Illinois
 Illinois Action for Children
 The Alliance at University of Illinois Springfield
 Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois
 Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health
 ParentTEACH Institute
 Illinois ACEs Response Collaborative



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