Panel 1: Transforming Systems to Protect Children and Strengthen Families
April 23, 2020

1 00:00:00,970 --> 00:00:12,670
Greetings, everyone and welcome to the webinar, Prevention is Protection: Transforming Child Welfare and Strengthening Families. We are thrilled to be hosting this important webinar today.

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And before we get started, I'll share a few housekeeping notes. To minimize interference on the line,

3 00:00:19,240 --> 00:00:32,200
all attendees will be muted for the duration of this webinar. You can use the magnifying glass icons in the upper right slide panel to increase or decrease the size of the slide on your screen.

4 00:00:33,100 --> 00:00:43,180
If you experience audio or technical issues during the webinar, click on the chat icon, and let us know what the problem is, we'll do our best to help troubleshoot any issues.

5 00:00:44,710 --> 00:00:58,480
Please use the chat panel to submit a question for our speakers. We will be holding time at the end of this session for Q. & A. We'll collect all questions submitted and get through as many as possible at the end of the session.

6 00:00:59,950 --> 00:01:11,800
Session this session is being recorded, and we'll be posted on our website for future access. And finally, if anyone is having any difficulty, you can also catch our event live stream on Facebook.

7 00:01:14,350 --> 00:01:28,330
And with that, we will begin. Good morning. My name is Alisa Santucci, and I am a principal associate at Abt who oversees the child welfare, youth and family work. April is child abuse prevention month.

8 00:01:29,020 --> 00:01:42,970
And today, we're excited to bring together and outstanding panel of experts to discuss how we can work together to protect children and
strengthen families. In light of the COVID pandemic.

There has never been a more urgent time to come together. And we're collectively on behalf of our children's and families in our nation. Over the next hour and a half,

You'll hear about the important work of our panelists and current efforts underway.

That are being addressed during the COVID pandemic. But first, I'm delighted to introduce Kathleen Flanagan, CEO of Abt Associates who would like to welcome our panel and participants to this national dialogue. Kathleen?

Good morning, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us. I can see on the webinar, we're approaching two hundred and fifty participants online so far. So we've got a great showing to discuss this extremely important topic at this time.

Abt was very focused on taking the opportunity of child abuse prevention months to bring together leaders and stakeholders across the country to discuss what we think are really important,

especially in the context of COVID-19,

which are the collective effort that you all are making on.

And have underway to prevent child maltreatment and strengthen families.

We are working at Abt Associates at the intersection of issues related
to health, child, welfare, housing those in most need.

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And we thought that this national dialogue right now, focusing on
three important topics,

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how are systems being transformed right now to protect children in a
very agile and responsive way,

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what specific efforts are underway during COVID-19 to make sure that
we can be sharing best practices.

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How do we, how should we be highlighting programs that are building
evidence right now for community driven efforts in prevention? So,
this dialogue today is meant to be participatory. We have exceptional
panelists.

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to share their perspectives on this important topic.

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But we'd like to also be thinking about the,

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the environment that we're in and,

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and ironically,

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what is the silver lining that COVID-19 might bring to us during this
challenging time? How can our communities agencies partners and
service providers be the most agile adapt share from one another
transform and

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improve the way that we support families and children in this country.
So we like to think about this in two different ways.

There's obviously the opportunity of the regular child abuse prevention month at the fore for us right now,

but we're also working in an unprecedented time,

which I think gives the,

the participants on this call today and more broadly all stakeholders in this important community.

Across the nation, to be thinking about sharing how best to respond and support the children and families.

So, I want to thank our moderator, Alisa Santucci, all of our tremendous panel members, and thank you all for taking time out this morning to participate and share your thoughts on this important topic.

Alisa:
Thank you so much Kathleen. Before we get started on our panel, we'd really like to hear from everyone joining us today. Many of us are from different organizations and play different roles in the field. We're putting in a link in the chat box now.

Please click on the link and answer the short question in your web browser. The question for our work cloud is in one word, what do you think is the most pressing issue at this time for child welfare?
We really want to hear from you, and I hope you'll take a second to let us know your thoughts. When you're done answering the question in your web browser, simply click back to the WebEx webinar to see the presentation.

Now, I'd like to introduce our distinguished speakers. Each speaker will give a brief introduction of themselves and their work before we transition to our general discussion. To learn more about them, you can also read the program brochure on our website. That link is on our event webpage. And you can also use the link we'll add to the chat box.

Our speakers for this webinar are Jerry Milner, the associate commissioner of the Children's Bureau; Dr. Bart Klika, chief research and strategy officer at Prevent Child Abuse America; Teresa Rafael, executive director of the Children's Trust Fund Alliance, and Vivek Sankaran, director of the Child Advocacy Law Clinic at the University of Michigan Law School.

Let's begin. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. For those who are joining the webinar today and may not be familiar with your work to help prevent child maltreatment, can you please spend a few minutes introducing yourself and your work to our listeners? Jerry we'd like to begin with you.

Good morning. This is Jerry Milner. And Alisa, Kathleen, thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of your program today.
As you said, it is a child abuse prevention month. For the past forty years in the Children's Bureau

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we have actually been doing everything that we can to promote the prevention of child maltreatment at all levels, primary prevention of child maltreatment.

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We've been doing everything we can to promote a new vision of child welfare in the United States, one that is proactive.

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One that seeks to strengthen families before they're ever in harms way, which is a pretty dramatic departure from the way we've traditionally done child welfare in our country.

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We've been on a mission to support child and family well-being and healing when necessary. So that we can reduce the need for families to ever make contact with the formal child protection system.

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00:08:00,370 --> 00:08:14,830
And I would just add that the need for that kind of a system has never been more apparent in my view, or more obvious than it is in our, our current situation. In order to realize this vision,

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we need to come together as an entire system to create robust networks of community-based family support, family supports that are trusted by families.

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That are free of stigma and are culturally appropriate. So, that we can meet families where they are within their own context. Places

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00:08:36,190 --> 00:08:46,690
where kids in our country can play safely, parents can address their needs and a place to get to connect with other people and feel those relationships,
the kinds of support that most all of us turn to for help when we need it. Our family, our friends, our communities.

But, unfortunately, not all of our families have access to those critical supports.

We believe that all children and all families will benefit if we work to create those robust networks, of community based supports and that the very best way to keep children safe and healthy is to ensure that families, parents have the protective capacities they need to make it through adversity, which will always be there in some form or fashion.

That is what we call primary prevention, which basically means that we recognize that everyone needs help sometimes and that we ought to be designed as a system to anticipate that need for help, the root causes of those needs,

and do everything we can to get ahead of them.

There are unfortunately some deeply ingrained beliefs that many out there, and in our field, have that often place, prevention and protection at odds with each other.

Beliefs that if we invest so much in prevention, or in the capacity of parents to care for their children, that somehow we may be less able to properly protect children.
We want to challenge that belief and we've been about trying to challenge that belief from the Children's Bureau for the last a few years. We want to expose it.

So, for what it is, a false binary, a false myth, a defiance of logic and frankly an injustice for our families who need support and help not just in times of crisis.

We felt an incredible sense of urgency at all times that strengthened and families and communities was really our best shot at achieving better outcomes in, in child welfare.

It's the best way to prevent the trauma. A family separation. It's the best way to interrupt.

A harmful, disruptive,
intergenerational cycles,

that many of our families experience and it may be frankly,

our best shot at addressing some of the most vexing

a systemic disparity,

such as over representation of a people of color in our in our system again recent events.

And only heightened that sense of urgency. We have vulnerable families that are struggling.

We have families that never thought they'd be struggling that that are,

in this moment,

we've got poor families that are more impoverished,

isolated families that are further isolated, fear, food,

insecure families that are more food insecure. Families who have experience instability and housing are likely,
even more unstable in these times, and yes, these factors all contribute to toxic stress and child welfare,

particularly, if the local, the state levels were forced to watch all of this develop and to try to assist the best we can with the needs and struggles that our families are facing, we struggle,

because our system isn't as agile,

and as adaptive as we would all like,

for it could be in a time like,

this really challenges us to be as responsive as we can. Unfortunately,

in child welfare,

we're accustomed to intervening with families usually after harm has occurred and often our options are limited to separating the family,

but we need right now to go after the risk factors that families experience as aggressively
and as early as we can.

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We need the,

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the time the energy,

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00:12:53,890 --> 00:12:55,990
the resources to respond,

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00:12:55,990 --> 00:12:57,250
and very flexible,

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00:12:57,730 --> 00:13:05,050
and culturally appropriate ways. We've invested heavily right now,

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in in reporting processes and investigation processes.

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And these are important.

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They are a part of the array of protections that that are needed out there,

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but they aren't always the best way to make sure that children are safe and protected from maltreatment ever occurring in the first place.

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We are, in this time, where mandatory reporters are not in routine contact with children, there is a tremendous amount of fear out there, that's recurring.

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00:13:46,480 --> 00:13:55,870
Because we're not able to lay eyes on children or a lack of
surveillance of families. We assume,

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in some situations that children may be in harm's way at the hands of
their own parents simply because we were not able to lay eyes on them.

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00:14:09,160 --> 00:14:09,370
I,

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I think that that gives us a tremendous opportunity, that awareness
and that knowledge, to think about where our assumptions are about the
families that,

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00:14:22,900 --> 00:14:25,450
that we are so involved with,

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in the child welfare system and about the underlying values that we
have there,

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00:14:30,130 --> 00:14:35,290
which are oftentimes deeply, deeply troubling for us.

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00:14:37,210 --> 00:14:51,550
Alisa:
Thank you so much, Jerry. Oh, I'm sorry, Jerry. We're going to go
ahead and transition to the next speaker, and then get into sort of
some of the challenges that are facing child, welfare in a few
minutes.

Jerry:
right right.

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00:14:55,090 --> 00:15:07,510
Bart:
Thank you and, you know, obviously tough back to follow. I think that
we at Prevent Child Abuse America agree with many of the things that
Dr. Milner just shared.

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00:15:07,970 --> 00:15:21,760
So, if we could go to the next slide, I think what I'll talk about in my first couple of minutes here is just a little bit about our organization, and how it is that we're trying to advance some of the concepts.

I think the Doctor Milner was talking about. I think we find ourselves right now at a point where the general public is talking about public health in a way that they haven't in the past.

And so I think we have a real opportunity to think about how we message and talk about the prevention of child abuse and neglect and other traumas and adversity and really framing what we mean, by a public health approach. To Prevent Child Abuse America,

we've been around since about nineteen seventy two, and our, our primary mission has really been about the prevention of child abuse and neglect and we do that in a number of ways. Next slide, please.

First of all the first off, we operate evidence based home visiting program, Healthy Families.

America we have approximately six hundred sites across the country where we're delivering services and right now, and I'll talk about in some of my comments later.

We're continuing to sort of families Amit, this COVID crisis, and we've seen incredible resilience of our model, but of other home visiting models and other services across the country in meeting the needs of families, but Healthy Families America

works with families early on supporting the needs of family is working on the relational context in which children and families develop. Next we
We do a fair amount of work in the arena of policy, both at the federal level, and at the state level.

At the federal level, our policy team over the past couple of years has been advocating strongly for things like the maternal, infant and early childhood home Visiting program, or MCV as well as on pushing for the reauthorization of CAPTA which many of the folks on this phone knows support that many community based prevention services that we so desperately need and over the last couple of years. We've moved more into the arena of supporting, realizing that as many of these state level policies that are going to support kids and families,
especially in these difficult times. Over the years we've also worked on public awareness and messaging of the issue of child abuse and neglect.

I'll talk a little bit later about child abuse prevention month, and some of our work, but many of you may have heard our signature pin wheels for prevention.

So our national symbol, being the, the pin wheel,

and during April,

especially, we see pin wheel gardens planted all over but,

especially in the early days Prevent Child Abuse America did a fair amount of work on really raising awareness about this issue of child abuse and neglect through public service announcements,

and then later on working with the Frameworks Institute,

to really think about the ways in,

which we message the issue of child abuse and neglect.
And then some of our other work has to do with our, our robust state chapter network.

We have chapters of our organization across the United States, doing various innovations in child abuse prevention at a state level, be that child sexual abuse prevention, home visitation, policy and advocacy work, but it's really, in my opinion where some of the innovation in child maltreatment prevention is occurring through our state chapter network. Cross cutting in our organization is our research and evaluation.

I typically talk about our role in the field is being both producers and consumers of, or translators of research. I find that spend a fair amount of my time reading the latest science, and trying to translate that into understandable, actionable policy and practice related strategies. As well as we also look for opportunities to actually conduct research to fill some of the gaps that we know exist, in our science space.

And then last,
but not least our president and CEO Dr Melissa Merrick and she took her post about it coming up on a year ago, has really been pushing this message that we all fully believe,

which is that prevention happens in partnership, and this is something that is at the core of what we do as a national organization.

It's a core of what we do across all of our programming,

in the organization. There's no one model, there's no one organization, there's no one strategy that is gonna work for every person, every community, every state, and that this work is gonna require partnerships.

And I know that many of the folks on the phone are some of our key strategic partners in doing some of this work.

But we've seen, even in this COVID crisis, a re-engagement of many of the partners in the field, who are doing work day and night to make sure that we're providing the necessary for services for kids and families.

So I'm gonna go ahead and pause there. And I look forward to contributing some comments moving forward.

Thank you so much. Yes, so my name is Vivek Sankaran, and I, thank you all for giving me the opportunity to be on this call.
I love the theme of prevention happens in partnership,

because that's where I want to begin the fact that legal advocacy and legal services is part of this conversation about prevention shows that we're making progress in helping to redefine what we think of as legal advocacy as an essential prevention tool in in child welfare.

I direct the child advocacy clinic at the University of Michigan law school, which is the oldest law clinic in the country that handles cases involving children and parents in the foster care system. But really the bulk of the work that I do now, and the thinking that I'm doing is how do we transform legal representation and court systems to be a support the families not just as the reactive tool that responds after something unfortunate has happened to a child. And so really thinking about the role of lawyers and legal representation as a prevention device.

I, in 2007 started the Detroit center for family advocacy. Which was a model, the first of its kind that got lawyers involved and partnering with child welfare agencies, well before a child was removed from the home with the hopes of supporting a family to prevent the children from leaving the home.

And so what other types of cases that we that we dealt with — it would be landlord tenant cases, domestic violence, child custody,
guardianship,

maternity,

criminal warrant, the list goes on and on about the types of concrete needs that families have that often,

go unaddressed.

And typically, in what happens in most jurisdictions, even today, is CPS worker might identify that a family has those needs will tell the family to go, get a restraining order at domestic violence case, go access, public benefits to firm up the economics stability in the house.

And they'll say, they'll come back in a week or two to see if it's been done. And if it hasn't been done yet, then oftentimes a petition might be in the works because of the instability in the house. What that system doesn't recognize,

that paradigm is how hard court systems are to access for families, particularly families without needs. And so we tried a new model to work with child welfare agencies to help them identify legal issues that were destabilizing families. And then we had a staff of three attorneys, a social worker and apparent mentor that were then partnered with families to try to address those needs.
And we did that for seven years from up from 2009 to 2016.

and in the first three years, we had a robust evaluation, which showed that of the a hundred and ten children that we work with who are all being investigated by child, protective services, None of those children entered foster care. To me,

this demonstrated that this is a model that needs to spread, that lawyers need to be viewed as more than simply folks who show up at court and respond to to issues that come up,

but really to be active partners in this prevention conversation.

alongside how home visitors and other key,

essential prevention services,

we need to redefine how we think of lawyers, not just as,

you know,

folks playing defense after something bad has happened,

but people who help solve problems.

And so what we've seen since then is an emergence in small pockets across the country where this type of preventive lawyering is happening,
either to legal service organizations,

or public defender offices,

where lawyers are engaging with child welfare agencies.

To help resolve a concrete issues affecting families. And so, what I want to talk about today and we'll get into. It is, you know, my, my view of this crisis is that this is a jolt to our legal system that none of us expected.

None of us wanted. It is unfortunate in many ways, but boy did we need this jolt in our legal system.

We absolutely did because many of the issues that we are seeing now involving families,

not being able to visit their children and not accessing services,

not getting access to lawyers,

not able to access courts, courts delaying outcomes like ratification.

A family is not being able to get a job or housing. All of these things existed for all of our families in the child welfare system before the pandemic.
And so, I look forward to having a conversation about how perhaps something has changed in terms of our own empathy and fragility and sort of recognizing a shared humanity with us and our, the families that we work with that might spark us into doing more, and building a stronger support network that includes rethinking how we operate courts, both to have a prevention mindset, but even when families enter the system, how it could be much more family-centered and redesign all of our systems. So that we're much more responsive to the needs of children and their parents.

So, I'll stop there and I look forward to the conversation.

Alisa: Thank you so much, Vivek. Teresa?

Teresa: Hi, everyone good morning.

I'm very happy to be with you today and I begin by telling you a little bit about the Children's Trust Fund Alliance and our members with the national membership organization for state children's trust funds. And I hope if you're on this, that, you know, about the trust fund in your state and if you don't, I encourage you to go to our website and find out where the trust fund is and make a link with them.

We've been around for thirty years. And the trust funds first developed in 1980 so they're celebrating forty years of trust funds.
They are leaders in their own states related to preventing child abuse and neglect and partner with many of the other organizations in their state. In addition to their role working with policies and practices, they distribute about two hundred million dollars every year to help support community-based child abuse prevention programs and that's a huge need always, but even moreso right now, of course. About a little more than half of them are their state CB CAP leads and about a quarter of them are the Prevent Child Abuse America chapters in their state.

So, we all work very closely together around all of the issues related to strengthening children and family. For about twenty years, from almost from the very beginning of this work, the alliance in the trust funds have been very involved in helping families, Build protective factors, looking at systemic level changes and training and all the elements that need to be put into place.
So, that families can have that they need. We have an online training that has been used by over thirty thousand people all over the world mostly in the US, free of charge.

And if you want CEUs, you can pay a very small fee and get those. And those are available on our website. We have a number of materials, their children's trust fund alliance.

CTFalliance dot org and the other other big areas of our work.

But one of those has been partnering with parents to really understand, what are those issues families are facing. We believe, often most often the solutions

so a lot of those issues are held and known by the folks facing them. So we try to learn from and capture some of those solutions and to work in partnership and all the areas where we work.

So, this, this current pandemic with COVID

has really changed a lot of that work in that many of the people who have been our partners and advocacy,

and in other areas,

Are now facing even new challenges, as we all are, getting through this period.

And so we've been learning a lot there,
and we've also been seeing among our members, the children's trust funds so much creativity and flexibility an ability to help families they're working with in ways that are needed.

And I'll say more about that later in our conversation.

But I will just say this pandemic has helped us learn where we're strong as families, as individuals, as a country, and where we need to do more work. And and we feel very committed to capturing both of those areas through our work, the families and systems and documenting what are those things that we can learn and take away from this, this very hard time. One of the gifts that we can pull out of it.

And if you'll go to the next slide, please, a lot of our work, as I said, is based on the protective factors framework. I'm not sure if the slide...there, thank you.

I wanted to really highlight we call it parental resilience and the protective factors framework, but I love this definition because I think all of us can take it to heart.

It's the ability to recover from difficult life experiences,
but even more than that to often be strengthened by and transformed by those experiences and I think that's what we're seeing in large part on a national scale right now and what's families need and want but we,

as individuals need and want to have happen. And when we think about the protective factors, and I'm assuming most folks on the line are familiar with them,

I think we have to add another line in our thought — protective factors during the time of COVID-19,

because even families were very strong protective factors,

are having to shift some of their thinking,

how do you maintain those positive social connections while maintaining physical distance?

It's another layer and we're finding very creative things happening around the country to help families,

stay connected and we're finding challenges too, often around technology,

a knowledge of parenting and child development, and that's critical.

But now you're the parent, you're the teacher, you have so many roles.
And demands, and how is that all playing out in the time of COVID, and how to help the child understand all that that's going on? If you could go to the next slide.

One of the things we know is so important is the social and emotional competence of children and in this picture,

you see a kindergartner, learning in kindergarten on the computer with his hand raised on that screen.

There are like, twenty six postage size pictures of kids in his class, waiting for his teacher to unmute him and call on him. And I, you know, that's pretty unprecedented way.

Children are learning right now and needing to learn and the parents needing to support that.

So, and then the big issue that we all are aware of, I think, is the concrete support but, you know,

I don't even need to read these. I know you all know them. There's so many issues housing, food, healthcare, mental health needs, and even the ability to isolate if you're in a small space with a lot of people-

how do you isolate the one family member sick? And how do you how do you keep all the other issues that you have to deal with if you're a parent or a family member? How do you keep those going?

So I think this is the time, you could go to the next slide, if you would, this is the time where we have to really hone in on our own protective factors.
But also to be so aware, everything we do in relation to families, our own, our neighbors, families we work with, has to be about how do we help build those protective factors.

In the time of COVID to realize that's another layer and it's so important that we use our voices with policy makers. We're hearing so much interest and questions.

We think it's so important to document what's happening with families during this time. What's the community response?

The federal response, and we just have to stay flexible, hopeful, take care of ourselves and to know, at a base level that we're gonna get through this together.

And we talk about a better normal, not just back to normal, but let's take what we've learned and really make a better normal. Thank you so much.

Thank you so much Teresa and all the panelists. I like that phrase, creating a better normal. Jerry, I want to turn back to you I want to give you an opportunity to finish your thought earlier.

And then also, I'm hoping you might be able to walk us through some of the recent guidance and information that you've been sharing to help support our children and families as I know that, but you've been doing a lot on that end.

And so yeah. Well, thanks so much Alisa. Yeah. Yeah.
I, I think the only thing that I would add is that I, I agree so much with what Vivek has said about

many of the situations and and problems existing in our system long before the current crisis.

And I do think that the crisis has brought a lot of those issues to the surface. I also just appreciate Teresa raising the issue of protected factors,

because I think that in our current situation, this is where we've seen the vulnerability of,

of so many families become much more apparent because frankly,

apart from the very good work,

that folks like Teresa's network has done and and other kinds of community based programs like,

family resource centers,

we haven't really invested in building the protective capacities of parents.

Instead

Instead
we tend to be much more reactive and after the fact,

so I,

I won't be labour that anymore,

but I think we are in terms of the, the policies and guidance that we're issuing.

I think it reflects what we are putting out there, reflects a real need to re-examine

how our system is set up and frankly, the lack of flexibility and agility to respond to families.

Our guidance has been directed toward giving as much flexibility in the use of
federal funds as we can do statutorily.

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For example, to purchase technology a cellphones to keep people in touch, relaxing a few requirements like fingerprinting requirements,

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so that child welfare organizations can focus on really meeting the needs of children and families.

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We also emphasize the need to continue with the central functions, such as making reasonable efforts to prevent the removal of children and to support reunification.

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We have strongly encouraged the courts not to issue broad sweeping court orders,

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limiting or prohibiting visits between parents and children more than ever right now, they need those relationships and those,

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00:38:07,840 --> 00:38:08,380
those,

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00:38:08,650 --> 00:38:13,090
those connections. One of the biggest population groups that

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00:38:13,840 --> 00:38:18,550
is affected by this are young people who are in extended foster care,

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00:38:18,550 --> 00:38:20,230
recent alumni of foster care,

310
00:38:20,890 --> 00:38:29,800
who were being displaced because of their dependence on college dorms for housing and college dining rooms for food.
And that's a direct reflection of the failure of our system to provide them with permanency in relationships and connections.

We have to go forward in a better way to serve those children and families. We will continue to provide guidance and whatever flexibilities that we have.

As long as that doesn't compromise our core mission to help families stay strong and children stay safe. We'll continue to issue those flexibilities.

Thanks Alisa.

Thanks so much Gary,

Alisa:

Bart I wanna also give you an opportunity to weigh in on that,

or thinking about this issue,

especially in light of COVID, and what kinds of strategies and what you're doing to help support children at this time.

Yeah,

you bet,

you bet,
and I,

I think that right now as an organization,

like like many folks out there,

we've,

we've done what we could to quickly pull together a resource page that's trying to catalog information for the general,

public or caregivers for professionals and,

you know,

and we find ourselves in child abuse prevention month and for us,

as an organization,

this is a big time that we try to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect.

Our state chapters are doing a lot of that work during this month. And so we often do things, like, have in person events, plant pin, wheel gardens.
And so last minute as an organization, our communications team has had to work to really pivot and think about how it is that we adapt some of our work for April for Child Abuse Prevention month.

And our theme this year is everyone can make great childhoods happen, especially, you.

And we've added 'especially now.' Because we find ourselves in unprecedented times. And so where we would usually advocate for the planting of pin wheel gardens, we're doing virtual pinned gardens.

We're doing instead of Hill visits.

We're doing digital advocacy day on April 28th, where, you know, we're really making the ask for increase in CB CAP funding to be deployed quickly for some of those community based resources.

That Dr. Milner was talking about, as well as increasing some emergency funding for home visitation programs, home visiting programs through MCV.

But,

you know,

we find that much of our guidance and many of the messages that we're talking about are pretty consistent to things that we've been talking about before. Dr Milner

had mentioned this idea of the message that everyone needs support.
And I think that that's something that's at the core that we need to continue to talk about is, we think about the stigma associated with a lot of the services that we provide, providing them universally, and really pushing the message that everyone needs support is absolutely critical.

And also, parenting under the best circumstances I think is challenging, but right now, for those experiencing homelessness, unemployment, poverty, substance abuse, other challenges, right now those are are being magnified.
And, you know, we heard a reverend from North Carolina, who, I think said it pretty well when he said that, you know, right now we're, we're all weathering the storm, but we're weathering the storm and very different boats.

Some of us have more stable shifts and a safe harbor and then some of us are finding ourselves more in the eye of the storm with unstable boats.

And I think this just speaks to the major inequalities that we know that exists in are seeing played out.

And things like the disproportionate burden of death in black communities, for example, as a result of COVID. And so we're continuing to reiterate that a public health approach to prevention it must address the social and structural determinants of inequality. And that really pushes us to think about policy.

And, and I think that a lot of what we're talking about is consistent with what's coming out of the CDC's technical packages around child abuse and ACES prevention.

And and right now,

economic and concrete supports to families are so critical and I think in a very immediate sense,

we're talking about making sure that families have food, making sure that they have housing, diapers,
access to childcare.

These are absolutely critical.

And that is,

we look to the future, we're continuing to talk about the need for things,

like,

paid family leave,

paid family leave,

leave,

child care,

support, and other family friendly

policies that we know,
help decrease the financial and logistical challenges that really cause family stress, in their balancing of caregiving and employment. I think some of our other messages really have to do with something that,

you know,

Teresa had mentioned as well about,

physical distancing does not mean emotional disconnection.

And so, you know, we've worked hard to provide guidance on ways to stay

socially connected, even though we're physically distanced right now. And then finally, I think the other message which, you know, seems sort of obvious, but it's, you know, take care of yourself.

Whether we're talking to parents,

whether we're talking to the people who are working on the front lines with families right now,

the issue of secondary trauma,
whether it's working in child

welfare,

home visiting, has always been an issue.

But right now we have a workforce that not only is experiencing the same types of secondary trauma of working with families and communities, but it's also experiencing primary trauma in their own lives.

And, and I think that we've seen examples. We were on a call a couple of weeks ago, and our West Virginia chapter was sharing examples.

Just of how as an organization they're working to really provide flexibility in working and,

and the work hours that people are are working in recognition that everybody is going through a very challenging time right now, and that we need to find ways to care for ourselves.

So, I will pause there.

Thanks so much Bart.

Vivek, I would really like you to weigh in here to, you know,
along those lines and the kinds of things that information and and resources that are happening and the legal community to help support our parents.

Vivek:
Sure, yeah, and I wanna start, you know, most of my work before, and now involves representing and working with parents who are trying to get their children back or prevent removal.

And, you know, I think the baseline, you know, that I start with is that courts were not working particularly well for my families before this crisis.

And I think what this crisis has revealed in many ways is the, some of the flaws in our legal system,

one of a phrasing that I recently heard,

which was useful for me,

was that we need to start viewing courts as a service,

not a place.

And for many years, we've just viewed courts as the place we go to make decisions.
And so what that means is that lawyers show up to court without doing anything outside of the hearing, and kinda work things out in the courthouse. Judges wait for scheduled hearings, to make decisions about things like re-unification, even though kids might be ready to go home months before a court hearing, but we wait, and we wait, and we wait. And what I think this is forcing us to do is think more creatively about how can we transform our legal system to actually be responsive to the needs of children and families when they need us to be a responsive. And so across the country, we're seeing courts do some creative things, like having virtual hearings on zoom or other platforms, or even having hearings on on email. You're seeing attorneys now, being forced to work outside of court and resolve issues through stipulations and agreements to get kids home more quickly. You're seeing an effort that I heard of with child welfare agencies, is looking at their,
at their kids in foster care,

with a sense of urgency about reunification and looking at every case in which a parent has unsupervised parenting time with children, and forcing caseworkers to figure out why those kids can't go home now and those are all things that I think our system needs to know, that sense of urgency needs to be injected. What you also see, though is and I want us or I would be remiss if I left this conversation without talking a lot about legal representation and the haves, and the have not that we've set up in terms of our system.

And what you're seeing across the country is where there are nonprofit and public defense offices that have representation for children and parents. You're seeing mobilize advocacy like, we've never seen before to protect the rights of their families.

You're seeing pushbacks on the blank and visitation orders that Jerry talked about to get far more nuanced decisions.

You're getting ramifications happening in, in a very expedited way, you're extending the time of foster care for older youth who shouldn't be exposed and and let out into the world to all alone in this time of great uncertainty.

You're seeing courts stall TPR hearing, because it's not fair for
families who couldn't access services and the arbitrary timelines
don't actually, aren't always responsive to the needs of of of children.

You're seeing lawyers show up for hearings when courts just simply
wanted to shut down.

So, on one hand, you see these organized efforts on the part of of
lawyers and any of the rest of the country where we have not set up
institutional entities to work with children and parents.

And instead we have solo practitioners who get paid by the hearing
without any support who have to take high number of cases, who in most
states,

a graduate from a law school can simply get a law degree,

go down to their local court and apply to be on a list to represent
kids and parents and child welfare systems. And we've tolerated this
for years and years and years.

And what we're seeing now is that parents in those systems

have no answer to the question they often ask is: What should I do
when my lawyer doesn't call me back? Which is what question I heard on
a town hall last week, in Michigan, and I don't have an answer for
that parent.

The answer is that we have failed in terms of setting up systems,
and we care about engaging parents and children in our system, it has to start with having strong, robust, institutional lawyering for families, both in and outside, and more importantly, outside of the courthouse, so that families feel supported. So I think the answer, it's kind of a long winded way of answering what was probably a more straightforward question, but in some parts of the country, you're seeing mobilized, a call to action, but in many many parts, parts where lawyers aren't active and engaged and supported, you're seeing courts, take a much more passive response, and we really need to use this
opportunity again.

00:50:47,260 --> 00:50:58,060
To think of courts, is providing a service to families, not as a place where we all wait and go and eventually get a decision from, because that's not prioritizing the needs of a families within our system.

00:51:01,330 --> 00:51:08,710
Alisa: Vivek, very thoughtful comments and ensuring access to justice is just critical during this time. Thank you.

00:51:08,740 --> 00:51:20,080
I want to give Teresa a moment to weigh in. She spoke about the importance of family engagement, and I think also this is a parallel of importance.

00:51:20,380 --> 00:51:29,650
So, Teresa, can you also share with us how we can help support that children and families and engage them as we navigate these waters?

00:51:34,930 --> 00:51:42,550
And you might be on mute.

Teresa:
Thank you. I was on mute sorry about that.

00:51:42,880 --> 00:51:50,620
Bart mentioned the public health approach to strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect.

00:51:51,040 --> 00:52:05,860
And we probably fifteen years ago adopted that approach in our work thinking that if we don't work across a societal community relationship and individual levels,

00:52:05,950 --> 00:52:11,200
we really won't have the long term impact that we want to have.

00:52:11,200 --> 00:52:24,850
And so our work falls into those areas. But, I think I'll focus a lot right now on a couple of them, one is helping to draw those links for
who right now are being faced with decisions they've never had to make. I just have to say a big thank you to Jerry Milner and his team for the flexibility that you all are showing right now and working towards, and and what's been so interesting is, as we talked to parents will hear certain needs. And then it's been really great to see new federal guidance come out to support those needs. So it is an unprecedented time to use over used word, but for changes in the systems that we know need to change to even better support the needs of families, and then to have the families identifying what are those changes. But even more important what are the solutions they think will work. We've been working very hard to really for a number of years and that has ramped up a lot, but to help make sure that we can make that connection between families and the policy makers whose decision so affect their lives. And so we've been having webinars or conference calls where families come on, and it's a support to the families. And it's also away to help capture that information. We're putting some new systems into place that
I probably won't talk a lot about now, because we're still building them, but there'll be a way to have more parent to parent connection, to have a small group of parents who are in support and a formal way to other parents.

This is a new work for us. We're very excited about being able to do it and we'll be building more parental capacity to support other parents in preventative ways.

We also use a lot of written materials to capture this information and share it.

We have a series that begins each publication begins with what parents say about dot dot dot and then the topic. Our newest one is what parents say about building a twenty first century community-based approach for strengthening families.

And it's really about how do we, how do we bring together the,
the strengths in the child welfare system,

and build something that works even better than [what] we have right now and that even then we can imagine build together something that will work.

We believe a lot and professional development,

and helping folks who want to move in new directions to work to have the skills and tools and ability to do that.

So, we, we do a lot of training around the country on helping families, build protective factors.

We have about twelve hundred certified trainers who were using our curriculum, which includes parent voices in the curriculum, in writing and in video, and it's all based on research.

And so that that's a real point of contact. And we can help link you to certified trainers in your area, if you're interested. I mentioned we have the online training that's free of charge.

It's a great program, and I can say that because our team developed it. I didn't, but we get great reviews on it, and I encourage you to take a look at it. That also is available on our website.
And then we have the alliance, National Parent Partnership Council.

They are our partners and everything that we do and they do a lot of work to and putting together materials that have a strong prevention, focus and capacity building focused and they use protective factors.

We have the birth parent national network, which is really open to any parent. The criteria that we give is you have been involved in the child welfare system, or you may have needed that.

And we define that is really any parent might potentially need the additional.

Support that could be provided. We, we hold quarterly meetings with that group. We have about three hundred parents now, and we have fliers.

You can people can apply, or or can register for our website to join that. But we really focus on helping parents know what are the key policies that are affecting their lives right now?

And how can they best use their voices locally and nationally. We have a training for parents to use their voice, it's called Strategic Sharing.

What do you think about what you want to say, and how your life experience forms. And people have found that very helpful where we've really been moving to how can we do our work in the best way virtually?
And so we're working the states to different various systems to develop their own parent advisory councils to,
to just have a structured way to have that dialogue in that conversation with parents,
we joined with Prevent Child Abuse America and other national organizations with a strong policy advocacy approach,
child, abuse,
prevention and treatment act has been one of our, our really key areas because it's so powerful and it's impact for children and families-
based work, I'll stop there. But we, I hope you'll come to our website and take a look at many of the materials there that are easily downloadable available.

Alisa: Thank you so much Teresa. It's so important for people to have access to resources right now.
And I do appreciate,
you're talking about some of the virtual ways that people can connect right now with those resources. Jerry, I want to swing back to you because I think that we know that child welfare systems are

struggling right now and I'm sure, that you can share with us some of the struggles that you're hearing about.

But, you know, one of the questions that we're getting from our dialogue is talking a little bit about the assumptions and values. We might be questioning right now that might drive concerns about child safety.

So, I was hoping you might be able to talk a little bit about that.

Jerry:
Yeah, sure. Thanks Alisa.

I think at the core of our assumptions here is that there are absolutely implicit the biases in all of our work out there.

You know, we, we don't need to look any further than the fact that most of the families that we've become involved with

in the child welfare system are there, because of what we call neglect, not for exploitation or abuse. And we know that so much of that in neglect is, it's tied to poverty.
Nobody in our system is gonna stand up, wave their hands and say, yes, I don't believe poor people can take care of their kids.

But if we look at the over representation of poor people in our child welfare system, I think it's a reflection of some implicit bias there. Nobody's going to wave their hand and say, I believe that people of a certain cultural, racial, ethnic background are less able to care for their children. But look at the disproportionality in our child welfare system and for me that's a clear sign of implicit bias in the way our programs are set up, and just the way that that we think about it, the fact that we overwhelmingly invest in foster care, as opposed to investing in the capacity of parents to care for their children. To me, that's a clear sign that we don't value parents, as much as we value paying somebody else to care for children.

If we flipped the balance of that funding much more heavily towards investment in parents we would not need as much foster care and I think we have to challenge those values and those assumptions that affect our families out there. In terms of challenges right now
I don't know that I can add a lot to what the other panelists have already said, obviously the workforce is a huge, huge issue.

The stress, the trauma, maintaining those critical relationships between children and parents is one of the biggest challenges out there right now. Very young children don’t have a clue that we're dealing with a pandemic or that there is this public health crisis. What they know is, they're not able to see their parents and to continue having those relationships.

And we've got a value that, and we've got to find a way to respond to it. When we see young people, aging out of foster care with nowhere to go and then being displaced, and when their college dorms close, that's a major challenge. I want to applaud those few governors out there, that have recently issued the executive orders saying that no young person will age out of foster care.

That's a bold step on their, on their part. Vivek is articulating far better than I can, the challenge associated with continuing traditional functions.

We just can't put people's lives on pause while we're trying to figure out how to deal with the situation.

One of the biggest challenges out there right now is the fact that we have not invested and brought community-based networks of service providers fully into
our system of serving children and families. Certainly not in terms of funding.

538
01:03:06,250 -- 01:03:12,250
And during this crisis, so many them are at risk of literally going under financially.

539
01:03:12,250 -- 01:03:22,180
And I don't know how many of them we're gonna be able to weather the storm, and their functions are so critical for the well-being of children and families.

540
01:03:22,180 -- 01:03:36,880
Not just in the child welfare system, but others who may come to the attention of child welfare, when those critical supports are not in place. I think those are a few of the challenges there.

541
01:03:36,880 -- 01:03:45,760
They're really so many more. But, as others have indicated, we've got an opportunity here to think through this.

542
01:03:46,240 -- 01:03:58,360
And, and not come back out of this situation, just trying to do what we've always done with fewer resources. But really think about doing something different.

543
01:03:59,050 -- 01:04:12,700
That will allow families to have what they need to care for their children safely in healthy ways, even in times of great adversity. Thanks, Alisa.

544
01:04:12,700 -- 01:04:24,220
Alisa:
Thanks so much, Jerry
Vivek, I appreciate your emphasis on how important the role of attorney right now and people are wondering on the chat.

545
01:04:24,220 -- 01:04:34,270
How can people access their attorneys locally? How can we identify lawyers to help? So, can you speak a little bit about how
our listeners might be able to access attorneys locally to support them.

Vivek:
Yeah, that's a great question. So, obviously, the answer is going to depend a lot in terms of the specifics of every locality.

I would start with seeing if your state has any nonprofits or public defense organizations, that represent parents and children and contact and reach out to the directors or heads of the offices.

And I think, you know, thinking about, you know, who's reaching out and in states where agencies take an interest in legal representation, I've seen just incredible things happen because they're just kinda unlikely partnerships and allies.

The other resource in states like Michigan where we don't have any organized family, defense or children's representation, I would reach out to court improvement projects.

Every state in the country has a court improvement project, which is a federally-funded initiative to strengthen court systems and make them more responsive to the needs of families.

Every state has a court improvement project director and a committee, and that's really a place for barrier busting and systems change. And so that's really where, where I would start.

Another question I saw in the chat was about funding and about how at a time where civil legal services are struggling for for funds,
how can we get funding for this sort of transformative,

01:06:05,230 --> 01:06:05,740
preventive,

01:06:05,740 --> 01:06:10,630
legal advocacy, and I wanted to highlight the significant change in federal policy

01:06:11,470 --> 01:06:19,000
that's allowing federal funds under Title IV-E to go to support child and parent representation.

01:06:19,360 --> 01:06:31,930
You know, I know that there are agency directors on the call today and county directors and and it really is incumbent on agencies to drive these conversations. Because they're the ones who can tap into the IV funding.

01:06:32,500 --> 01:06:45,610
And it is millions of potential dollars that are available to transform legal representation, either through pilot projects in a particular county, or throughout an entire state.

01:06:45,910 --> 01:06:50,980
And my fear is that so many jurisdictions are not using this resource.

01:06:51,310 --> 01:07:01,780
What we've done in Michigan is we have a county-based system of legal representation, which means that there are over eighty systems of legal representation in our state.

01:07:02,050 --> 01:07:07,930
But our department, to their huge credit, has taken on the administrative load of working with any county

01:07:07,930 --> 01:07:19,390
that wants to propose an innovation, generate an idea about how to strengthen legal representation, and then claim matching funds to support it with federal funds.
And so, I think that the possibility exists to get an infusion of funds, but again it requires agencies to prioritize legal representation.

And if I could leave, you know, this call with any one sort of selling point, it's that we're never gonna have the child welfare system we want, unless we actually invest in high quality, legal representation to families. It just will never happen in terms of the engagement of families.

And until child welfare can understand it and and realized that the system we've created right now,

which really,

you know,

in many ways, lawyers further are playing a role in alienating families from systems because it's not good representation.

It is making all of our collective work more difficult.

Alisa: Thank you so much, Vivek. Bart, the participants are sharing and asking about trauma and resilience.

And of course, we know ACES and the impact of ACES.

So, how can we work now to make all of our systems trauma informed and can you speak a little bit about what might be happening to our
children and families and workers and all of us really during this period.

574
01:08:39,370 --> 01:08:50,200
Bart: Yeah, I saw the question come across about addressing the issue of child safety and this has been, you know, we work at the cusp of prevention.

575
01:08:50,260 --> 01:08:54,400
So, you know, moving upstream, trying to prevent child abuse before it ever occurs.

576
01:08:54,970 --> 01:08:55,420
But that,

577
01:08:55,630 --> 01:08:55,870
you know,

578
01:08:55,870 --> 01:08:58,300
our most common question that we get is about,

579
01:08:58,300 --> 01:09:01,750
what do we do for children and families right now,

580
01:09:01,750 --> 01:09:03,760
who we're concerned about,

581
01:09:03,790 --> 01:09:10,660
that might be sheltering in what we would consider unsafe conditions and we share that concern and,

582
01:09:10,970 --> 01:09:11,380
you know,

583
01:09:11,380 --> 01:09:19,930
I think it's important right now that we continue to reiterate what individuals can do if they're concerned about families,
there's the National Child Health Hotline,

1-800-4-A-CHILD,

if you're concerned about the immediate danger of a child call 911,

and those looking for more local resources support, many of our state chapters,

operate helplines through a one, eight hundred children helpline.

And so there are, that's sort of like the concrete here are things

if you have immediate concerns about a family. But, as we think about some of our prevention work, we're concerned about, you know, reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors that so many people have talked about.

On the call today and, you know, right now we know more than ever that families are experiencing stress and stress is a huge risk factor. We know for child abuse and neglect. And so we've been giving a lot of thoughts to what are the strategies that we can be giving right now to families, to workers who were working directly with families, around reducing stress.
And some of that has to do with,

01:10:24,790 --> 01:10:25,000
you know,

01:10:25,000 --> 01:10:26,770
just basic parenting tips,

01:10:26,770 --> 01:10:27,100
can,

01:10:27,130 --> 01:10:27,400
you know,

01:10:27,400 --> 01:10:41,740
can we get parents some resources that allow them to understand and
normalize the experiences that they're having the frustrations, the
lack of sleep, the irritability, lack of patience that so many of

01:10:42,700 --> 01:10:46,570
so many caregivers now are experiencing and,

01:10:46,570 --> 01:10:46,810
you know,

01:10:46,810 --> 01:11:00,520
a lot of families that have children right now we're finding
themselves in a time where not only are they having to balance the
multiple hats that they always wear, but now they're being expected to
be educators of their children

01:11:01,660 --> 01:11:04,060
and so this is placing even more stress.

01:11:04,060 --> 01:11:14,680
I mean, parents are talking about, you know, how the heck do I help
teach my kids these concepts and and keep their academics moving while
I'm trying to work and keep food on the table.
And, you know, we've had a number of our state chapters, Michigan, create some resource guides for educators about how they can support parents and relieve some of the stress.

That parents are facing right now.

I think also,

you know,

they're,

there's families that are worried about how much screen time kids are getting right now,

when,

you know,

part of what I was just saying about normalizing the experience that caregivers are going through

and the stresses that they're experiencing, we need to validate those. You know, I think we're, we're trying to help families navigate the various resources that they qualify for right now.

And so,
as we've seen funding,

come down through the various stimulus packages,

helping to provide guidance to families,

but also to organizations,

how it is that they can tap into some of these resources to potentially reduce stress.

And then, you know, I said it before, and I'll say it again, I think that we're continually trying to push at a federal level and the state level for these economic supports for families paid family leave, child care support.

And then we've got the issue of social isolation right now, which we know is another risk factor for child maltreatment. And, you know, we've talked about this idea of shifting to a frame that physical distance does not mean emotional disconnection, and so finding ways to stay connected. I think we have to be mindful that, yes, technology can be a great way to stay connected,

and we have examples from the family support worker in Maryland, who was reading Brown Bear, Brown Bear to families during the virtual story time, which is great.

But not all families have access to technology to Internet.
And so,

we have to think creatively,

the family support network put out a great newsletter last week where they showed a picture of their family support workers driving around and doing drive by check ins with signs of encouragement for their families.

And so I think it's pushing us to think creatively about this issue of social isolation, and, you know, home visitors as well.

I mean, I think we need to continue to think about our workforce that basically overnight had to switch from an in person modality to a virtual platform.

And I know that they're employing many creative strategies to maintain connections to families.

And in some spots, we've actually seen increased engagement of families now that it's switched virtually. I think, you know, as an organization, we're also starting to envision kind of the next wave as we've heard about. we're starting to do some work with the Doris Duke Fellowship for the Promotion of Child Well-being
and this is a group of early career researchers who are really at the forefront of child abuse prevention research,

and we're working with them to not only create the types of research informed products that parents and systems need at this point.

But, but starting to envision what our system can look like, what are the lessons that we've learned during this COVID-19 crisis? And how can we envision a new system? We've heard Dr. Milner said,

it's not just, we can't go back to doing what we've always done. If we do what we've always done, we're gonna get what we've always gotten. And I think that,

this is an opportunity for us to not just think about rearranging the furniture,

but to actually think about some remodeling of our systems and I loved what Teresa had shared about

You know, it's we're going back to a better normal. And so we look to
be able to, you know, partner with others to provide some guidance on on what that might look like.

647 01:15:20,830 --> 01:15:23,890
Alisa:
Thank you so much, Bart.

648 01:15:23,890 --> 01:15:36,610
Teresa, there's a question for you about children's trust fund funding and how people might be able to access it just to support the family resource network.

649 01:15:37,420 --> 01:15:41,080
So, can you share a little bit about that funding stream?

650 01:15:41,080 --> 01:15:54,250
And also what are the ways that people are using it now and how they might be able to use that funding to help support what's happening? And you might be on mute.

651 01:16:00,100 --> 01:16:01,240
Teresa:
Thank you and I,

652 01:16:01,240 --> 01:16:03,130
I was seeing that question too.

653 01:16:03,490 --> 01:16:09,040
I will really encourage you all to go to our website and find the,

654 01:16:09,220 --> 01:16:18,580
the we have a map and a list of all the children's trust funds around the country and find yours if you're not connected,

655 01:16:18,940 --> 01:16:28,180
I will say they are probably three states where we don't have a trust fund and so I hope that's not the case with you all but if it is,

656 01:16:28,210 --> 01:16:33,970
we often have contacts in those states and that might even be the
Chapter in those states that we work with. But I believe you'll find good information there if you look. I, I wanted to just add a couple of comments.

I really appreciated what I've heard from everyone else and I, and I did it and don't want to repeat it.

But but there was multiple questions related to child's safety and why are we talking about that? And I think those are really good questions.

And I think Bart said a lot about that, I do wanna just share that one of the reasons we talk less about it is the alliance is because, it's being discussed in a lot of other places, but also we don't want to start with reporting and the risk for children and being at home with their parents without also including we need to be supporting the parents and doing their work. That really it is the parents job to protect their children. And if they can't do that, then we, as a society come in to, either take over that responsibility when needed,

But,

ideally,
to support the parent in doing their job of keeping their children's
safe,

so,

we, we really understand sometimes it's important to make a report and
sometimes you have to take action and we never want to take away from
that importance but we'd like to do everything we can before we get
there,

so that families can stay strong and stay together.

And one of the things we're seeing is,

it's just the stress on child welfare workers. You know, we, we talk a
lot about the medical professionals and others, and rightly

so it's heroic what people are doing. But still, every day child
welfare workers can't always do their work from their desk and their
computer. They have to go out and

have to be connected and we really have to make sure that we're
supporting them and the trauma that the secondary trauma,

and really the primary trauma,

and going out into what can be an unsafe world right now in some ways.
So, it is critical that all those, those sort of last defense systems are in place to support children, and we really urged that they be used,

let's do everything we can to avoid having to use them.

The other thing, and Dr Miller said this in the beginning about neglect being such a big issue, and right now with lack of access to resources and many families we're seeing but that is that it's not an intentional neglect issue.

We say is the alliance there's a thin line between societal neglect of children and families, and parental neglect of children.

And we,

as a society have to think very long and hard about what we're doing,

that leads to the neglect of children,

healthcare,

food,

housing,
all those basic needs we talked about and we don't want to remove children from their families.

So that we can provide those in an alternative setting, we want to make sure their families have that ability to provide for their children. And those are huge social issues that we have to confront. On our website,

we've, we've done a lot of work around neglect. We have a theory of change posted on how to eliminate neglect, and it's broken out into the public health approach of the four levels that I mentioned earlier.

But in the societal level, one of those is work to eliminate poverty. Because we know there's such a connection between not - there might be a strong commitment to caring for children - and a lack of ability

Often linked to poverty.

Alisa:
Teresa, thank you so much. Thank you so much. We're nearing the end of our time here.

And so I just wanna give Jerry and Bart and Vivek also a moment to give a minute of their final thoughts.

And then we can close out our webinar also thank you so much. So, Jerry yeah, right. Jerry:

Thanks. Thanks, Alisa.

Just just a couple of bear brief thoughts here and I,
I think others on the panel have already noted that we have such rigidity and shortcomings in our system. They only become amplified in a time where we need increased flexibility and agility.

And that's the time that we're in right now. The lack of flexibility in our programs is not something new, and it's not something that was brought about by the COVID crisis. Although it does bring it to light. We need permanent solutions. A lot of the flexibilities that we're able to expand right now are for the length of the crisis.

And my question to myself is, you know, if we can be flexible in a time of a crisis, why can't we look beyond that and be flexible? So, that communities can serve their children, their parents, their families in ways that they know best, to how to bolster them and how to strengthen them.

And then we need a permanent flexible funding process for child welfare services and not one that is so prescriptive that it ties the hands of state and local officials and communities. And I think that that is our challenge going forward here. So thank you.
Alisa:
Thank you so much.
Bart final thoughts?

Bart:
Yeah, I just, you know, I appreciate again being invited onto this panel and just kind of reiterating things that we've already said.

But, you know, I think this is an opportunity for us to talk about what we mean by public health and, you know, we're hearing daily about why math is important. Why we need to remain physically distant to ensure population health and these messages have an absolutely direct connecting to the work that we do.

And I think that we have to seize this opportunity to help a decision makers in the public understand what a public health approach for prevention actually means and that we need to reiterate,

you know,

we've seen magnified inequalities in access to care, quality of care, unequal exposure to risk and opportunity, we need to keep those at the forefront.

I think,

as I said,
you know,

01:23:47,350 --> 01:23:48,880 our president CEO Dr,

01:23:48,880 --> 01:23:49,180 Melissa Merrick

01:23:49,180 --> 01:23:54,940 talked about the importance of partnerships that prevention truly happens in partnership,

01:23:54,940 --> 01:23:57,280 and we've seen through this COVID crisis,

01:23:57,760 --> 01:24:12,610 an engagement of our partners that we are so thankful for, and I hope we maintain that spirit with our partners moving forward to serve families and finally back to the policy and thinking

01:24:12,610 --> 01:24:13,150 about

01:24:14,080 --> 01:24:28,420 providing economic supports to families to address many of the inequalities that we've talked about today, you know, being able to provide paid family leave, child care support, expanding, earn income tax credits.

01:24:28,420 --> 01:24:37,330 You know, all the things that we know that are gonna support families. So, thank you for having me on.

Alisa:
You're welcome and Vivek, final thoughts?

01:24:37,330 --> 01:24:45,670 Vivek:
You know, I think that out, because Thank you for having me on this call, you know, in any crisis like this, it's so easy to spend from
one emergency to the next

726
01:24:45,670 --> 01:24:58,330
and that'll fill our day, but I think a common theme we're hearing
today is a need for each of us to reflect and do strategic thinking
about what we're seeing now that might give us a blueprint of what
needs to happen in the future.

727
01:24:58,330 --> 01:25:09,850
And some of the things that we talked about, the need for a strong
institutional lawyering throughout all stages of child protective
cases, having a fierce urgency that we're seeing about unification.

728
01:25:10,480 --> 01:25:23,680
There are more conversations happening now about visitation and family
time than ever before in child welfare because people are upset and
frustrated. And how can we use that to create a new normal for
visitation

729
01:25:23,680 --> 01:25:33,610
that's more than an hour a week in child welfare? We're seeing out of
the need for out of court advocacy, and moving decision making away
from court houses to other forums.

730
01:25:34,240 --> 01:25:48,460
Can we use technology to to supplement when we get back to the new
normal? Well, you know, can we use technology to supplement
relationships between children and parents, birth parents and foster
parents, and create new partnerships and new relationships?

731
01:25:48,490 --> 01:26:00,430
You know, I think just to end, I think what we've seen in this crisis
is, I mean, all of us have this sense a little bit of fragility, which
is we're worried about everything, about our jobs, about our houses,
about our kids.

732
01:26:01,060 --> 01:26:10,180
And I think it's given some of us an eye opening experience of what
it's like, all the time for so many of our families in the child
welfare system.

733
01:26:10,570 --> 01:26:22,030
And my hope is that this shared sense of fragility might foster some more empathy towards the families in our system about what they experience every day and lead to better solutions.

Alisa:
Well, I want to thank all of our panelists. We are out of time. This conversation always goes so quickly, but we are having another panel or second panel starts at eleven.

So, please join us for our next panel, beginning at eleven and we're showing

now, the word cloud that everyone participated in at the beginning of the panel, and we're doing the same for our next panel as well, related to our families. And I think a lot of what people are thinking are showing up here.

So, I want to thank everyone for your time and your participation.