

# Public Health Leadership Initiative

The Public Health Leadership initiative is a three-year project to identify best practice models of state public health leadership in the prevention of child maltreatment and the promotion of safe, stable, and nurturing relationships (SSNRs)\* for children. The project will also disseminate recommendations for core program components and related tools to support state-based public health efforts to address child maltreatment.

## Project Vision

To serve as a foundation for building a strong national public health prevention system that promotes safe, stable and nurturing relationships for children and prevents child maltreatment.

## Why State Public Health Agencies?

Child maltreatment is a public health issue.

- Child maltreatment is biologically and epidemiologically associated with health throughout the lifespan.<sup>1</sup>
- 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.<sup>2,3</sup>
- The consequences of child maltreatment have significant short and longer term impacts on communities and society.

Public health systems are uniquely positioned to significantly advance comprehensive, evidence-informed child maltreatment prevention strategies.

- State public health agencies have a wealth of experience in developing strategies to improve the health and well being of populations. (e.g., state public health resources and strategies to prevent and respond to infectious diseases, chronic diseases, and disasters).
- Public health prevention infrastructure exists in every state, with an average of about 2,000 state employees in the workforce and state and federal funding of approximately \$2.89 billion combined per state.<sup>4</sup>
- State public health agencies commonly come in contact with children age 6 years and under through childhood immunization programs, WIC, and other maternal and child health programs. This is important, as young children are most likely to be the victims of child maltreatment and suffer the greatest harms.

\* Promoting safe, stable, and nurturing relationships is the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's strategic direction for the prevention of child maltreatment.



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## ***Project Goals***

- 1) Raise awareness about the prevention of child maltreatment as a public health issue.
- 2) Identify states with strong public health leadership in child maltreatment prevention and the promotion of SSNRs and identify best practices.
- 3) Identify state policies that appear to promote safe, stable, and nurturing relationships between parents and children.
- 4) Partner with state and local public health agencies, child maltreatment experts, and other key stakeholders to identify the core components of effective, public health leadership in child maltreatment prevention and the promotion of SSNRs.
- 5) Develop, test, and disseminate recommendations and tools to promote leadership in child maltreatment prevention and the promotion of SSNRs in state public health agencies.

### **Please direct all questions and correspondence to:**

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