

GOAL: EXPAND AND IMPROVE PREVENTIVE SERVICES, PARTICULARLY PRIMARY PREVENTION, THAT HELP KEEP CHILDREN SAFE AND FAMILIES TOGETHER



Why: Each year there are approximately 70,000 children involved in indicated cases of neglect or abuse in New York.¹ The overwhelming majority of reports are cases of neglect, often connected to resource deprivation and poverty, rather than abuse.² The prevalence of neglect indicates a need for services and supports that help to strengthen families and connect them to the resources they need so that their children can remain safely at home.

Families must have a child welfare case opened and be deemed “at-risk of foster care” in order to receive preventive services. A more effective approach would emphasize primary prevention, targeting services to families early, in order to stop maltreatment before it occurs by bolstering supports that strengthen families and reducing the factors that put children at risk.

Supporting Policies & Initiatives:

- **Restore & Expand Preventive Funding.** To ensure that children and families across the state have access to high-quality preventive services when they’re needed, the State should restore funding for protective and preventive services from 62% State share to 65%, as is written in statute. This funding has been reduced to 62% through the budget each year for the past 10 years, as a cost-saving to the State (and increased burden on localities). New York should restore its commitment to prevention, thereby incentivizing counties to expand services to help keep more children out of foster care and safely home with their families.
- **Implement Family First Prevention Services Act’s Prevention Provisions to Seek New Federal Funding of Evidence-Based Preventive Services.** The new federal Family First Prevention Services Act allows states to seek federal reimbursement for evidence-based preventive services. New York should adopt this provision of the new law to help fund existing eligible services and expand access to evidence-based preventive programs to currently unserved areas.
- **Expand Community-Based Family Strengthening Services to Prevent Maltreatment.** New York City is piloting Family Enrichment Centers in three high-need communities. These community-based centers – welcoming families regardless of child welfare involvement – focus on building family resilience and stability by providing an array of supports that reinforce economic mobility, parenting skills, positive relationships, housing, child development, community engagement and supportive advocacy. This project is a small-scale example of the kinds of primary prevention initiatives the state could implement to strengthen families and communities, and prevent child abuse and neglect.
- **Collect and Report Data and Measure What Works.** To better understand the effectiveness of our preventive services, New York should collect, analyze and report data related to these services.

¹ Kids Wellbeing Indicators Clearinghouse. (2016). www.nyskwic.org/get_data/indicator_profile.cfm?subIndicatorID=107

² Committee on Child Maltreatment Research, Policy, & Practice; Board on Children, Youth, & Families; Committee on Law & Justice; Institute of Medicine; National Research Council. (2014). *New Directions in Child Abuse & Neglect Research*. Washington (DC): *National Academies Press*. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK195982/#sec_00032