

Summary of Laws authorizing the Children's Bureau

Below is a summation from 27 laws passed since 1974 that have authorized the work of the Children's Bureau. It includes excerpts from a number of informational brochures to describe the legislative basis of the agency's work.

"The Children's Bureau: A Legacy of Service....A Vision for Change."

The Children's Bureau was founded in 1912, and has an annual budget of almost 8 billion dollars. The Bureau's mission is to work with States, Tribes, and localities to:

- prevent child abuse and neglect;
- protect children when abuse or neglect has occurred; and
- ensure that every child and youth has a permanent family or family connection.

CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS

The Children's Bureau provides matching funds to States, Tribes, and communities for child welfare systems. They include:

Title IV-E Foster Care: Assistance with costs of foster care for eligible children and associated administrative and training costs.

Title IV-E Adoption Assistance: Financial and medical assistance, as well as associated administrative and training costs for the adoption of children with disabilities, those who are members of minority or sibling groups, or older children.

John Chafee Foster Care Independence Program: Funds to help older youth in foster care and former foster youth acquire training and independent living skills.

Title IV-B, Subpart 1, Child Welfare Services: preventive intervention, alternative placements, and reunification efforts to keep families together.

Title IV-B, subpart 2, promoting safe and stable families: Family support, time-limited family reunification services, and services to support adoptions.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) State Grants: assistance to improve state child protective service systems. Most recent amendment to CAPTA is 2016, CARA the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), 2019: This document presents CAPTA as amended by P.L. 115-271, the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and

Communities Act or the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act. The text includes the Adoption Opportunities program.

Community-based grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect: Support for community-based, prevention-focused programs and activities.

The Children's Justice Act: Funds for improving the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The Children's Bureau also awards discretionary grants for research and program development through a competitive peer-review process to State and local agencies, tribes, and other groups. These include:

Adoption Opportunities: these help eliminate barriers to adoption and find permanent families for children.

Child Welfare Training enhances the skills and qualifications of child welfare workers.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Research and Demonstration Projects support research and demonstration and training programs to prevent and respond to child maltreatment.

Infant Adoption Awareness Training program trains designated staff of eligible health centers in providing adoption information and referrals to pregnant women on an equal basis with all other courses of action.

Prenatal Alcohol and Other Drug Exposures in Child Welfare – study examining the agency policies and practices for detecting prenatal substance exposures when children enter the child welfare system.

MONITORING OUTCOMES (STATISTICAL REPORTING AND ANALYSIS)

Child and Family Services Reviews ensure that State child welfare agency practice conforms to Federal requirements, and help states improve their services.

Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews determine whether the facilities that house foster children meet requirements for the funds.

Federal and State Reporting Systems provide data on:

The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) has case-level data on all children in foster care.

National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System collects data on children who come into contact with child protective services.

National Youth in Transition Database collects case-level information on youth foster care and outcomes.

Comprehensive Child Welfare Information Systems (CCWIS) are comprehensive case management tools that support practice (formerly SACWIS – State Automated Child Welfare Information System). The Children’s Bureau provides support and technical assistance to states that are working on setting up such a data system that will allow them meet their own case management needs as well as to meet federal reporting requirements.

The Bureau also has regular publications on

- adoption and foster care statistics,
- child abuse and neglect reports,
- annual reports to Congress on child welfare outcomes; and
- user’s manuals that help people identify, prevent, and respond to child maltreatment.

Below is additional legislation authorizing the work of the Children’s Bureau

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Pub. L. 111-148. **Attached is the section of the law that refers to foster care and the health care needs of youth aging out of foster care** (the full, 1,000 page act is available at: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ148/pdf/PLAW-111publ148.pdf>)

SEC. 2004. MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR FORMER FOSTER CARE CHILDREN.

- (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1902(a)(10)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a), as amended by section 2001(a)(1), is amended—
- (1) by striking “or” at the end of subclause (VII);
 - (2) by adding “or” at the end of subclause (VIII); and
 - (3) by inserting after subclause (VIII) the following:
“(IX) who were in foster care under the responsibility of a State for more than 6 months (whether or not consecutive) but are no longer in such care, who are not described in any of subclauses (I) through (VII) of this clause, and who are under 25 years of age;”.

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008.

Public Law 110-351, Oct 7, 2008 110th Congress An Act

To amend parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to connect and support relative caregivers, improve outcomes for children in foster care, provide for tribal foster care and adoption access, improve incentives for adoption, and for other purposes.

The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act, Public Law (Pub. L.) 112-34; [Note: this extended the authorization for Title IV-B, Part I, Child Welfare Services, and Part II, Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) **through 2016**. It was passed September 30, **2011**. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ34/pdf/PLAW-112publ34.pdf>

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Executive Order on Strengthening the Child Welfare System for America's Children, **June 24, 2020**. Aims to strengthen America's child welfare system through improving partnerships, resources, and oversight. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/law-regulation/executive-order-strengthening-child-welfare-system-americas-children>