

**DRAFT**

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# Planning to Prevent Child Maltreatment

## ▶ COLORADO

A progress report on efforts to mobilize action to ensure all children are valued, healthy and thriving

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## Community planners, policy makers and community foundations play a role in preventing child maltreatment.

A state prospers when our kids thrive. They are the future workforce, leaders and community members of Colorado. Services and policies that help strengthen families, prevent child abuse and neglect, aid caregivers struggling with adversity and promote positive interactions within families and caregivers help kids develop their potential.

A thriving community supports parents. Every parent struggles at some point and no parent knows everything about raising a child. Knowing where to get help and having a network to lean on can make a difference.

Community planners, policy makers and community foundations in all sectors of the community and all levels of government play a significant role in preventing child maltreatment.

It is essential for community leaders and policy makers to understand child maltreatment prevention and examine community planning through this lens to build communities that strengthen families.

Engaging in a community planning process to prevent child maltreatment process is a very clear way for community leaders, politicians, policy makers and advocates to demonstrate a commitment to ensuring the children in their communities are valued, healthy and thriving.

Citizens are encouraged to ask themselves is my community planning to prevent child abuse?

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# ABOUT THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Colorado began spearheading a national effort to develop a framework for child maltreatment prevention in 2014.

The Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood (CDHS), the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, the Children’s Trust of South Carolina, and numerous Colorado agencies and partners worked together to design a comprehensive framework that could serve as a national model for child maltreatment prevention.

The collaboration included work over the course of a year to gather insights and feedback from parents to better understand the resources and supports they value in caring for their children. The team also mined the latest research for best practices and upcoming innovations and identified ways to measure progress on shared outcomes across the strategies.

The result, in April 2017, Colorado unveiled the **Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action (CMP Framework)** – the state’s first and most comprehensive

child maltreatment effort in more than two decades.

The launch of this statewide tool was only the first step of this new initiative in Colorado.

State-level organizations embraced the tool as a way to align efforts. The CMP guides the investment, programs and policy under CDHS’s purview, including the federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Funds for Colorado. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has also adopted the Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action as a guide to inform prevention efforts.

Several communities were also selected to engage in community planning on the local level utilizing the framework. Those communities participated in the subsequent academic evaluation of the process to provide a more clear roadmap for others to follow in their footsteps.



SHARED VISION  
All Children are Valued,  
Healthy, and Thriving



This framework is designed as a tool to guide strategic thinking, at the state and local level, about resource investments to prevent child maltreatment and promote child well-being. As this tool is used collectively across the state, the resulting alignment of strategies will maximize the impact on shared outcomes.

Child  
Maltreatment  
Prevention  
Framework for Action



A tool to guide to strategic thinking and mobilize action to ensure all children are valued, healthy and thriving

This framework better positions a state and local communities to be more effective in efforts to prevent abuse and neglect, and mobilize action to ensure all our kids are valued, healthy and thriving.

**Benefits of using the framework to prevent child maltreatment:**

- Create a more focused and integrated approach to preventing child maltreatment and promoting child well-being.
- Guide strategic resource investments.
- Identify monitoring systems to track implementation and measurable progress.

By using this tool collectively across at all levels of government, the resulting alignment of strategies will maximize the impact on shared outcomes.

**About the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention For Action**

The CMP Framework shares a vision for communities to work collectively and locally to prevent child maltreatment.

Anchored by six foundational principles, the CMP Framework outlines potential strategies that when implemented will achieve four overarching outcomes to ensure that all children are valued, healthy and thriving.

The CMP Framework is a tool community planners, policy makers and community foundations can use to guide community planning and future investment of resources to mobilize action that protects children, and will include monitoring systems to track implementation and measurable progress.



# PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

Research has shown that the good can outweigh the bad.

## WHAT PREVENTS CHILD ABUSE

Successful child abuse intervention both reduce risk factors and promote protective factors to ensure the well-being of all children and families. Protective factors are conditions or attributes in individuals, families,

communities, or the larger society that, when present, mitigate or eliminate risk in families and communities and increase the health and well-being of children and families.



There are three types of child abuse prevention.

**Primary prevention** activities are directed at the **general population** and attempt to stop maltreatment **before it occurs**.

Five protective factors are linked to a lower incidence of child abuse and neglect. Nurturing and attachment

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete supports for parents
- Knowledge of parenting and of child development
- Social and emotional competence of children

**Secondary prevention** activities focus on **high-risk populations** that have one or more risk factors associated with child maltreatment, such as **poverty, parental substance abuse, young parental age, parental mental health concerns, and parental or child disabilities**.

**Tertiary prevention** activities focus on families where maltreatment **has already occurred or likely occurred** and seek to reduce the negative consequences of the maltreatment and to prevent its recurrence.

It is not uncommon for communities and their leaders to simply focus on child welfare services when thinking about child abuse, however, the result is an incomplete strategy toward ending child abuse and neglect.

# COMMUNITIES PLANNING TO PREVENTION

Lessons learned from communities that have gone through a planning process utilizing the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action.

## COMMUNITIES BUILDING A COLORADO FOR KIDS

In 2017, 15 Colorado organizations were selected to participate in an eight-month planning process using the CMP Framework and other tools in the community planning Toolbox.

Funding from the ZOMA foundation and the Colorado Department of Human Services enabled each of the 15 grantees to receive technical assistance and \$15,000 to \$17,000 in financial support to engage in a community-led planning process to prevent child maltreatment.

The community champions were geographically diverse and with different lead agencies coordinating the effort. The lead agencies include: nine family resource centers, two early childhood councils, one child abuse coalition, one Department of Public Health, one Department of Human Services, and one regional care collaborative.

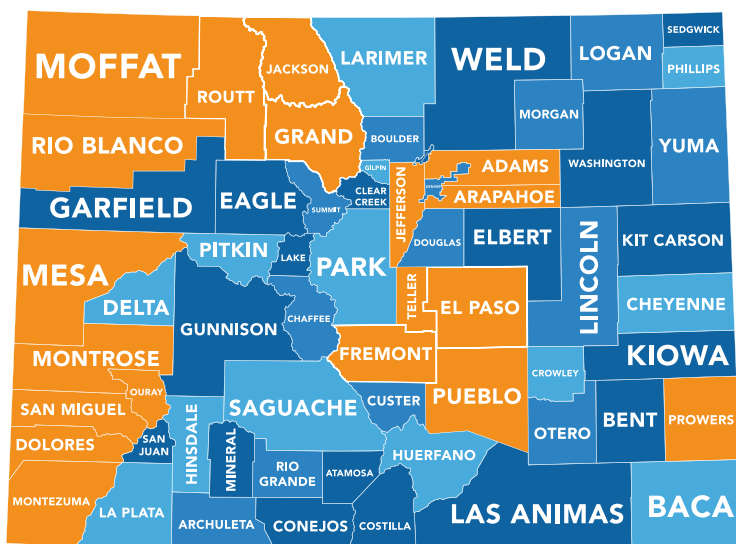
The funding and support empowered local communities to tailor a local plan for prevention of child abuse and neglect. At the local level, communities identified their unique priority areas of improvement, created corresponding action plans for each priority area and deployed monitoring systems to track the implementation of changes and resulting progress for the future.

The Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action is just one tool in the community planning toolbox.

The complete community planning toolbox includes:

- The Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action Toolkit from the Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, which includes more information on the community action steps and sample data collection tools.
- The Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action
- Parent and community survey results
- A literature review by the Chapin Hall to provide states and local communities useful guidelines for selecting specific interventions and, more importantly, building an infrastructure to support high quality implementation.

## COLORADO



A process and outcome evaluation with this first cohort of community planning grantees was conducted by Sarah Prendergast with the Colorado State University to identify what worked well, opportunities for improvement and benefits to engaging in the planning process to prevent maltreatment.

The findings from this process and outcome evaluation affirmed that the CMP framework is a viable approach for coordinating community-level prevention of child maltreatment.

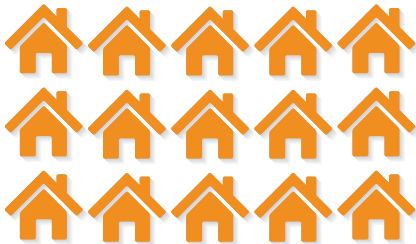
Communities that engaged in the planning process experienced increased community capacity, strengthened alliances among partners, and increases in community support for strengthening families and preventing child maltreatment.

While the 15 communities followed the same planning tasks outlined in the Toolbox, each prevention plan was different with unique activities that reflected local priorities.

### CROSS CUTTING EMERGING THEMES IN LOCAL PLANS

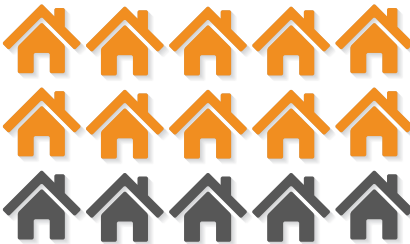
Emerging themes and examples of activities from the final local community child maltreatment prevention plans are listed below.

100% included **Enhanced Individualized Services**



- Increase capacity in evidence-based, two-generation, child maltreatment prevention programs; home visitation, parent education, and child social-emotional development.
- Select evidence-based parenting programming; recruit and train professionals to deliver services.

66% included **Community Norms/ Messaging Campaigns**



- Develop messaging campaign targeting families about the importance of well-child doctor visits and early childhood mental health.
- Identify and test messages that are meant to develop a sense of community and normalize seeking/accepting help.

53% included **Community Partner and Provider Trainings**



- Facilitate cross-training opportunities with key organizations that interface with families (e.g., libraries, schools, child care, referral organizations) to support multi-agency navigation for families.
- Provide training and implementation support to families and organizational partners on the Strengthening Families/Protective Factors to further embed the framework within the community.

33% included **Social Connections**



- Draft proposal for creating cohesion in neighborhoods such as neighborhood captain models.
- Create a Monthly TedTalk-like event of topics targeted toward families with children.

33% included **Family-Friendly Policies**



- Identify and actively engage partners to establish a collaborative approach to the promotion of family-friendly policies.
- Distribute Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC) toolkit to local businesses to help employers support employees and have conversations with employers about family issues.

20% included **Housing**



- Connect with Housing Authority to understand current housing process and collaborate to address community needs.
- Map how many affordable housing units total and how many are available.

20% included **Community Awareness of Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences**



- Host Trauma-Informed Community Trainings for: parents/family, childcare, early education, schools, community college, primary care, recreation department, faith community, and non-profits/other organizations.
- Organize community presentation on Adverse Childhood Experiences and resilience; develop a social media campaign to use as outreach.

20% included **Integrated Services**



- Offer integrated family services and supports that addresses the needs of families including support towards increased self-sufficiency.
- Identify an opportunity to build a centrally located family center that provides an accessible space for families to interact and build social capital, access available resources, and engage in their community.

20% included **Culturally Appropriate Services and Supports**



- Increase number of people trained in interpretation (simultaneous and consecutive).
- Train partner agency staff on opportunities/ programs available to non-English/non-Spanish speaking families.



# LESSONS LEARNED

Key findings from the evaluation of the CMP Framework community planning process

## METHODOLOGY

Leadership team coordinators, core team members, and broad team members completed evaluation surveys at the start of the planning period (i.e., pre-

planning), at the end of the planning period (i.e., post-planning), and again approximately 90 days following the end of the planning period (i.e., 90-day follow-up).

### Framework Language.

Nearly all community planning teams reported that common language across the state is important for prevention, but that the language used in the framework was challenging to understand.

It was difficult for parent representatives and leadership team members who do not work in early childhood professions to understand. Other sites mentioned that including "Child Maltreatment Prevention" in the title of the framework was misleading to partners who were not familiar with the state's primary prevention strategy and expected to learn more about how to recognize and prevent maltreatment among at-risk families.

### Forming a Team; Duration and Frequency of Meetings.

Most leadership planning teams reported no problems partnering with other members and were able to engage several new partners. However, several teams struggled with maintaining consistent membership at each meeting.

### Community Profile.

Most groups found the community profile to be valuable for their community. However, some teams struggled with the community profile because they had limited experience with locating and analyzing data.

### Securing Parent Input.

Many teams did not have the capacity to conduct a parent survey on their own, but were able to partner with researchers at the University of Denver to administer a survey previously developed for state-wide data collection and analyze the data. Some teams mentioned that the surveys could be revised to better match their communities' needs and that the focus groups were especially beneficial. It was particularly important for the teams to have a neutral person (e.g., their facilitator) lead the focus groups.

### Catalogue Local Services.

Many teams were able to build on existing catalogues of services to complete this task. For others, it was a time consuming task and some teams completed it informally via group discussions. For some, it was particularly useful because their communities did not previously have a way to locate relevant community services.

### Training and Facilitation Support.

The facilitator role was critical for this planning process. All teams discussed at length the importance of their facilitator to group success. Several teams that were less ready or less prepared reported needing additional training or support. Most teams indicated that this type of planning process requires that facilitators have an in-depth understanding of child maltreatment prevention and the CMP framework.

## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Benefits of planning to prevent maltreatment; Nearly all communities were awarded at least one grant after completing the planning process.

Of course, the primary benefit of engaging in a community planning process to prevent maltreatment is to ultimately ensure that all children are valued, healthy and thriving.

Measuring outcomes for a community planning process is not easily done. Changes in attitudes impacting child maltreatment, for example, is a long-term outcome that is unlikely to be realized within the course of a planning period, or the first few months following the planning period.

### Short-term goals and outcomes for the community planning process

GOAL: strengthen organizational capacity and alliances so that communities could join forces to strengthen their base of support such as secure funding, expected to learn more about how to recognize and prevent maltreatment among at-risk families.

GOAL: improve community social norms around the prevention of child maltreatment, maltreatment among at-risk families.

### Long-term goals and outcomes for the community planning process

GOAL improve policies and programs.

GOAL increase the impact that such efforts have on families and children in the community.

- Overall, the results suggest that the planning process resulted in community planning teams becoming more structured, collaborative, and process-oriented by the end of the planning period. These changes were statistically significant among the limited number of participants who took both the pre- and post-planning period surveys.
- Teams set measureable long-term goals, identified interim goals, established ways to monitor progress, effective at obtaining resources, and willing to confront and resolve performance issues.
- The majority of leadership team coordinators reported that community leaders' levels of concern for child maltreatment prevention had improved and that community members' knowledge or awareness of child maltreatment had improved.

Policy and program improvement is a long-term outcome. However, within 90 days, the majority of leadership teams (77%) were actively working on intermediate activities related to improving policies or programs.

- Nearly all teams (85%) were awarded at least one grant within 90 days of completing the planning process. Three teams were still awaiting funding decisions at the 90-day follow-up, 13 sites had applied for at least one funding opportunity which included federal, state and local government grants, as well as private grant support.

### What's next?

- The next phase of the CMP framework development, the CDHS OEC will develop a data dashboard to monitor the overarching outcomes at each participating site.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 2014, the **Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood**, in partnership with **Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago** and the **Children's Trust of South Carolina**, countless state and local agencies and partners began working together to design a framework to serve as a national model for the prevention of maltreatment.

Partners reviewed literature and talked to hundreds of parents and professionals to identify principles, strategies and data-driven outcomes for the prevention of child maltreatment. Together, partners evaluated Colorado's programs, services and policies based on the **Strengthening Families™** research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

Thanks to the support of the Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood, the **Ben and Lucy Ana Walton Fund of the Walton Family Foundation**, and the **Office of Child Abuse and Neglect in the Children's Bureau, an Office of the U.S. Administration for Children and Families**, Colorado launched the **Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action** in April 2017 to help local communities create a more focused and better integrated plan to prevent child maltreatment and promote child well-being.

**The Zoma Foundation**, a new Ben and Lucy Ana Walton family charitable organization with a focus on funding initiatives that have a positive impact on early childhood development, committed approximately \$500,000 to the initiative and is helping turn the framework into action at the state and local community level in Colorado.

With funding and support from the **Colorado Department of Human Services** and the **Zoma Foundation**, that **Early Milestones Colorado** (Milestones) served as the lead agency for the **Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action** initial community planning process.

Milestones served as the fiscal agent and provided facilitation and technical assistance support to 15 community champions. Milestones served as a partner, information hub, and champion with a deep commitment to and engagement with community grantees.

In this capacity, Milestones:

- Coordinated and managed the project
- Maintained an open line of communication with all communities
- Visited communities to better understand context and culture
- Served as the hub for trained facilitators and monitor effectiveness
- Served as the first point of contact for all TA requests
- Developed and coordinated the online learning community
- Hosted cross-community calls and webinars to support peer-to-peer learning and promote best practices
- Developed an understanding of the spectrum of community needs and level of engagement in all aspects of the learning community
- Communicated learnings to local and state partners.

Finally, thank you to the 15 community sites and countless partner organizations and parents that participated in the community planning process.

### Get Involved

Throughout Colorado counties, cities, neighborhoods are coming together to ensure that their community strengthens families.

Coalitions of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, churches and local volunteers and advocates are reaching out to their neighbors, organizing on a local level and proactively planning to prevent child maltreatment and build a Colorado for kids.

Learn more about the **Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action**.

Find out if your community is planning to prevent child abuse.

Visit the **Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Public Awareness Campaign** [www.co4kids.org](http://www.co4kids.org).

