



Prevention Investment Strategy: Policy and Practice Recommendations for the Colorado Child Abuse Prevention Trust Fund

Strong Families, Thriving Communities



Established in statute in 1989, the [Colorado Child Abuse Prevention \(COCAP\) Trust Fund](#) provides leadership and advising to prevent child maltreatment. The Trust Fund focuses on preventing maltreatment before it occurs by building protective factors and reducing risk.

A data-informed Prevention Investment Strategy was developed to guide the Trust Fund in aligning and accelerating child maltreatment prevention and family strengthening in Colorado.

Key Data Points

- [23% of children](#) ages 0 to 8 who need mental health support are not receiving it
- [72.8% of adults](#) who need substance use services are not comfortable talking about it
- [32% of birthing people](#) are at or below 185% of the federal poverty line
- Colorado counties with the [highest child poverty](#) are in the Southeast region
- [73% of child maltreatment](#) allegations in Colorado are due to neglect
- Black and Hispanic/Latinx children are [overrepresented](#) in child welfare



Policy and Practice Recommendations Essential to Strengthening Families

The Prevention Investment Strategy includes 9 recommendations aimed at three drivers of change. Recommendations move beyond direct service to also inform data, policy, and funding priorities.

Driver of Change: Direct Investments

The **Direct Investment** recommendations guide the Board in advising on the effective use of Trust Fund resources, as well as investments by public and private partners in prevention.



Recommendation 1: Invest in Family Resource Centers

[Family Resource Centers](#) (FRCs) offer community-based services to build protective factors and connect families to resources. To increase their impact, raise awareness about FRCs, strengthen service access, leverage peer supports, set quality standards, and grow the available network.



Recommendation 3: Invest in Strategies to Match Families to Appropriate Services and Decrease Barriers to Access

Even when services are available, there are barriers to access. To better connect families to services, expand the workforce of trusted outreach coordinators, use [social health information exchanges](#) for care coordination, and promote language justice practices.



Recommendation 2: Invest in Evidence-Based Practices and their State Intermediaries

Evidence-based practices (EBPs) have strong evidence that demonstrates their positive impact. To ensure effective services matched to needs, expand [Colorado's Family First Service Array](#), scale EBPs to underserved areas, and build evidence for community-grounded practices.



Recommendation 4: Invest in Strategies from Child Maltreatment Prevention Plans

The [Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action](#) has guided local prevention planning across Colorado. To move vision into action, implement identified strategies, strengthen collaborations established during planning, and elevate family voice.

Driver of Change: Raise Capital

The **Raise Capital** recommendations are about designing for sustainability and preventing the loss of critical infrastructure.



Recommendation 5: Position the Trust Fund to be a Depositing Ground for Unspent Prevention Funds

The Trust fund is not swept annually. Making the Trust Fund a depositing ground for unspent child maltreatment prevention funds will give agencies the opportunity to ensure all dollars they steward go toward the original intent of the state allocation.



Recommendation 6: Increase Endowments and Other Gifts to the Trust Fund

By law, the Trust Fund can accept gifts and contributions. Philanthropy plays a critical role in preventing maltreatment and can fund innovations that, if proven favorable, can be sustained by private and public investments. Workplace giving and estate planning are other prime ways to increase contributions.



Recommendation 7: Promote Strategies to Maximize Federal Drawdown in Family First Colorado can claim 50% reimbursement of federal funds on approved services that keep kids safely with their families. [Family First dollars](#) can be maximized by increasing use of current services, building the service array, and expanding populations eligible for drawdown.

Driver of Change: Align and Accelerate

The **Align and Accelerate** recommendations leverage the COCAP Board's expertise to boost collaboration between different systems.



Recommendation 8: Endorse and Advise on Recommendations by Aligned Prevention Partners

No one system is responsible for [preventing child maltreatment](#). The COCAP Board should advise on the development of new recommendations and align existing ones toward shared outcomes.



Recommendation 9: Support Policies and Practices that Expand Economic and Concrete Support for Families

Connecting families to [economic and concrete supports](#) reduces child maltreatment. Colorado needs policies and practices that address affordable housing, food security, health care coverage, workforce development and economic mobility, affordable child care, and tax credits.



Successful implementation of the Prevention Investment Strategy will contribute to improved:



Family economic security



Substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery



Caregiver mental and behavioral health



Child/youth mental and behavioral health



Family Functioning



The Prevention Investment Strategy acts as a capacity building tool for the Trust Fund to meet their vision of *Strong Families, Thriving Communities*. [Click here](#) or scan the QR code for the full report with concrete guidance for activation.



For more information, contact Dr. Courtney Everson at Courtney@coloradolab.org



Colorado Evaluation & Action Lab
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER