

PREVENTION MINDSET INSTITUTE:
EMBRACING PREVENTION ACROSS SYSTEMS
SUMMARY REPORT 2020 – 2021



FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention
A Service of the Children's Bureau

December 2021

Rationale for convening The Prevention Mindset Institute (PMI)

What does it take to shift mindsets across multiple, interconnected systems? *Can* mindsets be shifted within decades-old child-welfare systems—systems that wield enormous reach and power? What would motivate change, as systems continue to be financially supported with approximately 34 billion dollars of public money annually, despite poor outcomes? The Prevention Mindset Institute (PMI) was formed to help answer hard questions like these, working with and learning from forerunners of systems change. The child welfare system change deemed necessary operates under the premise that although there are times when public intrusion into families' lives may be warranted, it should be avoided whenever possible.

Families should remain intact whenever it is feasible to support the family through difficulties while maintaining safety for the child. The research shows that trauma caused to children by forced separations from their families is profound, and trauma is exacerbated when children experience multiple foster care placements and caseworker turnover. (The U.S. General Accounting Office estimates that turnover of child welfare staff is between 30 and 40 percent annually.) Moreover, the data are conclusive: the systems that function to protect children are disproportionately disrupting the lives of children of color. Punitive actions, such as the forcible removal of children from their families, occur much more frequently for black and brown children. According to data reported in a 2017 Annie E. Casey Foundation report, “. . . black children are 1.81 times more likely than white children to enter foster care, while Native American children are 2.89 times more likely.”¹ Whether this is the result of implicit or explicit bias, families of color more often suffer the effects of disruption from child welfare systems. According to the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA - <https://www.cwla.org/>), in 2020, 64% of children removed were removed due to child neglect. There are deep associations between conditions of poverty, health inequities, trauma, opportunity gaps and neglect especially for families and communities of color. These deep associations cannot be overlooked, requiring systems to think differently regarding its approach to child welfare and child well-being.

Because systems are made up of people, people can change systems. The process begins with a collective understanding that business as usual is often failing children, and there are remedies to be had. Child-welfare systems have an opportunity to evaluate their history, their data, their norms, their policies and practices and evaluate how it can be more pro-active and less reactive in its work of maintaining child safety and promoting child well-being. A shift in approach has begun in other fields of practice, such as healthcare. Trust for America's Health estimates an investment of \$10 per person per year in community-based programs tackling physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and smoking could yield more than \$16 billion in medical cost savings annually within 5 years.² The goal is to mitigate risks early before those risks escalate into bigger concerns. Similarly, to achieve optimal results for children and families, public resources are best spent upstream on activities that mitigate risk factors. Parenting is a challenging undertaking for all families; if families and children can access support, resources, and encouragement early, most should never have to

¹ (2017) <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-10PracticesPart2-2015.pdf#page=36>

² Prevention for a Healthier America: Investments in disease prevention yield significant savings, stronger communities. Washington D.C.: Trust for America's Health; 2008. Available from: <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/prevention08/>

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experience intervention from agencies with the power to remove children. Though child welfare agencies have been a force for good for many children, and many families have benefitted from their intervention, the overall outcomes for the system have not been good and must be acknowledged and stemmed. Our nation’s children depend on us, as the adult influencers, to do better.

The FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child-Abuse Prevention (FRIENDS) initiated the Prevention Mindset Institute (PMI) to discover strategies showing promise for shifting mindsets toward prevention. FRIENDS’ goal is to learn and disseminate our findings with others in the fields of child welfare and prevention. Our vision is that systems currently focused on the aftermath of bad things happening and intervening, shift significant amounts of their energy and resources to prevention and early intervention. A shift to prevention and early intervention offers families the opportunity to overcome circumstantial challenges, making most removals unnecessary, and promoting the best possible outcomes for our nation’s children.

This document explains the ongoing process of the PMI, from its initial steps through the present. The work is ongoing; what follows describes the steps taken thus far in the process.

Glossary of Terms Used in this Document

The terms used in this document are defined differently by individuals across systems. For clarification to the reader, we are providing a set of terms used throughout this document, and a brief description of the use of those terms in the child abuse prevention field.

Term	How it is used in this document
Child Welfare/Child Protective Service Agencies or Organizations	Organizations or agencies that, while they may provide other services, are charged with Child Protective Services (CPS) and have the power to investigate allegations of child maltreatment and place children in out-of-home care.
Child Welfare Systems	We use this term to describe the collective group made up of organizations working to improve the health and welfare of children and families, including prevention programs and CPS agencies. Entities that make up this system may provide parent education, home visiting, respite, family resource centers, faith-based programs, as well as child protection that includes tertiary prevention, foster care, and adoption services.
Prevention, Prevention Programs, or Prevention Services	Prevention Programs or Services are services and supports that promote and provide primary and secondary prevention education and services. Parent education, home visiting, respite, and family resource centers are a few examples of prevention services. In this document, tertiary prevention is not included when we refer to a

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	prevention program or service. Please see the description of the three levels of prevention below for greater clarification.
Primary Prevention	Primary prevention consists of activities directed toward the community at large. These activities are meant to impact families before any allegations of abuse and neglect. Primary prevention services include public education activities, parent education classes that are open to anyone in the community, and family support programs.
Secondary Prevention	Secondary prevention consists of activities directed to families that have one or more risk factors, including families with substance misuse, parents experiencing moderate to high stress, teen parents, parents of special needs children, single parents, and low-income families. Secondary prevention services include parent education classes for vulnerable parents at higher-risk, or respite care for parents of a child with a disability, or home visiting programs for new parents.
Tertiary Prevention	Tertiary prevention consists of activities for families that have confirmed or unconfirmed child abuse and neglect reports. These families have already demonstrated the need for intervention, either with or without court supervision. These are families that qualify for services under child protection programs. These families would not be a focus of CBCAP programs. Nevertheless, tertiary prevention is a consideration for mindset shifts within the PMI.

Establishing the Prevention Mindset Institute

The Top Priority of the Children’s Bureau (CB)

Over the past few years, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has promoted the re-orientation of child welfare agencies toward a prevention mindset. An [Information Memorandum](#) issued by ACF on November 16, 2018, strongly encouraged the following:

“. . . all child welfare agencies and Children’s Bureau (CB) grantees to work together with the courts and other appropriate public and private agencies and partners to plan, implement and maintain integrated primary prevention networks and approaches to strengthen families and prevent maltreatment and the unnecessary removal of children from their families. Coordinated and robust primary prevention efforts are critically important to strengthen families, prevent the initial occurrence of and ongoing maltreatment, prevent unnecessary family disruption, reduce family and child trauma, interrupt intergenerational cycles of maltreatment, and build a well-functioning child welfare system.”

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The Information Memorandum went on to state that the *CB's top priority* was to “reshape child welfare to focus on proactively strengthening families through primary prevention of child maltreatment.”

FRIENDS' Proposal to Help Meet the CB's Priorities

FRIENDS, as the National Center for Community-Based Child-Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)³ has been committed to promoting primary and secondary prevention strategies and services since its inception in the 1990s. To support the CB in preventing child abuse and neglect by proactively strengthening families through primary prevention, FRIENDS set a goal to help realize what ACF identified as the CB's top priority. Through what came to be called the Prevention Mindset Institute (PMI), FRIENDS aspired to meet the goal of *identifying, documenting, and sharing successful strategies for creating mindset shifts across systems at the community, state, and national levels*. FRIENDS' training and technical assistance (T/TA) activities to the states have been, and will continue to be informed by the activities and learnings of the PMI.

Selecting Partners to Support the Work

The primary informants on successful strategies for shifting from a tertiary child welfare system to a system that supports child and family well-being would be state teams who had a vision and had begun the work of shifting mindsets towards prevention; **the goal was to learn from their experiences, while providing support in growing their efforts**. To that end, the FRIENDS staff felt the voice of parents with lived experience was essential to inform each team's direction. Further, it would be necessary to have meaningful conversations between the CBCAP state lead agencies and their child welfare counterpart leads. To facilitate these connections and conversations, support would be needed by experts in child welfare, prevention, racial equity, and community engagement. Prior to recruiting states to participate in the PMI, the FRIENDS team identified five key partners to help plan and execute the meetings and support the needs of the PMI participants.

³ CBCAP was established by Title II of CAPTA. Its purpose is: 1) to support community-based efforts to develop, operate, expand, enhance, and coordinate initiatives, programs, and activities to prevent child abuse and neglect and to support the coordination of resources and activities to better strengthen and support families to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect; and 2) to foster understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of diverse populations in order to effectively prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. FRIENDS is authorized under the same legislation to provide Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) to the states receiving CBCAP funding.

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The Key PMI Partners are:

Group	Contribution to the PMI Process
The FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council	Parents are a vital resource to child welfare and child abuse prevention efforts; the expertise of parents with lived experience is essential to the PMI process. FRIENDS includes meaningful parent voices in all its activities. Policy decisions in both prevention and child welfare systems should be made only after inviting and listening to the suggestions of parents with lived experience in child welfare and prevention. For that reason, representatives from the FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council have been active participants in all PMI meetings.
Action 4 Child Protection	Since its inception in 1990, Action 4 Child Protection’s commitment has been to help child welfare agencies improve their services to children and families so they can better protect children. This is done by developing higher standards and state of the art case practice. The PMI process benefits greatly from their insight and experience working with child welfare systems across the United States. Learn more: https://action4cp.org/
Children’s Trust Fund Alliance	Children’s Trust Fund Alliance (The Alliance) is the national membership organization for state Children’s Trust Funds. The Alliance supports a network of children’s trust and prevention funds who are “. . . catalysts for positive changes in systems, policies and practices . . . to promote well-being for children, families and communities.” The Alliance and FRIENDS often work together on prevention-related projects. The PMI benefits from The Alliance’s connections and expertise in parent leadership, protective factors, and collaboration. Learn more: https://ctfalliance.org/
Mining for Gold	Mining for Gold is “. . . the curator of community experiences and utilizes those ideas and expertise to shape new thinking within complex systems.” Corey Best, the founder of Mining for Gold, partners with child welfare leaders, communities, and parents, to advance racially just and equitable and authentic family engagement and strengthening approaches. Mining For Gold influences the PMI process as we examine and address issues of racial equity and racial disproportionality in child welfare systems. Learn more: http://miningforgoldcommunity.com/corey-best-mining-for-gold/

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The Prevention Institute

Prevention Institute (PI) is a national nonprofit with the mission of building, “. . . prevention and health equity into key policies and actions at the federal, state, local, and organizational level to ensure that the places where all people live, work, play and learn foster health, safety and well-being.” PI’s approach to prevention can be applied across a broad range of systems influencing the well-being of individuals and communities. Learn more: <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/about-us>

State Team Partners’ Application Process

In January 2020, FRIENDS released an application inviting CBCAP State Lead Agencies to apply to participate in the PMI. To be selected, CBCAP leads were asked to complete a short form (*See Attachment A*) outlining their motivation for participating in the PMI and their experience working collaboratively within and across systems. Also, PMI applicants were asked to commit to implementing and analyzing strategies, sharing their findings, and whether their leadership would be supportive of their work in the PMI. Successful applicants were scored based on their ability to demonstrate the following:

- A commitment to ensuring that a prevention mindset is firmly established in the field of child welfare.
- Experience working collaboratively within and across systems to influence beliefs, attitudes, and practices as they relate to children and families,
- Willingness to formally or informally present findings from the institute with state and local partners and at regional and national CBCAP meetings, and
- Willingness to implement and analyze strategies identified at the institute when the strategies are practical and relevant to the applicant’s state

The CBCAP state lead agency from participating states had the opportunity to identify a leader who is influential with the child welfare agency to be their partner at the PMI. In addition, FRIENDS encouraged the leads from each state to select parents with lived experience and community-based organization leaders to participate in the PMI meetings, both virtual and in-person.

By March 2020, six states were selected to form the PMI. The PMI teams were committed to working together, in person and virtually, to share successful strategies for shifting mindsets and to explore new approaches. Each team included the CBCAP state lead and a leader in the state who was influential in a key system related to child welfare, such as a state’s child welfare director, a faith-based or other community-based organization director, or a business or foundation manager. The states selected for the PMI were: Alabama, California, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, and Wyoming.

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The table below describes the states' CBCAP lead agency, and the team leads representing prevention and the child welfare system who participated in the PMI.

State	Lead Agency Description	State Team Key Leaders
AL	Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (ADCANP) Children's Trust Fund of Alabama	Sallye R. Longshore, Director Alabama Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention sallye.longshore@ctf.alabama.gov Karen H. Smith, Deputy Commissioner Alabama Department of Human Resources karen.smith@dhr.alabama.gov
CA	Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) serves as a statewide source of information, developing and disseminating educational material regarding prevention/early intervention programs, activities, and research.	Angela Ponivas, Bureau Chief California Department of Social Services' Office of Child Abuse Prevention 916-657-4709 angela.ponivas@dss.ca.gov Kelly Winston, Bureau Chief California Social Services Child Welfare Program & Policy Development 916-651-6100 kelly.winston@dss.ca.gov
OH	The Ohio Children's Trust Fund serves as Ohio's sole public funding source dedicated to the primary and secondary prevention of child abuse and child neglect.	Nicole Sillaman, Chief of Fiscal and Program Planning Ohio Children's Trust Fund 614-752-2167 nicole.sillaman@jfs.ohio.gov Kari Akins, Assistant Deputy Director Office of Families and Children Ohio Department of Job and Family Services 614-466-8427 Kari.Akins2@jfs.ohio.gov

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TX	The Texas Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Office. Its eleven prevention programs are designed to address risk factors in communities, partner with families of children 0-17 and build protective factors within families so both can thrive.	<p>Sasha Rasco, Associate Commissioner of Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) 512-840-7814 Sasha.Rasco@dfps.state.tx.us</p> <p>Angie Voss, Director of Family Based Safety Services Child Protective Services division angie.voss@dfps.state.tx.us</p>
WY	The Wyoming Children’s Trust fund has the mission of “coordinating prevention efforts in Wyoming to prevent incidents of child neglect, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse” and serves to bring the vision that Wyoming children will thrive in healthy families and strong communities.	<p>Sara Serelson, Executive Director Wyoming Children's Trust Fund Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming (307) 631-5309 sara.serelson@wyo.gov</p> <p>Jacob Weinzierl, Interim Director left his position in June, 2020.</p> <p>Cari Cuffney, Sr. Policy Advisor for Family Services left her position in August, 2021.</p>

Please note: South Carolina withdrew from the PMI because of conflicting obligations.

Pivot required by COVID-19

Applications to be a part of the PMI were to be submitted by February 19, 2020, just prior to the shutdowns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The selected applicants made up the inaugural PMI group, and each agreed to meet in-person in Baltimore, MD on July 15 and 16, 2020. However, due to the pandemic, a pivot in plans was necessary. To keep the momentum moving forward, the PMI group agreed to meet quarterly through a virtual platform, until all could come together safely. Before each quarterly meeting, a topical newsletter was disseminated to stimulate prevention mindset thinking. Technical assistance was available to the state teams according to their needs and priorities. FRIENDS and its national partners consulted and collaborated with the teams to bolster efforts. More information on the details of each of these activities to support the process is noted below.

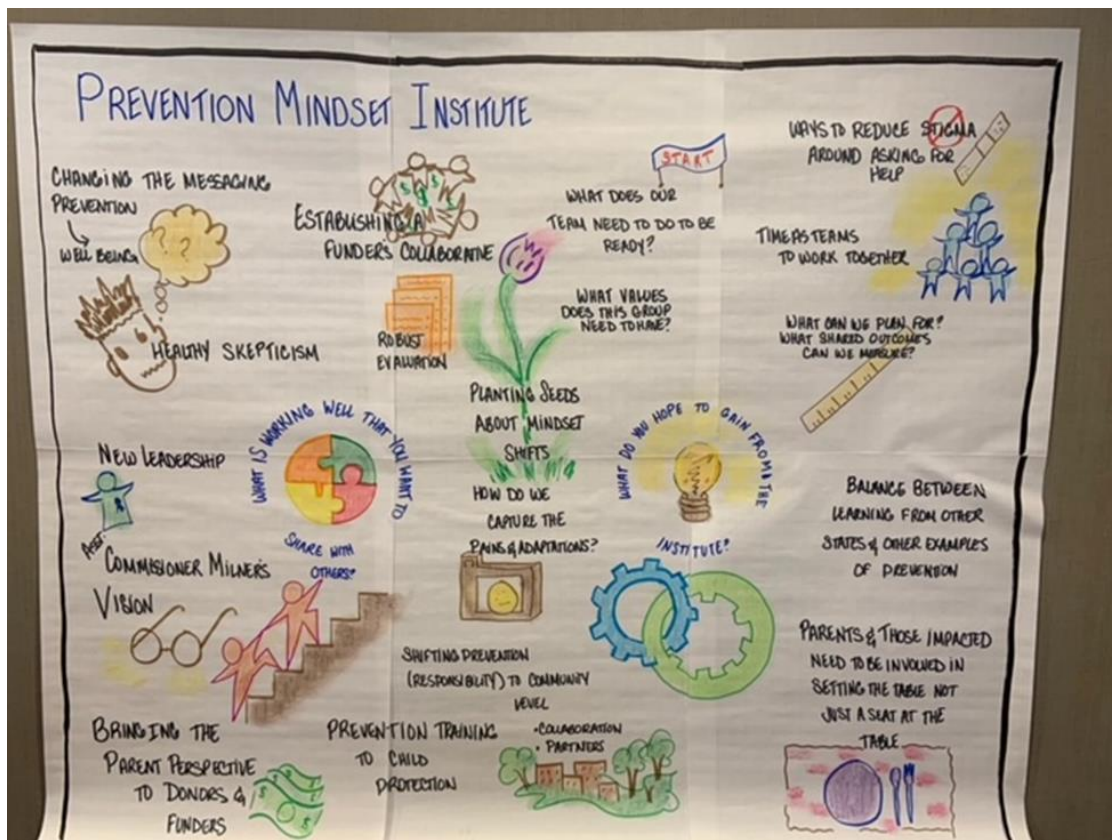
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Activities and Process

A. Foundational Preparation:

1. During the March 2020 CBCAP Grantee Meeting, time was given for PMI states to present their states' current progress and future plans. PMI grantees were asked to ponder the following questions:
 - What is working in your efforts to change mindsets related to family strengthening and family preservation?
 - What (measurable) changes between the CBCAP state lead or local community-based services and the child protection system have occurred already? (These can be small---small changes are important.)
 - How is your initiative partnering with families?
 - What barriers are you facing in your efforts to shift to a prevention mindset?

Complete notes from the workshop are in Attachment B: PMI State Presentation Notes-March 2020. FRIENDS' partners provided input on the states' presentations, commenting on strong aspects of their plans and items that may have been missing that needed consideration. The PMI states started visioning what they wanted from the Institute. The product of their visioning is below:



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2. In September 2020, partners facilitated discussion groups with states to identify values and principles for systems change work. Corey Best and Dana Fields-Johnson facilitated the breakout groups during this meeting. PMI participants recognized that a clear set of values and principles would illustrate and guide what was important to this group of people and their mission. The FRIENDS team drafted a Values and Principles document from the notes of the 9/20/2020 meeting. Partners and PMI States provided written input. The final document can be accessed here: [Prevention Mindset Institute | Friends NRC](#)
3. Partners worked with the FRIENDS staff to develop a list of training and technical assistance services to be offered to the PMI participating states in the fall 2020.
Note: An outline of the services offered is provided in this section, item D titled: Technical Assistance Offered to State Teams.

B. Quarterly Meetings

When it became evident that the pandemic would prevent the in-person Institute from occurring in July 2020, the quarterly virtual meetings began with the first quarterly call occurring in June. State teams expressed a desire to learn and share with other states, so for each of the virtual meetings, time was set aside for break-out groups in which states could share with one another. National partners and FRIENDS staff worked together to facilitate the break-out sessions, and most break-out sessions were preceded by trainings and presentations by national partners. Subjects discussed included cross-system collaboration, racial equity, being trauma-informed, building networks, changing social norms and barriers/opportunities

C. 3-2-1 Newsletter

The PMI structured its newsletters in the format of 3 ideas, 2 quotes and one question (3-2-1) to inspire and provoke thinking. This format was borrowed from James Clear, author of *Atomic Habits* who issues a weekly newsletter. The subject matter of the four newsletters varied as follows:

- August 2020 – Systems Change and Shifting Mindsets, edited by Valerie Spiva Collins, Director, FRIENDS National Center
- November 2020 – The Impact of Trauma/Avoiding Re-traumatization, edited by Theresa Costello, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Action 4 Child Protection
- March 2021 – A Reimagined Prevention Services System, edited by Teresa Rafael, Executive Director of the Children’s Trust Fund Alliance
- June 2021 – Racial Oppression in Child Welfare, edited by Corey Best, a consultant and founder of Mining for Gold, Inc., and Dana Fields-Johnson, an Associate Program Director with the Prevention Institute

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Each newsletter can be found on the FRIENDS NRC website at: [Prevention Mindset Institute | Friends NRC](#)

A schedule of quarterly calls and newsletters is noted below:

Month	Activity	Newsletter Editor
June, 2020	First Quarterly Call	
August, 2020	First Newsletter	Valerie Spiva Collins, FRIENDS
September, 2020	Second Quarterly Call	
November, 2020	Second Newsletter	Theresa Costello, Action 4 Child Protection
December, 2020	Third Quarterly Call	
March, 2021	Third Newsletter	Teresa Rafael, Children's Trust Fund Alliance
March, 2021	Fourth Quarterly Call	
June, 2021	Fourth Newsletter	Corey Best, Mining for Gold and Dana Fields-Johnson, the Prevention Institute
August, 2021	The In-Person Institute	
October, 2021	PMI Update Newsletter	FRIENDS

D. Technical Assistance Offered to State Teams

The following training and technical assistance offered to the PMI states included:

1. Facilitate state strategizing sessions or plan for (possibly virtual) community cafes with parents, practitioners, and systems leaders to further advance child welfare systems change. Potential issues or strategic actions:
 - Initiating or accelerating trust-building with families, to include lower-income communities, communities of color, and those who have been at risk of or have previously been involved with Child Protection Services.
 - Identify and reflect on ways in which institutionalized racism is entrenched in state systems and first steps to making change. Identify data gaps to inform this strategy.
 - Disentangling poverty from neglect in policies, staff training, and decision-making. (Poverty rates are expected to substantially increase due to the Covid-19 crisis.)
 - How do we make asking for help non-stigmatizing and normalize it?
 - Create helplines for families and not mandatory reporting lines.
2. Develop a plan for more fully engaging with those with lived experiences in your state (lived experiences at all levels of service). This could include guiding the state using *Building Effective Parent and Practitioner Collaboration* (BEPPC) resources, or working with a current Parent Advisory Council along with agency leaders, supervisors, and frontline staff.

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3. Develop an approach or a resource to better share the voices of those most impacted by risks, CPS investigations, and case involvement ---youth, community members, constituents, and parents. Sharing stories about supports and values that helped families stay together, will reinforce prevention and well-being, even if it's harder to concretely measure.
 - Collect stories from those with lived experiences utilizing technology (website, social media, apps, and other data collection methods).
 - Create a platform to share the stories with the larger CBCAP and prevention network.
4. Prepare more parents to speak before city councils, state legislators, and others who develop and enforce policies.

For many states, their goals and their direction evolved over time requiring pivots in the technical assistance that was needed. The actual training and technical assistance provided to the states that has occurred to date include:

State	T & T/A Provided by the FRIENDS Staff
Alabama	<p>The Alabama Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention (ADCANP), The Children’s Trust Fund’s mission is to secure resources to fund evidence-based community programs committed to the prevention of child maltreatment, and advocate for children, and the strengthening of families. The PMI offered the opportunity for ADCANP and child welfare to work more closely together on prevention strategies. Child Welfare is in the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR), which works closely with ADCANP in terms of communicating and sharing resources that lead to prevention efforts statewide. Their partnership with the state’s child welfare agency is strong as they are continuously partnering to incorporate prevention services in their combined work to support children and families.</p> <p>Alabama has two main projects that have been reinforced by the PMI - 1) The fatherhood programs through Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funding, and 2) The Protective Factors Training for frontline workers and supervisors. Since 2015, ADCANP has had a Memorandum of Understanding with DHR to conduct the fatherhood initiative in Alabama. Currently, 20 fatherhood programs are working in communities to ensure dads are paying child support, gaining job skills, securing and maintaining employment, and most importantly, are gaining parenting skills and engaging with their children. Learning to co-parent is also a key objective with the programs. Three years ago, we developed a pilot program in three areas of the state to embed the Strengthening Families™ framework into the fatherhood initiative called Strengthening Families™ through Fathers (SFTF). These three pilot programs have been evaluated by our evaluation partner in the College of Human Development and Family Studies at</p>

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	<p>Auburn University. The evaluation report was released in August 2021 and revealed that participants in the SFTF program reported greater improvements compared to the fathers in traditional programs in commitment to the couple relationships and in financial responsibility immediately after the program, with the effect on financial responsibility sustained to the one-year point.</p> <p>ADCANP partnered with our Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers to deliver Protective Factors training in almost all the DHR districts in the state. After a successful pilot training of all DHR county directors and supervisors and frontline workers in the central area of the state, the training was adopted to a virtual 3-day training during COVID. Feedback has been positive about how working with families from a strengths-based approach is more effective.</p> <p>Alabama has obtained technical assistance from FRIENDS staff in growing these projects and in the development of their PMI logic model. As they developed their logic model, they realized they were already measuring many of the outcomes, but they further identified ways in which to strengthen their measurement strategies. Alabama will continue to work with FRIENDS and expand upon its current PMI initiative.</p>
California	<p>Prior to the PMI, California had begun working toward systems change at the local level, inspiring the formation of prevention planning teams within counties. The PMI offered California an opportunity to learn from other states and strengthen its action steps for growing prevention within the state. FRIENDS staff provided assistance to California to prepare for the in-person Institute, helped California develop their draft goals for the Institute and then developed a draft logic model. Following the PMI in-person meeting, California recognized the importance of working internally to "buy into the spirit of prevention," shifting beliefs by changing the hearts and minds of those most closely connected to tertiary prevention efforts. The state is beginning conversations with Action4Child Protection to develop and offer leadership training in early 2022 that supports this buy-in.</p>
Ohio	<p>The Ohio Children’s Trust Fund (OCTF, Trust Fund), Ohio’s CBCAP State Lead entity, is governed by Ohio Revised Code (ORC) sections 3109.13 to 3109.179. Within the OCTF’s ORC section, 3109.13 identifies the OCTF’s relationship to programs that use primary and secondary prevention strategies that are conducted at the local level and activities and projects of statewide significance designed to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and child neglect. Within this section of code, primary prevention strategies are defined as, “activities and services provided to the public designed to prevent or reduce the prevalence of child abuse and child neglect before signs of abuse or neglect can be observed.” Across Ohio, multiple systems have recognized the importance of shifting to a primary prevention approach in recent years. This has been identified as a priority from Ohio’s Governor, and has carried down into state agency directives. This emphasis on prevention has shined a light on the work of</p>

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	<p>the Trust Fund, and how that work connects with other systems. Ohio is well on its way to aligning its prevention work across systems of care, with the ultimate goal of establishing a fully integrated approach to child and family well-being.</p> <p>The PMI opportunity has allowed the Trust Fund to work closely with colleagues at Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to better integrate primary and secondary prevention within Ohio’s child welfare system, creating a broader continuum of prevention. To accomplish this, the Trust Fund engaged in strategic planning for 2022-2027, facilitated by the Center for the Study of Social Policy and The Ohio State University. Both FRIENDS staff and Children’s Bureau staff participated as stakeholders, providing their perspective on how the Trust Fund is achieving their mission and how the Trust Fund could improve their work. During this planning process, the Trust Fund embedded their PMI and Children Services Transformation recommendations within the tracking methods established as part of the operational plans to measure the OCTF’s impact as part of this primary prevention shift in Ohio.</p> <p>As part of the PMI, the two main T/TA supports provided included: 1) Supporting the Trust Fund to work across systems, and 2) Engaging in strategic planning and having meaningful input from FRIENDS staff and Children’s Bureau staff. Ohio has also benefitted from T/A from FRIENDS to support its parent leadership activities. A parent leader coordinator has been involved in the PMI, providing insight as to how the input of parent leaders can further shape Ohio’s focus on primary prevention. Following the PMI in-person meeting, Ohio expressed interest in utilizing Dear Leaders and in exploring capacity building with regards to race equity.</p>
<p>Texas</p>	<p>Texas was working to grow its prevention strategies when the PMI opportunity presented. The Department of Families and Protective Services and the Department of Prevention and Early Intervention Services were working to create their Family First Prevention Services Act Part 1 plan. The PMI supported their efforts by bringing prevention, child welfare, and court improvement together in a concrete manner, allowing for in-person time. Texas developed two primary goals: 1) Shifting to encourage a mandatory supporter system in addition to a mandated reporter system. Their desire is to shift so that families in crisis are helped within the community in a supportive manner that diverts from child welfare involvement whenever possible. To accomplish this goal, Texas is hiring an agency disproportionality manager who will coordinate and pilot a new training for mandatory reporters in the state. 2) Fund early court liaisons in the judicial system to help develop leadership and local prevention strategies based on the downstream perspectives of the court. FRIENDS staff have supported Texas to keep the work moving forward. Further, Texas has benefitted from the newsletter, hearing from other state peers, and has benefited from the opportunities to explore mindset shifts toward upstream solutions.</p>

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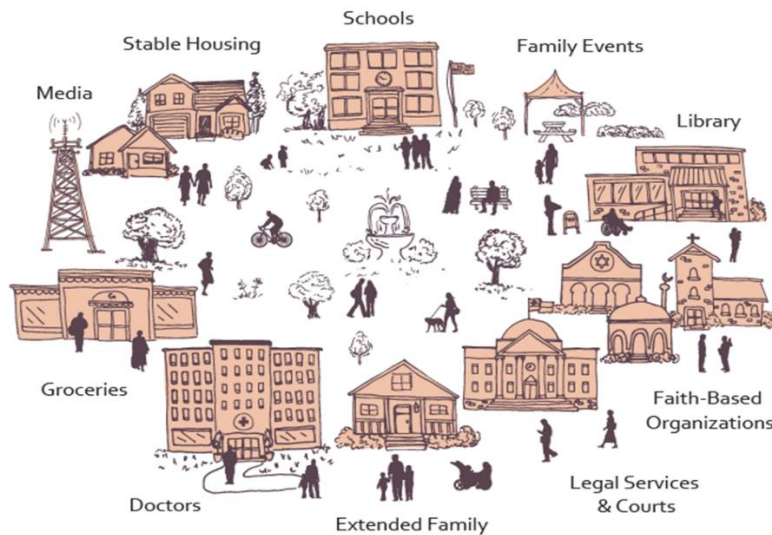
Wyoming	The Wyoming CBCAP lead applied to participate in the PMI, but shortly after being selected as a PMI state, the lead resigned. FRIENDS staff met with the lead's supervisor within the Department of Human Services. The supervisor felt it was important to continue with the PMI and focus on prevention. WY Home Matters, a large group that includes Child Welfare, Mental Health, Substance Abuse and others, started to meet to discuss the needs of families during the pandemic. The PMI participants were key decision-makers of the WY Home Matters group. The PMI helped them continue collaboration beyond COVID. They began their work by growing family engagement and storytelling; this work was supported by FRIENDS staff. Inspired by the work done with the FRIENDS staff, Wyoming started to coordinate parent cafes and collecting stories. FRIENDS staff trained providers and parents in collecting stories. Also, FRIENDS staff helped Wyoming do strategic planning in order to update their prevention plan. It was at the in-person PMI meeting, that Wyoming gained clarity into the goals they wanted to set for themselves. They went home understanding disproportionality in a greater way and have made this a focus of their efforts. They are gaining understanding into how biases impact policies and procedures.
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E. Additional Presentations and Learnings: A Digital Dialogue and the 2021 CBCAP Grantee Meeting

Digital Dialogue – A Digital Dialogue was hosted by the Children’s Bureau Learning and Coordination Center (CBLCC) in April 2021, focusing on the PMI and changing social norms for help seeking. FRIENDS’ Director in conjunction with Texas’ Associate Commissioner of Prevention and Early Intervention, and a FRIENDS’ Parent Advisory Council Member participated in a discussion led by the CBLCC. The dialogue framed the importance of changing social norms around help-seeking, the essence of a strong community and the importance of those with lived experience guiding our approach to strengthening families. The presenters acknowledged that we all benefit from community support. The goal is to grow strong communities that remove shame associated with help-seeking and remove obstacles families may face by helping them find solutions. The Digital Dialogue stressed that a community functioning in a strong and healthy way is sometimes all that a family needs to succeed. Below is a graphic depiction of the critical components that are part of a healthy community.

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This graphic depiction was provided in Texas' presentation:



At the annual CBCAP grantee meeting in May 2021, three states – Texas, Ohio and California - presented on their progress in moving toward a more upstream approach that supports child and family well-being. The three states communicated that the PMI and the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) legislation have inspired and influenced greater collaboration between prevention/early intervention agencies and child welfare agencies, bringing the two together to move toward a more holistic system of supports in strengthening families. All three states spoke of their efforts to frame prevention in child welfare, ensuring congruency with the FFPSA legislation. All three spoke to a priority of addressing racial inequities in strengthening families primarily through education and data analysis. Finally, all three are considering how to meaningfully engage families with lived experience and communities to guide change.

F. In-Person Institute – Baltimore, MD – August 24 and 25, 2021

After more than a year of postponing the in-person meeting due to the pandemic, PMI partners and state team members felt comfortable gathering in Baltimore for an in-person meeting in August of 2021. CDC-recommended health and safety measures were taken to ensure maximum protection for all.

Holding the in-person institute was vital to the PMI process. By bringing the large group together, state teams were able to take time away from their offices to meet and plan. The agenda provided opportunities for interactions between partners, states, parents, and FRIENDS' staff.

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Ideally, the in-person meeting would have kicked off the PMI at the front end. However, despite timing issues, the meeting was inspiring and participants left with additional direction and motivation for continuing the work of shifting mindsets towards prevention.

1. Presentations:

The first day of the Institute opened with Amelia Franck-Meyer, founder and CEO of Alia Innovations, as the keynote speaker. Dr. Franck-Meyer challenged the group to think, plan, and strategize, and most importantly, to DO--start with something. She emphasized that families want to be heard and are in desperate need of change in the system. She encouraged the use of “unsystem funds.” An unsystem shifts the focus to the family’s role in raising children, and unsystem funds are funding sources that can be used to try new strategies for working alongside families in our communities. Alia’s consistent message to all who are making decisions, *Do What Love Would Do!* She and her team have consulted with state and jurisdictional child protection offices for decades and are committed to moving supports upstream.

Following Dr. Franck-Meyer’s presentation, each of the five states who attended the PMI provided presentations on their progress in the past year and barriers. Most shared how the pandemic had impacted their progress and direction, highlighting disparities and the need for prevention supports to families.

Theresa Costello, CEO of Action 4 Child Protection, facilitated the end of day 1, with reflections on the day’s activities, including presentations made by Amelia Franck-Meyer, Joanne Hodgeman (PAC member), Valerie Lebanion (PAC member), and observations of her own.

Day Two began with Joanne Hodgeman, a FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council (PAC) member and staff person with Village Arms: Finding Safe Solutions to Keep African American Families Whole. She shared policy strategies that are being advocated for in Minnesota, like the African American Family Preservation Act. Corey Best, founder and CEO of Mining for Gold, Inc., challenged the group to think about what we are willing to commit to in advancing social justice. What are we saying “yes” to? Corey is a national leader and expert in this area.

G. Goals and Commitments After the Institute

The PMI group of states, national partners, parent leaders, and FRIENDS staff have been working together for 18 months. The in-person Institute led all to step back, re-focus, and determine what greater actions can be implemented within our spheres of influence. Each state is working with FRIENDS staff to draft their goals and strategies for next steps and to create a plan for measuring change; this may result in plans similar to a logic model. (*Alabama’s Logic Model is provided as an example. See Attachment E*)

Almost every state decided to approach their work with an equity lens. Leaders experienced “aha moments” of how systems had failed black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) and gained deeper understanding into the bias attitudes and beliefs that have been “baked

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into system policy and practices, at every level.” All were informed of the power and influence each person maintains, how to own this power and influence our spheres. At the Institute, parents with lived experience provided meaningful input into all of the team discussions, and everyone came to a greater realization of the value of having parents with lived experience participate in policy and practice decision-making to help guide the process.

FRIENDS committed to further support states in the implementation of their identified goals and strategies by offering up to seven hours of time working with one of the PMI partners. Further, FRIENDS staff is offering technical assistance and connecting states to available resources.

In December 2021, FRIENDS provided a one-hour follow-up webinar session with Alia Innovations to provide an informational webinar on [Dear Leaders](#), a set of theme-based discussion prompts and activities developed by lived experts and leaders in the field to help prepare child welfare teams to do community co-design as trustworthy partners. In January 2022, another webinar session will be offered to states that would like to go deeper into the Dear Leaders content.

Lessons Learned

FRIENDS’ external evaluator, Amber Romo of the University of Oklahoma, conducted interviews with at least one member of every state team participating in the PMI in January 2021 (*see Attachment C*) and again in September 2021 (*see Attachment D*), following the in-person Institute. Information gathered showed that the benefits of the PMI included:

- Connecting with other states
- Partnering and building relationships with others in their own state
- Focusing on prevention with child welfare partners
- Having the allotted time to work on prevention
- Hearing from experts, consultants, and parents
- Parents have appreciated the many opportunities to contribute to the discussions, make important points regarding families and previous trauma, and addressing needed supports for help-seeking earlier when families face challenges

Participants reported, during the month after the event, using much of what they learned from the PMI in the following ways:

- Passing along information and resources received during calls, the Values and Principles document, etc.
- One state has contracted with someone to work with organizations in their state on self-examination
- It has planted seeds which are passed on through prevention work

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- Feel they have seen a shift in thinking in counties and at state-level
- Has helped work through prevention piece of FFSPA

The PMI participants were surveyed before the in-person Institute and again, afterward. The pre-Institute survey provided the following recommendations for improvement to the PMI, many of which were taken into consideration when planning the in-person Institute:

- We need stakeholders, all of our organizations, to be more proactive in communities in order to encourage other parents; we must change the way parents view “us” before they will want to give us input
- Sometimes it feels like a longer quarterly meeting would be more useful – 90 minutes is not enough
- There is a long span of time between meetings—takes some time to get re-focused and to recall what we did last time
- Partner suggestions: develop a shared vision, bring active community members to the group, develop more concrete strategies, and have assignments and define measurable outcomes
- Discussion points, tangibles, assignments needed- several requested more concrete guidance. Some would like to have task lists, action items, and discussion points to help them prepare for future calls.
- Additional peer-to-peer work might be helpful

Overall, FRIENDS staff learned and experienced the benefits of having time for peer-to-peer sharing, the importance and benefit of including the parents’ voice with lived experience, the advantages of time away from the office to allow time for brainstorming, and the importance of changing hearts and minds; we observed that often it is people’s beliefs that impact the systems that we influence, and the foundational work of the PMI is to impact hearts and minds with the message of prevention.

Logic Models

Following the PMI in-person meeting, FRIENDS began documenting the individual outcomes projected by each state team and the activities they pursued or planned to pursue to achieve the outcomes. By collecting this information, we began creating PMI logic models. As of this writing, three Logic models have been drafted, and of those, one has been finalized – Alabama’s. The other state logic models will be added to the *Attachment E* section, as each one is completed.

Ideally, logic models would have been created at the beginning of the PMI process, but the obstacles presented by COVID lockdowns caused many activities to be delayed. Future PMI cohorts will initiate logic model development within the first few months of the process.

Next Steps

The final survey of states, post-Institute, revealed that the participants would like the following support going forward:

- States wanted support implementing Alia Innovations' Dear Leaders, a set of theme-based discussion prompts and activities developed by experts and leaders in the field to help prepare child welfare teams to do community co-design as trustworthy partners.
- States would like additional support to promote racial equity in child welfare in their state through reading materials, consultations, trainings, webinars, tools, best ways to look at data.
- States were interested in attending 2-3 calls during the next six months to learn more about what the other PMI states are doing and strategies that have been used by other jurisdictions with success.
- States would like support in engaging more people with lived experiences with child welfare services and learn how to best collaborate with them to create effective systems change.
- States expressed a desire for the FRIENDS staff to continue providing technical assistance in cross-system collaboration and engagement; continuing to be a support for questions; continue providing information about new, innovative, or "old" services that show promise; Dear Leaders tool.
- There was some interest in continuing with the PMI by selecting a local area within the state to pilot systems change work over the next 18-24 months.

The FRIENDS team and its partners will continue to support states in the areas they have identified as wanting and needing additional help. A second cohort of states will be recruited in January 2022 and the work will continue with the original states and the new PMI group throughout next year. Findings will continue to be documented, as this work evolves.