

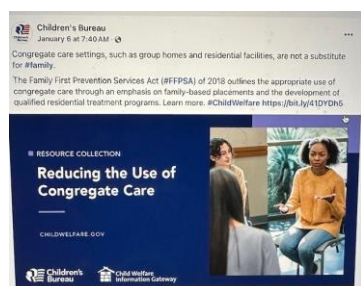
The CORE board of directors was on Capitol Hill this past week for legislative visits and a January 30th board meeting. As you are aware, H.R. 3852 - Create Accountable Respectful Environments (CARE) for Children Act expired without passage on January 3, 2025.

We are optimistic that similar legislation will be filed in the 119th Legislative Session and will keep you updated of the status of that yet-to-be filed legislation.



As shared previously, S.1351 - Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act was passed and signed into law by President Biden on Christmas Eve, 2024. The version of legislation was modified prior to passage to remove references to legislative and administrative actions. The legislation as written simply authorizes that a study will be done. It does not authorize any kind of regulatory requirements related to findings from the study.

The ability for CORE to influence those kinds of needed legislative changes is a significant accomplishment that could not have occurred without the active involvement of many of you. Thank you for investing the time and making the commitment to having your concerns heard and addressed.



Children's Bureau

In reviewing information posted on The Children's Bureau website, I found content that I believe most of our membership will find objectionable. During the month of

January 2025, the following information was published by The Children's Bureau on their Facebook page:

January 6, 2025 - Congregate Care Settings, such as group homes and residential facilities, are not a substitute for #family.

The Family First Prevention Services Act (#FFPSA) of 2018 outlines the appropriate use of congregate care through an emphasis on family-based placements and the development of qualified residential treatment programs.

January 15, 2025 - #Children in out of home or congregate care are particularly vulnerable to #human trafficking.

Resource Link from the Facebook posting contained this message:

Children thrive when living with family in their own communities. Congregate care settings, such as group homes and residential facilities are not a substitute for family and should only be used on a time limited basis when youth require services that are unavailable in less restrictive environment to address psychological or behavioral needs.

Living with family generally improves child and youth well-being, reduces trauma, promotes normalcy and self-esteem, and builds relational permanency.

Brief, therapeutic stays in congregate care facilities may be required to stabilize some children, and youth's psychological, behavioral, or substance use treatment needs. The Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 outlines requirements that non-family settings must meet to be designated as a qualified residential treatment program (QRTP). QRTPs provide time-limited, informed, and family-focused treatment and aftercare services.

TEXAS JUDGE VACATES Department of Labor Scheduled Compensation Thresholds ushered in by the Biden-Harris Administration on April 23, 2024.



In April 2024, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) published a new rule that increased the minimum salary required to qualify for the white-collar exemptions. The DOL's pre-existing 2019 rule required a minimum salary threshold of at least \$35,568 annually (or \$684 per week). The rule's first stage went into effect earlier this year on July 1, 2024, increasing the annual salary threshold to \$43,888 (or \$844 per week). The rule also scheduled a larger annual salary increase for Jan. 1, 2025, to \$58,656 (or \$1,128 per week). Employees making less than these threshold amounts are not exempt from overtime requirements under the white-collar exemptions, even if they meet the salary-basis and duties tests.

In an Opinion issued on Nov. 15, a federal judge in the Eastern District of Texas held that the DOL exceeded its authority in issuing the 2024 Rule and its related increases to the minimum salary threshold for exempt executive, administrative, and professional employees.

Accordingly, the Court entered a summary judgment vacating the DOL's 2024 Rule. This ruling applies nationwide and strikes down the upcoming Jan. 1 salary increase and future automatic increases, as well as the prior increase that had taken effect on July 1, 2024.

Welcome New Member

Missouri Baptist Children's Home has been approved as a new member of the Coalition of Residential Excellence. Dr. Juston Gates is the President of Missouri Baptist Children's Home and the agency's leadership team includes seven other individuals. The primary campus is located at 113000 St. Charles Rock Road in Bridgeton, Mo. I visited the primary campus and visited with Dr. Gates and other staff on Wednesday, January 22, 2025.

The needs of children served by Missouri Baptist Children's Home exceed beyond the basic care provided in many children's home settings. However, agency is not a resource for:

- Someone who is actively presenting psychotic behaviors.
- Someone who is engaging in aggressive behavior with the use of a weapon (e.g., gun, knife, etc.)
- Someone who is an active gang member.
- Someone who is currently using alcohol or any other drugs.
- Someone who has a recent pattern (within the last 6 months) of physically assaulting staff, other adults and/or peers or was discharged from CFM for physically assaulting staff or peers.
- Someone whose behavior represents a risk to self or others.

The agency is licensed by the State and is accredited through COA. The agency utilizes Trust Based Relational Intervention as a philosophy of care and approach in all their programs. The purpose of services is to provide a family centered, community-based option for children and youth that have displayed higher end needs than what could be met in a more traditional setting.

The agency no longer operates a live-in houseparent model but is staffed on a shift basis. Each living unit is designed to provide services to six or fewer children. All children are school age and attend public schools.

Except for the Transition Living Program, all other children in the residential program are limited to a 90 day stay by the state of Missouri.

All children accepted for placement are school age. Children referred to the transition living program may stay for an extended period. The transition living program serves children ages 16-21.

The goal of the Missouri Baptist Children's Home is to provide a living environment that promotes growth, positive change, and ultimately, a move toward permanency. A structured, but nurturing atmosphere is accomplished by utilizing daily schedules, clear and realistic expectations, praise and encouragement, responsibility and trust, limits and boundaries, choices and consequences (both natural and logical), that result in the child's assurance of safety and security.

Children referred to the transition living program may stay for an extended period. The transition living program serves children ages 16-21. Children in care attend public schools. Participation in extra-curricular activities are encouraged. Students are permitted to play sports or participate in band or choir. Children enrolled in the transition living program are also encouraged to have a job.

In addition, the agency desires to include and empower the family by providing family counseling, training, and referrals for practical assistance. Families are an integral part of the treatment plan with identified goals and responsibilities.

Family members may visit the youth on campus, but often, residents go on regular home visits, especially if the goal is for the resident to be placed with the biological parent or family member after being discharged from our care.

The agency reportedly has good outcomes for children and has an excellent working



relationship with the Children's Division of the Missouri Department of Social Services. Please Remember that CORE Membership Dues for 2025 are now due. The mailing address for CORE has changed:

Coalition of Residential Excellence
300 New Jersey Avenue NW- Suite 300
Washington, DC 20001

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