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Legislation

Legislative visits were made on Capitol Hill the third week in February. Since the Family First Transition Act [S.1376] was successfully attached to the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020 near the end of 2019, there were no other pressing matters before Congress that CORE has been tracking.

H.R. 4983 [Caring Homes and Improved Lives for Dependents (CHILD) Act] filed by Congress Meadows in October 2019, has not had a lot of activity. In addition, Mark Meadows was named last week as Chief of Staff by President Trump. He replaces Mark Mulvaney in that role.

While on Capitol Hill, Dana Hudson, lobbyist with c6 Strategies, LLC, assisted in making visits with us. In the process, she arranged for and made introductions to several committee staff members. Dana assisted the Florida Coalition for Children in supporting the passage of S.1376.

CHILD Maltreatment 2018

Published by the Children's Bureau January 15, 2020

The annual "Child Maltreatment Report" for 2018 published by the Children's Bureau indicate that **4.3 million** referrals alleging maltreatment to CPS involving **7.8 million** children. Of that number, **3.5 million** children received either an investigation or alternative response.

- For 2018, an estimated **1,770** children died of abuse and neglect at a rate of 2.39 per 100,000 children in the national population.
- The national rounded number of children who received a child protective services investigation response or alternative response



increased 8.4 percent from 2014 (3,261,000) to 2018 (3,534,000).

- **The number and rate of victims have fluctuated during the past 5 years. Comparing the national rounded number of victims from 2014 (675,000) to the national rounded number of victims in 2018 (678,000) shows an increase of 0.4 percent.**
- **The 2018 data show more than four-fifths (84.5%) of victims suffer a single type of maltreatment. Sixty percent (60.8) are neglected only, 10.7 percent are physically abused only, and 7.0 percent are sexually abused only. More than 15 percent (15.5%) are victims of two or more maltreatment types.**

According to the Child Maltreatment Report, “a total of 3.5 million children received an investigation or alternative response, and states found approximately 678,000 (16.8%) to be victims of child maltreatment; in other words the allegation was ‘substantiated.’ Another 14% received an alternative response rather than an investigation, which meant there was no determination of whether maltreatment occurred. Reports involving 56.3% of these children were unsubstantiated, which meant there was not sufficient evidence to conclude that maltreatment took place”.

According to the report, the ongoing national crisis involving opioid and methamphetamine addiction has been blamed for an increase in maltreatment in many states. And indeed, all of the states with the highest rates have been hard-hit by the opioid epidemic and had among the highest opioid overdose death rates in the country in 2017.

A Closer Look at Alternate Case Response

According to recent 2020 news releases, more than one state is compelled to look more carefully at children placed on an “Alternative Case Response”. Sadly, the impetus for review is tied to child deaths.

While the death of a child from any cause always carries a sense of sadness, it is particularly concerning when allegations of abuse/neglect have been made and investigations or contact with the family yields an alternate case response where the child is subsequently severely injured or killed.

Ohio - Two recent child deaths in Ohio were the impetus for the Governor to order a review of all alternative case responses handled by Montgomery County Children’s Services in the past six months. A two-month old boy died of injuries associated to blunt force. The ten-year-old is alleged to have been tortured, sexually abused and routinely locked in the attic before he died in December 2019. The child’s school



had made fifteen referrals to children’s protective services. Reportedly, both children had been on the radar of Montgomery County Children’s Services Agency.

Colorado - Kevin Vaughan, Investigative Reporter for KUSA-TV Denver, reports that State’s child protection ombudsman calls for all child abuse, neglect deaths to be investigated, followed up. Roughly half of deaths are not examined to look for ways to prevent future fatalities. And no one has the task of tracking whether recommendations are followed. Reportedly, even with reforms in recent years, the number of child deaths in Colorado continued to climb from 23 in 2015 to 35 the next two years and 36 in 2018. Statistic for 2019 have yet been released, but they are thought to be lower.

New York - A New York Times article written by Ashley Southall, carries the headline: “2/10/20 A Young Father Was Investigated 4 Times. Then his newborn died”. The notation under the headline stated: “Years of warnings that children were being abused may have gone unheeded until the death of Kaseem Watkins”. Reportedly, “Not only had he (the father) been arrested twice on charges that he had assaulted the baby’s mother, but the authorities investigated him four times over allegations of child abuse in the family, including once when another son had a broken leg.”

Space doesn’t permit an identification of all the press releases this calendar year, but it is an issue that merits closer scrutiny. When child welfare works, an alternate case response doesn’t culminate in a child being significantly injured or killed.



2020 CORE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

October 13 - 15, 2020

**Hosted by Mooseheart Child City & School
Mooseheart, Ill**

2020 Conference Theme: EMPOWER – Get Connected

Deadline for Submission of Conference Proposal: **May 30, 2020**

Length of Workshops: **One hour and thirty minutes | Three Hours**

Forward Thinking – Best Practice – Outcome Focused – Effective

Suggested Topics Include, but are not limited to :

Story Branding – Donor Acquisition and Fund Raising – Orchestrating Legislative Change – Ethics – Tracking Outcomes – Independent Living – Attachment – Sensory Integration – Thrift Stores -Are They Worth The Investment – Innovation and Thinking Outside the Box – Working with Boards and Selection of Board Members – The Use of Volunteers – Supporting a Normalized Home Environment for Children – Drug Use and Misuse – Promoting Best Practice in a FFPSA Environment – Continuous Quality Improvement Processes – Using Alumni To Share The Agency’s Story and Impact Legislative Change -Promoting Educational Excellence – Keeping Children Safe – The Use of Volunteers In Enrichment Activities for Children – Cottage Parent Recruitment, Training and Retention, Trauma Informed Care Issues – An Executive Leadership Track

All Workshop proposals must be electronically submitted for consideration by May 30, 2020. There is a template to be completed for the presenter information. Please reach out to Don Forrester, Executive Director don@CORE-DC.org for immediate access to the template. The link for the template will subsequently be posted on the CORE website.