



www.protectpachildren.org

Governor Tom Corbett
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Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Senator Joseph B. Scarnati III
President Pro Tempore, Pennsylvania Senate
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Harrisburg, PA 17120-3025

Senator Dominic Pileggi
Majority Leader, Pennsylvania Senate
Senate Box 203009
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Senator Jay Costa
Democratic Floor Leader, Pennsylvania Senate
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3043

Representative Sam Smith
Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives
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Representative Mike Turzai
Majority Leader, Pennsylvania House of Representatives
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Representative Frank Dermody
Democratic Leader, Pennsylvania House of
Representatives
PO Box 202033
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2033

Dear Governor Corbett and Leaders of the General Assembly:

Preventing child abuse and protecting children is a shared community responsibility.

Throughout this National Child Abuse Prevention Month, there will be events to reinforce our shared commitment to improved child outcomes, in part, by ensuring that children and society do not suffer from the long-term adverse experiences and costs linked to child abuse.

Today, we are seeking your leadership to realize an intentional time-limited and interdisciplinary Commission to Improve the Prevention, Identification and Treatment of Child Abuse.

Included as an attachment are a number of tables that appear to suggest that Pennsylvania is a statistical outlier in when and how it investigates and then substantiates child abuse. The only immediate conclusion we can draw is that as a Commonwealth we must prioritize a greater understanding of and attention to the prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse.

The recent Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice proved that together the Governor, legislative leaders, the courts, and external stakeholders can join together to ask tough questions, tear off the blinders about an issue, and then chart a productive course forward. We think this is an appropriate model to replicate in order to study child abuse and develop any needed action plan.

Included within the analysis required of the interdisciplinary Commission to Improve the Prevention, Identification and Treatment of Child Abuse should be attention to the following questions:

1. How much is the Commonwealth investing in evidence-based or promising child abuse primary prevention strategies? Also, how are funding and outcomes measured and coordinated across departments?
2. What impact, if any, does the state's definition of child abuse have on child health and safety?

3. What public and private education and training strategies are needed to ensure mandated reporters of suspected child abuse fully understand their duties and responsibilities?
4. Are any updates or improvements needed to the state's dual response system (Child Protective Services and General Protective Services) to improve child safety and what performance measurements are tracked to demonstrate effectiveness?
5. How is ChildLine – the state's abuse hotline – functioning?
6. How should child welfare financing strategies, workforce development, and technology aimed at improved decision-making evolve to better promote prevention and ensure child safety?
7. How will the Commonwealth increase transparency within the child welfare system and ensure independent complaint resolution and oversight (e.g., Child Protection Ombudsperson)?

Pennsylvania will make its first application for federal Children's Justice Act (CJA) funds in May. These funds are intended to improve the investigation and treatment of child abuse. The availability of federal discretionary funds both for the prevention of child abuse through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as well as CJA provide a unique opportunity and a reasonable source of funding for any costs that would be incurred to convene this time-limited Commission and its required analysis.

The recently proposed Commonwealth Budget illustrates that there is a significant price tag paid when we fail as a society to prevent child abuse. There are unquestionable human costs and there are tangible fiscal costs that cross all departments and funding streams (e.g., child welfare services, remedial education, corrections, health, justice and victim services, etc).

The bottom line: whether calculating the life-long consequences for children or the tangible public and private costs to combat child abuse, the price is too steep to be ignored.

We look forward to working with you in the days ahead to ensure a Commission is convened and answers pursued.

Sincerely,

A Child's Place at Mercy –Allegheny County Children's Advocacy Center
Joan Mills, Manager

Adams County Children's Advocacy Center
Joddie Walker, Executive Director

Alice Paul House
Lou Ann Williams, Executive Director

Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries
Patricia Savage, CEO

American Academy of Pediatrics - PA Chapter
Dr. Allen Nussbaum MD, Vice President
Suzanne Yunghans, Executive Director

Bucks County Children's Advocacy Center
Leslie Slingsby, LSW, Director

Center for Family Life, Inc./Children's Advocacy Center of Indiana County
Kristina Taylor-Porter, Executive Director

Center for the Prevention of School-Aged Violence at Drexel University
Charles A. Williams III, PhD, Director

Central Susquehanna Valley Children's Advocacy Center
Dr. Pat Bruno, M.D., FAAP, Medical Director

Child Watch of Pittsburgh
Christopher P. Smith, Executive Director

Children's Advocacy Center Of Lawrence County
Sue Ascione, Executive Director

Children's Advocacy Center of Northeastern Pennsylvania
MaryAnn LaPorta, Executive Director

Children's Alliance Center of Berks County
April Reed Schmehl, Vice President

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC
Dr. Rachel P Berger MD,MPH, Child Advocacy Center
Dr. Janet Squires MD, Child Advocacy Center

City Church York
Rev. Aaron Anderson, Pastor

Crime Victim Center of Erie County, Inc.
Paul A. Lukach, Executive Director

Crisis Shelter of Lawrence County
Dayna Shaw Sear, Executive Director

Dauphin County Victim Witness Assistance
Vikki Palmer, Child Abuse Advocate

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Northwestern PA Synod

The Rev. Dr. Ralph Jones, Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Southeastern PA Synod

The Reverend Claire S. Burkat, Bishop

Family Design Resources

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Family Support Policy Board

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Fight Crime: Invest in Kids – Pennsylvania

Bruce Clash, State Director

Juvenile Law Center

Robert Schwartz, Executive Director

KidsVoice

Scott Hollander, Executive Director

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania

The Rev. Amy Reumann, Director

Lutheran Congregational Services, Inc.

The Rev. Dr. Dennis S. Ritter, Executive Director

Luzerne County Office of Human Services

Joe DeVizia, Director

Maternity Care Coalition

JoAnne Fischer, Executive Director

Mission Kids – Child Advocacy Center of Montgomery County

Abbie Newman, RN, JD, Executive Director

National Association of Social Workers – PA Chapter

Jenna Mehnert, Executive Director

Network of Victim Assistance (Bucks County)

Barbara Clark, Executive Director

Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office

Tara Dechert, Pennsylvania Program Developer

PathWays PA

Carol Goertzel, CEO

Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners

Karen Flad RN MSN CSN, President

Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police

Amy Rosenberry, Executive Director

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape

Delilah Rumburg, CEO

Pennsylvania Community Providers Association

Connell O'Brien, Policy Specialist

Pennsylvania Council of Churches

The Rev. Sandra L. Strauss, Director of Public Advocacy

Pennsylvania Court Appointed Special Advocates

Dennis Hockensmith, Executive Director

PA Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention & Awareness Program

Dr. Mark S. Dias, MD, FAANS, FAAP, Director (also Professor of Neurosurgery & Pediatrics, Penn State Hershey Medical Center)

Kelly Cappos RN, BSN, Nurse Coordinator

Marie Killian, RN, BSN, Nurse Coordinator

Carroll Rottmund RN, BSN, Nurse Coordinator

Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association

Kathleen Ramper, Executive Director

Philadelphia Children's Alliance

Chris Kirchner, Executive Director

PinnacleHealth Children's Resource Center

Teresa Smith, Ph.D., LSW, Executive Director

Pressley Ridge

Tammy Relken, Senior Director

Prevent Child Abuse PA

Dr. Maria D. McColgan, M.D, Advisory Board Chair

Protect Our Children Committee

Cathleen Palm, Co-Founder and Executive Director

SEIU Local 668

Kathy Jellison, President

Sexual Assault Resource and Counseling Center

Jenny Murphy-Shifflet, President/CEO

South Central Citizen Review Panel

Christina Mortensen, LSW, Vice Chair

Strategic Health Institute

Dr. Wanda Filer, Founder

Support Center for Child Advocates

Frank Cervone, Executive Director

The Foundation to Abolish Child Sex Abuse

Tammy Lerner, Co-Founder and State Director

Women Organized Against Rape

Carole Johnson, Executive Director

York County Children's Advocacy Center

Deborah Harrison, Executive Director

York Hospital

Dr. David Turkewitz, M.D., Chairman Pediatrics (and Medical Director York County Children's Advocacy Center)

York County Cribs for Kids Program

Dr. Michael H. Goodstein, MD, FAAP, Director (and Attending Neonatologist at York Hospital)

Individuals

Mary Achilles (Cumberland County)

Deb Beck (Dauphin County)

Beth Docherty (Allegheny County)

David Fair (Philadelphia)

Patti Gilbert (Cumberland County)

The Rev. Karl Jones (Schuylkill County)

Nancy Kaminski (Allegheny County)

Terry Kane (Montgomery County)

Charles Lockwood (Butler County)

Lisa L. Pawlowski (Lehigh County)

Sheldon Schwartz (Franklin County)

Patricia Sonne (Lehigh County)

Gary Shuey (Cumberland County)

Clay Yeager (York County)

TABLE 1: Rate of Child Abuse Reports Triggering Investigation¹

Table developed from [data prepared](#) by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau research on child abuse and neglect including the annual Child Maltreatment reports

STATES	2009 Rate of Children Receiving CPS Response ²	Investigation Rate 2008	Investigation Rate 2007	Investigation Rate 2006	Investigation Rate 2005	Investigation Rate 2004
NATIONAL	40.3	27.1	26.0	26.0	26.3	26.2
CALIFORNIA	39.1	26.1	24.8	24.0	24.2	24.8
FLORIDA	67.6	43.3	38.5	37.8	37.3	37.4
IOWA	43.3	30.4	32.5	35.2	34.6	34.3
KENTUCKY	59.3	49.6	48.4	48.6	48.2	47.3
LOUISIANA	29.4	19.3	17.5	24.0	23.1	20.4
MINNESOTA	17.9	14.8	15.1	15.8	14.9	13.8
MISSOURI	40.9	34.6	34.7	33.4	38.9	38.3
NEVADA	31.4	21.5	24.8	23.4	23.6	22.6
NEW JERSEY	34.6	26.3	21.6	13.5	16.6	20.9
NEW MEXICO	38.7	28.8	29.7	33.2	40.7	33.1
NEW YORK	50.8	36.2	34.9	33.5	30.9	32.3
NORTH CAROLINA	51.8	30.9	30.3	31.4	31.6	31.9
NORTH DAKOTA	---	28.0	25.0	26.4	27.2	26.6
OHIO	36.8	30.7	28.1	26.4	25.7	25.0
OKLAHOMA	48.4	38.6	39.9	41.2	41.9	41.0
PENNSYLVANIA	8.3 ³	9.1	8.4	8.2	8.2	8.4
SOUTH DAKOTA	32.0	18.1	18.4	19.9	22.7	23.6
TENNESSEE	50.6	41.5	42.3	42.4	41.7	34.1
VERMONT	27.8	18.3	19.5	17.3	18.4	19.4
VIRGINIA	31.7	15.9	14.5	16.0	15.4	15.6
WASHINGTON	24.0	23.2	23.0	23.4	22.6	21.3
WISCONSIN	23.9	20.1	20.4	21.9	22.3	30.0
WYOMING	36.0	18.7	19.4	19.8	16.5	16.5

¹ Since not all reports of suspected child abuse trigger a response or investigation, this chart depicts the rate at which child abuse investigations are generated. In 2009, nationally 3,002,979 unduplicated children were the subject of a report of suspected child abuse generating a response/investigation by the Child Protective Services system at a rate of 40.3 percent. Pennsylvania recorded 23,100 children who were the subject of a report triggering an investigation - a rate of 8.3 percent. The specific source for this data was Table 3-2 within Child Maltreatment 2009. According to the Child Maltreatment 2009 document, the rate was computed by dividing the number of children who received a CPS response by the child population and multiplying by 1,000.

² The Duplicate Children Count was 9.3 for Pennsylvania and 48.1 nationally.

³ The tables represent an attempt to better understand PA's statistical rates in relationship to national data and states with an identified differential response to child abuse reports and investigations. The National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response in Child Protective Services has identified 11 states with a statewide implementation of Alternative Response (AR) including Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming. States with regional or pilot ARs include Florida, Nevada, New York, Ohio and Wisconsin. They also include California, Iowa, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota and South Dakota in a category of "implemented other innovative response systems."

TABLE 2: Substantiated Child Abuse Rate

Table developed from [data prepared](#) by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau research on child abuse and neglect including the annual Child Maltreatment reports. This is the substantiation/child victim rate per 1,000 children.

STATE	<u>Total Rate 2009</u>	<u>Total Rate 2008</u>	<u>Total Rate 2007</u>	<u>Total Rate 2006</u>	<u>Total Rate 2005</u>	<u>Total Rate 2004</u>	<u>Total Rate 2000</u>
NATIONAL	9.3	10.3	10.6	12.1	12.1	12.0	12.2
CALIFORNIA	7.8	9.1	9.4	9.5	10.1	10.4	14.0
FLORIDA	11.3	12.8	13.3	33.5	33.0	33.4	26.3
IOWA	16.3	15.7	19.7	20.5	19.8	19.4	14.8
KENTUCKY	16.0	18.1	18.7	19.8	19.6	19.3	18.7
LOUISIANA	8.1	9.2	8.6	11.7	10.6	9.3	8.7
MINNESOTA	3.7	4.6	5.4	6.1	6.7	6.5	9.2
MISSOURI	3.7	3.9	5.0	5.0	6.3	6.8	8.2
NEVADA	6.5	7.3	8.2	8.4	8.5	7.5	11.3
NEW JERSEY	4.3	4.4	3.7	5.6	4.7	3.9	4.2
NEW MEXICO	9.6	11.3	12.1	11.9	14.7	12.8	12.4
NEW YORK	17.5	19.1	18.8	17.8	15.6	16.2	15.8
NORTH CAROLINA	9.8	11.0	11.8	13.2	15.7	16.3	18.4
NORTH DAKOTA	---	9.0	9.0	10.2	10.6	11.4	0
OHIO	11.5	13.2	14.0	15.0	15.2	15.3	18.7
OKLAHOMA	7.8	12.3	14.6	15.1	15.8	14.2	15.5
PENNSYLVANIA	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7
SOUTH DAKOTA	7.2	7.0	7.5	7.8	8.3	9.8	15.2
TENNESSEE	5.9	7.8	10.9	7.8	8.3	9.8	11.8
VERMONT	5.5	5.3	6.6	6.4	7.9	8.2	9.1
VIRGINIA	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.9	4.3
WASHINGTON	3.9	4.4	4.6	4.8	5.2	4.4	4.7
WISCONSIN	3.6	4.4	5.9	6.5	7.3	7.0	8.8
WYOMING	5.4	5.7	6.1	6.4	7.0	5.5	10.3

TABLE 3: Substantiated Child Abuse by Type

Table developed from [data prepared](#) using the annual Child Maltreatment reports. When abuse was substantiated, this table represents the type of abuse (e.g., neglect, physical or sexual). A child may have been the victim of more than one type of maltreatment, and therefore, the total percent may equal more than 100.

STATE	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2009</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2008</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2007</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2006</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2005</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2004</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2000</u>
NATIONAL	78.3	71.1	59.0	64.1	62.8	62.4	59.8
FLORIDA	52.7	49.4	36.0	32.4	30.2	29.8	35.9
KENTUCKY	95.3	87.9	85.0	87.2	85.0	82.8	67.5
LOUISIANA	82.8	77.5	68.0	78.9	76.2	75.0	76.5
MINNESOTA	75.2	71.7	68.9	75.8	76.4	75.4	73.6
MISSOURI	53.5	52.6	39.6	51.7	51.7	50.5	45.2
NEVADA	75.8	80.0	66.1	84.8	82.8	82.2	42.8
NEW YORK	107.0	91.8	57.3	91.5	91.5	90.8	89.5
NORTH CAROLINA	87.4	79.0	78.5	52.1	64.3	88.0	89.9
OHIO	47.7	46.1	50.5	54.3	55.0	56.0	52.7
OKLAHOMA	89.0	83.4	58.2	83.1	82.4	88.0	80.0
PENNSYLVANIA	3.9	3.9	2.2	3.5	3.5	2.6	3.6
TENNESSEE	59.0	49.2	41.1	53.1	53.3	51.9	42.9
VERMONT	4.0	4.1	1.6	4.9	5.6	5.7	38.2
VIRGINIA	63.1	59.5	56.8	61.6	59.8	61.8	58.6
WASHINGTON	82.7	77.7	76.3	81.9	83.1	80.1	71.0
WISCONSIN	55.4	49.0	31.0	29.9	28.4	28.2	27.8
WYOMING	70.7	74.1	71.0	70.9	71.0	62.8	63.1
	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2009</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2008</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2007</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2006</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2005</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2004</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2000</u>
NATIONAL	17.8	16.1	10.8	16.0	16.6	17.5	19.3
FLORIDA	10.5	9.7	6.5	11.3	12.0	13.2	16.0
KENTUCKY	10.0	10.3	8.1	11.0	12.4	14.9	27.2
LOUISIANA	28.0	26.4	16.3	25.5	27.7	29.6	23.0
MINNESOTA	20.5	17.7	12.6	15.7	16.9	17.9	21.9
MISSOURI	33.1	29.1	20.2	31.2	27.5	28.8	27.4
NEVADA	29.6	19.2	9.3	17.8	17.8	18.0	18.0
NEW YORK	11.4	10.1	1.5	10.6	11.2	12.1	13.9
NORTH CAROLINA	10.7	9.4	9.8	6.4	3.5	4.0	3.9
OHIO	37.5	31.6	24.0	22.2	20.9	21.3	27.7
OKLAHOMA	19.0	16.9	5.6	17.9	18.3	19.0	19.9
PENNSYLVANIA	34.0	31.5	33.1	34.0	32.4	34.3	37.6
TENNESSEE	15.3	23.8	24.7	34.1	33.3	31.6	20.0
VERMONT	52.3	46.1	44.7	51.3	48.4	49.4	22.1
VIRGINIA	27.9	27.6	21.6	27.9	27.4	24.6	28.5
WASHINGTON	24.7	20.7	14.0	17.3	16.5	18.9	21.7
WISCONSIN	22.2	19.3	11.6	14.2	12.7	14.0	15.3
WYOMING	8.1	6.3	7.0	6.4	7.0	8.3	27.3
	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2009</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2008</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2007</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2006</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2005</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2004</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2000</u>
NATIONAL	9.5	9.1	7.6	8.8	9.3	9.7	10.1
FLORIDA	4.7	4.6	3.4	3.4	4.0	4.1	5.7
KENTUCKY	4.5	4.1	4.0	4.0	5.1	4.8	7.8
LOUISIANA	7.8	7.3	4.0	7.2	7.2	7.1	6.7
MINNESOTA	16.9	16.1	11.3	12.1	10.7	10.4	7.4
MISSOURI	28.5	27.6	22.7	28.7	26.2	27.2	28.3
NEVADA	8.3	4.9	3.7	3.7	4.3	3.9	4.5
NEW YORK	3.6	3.3	0.7	3.4	3.9	3.8	4.1
NORTH CAROLINA	8.2	8.0	7.5	4.8	3.8	4.1	3.5
OHIO	19.4	17.5	16.5	17.6	18.6	17.5	14.0
OKLAHOMA	7.8	6.3	2.5	6.6	6.4	6.9	7.8
PENNSYLVANIA	64.2	61.7	59.9	60.5	62.5	60.7	49.9

TENNESSEE	31.2	31.2	22.9	20.4	20.4	24.1	21.0
VERMONT	52.9	48.4	46.8	43.2	46.5	45.7	40.8
VIRGINIA	15.8	16.4	13.5	13.9	15.0	15.8	11.0
WASHINGTON	7.4	7.3	4.5	6.0	6.0	6.9	7.0
WISCONSIN	29.9	28.4	24.2	35.0	37.8	43.3	40.1
WYOMING	12.6	10.6	9.2	7.9	7.4	10.6	10.3