

**Prevent Child Abuse Illinois** envisions an Illinois where all children grow up in healthy nurturing homes and communities free of abuse, neglect, or violence of any kind. Since 1990, PCA Illinois has provided leadership working in partnership with individuals, organizations, and communities through public awareness, education, technical assistance, and by advocating for effective public policies and services to strengthen families and children.

**The most critical public policy concern in 2018 for the State of Illinois and for services to children and families is the enactment of a state budget.** The lack of a budget over the last two years has curtailed funds and reduced services to families and children creating unnecessary hardship and putting futures at risk. Some programs and provider organizations have had to shut down entirely. This overshadows every policy concern and has to be a top priority for the governor and legislators.

**Beyond that, the Prevent Child Abuse Illinois priority concern is the continued growth of proven home visiting programs for new parents.** PCA Illinois has promoted and assisted the development of the Healthy Families Illinois home visiting program since its inception and collaborates with other advocates to support additional evidence-based programs as well. Our ultimate goal is for these programs to reach full scale in Illinois serving every young family where this support is needed.

**Prevent Child Abuse Illinois will also support the several key issues raised by our child advocacy partners, including the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, The Ounce of Prevention, Voices for Illinois Children, Children's Home and aid and others.**

1. Early Childhood Home Visitation programs are voluntary programs of intensive and continuing home visiting which assists parents of newborns through education, hands-on coaching, and access to community services. They are proven, evidence-based programs which promote positive parenting, maximize child health and development, and prevent child abuse and neglect.

**PCA Illinois will advocate for full maintenance of effort by the state for early childhood home visitation program funding.** The full reach of early childhood home visitation programs in Illinois is dependent on the continuation of the federal Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funds. That requires a maintenance of effort on the part of the State of Illinois. And that means continued state funding at \$16.9 million (Healthy Families Illinois at \$10,040,000 and Parents to Soon at \$6,870,300). This has held in the Governor's budget FY 2019 and PCA Illinois will encourage the enactment of that budget. Additionally, the Governor's budget has a 10.5 million dollar increase in the Childhood Block Grant. This should result in additional home visiting programs.

2. We will follow the lead of our advocacy partners legislative agenda including several key budget items supporting the wellbeing of children and families. Additionally, PCA Illinois staff are actively engaged in legislative issues at the local and state level. We will encourage them to continue to provide the agency with information related to those areas.
3. We will closely follow HB 5202 and lend our support to the Illinois Youth Budget Commission when appropriate.

**PCA Illinois anticipates that we will endorse and will advocate for the Ounce of Prevention Legislative Agenda.** The agenda will most likely include a full-year, fully funded FY2019 budget with adequate revenue to fund core early childhood programs and other critical supports for young children and their families. The Legislative Agenda will be attached when it becomes available.