

Public Health Leadership Initiative

Fact Sheet

Millions of children are abused or neglected every year. Research indicates those experiences have an impact lasting long after childhood and may contribute to some of the nation's worst health problems.

The Public Health Leadership Initiative believes public health agencies can make great strides in preventing child maltreatment. The purpose of the Public Health Leadership Initiative is to assist and support state agencies as they work to better the lives of children and adults.

Why State Public Health Agencies?

Child maltreatment is a public health issue.

- Toxic stress can impair the connection of brain circuits and, in the extreme, result in the development of a smaller brain.¹
- Poverty, maltreatment, and discrimination in childhood can have a harmful effect on later health, learning, and behavior.²
- Research shows an association between child maltreatment and a broad range of health problems including substance abuse, intimate partner violence, teenage pregnancy, anxiety, depression, suicide, diabetes, ischemic heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases, smoking and obesity.^{3,4}
- The consequences of child maltreatment have significant short- and long-term impacts on communities and society.

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Making a Difference

The Public Health Leadership Initiative will:

- 1) Serve as a foundation for building a strong national public health prevention system that promotes safe, stable and nurturing relationships (SSNRs) for children and prevents child maltreatment.
- 2) Raise awareness about child maltreatment prevention as a public health issue.
- 3) Identify ways to support, improve, and expand child maltreatment prevention efforts at public health agencies.

References

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