



The Children's Bureau is committed to advancing national efforts that strengthen the capacity of families to nurture and provide for the well-being of their children, including:

● **Primary Prevention of Child Maltreatment and Unnecessary Foster Care Placement**

Nurturing and safe parental relationships are essential to the healthy physical and emotional development of children; when interrupted, children suffer, sometimes for a lifetime. Intervening only after maltreatment occurs does not protect children from trauma. Primary prevention, through flexible funding, community-based services that strengthen the protective capacities of all parents, not just those at risk of child welfare involvement, will help children and their families thrive.

● **Foster Care as a Support to Families, not a Substitute for Parents**

The need for strong relationships and parental support continues when a child enters foster care. Children need to feel loved and cared for by their mothers, fathers, siblings, and maternal and paternal relatives. Even when parents are unable to keep their children safe at home, parents can remain actively involved with their children in foster care in safe and healthy ways. Foster and birth families must work together to support children in and after care to help ensure successful reunification.

● **Child Welfare Practice that Supports the Well Being of Children and Families**

Physical safety of children should not be achieved at the expense of their emotional and psychological well-being- this can perpetuate trauma for children and parents alike. Physical safety is one critical aspect of well-being, but well-being also requires social, educational, economic, behavioral, cognitive, and relational functionality. Addressing well-being helps ameliorate risks of harm and strengthen critical protective factors for ending patterns of maltreatment and trauma.

● **Community-Based, Collaborative Programs that Support Families**

Primary prevention of maltreatment and a focus on well-being best occur in the communities where children and families live. Community-based programs provide families with access to critical services in supportive environments that enhance protective factors. Child welfare agencies cannot, and should not, do this work alone. A wide array of stakeholders and systems, must work together, guided by the communities they serve.

● **A Strong, Healthy Child Welfare Workforce to Achieve Better Outcomes**

To serve families well we must have a strong, competent and healthy workforce. An effective child welfare system requires social workers, attorneys, and service providers to have adequate supports and supervision, manageable workloads, and the skills needed to do their work well. Inspired, competent leadership can garner the support of community partners, staff, and families on the path to meaningful and sustained improvement.



**KEEP FAMILIES**  
HEALTHY, TOGETHER, STRONG.