



Advocacy Toolkit

Dear Advocate,

Thank you for your interest in **#KeepingKidsinFamilies!** We are excited to have you join us as we raise the collective voice of advocates nationwide to promote our shared commitment to ensuring that every child has a safe, caring permanent family.

The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, the American Public Human Services Association and the National Association of State Organizations for Children are proud to lead this historic public-private partnership to develop and support policy solutions that help to strengthen our nation's child welfare system through investments in prevention, early interventions and treatments that keep children safe and in permanent families, whenever possible.

As representatives of the public and private agencies serving children in communities across this country, we have come together to urge members of congress to make a greater investment in children and families before it's too late. In the last few decades, we've seen advancements in our child welfare laws but very little has been done to improve the way we fund child welfare at the federal level. In fact, today, in its 2015 Signature Report, Casey Family Programs noted that for every \$6.00 in federal funds spent to maintain children in foster care, only \$1.00 is available to invest in a wider array of services that prevent the need for foster care. This is simply unacceptable!

For far too long, we have been operating under a financing model that does not allow us to meet the best needs of our children and we want Congress to know that our children cannot wait any longer. Every day that our country uses an outdated system, children, families and communities continue to lose.

Keeping Kids in Families is about assuring that the best interests of children and families are at the center of all policy decision making. We are advocating for policy solutions that lead to a stronger, more effective child welfare system that helps to keep families whole, prevent child abuse and neglect, and offer high quality early interventions and treatments. As an advocate for children and families you provide a critical voice in conveying this message to members of congress.

This toolkit is designed to support you in in this effort. Please remember that these tools are meant to provide guidance and examples to help you get started, but we encourage you to leverage all opportunities to best engage members of your network and community.

How to Get Started

1. **Sign-on to support Keeping Kids in Families.** Visit our website at www.keepingkidsinfamilies.org to get involved. **Live on August 10th**
2. **Share this message with your colleagues, members of your board of directors, donors and members of your community. (see the sample outreach email attached)**

3. **Call and schedule a meeting with your members of congress. Find your members' contact info [here](#).**
4. **Talk about Keeping Kids in Families on social media.** (see sample social media posts attached)
5. **Write a letter to the editor** of your local newspaper explaining why child welfare finance reform matters to your local community. **(see sample letters to the editor attached)**
6. **Encourage others to get involved.** Spread the message by getting your friends, family and community involved. Tell them about Keeping Kids in Families and urge them to join us by visiting the website. **(see sample outreach email attached)**
7. **Host a site visit** for one or more of your members of congress at your local agency.
8. **Share a story** that illustrates the critical need and opportunity to update our child welfare financing model. Compelling stories are vital to catching the attention of policymakers. This could be the success story of an individual that spotlights the importance of prevention and early intervention, a case example of how local reforms – perhaps through waivers – have demonstrated results, or a striking account that underscores the urgency of what happens when we aren't able to best support families.

We look forward to partnering with you to help build the awareness, visibility and momentum we need to cause change on behalf of children and families.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Susan Dreyfus, President and CEO, **Alliance for Strong Families and Communities**
Tracy Wareing Evans, Executive Director, **American Public Human Services Association**
Megann Anderson Fischer, President, **National Organization of State Associations for Children**

Background

As a nation we have long focused on treating the symptoms of child neglect and abuse, rather than addressing the root causes of what puts children at risk. Driven by outdated national policies that focus resources and energies at the deeper end of the system, once children have come into foster care, our current child welfare system is not allowing us to meet the unique needs of far too many children and families.

Historically, federal child welfare funding has favored foster care more than services that support and strengthen families. To date, the largest source of federal funding of child welfare comes under the Social Security Act Title IV-E funds, which is only accessible once a child is removed from the home. In most states preventative services continue to receive only a fraction of available funding, and as a result, we continue to fail too many families.

Demonstrated through the Title IV-E waiver authority, we know there are better ways to support families who have come to the attention of the child welfare system. A more recent concept, the child welfare demonstration projects have given some states the opportunity to test innovation and what works best for children and families by allowing them to shift resources away from foster care toward prevention, intervention and treatment services. Early results from the demonstration projects highlight the benefits of front end investments and a funding model that allows for greater flexibility and innovation.

Set to expire in 2019, the waivers are an example of a temporary solution that does not offer a comprehensive approach for all states. This emphasizes an even greater sense of urgency to develop a long-term solution for strengthening our federal child welfare financing model – to allow all states the opportunity to focus on flexibility and innovation through prevention and early intervention services.

Keeping Kids in Families is interested in building on the lessons learned as well as reinforcing the importance of increased federal support for a range of prevention and early intervention services. We know that we must make a stronger commitment to ensuring that every child has a safe and loving family and the best chance of success.

We believe the solution lies in comprehensive system reform that aligns federal financing with child and family success. Our efforts seek to:

- Better leverage resources across all levels of government and community supports.
- Promote evidence-informed practices that improve outcomes while also ensuring that we don't get in the way of practical, low-cost supports that can make the difference for a family.
- Strengthen families and keep children safe in their homes whenever possible, preventing traumatic and expensive entry into foster care.
- Secure permanency quicker for children who are removed from their homes.

- Establish an integrated array of proven community-based treatment services and supports for children and their families to reduce the need for more intensive services.
- Provide high quality behavioral and therapeutic intervention through a residential setting when it offers the most effective, appropriate and safest environment in which to address a child's needs.

We have adopted [Shared Principles for Child Welfare, Policy and Practice Alignment](#), upon which we develop and respond to other proposals as they come forward. We are actively bringing these principles forward, through our networks' collective expertise and experience, to inform policy discussions and decisions. One recently released proposal is the discussion draft of legislation from U.S. Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon. In looking at Sen. Wyden's draft we believe his proposal aligns with our principles on child welfare finance reform, especially as it relates to increasing investment in preventative and early intervention family strengthening services. Additionally, we are very supportive of the proposal's focus on ensuring that we meet the individual needs of children and youth, and keep them safe and supported in families. Senator Wyden's proposal would expand the federal foster care entitlement and allow for investment in supports, services and early interventions for families through Title IV-E.

Together, we are engaging the powerful voices of individuals, organizations and agencies, nationwide, who work directly with children and families every day and are focused on assuring that the best interests of both children and families are at the center of all decision-making and reform efforts.

Keeping Kids in Families – General Talking Points

One of the goals of Keeping Kids in Families is to convey a consistent, simple, and clear message to members of congress and potential campaign partners nationwide. The following are talking points that can be used as you share the message and invite others to join our movement:

- **Keeping Kids in Families** raises the collective voice of advocates nationwide to promote our shared commitment to ensuring that every child has a safe, caring, permanent family.
- We are guided by a **public-private partnership with three nationwide networks**– the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, and the National Organization for State Associations for Children (NOSAC). We're issuing a call-to-action to ensure safety and well-being for all children.
- **We are advocating for policy solutions that lead to a stronger, more effective child welfare system.** We want to emphasize the fact that we, as a nation, can do a better job of supporting children and struggling families, much earlier. We are elevating this issue as part of state and national discussions and we are working to develop policy that will help us realize our vision for child welfare reform.
- **For far too long our nation has been operating under an outdated system for federal financing child welfare.** The current financing model - which favors one intervention only: foster care - does not allow us to meet the best needs of our children. In most states preventative services continue to receive only a fraction of available funding, and as a result, we continue to fail too many families. Under this model states are given very little flexibility to shift funds to critical prevention and intervention, and treatment services that best meet the needs of families. Every day that our country uses an outdated system, children, families and communities continue to lose.
- **Federal spending on child welfare continues to decrease.** From 2002 to 2011, federal spending on foster care payments decreased by 40 percent. It is expected to decrease by an additional 45% in the next ten years.
- **Title IV-E Waivers do not offer a comprehensive long-term solution for all states.** While Title IV-E waivers have given some states the opportunity to test innovation and learn more about what works best for meeting the needs of children and families by allowing them to shift resources away from foster care toward prevention, intervention and treatment services, these are only a temporary solution that do not benefit all states and communities. The waivers, which are set to expire in 2019, are not expected to be extended,, which means advocates have the opportunity now to influence the systems change we want for children and families.

- **It's time to build on what we know works best for children and families.** We would like to build on lessons learned from the waiver demonstration projects. Early results highlight the benefits of front end investments and a funding model that allows for greater flexibility and innovation. We need to reform our current federal child welfare financing model to allow all states the opportunity to focus on flexibility and innovation through prevention and early intervention services and quality treatment approaches.
- **We believe that every member of the community has a role to play in helping to bring awareness to this issue.** We know that the task of transforming our child welfare system is not an easy one but together, we can elevate this issue. You can start today by making the pledge to support Keeping Kids in Families and invite members of your organization's staff and board, community coalitions and your personal and professional networks to participate in our advocacy efforts. Learn more at www.keepingkidsinfamilies.org.
- **Congressional policymakers need to take immediate action.** Ensuring better outcomes for our children should be one of our nation's top priorities. We've bandaged this issue for far too long and our children cannot wait any longer. Members of congress have an important role to play by sponsoring, supporting and/ helping to advance legislative proposals that keep the needs of children and families at the heart of decision-making.
- **The time to act is now!** We recognize that there is an urgent need to strengthen our nation's child welfare system in order to achieve better outcomes for children and families. We are encouraging advocates to ask their members of congress to start today by making a commitment to supporting families and children through child welfare system reform.
- **Keeping Kids in Families partners offer a source of information and on-the-ground perspective.** Let your Member of Congress know that we stand ready to work collaboratively with policymakers and other key stakeholders to ensure that we are bringing information and experience to policy discussions and supporting legislation that aligns child welfare investment with child and family success.
- **We want the best in essential behavioral and therapeutic interventions for children and families.** We believe that residential settings should not be long-term solutions for children and youth. By their very nature, they cannot provide lifelong family permanency for a child. They are however, a critical resource for a small percentage of youth and should be used as time appropriate, child specific interventions.
- **High quality, child-focused residential-based intervention IS a critical part of our country's system of care for some children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.** We believe that high quality, residential-based behavioral and therapeutic

intervention should be used when it is part of a set of interventions included within a home- and community-based system of care focused on the unique needs of each child and family. Residential-based intervention should not be a placement at all. State systems should not be subject to artificial age or time limits for funding eligibility. Policy solutions surrounding residential-based interventions should focus on incentivizing quality and eliminating congregate care settings that are of poor quality.

- **Our goal for our country is a child welfare system that focuses first and foremost on what is best for children and families.** Our experience has shown us that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to supporting families and honoring the best interest of each child. We know that there are many variables that impact the decision to do what is best for each child and we believe policy decisions should reflect those needs.
- **Keeping Kids in Families is about ensuring that all children who come to the attention of the child protection system live with physical and emotional safety.** Whether they live with their own families, in quality foster care, or in a residential setting when higher levels of intervention are needed, children should always live in the most family-like way possible with the paramount goal of successful family-based permanency for each child.
- **Federal expenditures should align with the needs of children and families.** Through system reform we would like to see resources aligned more closely with the specific needs of children and families while providing the flexibility states need to maximize the use of funds that are being invested in our child welfare systems.
- **Keeping Kids in Families is built on a foundation core principles to help guide policy and inform policy decision-making.** As new legislative proposals come forward, the three national networks that initiated the campaign are assessing and responding to share on-the-ground expertise and experience.
- **The major push for Keeping Kids in Families is comprehensive child welfare finance reform.** We recognize that it will take time to achieve our goals but we will continue to push for comprehensive system reform that aligns with our principles and provides a regulatory and fiscal framework that ultimately creates lasting change and a better future for children and families.
- **We believe that strong, upfront investments back up our shared commitment to strengthening families facing crisis and improving well-being and life outcomes for all children.**
- **Make your commitment today! Join Keeping Kids in Families at www.keepingkidsinfamilies.org.**

Top Ways to Support Keeping Kids in Families

As you work to engage various members of your network in raising a collective voice to strengthen our child welfare system, please consider a variety of opportunities to support and engage as an advocate for Keeping Kids in Families. A large piece of that is sharing ideas and tools to support your efforts.

Remember to always check our website for the latest ideas, trends and tips to support #KeepingKidsinFamilies.

General ideas include:

1. **Sign-on to support Keeping Kids in Families.** Visit our website at www.keepingkidsinfamilies.org to get involved.
2. **Share this message with your colleagues, members of your board of directors, donors and members of your community.** (see the sample outreach email attached)
3. **Call and schedule a meeting with your members of congress. Find your members' contact info [here](#).**
4. **Talk about Keeping Kids in Families on social media.** (see sample social media posts attached)
5. **Write a letter to the editor** of your local newspaper explaining why child welfare finance reform matters to your local community. (see sample letters to the editor attached)
6. **Encourage others to get involved.** Spread the message by getting your friends, family and community involved. Tell them about Keeping Kids in Families and urge them to join us by visiting the website. (see sample outreach email attached)
7. **Host a site visit** for one or more of your members of congress at your local agency.
8. **Share a story** that illustrates the critical need and opportunity to update our child welfare financing model. Compelling stories are vital to catching the attention of policymakers. This could be the success story of an individual that spotlights the importance of prevention and early intervention, a case example of how local reforms – perhaps through waivers – have demonstrated results, or a striking account that underscores the urgency of what happens when we aren't able to best support families.

Below you will find some ideas that you can tailor to your specific network along with various supplemental resources to guide you along the way. We have a large group of like-minded individuals and organizations to mobilize, and, together, we can create change.

Mobilize your staff:

- [Send them an email, asking them to pledge their commitment to Keeping Kids in Families by joining the campaign at \[keepingkidsinfamilies.org\]\(http://keepingkidsinfamilies.org\).](#)
- Continually encourage them to take action when Keeping Kids in Families reaches out to engage them. We'll have a number of opportunities to let Members of congress know what we want. We promise to make it easy for your staff to make their voices heard.

Mobilize your board members:

- [Take them to a meeting with one of your members of congress at their local office or in DC. Perhaps some of your board members even have a direct connection or two to one of your members of congress that they would be willing to use for the campaign. Ask them.](#)
- [Ask one of your board members to place a letter to the editor. Board members have the ability to bring unique perspective to ensure a letter is placed.](#)

Mobilize your donors and volunteers:

- [Send an email to your entire listserv sharing with them the importance of investments in prevention, early interventions and family permanency and ask them to join you in Keeping Kids in Families campaign.](#)
- [Join the social media movement. Share tweets and Facebook posts with your supporters and ask them to engage in the conversation. We have some posts to make it quick and easy for you. Make sure you use #KeepingKidsinFamilies.](#)

Mobilize your community members and the families you serve:

- [Invite a foster youth, former foster youth or family you serve to attend a meeting with one of your members of congress in their local office. Policymakers can be greatly affected by stories of personal impact.](#)
- Work with local community members to organize an event calling for policymakers to support aligning the system for child and family success. Or, simply make a commitment to elevate the principles and talking points of Keeping Kids in Families at every relevant gathering, coalition meetings, media interviews, special events, etc.

Mobilize your partner organizations:

- There is strength in numbers. Share information about the campaign with local or state organizations you partner with and ask them to join you in participation. When you talk to members of congress, it will carry weight to have more people in their district or state participating.

- Coordinate with your [National Organization of State Associations for Children \(NOSAC\) member](#) to find out what other organizations in your state are participating and how they are organizing.

Sample Outreach Email

The following email offers ideas and language you can use as part of your outreach for Keeping Kids in Families. You can use this to share the message with staff, Board members, donors, and other members of your network to get them involved in supporting the campaign. Feel free to copy, paste, or adjust as necessary for your organization.

Dear _____,

This month, advocates nationwide are coming together to launch a new, ongoing campaign that promotes our shared commitment to improving the lives of children and families. Through *Keeping Kids in Families*, we are raising awareness of the pressing need to strengthen our nation's child welfare system by urging members of congress to take immediate action to update an outdated child welfare system that too often puts barriers in the way of our being able to act in the best interest of children and families in the earlier stages of family crises, much earlier.

As an advocate for children, you provide a critical voice in conveying this message to Members of congress and members of your network. Therefore, I would like to invite you to be part of Keeping Kids in Families.

Will you join me? If you're ready to make your voice heard and be part of a national movement to ensure that we are putting the needs of children and families first, start today by visiting www.keepingkidsinfamilies.org. Join the movement and find out how you can make your voice heard today. You can also access the advocacy toolkit, which provides information about these opportunities to engage: **Sign-on to support Keeping Kids in Families**. Visit our website at www.keepingkidsinfamilies.org to get involved.

- **Share this message with your colleagues, members of your board of directors, donors and members of your community. (see the sample outreach email attached)**
- **Call and schedule a meeting with your members of congress. Find your members' contact info [here](#).**
- **Talk about Keeping Kids in Families on social media.** (see sample social media posts attached)
- **Write a letter to the editor** of your local newspaper explaining why child welfare finance reform matters to your local community. **(see sample letters to the editor attached)**
- **Encourage others to get involved.** Spread the message by getting your friends, family and community involved. Tell them about Keeping Kids in Families and urge them to join us by visiting the website. **(see sample outreach email attached)**
- **Host a site visit** for one or more of your members of congress at your local agency.
- **Share a story** that illustrates the critical need and opportunity to update our child welfare financing model. Compelling stories are vital to catching the attention of policymakers.

This could be the success story of an individual that spotlights the importance of prevention and early intervention, a case example of how local reforms – perhaps through waivers – have demonstrated results, or a striking account that underscores the urgency of what happens when we aren't able to best support families.

Keeping Kids in Families represents the voice of individuals, organizations and agencies, and members of the community, like you, who are passionate about assuring their best interests of children and families are at the center of all policy and decision making. We recognize that our communities cannot wait any longer for a smarter investment, and we are advocating for policy solutions that lead to a stronger, more effective child welfare system. **Our message to Congress: Every day that our country uses an out-of-date system, children, families and communities continue to lose.**

Whether your work directly touches child welfare issues or broadly focus on improving the lives of children and families in any way, I can't stress enough how important you are to this movement.

Join us as we come together to urge our leaders to make child welfare finance reform a national priority, and reinforce our commitment to #keepingkidsinfamilies.

Thank you,

Guidelines for Meeting with Members of Congress

Policymaker Meeting Outline

The following is a suggested outline to help organize meetings with your policymakers.

1. **Introductions** (3 minutes)
 - Introduce yourself and your organization and briefly discuss why this issue is important to you.

2. **Overview of issues** (3 minutes)
 - Introduce the purpose for your visit.
 - Personal stories illustrating the importance of the issue are key.

3. **Legislative asks** (10-12 minutes)
 - Use the campaign talking points to outline why the time to act is now.
 - Use XXX from the campaign toolkit to give concrete evidence for your ask.
 - Clearly state your ask:
 - Will you be a champion for child welfare finance reform by sharing your support for this issue with Senate Finance or House Ways and Means Committee leadership?
 - Will you review child welfare reform proposals using the provided checklist and contact me as a resource?

4. **Review of asks** (1 minute)
 - Please support our legislative requests.

5. **Thanks and closing** (< 1 minute)
 - Give any leave-behind documents/folder.
 - Take a photo with your member to post on social media and use in your organization's communications.
 - Invite policymaker and/or staff to visit your site, if appropriate.

ABCs of Meeting with Members of Congress

Before the meeting

1. Research your legislator's and responsibilities. Read up on their professional backgrounds, their committee assignments, any focused membership groups to which they belong, their legislative accomplishments, etc. Most of this information is available on individual legislators' homepages. For members of the U.S. Congress, individual homepages can be found at house.gov and senate.gov.
2. Prepare your three strongest talking points. Your meeting will probably last only 10-20 minutes. Ensure that your information is accurate, and be ready to answer questions.
3. Prepare materials to bring to the meeting and leave with the legislators or their staff. Work with the Public Policy and Mobilization office on what these may be.
4. Bring a camera to take a photo at the meeting. It could be used later in your newsletter.
5. Wear business attire.

During the meeting

1. Arrive on time, but don't be surprised if your meetings start late. Don't be offended if you are asked to have your meeting in the hallway or cafeteria; this is merely a result of space limitations. It is quite likely that you will meet with a staff person instead of your elected official. Staff-level meetings are extremely valuable, as legislators rely heavily on them for policy advice.
2. be respectful. Because offices are small, loud conversations in the waiting area are not appreciated.
3. Identify yourself with. Introduce yourself, and start on a positive note. Thank those you are meeting with for their past support of issues you care about.
4. Clearly state your legislative asks.
5. Explain your position with the facts, but always use personal or local stories when possible. Legislators are most interested in how legislation will affect their districts and constituents. Never speak ill of another legislator, staff member or advocacy group.
6. Ask for an explanation if you don't understand a position or statement.

7. Get an answer. Ask the legislator or staffer how he or she will respond to the requests you make. If an answer cannot be provided immediately, ask when you can follow up to get a response.
8. Invite your legislators and their staff members to visit your site if appropriate.
9. Share your value as a resource. Offer to be a source of information on the specific issues addressed, on your work with your organization, and on children, youth, communities, and the human-serving nonprofit sector more generally.
10. Ask to take a photo with the member/staff and post it on social media thanking the member including the member's Twitter handle and any relevant hashtags.
11. Thank the legislator and the staff as you leave.

After the meeting

1. Write or call your legislators to thank them for their time. Reiterate your major points, and remind the legislators of anything they might have agreed to do.
2. Send along any additional materials that were requested, or follow up with the answers to questions.
3. Share the results of your meetings by filling out a meeting report form (available on keepingkidsinfamilies.org) after the visit. Share insights you have gained about legislators' concerns and interests.
4. Find out when the legislators will be in your home district hosting town hall meetings or forums, and organize a group to attend.
5. Maintain communication with legislators and their staff members through letters, calls and visits when relevant.
6. Invite your legislators and their staff members to visit your site if appropriate.

Sample Letters to the Editor

Writing a letter to the editor (LTE) is a great way to raise awareness of child welfare finance reform in your local community and/state, as well as an effective tool to reach members of congress, since they keep close track of what is said about them and national issues in local papers.

Some tips to keep in mind:

- Please keep in mind that you must personalize and localize this issue to make it relevant for your community.
- Describe how the current federal child welfare financing model has impacted your work and your community and provide examples of how children and families in your community have been impacted.
- A good story backed up with facts is the most effective tool you have to persuade members of congress to make this a national priority.
- Visit KeepingKidsinFamilies.org to get more tips on writing a letter to the editor.

See sample letters below:

Our Children Cannot Wait Any Longer

Dear Editor,

For far too long, we, as a nation, have only taken incremental steps toward improving our child welfare system, even as our knowledge of what works best for children and families has evolved. Our current federal child welfare system is driven by outdated national policies that focus on investing resources after families are in crisis and does not allow us to best meet the needs of our most vulnerable children. This is a national crisis but it really hits home here in [insert state].

Working in this community, I have seen firsthand just how badly child welfare reform is needed.

[Provide a personal example].

Lawmakers here in [insert state] and in Washington, D.C. need to understand that this issue is serious and we need a solution now, or more children and families lose the opportunity to thrive. Let's stop just talking about how much we support children and families and back this up with common sense solutions.

I want **[Your state]**'s congressional delegation to understand that we have to stop putting band aids on this issue and come up with some real, comprehensive solutions that put the safety and wellbeing of children first. As part of this, we need to shift our focus from reactive to preventative, where we make preventing abuse and neglect and finding caring, permanent homes, for all children a top priority

That fact is, if our federal lawmakers do not act soon, the outlook will continue to be bleak. Our children cannot wait any longer and our communities cannot afford to stand by and watch. With smarter investments, we can do what's best for families and serve as the beacon of hope our child welfare system should be. Strengthening our child welfare system is not just about supporting better outcomes for children, it's about supporting better outcomes for families and building strong, vibrant communities.

As a community we must work together – and we can start today by telling [INSERT your Senators' and/or Rep's names] to take immediate action to save our children and our families.

Child Welfare Reform Doesn't Have to Be Complicated

Dear Editor,

Watching the slow progress we've made in the last few decades to strengthen our nation's child welfare system, some people might have you believe that updating our federal child welfare system is just too complicated for our lawmakers.

To me, the issue is as simple as this: we must put the best interest of children and families first in order to strengthen families and ensure the best outcomes for children. There is no other option.

As an advocate working on behalf of children and families, I can tell you first hand why there is an urgent need to improve our child welfare system. **[Provide personal example]**. And every day that we wait to update our outdated approach to child welfare —costs our entire community.

I recently joined with advocates nationwide to promote a shared commitment to ensuring that every child has a safe, caring permanent family. We're not asking for anything that shouldn't already be a priority for our country. When they took the oath of office, our lawmakers made a commitment to serving our children and their communities. It's time to back that commitment with sound policy and decision making.

We should start today by updating our laws to reflect the realities of the 21st century. We've come a long way in the last two decades, but our federal child welfare financing model has not caught up yet. I've seen members of congress tackle some difficult policy challenges.. Surely we can come together to develop a solution for ensuring what's best for children and families.

It's simple common sense: Congress it's time to move forward in designing and passing comprehensive legislation that focuses on preventing child abuse and neglect, giving states the flexibility to shift investments to prevention, early interventions and treatments that best meet the needs of families and children.

Join the movement to do what's best for our children – www.keepingkidsinfamilies.org.

Sample Social Media

Once the Keeping Kids in Families website is live on August 10th, be sure to insert a link to the site as part of your social media engagement.

Facebook

- Join Keeping Kids and Families to raise the collective voice of advocates nationwide to promote our shared commitment to ensuring that every child has a safe, caring permanent family. Visit KeepingKidsinFamilies.org Today.
- Smarter and effective child welfare investments = Stronger Families and Stronger Communities. Tell Congress to support Keeping Kids in Families. Take Action Today.
- Tell Congress: Support policy solutions that help to strengthen our nation's child welfare system through prevention, early interventions and treatments that keep children safe and secure, in permanent families. Support Keeping Kids in Families.
- Every day that our country uses an outdated system, children, families and communities continue to lose. Our children cannot wait any longer. Take Action today! Support Keeping Kids in Families.
- Did you know for every \$6.00 in federal funds spent to maintain children in foster care, only \$1.00 is available to invest in a wider array of services that prevent the need for foster care? It's time to invest in children in families before crisis. Ask Congress to support Keeping Kids in Families, whenever possible.

Twitter

- Join us in raising our voices for children and families. #keepingkidsinfamilies
- It's time for our nation to commit to making strong investments in our children. Raise your voice today for #keepingkidsinfamilies
- Do you support improving the lives of children? Show your support today. #keepingkidsinfamilies
- Let's focus on preventing abuse and neglect and finding caring, permanent homes, for all children. #keepingkidsinfamilies

- Ask Congress to invest in children and families. Act Now! #KeepingKidsinFamilies



Congressional Leave Behind

The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, the American Public Human Services Association and the National Association of State Organizations for Children are proud to lead an historic public-private partnership to develop and support policy solutions that help to strengthen our nation’s child welfare system through investments in prevention, early interventions and treatments that keep children safe and in permanent families, whenever possible.

As I participate in the Keeping Kids in Families campaign, I hope that you will join me in championing child welfare, using the below checklist to evaluate child welfare reform proposals.

The proposed reform:

- Provides for a wider array of supports, services and early interventions for children and families that prevent the need for foster care.
- Expands the service population so that we are able to meet the needs for more children and families.
- Ensures accountability to better outcomes for children.
- Allows for reinvestment of savings in building community capacities that further improve and strengthen the child welfare system.
- Provides the flexibility states need to maximize the use of funds that are being invested in our child welfare systems without the use of waivers.

I am happy to be a resource to you as we work to ensure that every child has a safe and secure, caring permanent family.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____