



## What is CAPTA?

Child abuse and neglect are serious and complex national challenges that have far reaching impacts on children and their families and costly consequences for our country.<sup>1</sup> Yet with expert prevention, intervention, and treatment, incidents of abuse and neglect can be significantly reduced, and the effects on children and their families can be mitigated. Thanks to sound research and evaluation and the engagement of families who have experienced abuse and neglect, we know more than ever before about what works to prevent and address abuse and neglect.

First authorized in 1974, the **Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA)** is foundational to our nation's system for both preventing child abuse and neglect and protecting children who have been seriously harmed.

This year's CAPTA reauthorization provides an opportunity to strengthen this critical law in important ways. The National Child Abuse Coalition supports a strong and comprehensive reauthorization bill that emphasizes primary prevention and family support, includes significantly higher funding levels, increases transparency and accountability, and promotes race equity in child welfare.

## Current Status of CAPTA Reauthorization

Significant progress has been made towards strengthening CAPTA and its impact on children and families. In March 2021, the House of Representatives passed the *Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act* ([H.R. 485](#)), and in June 2021, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) approved the *CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2021* (S. 1927), which built on the reforms made by the House bill. Both bills strengthen the law's emphasis on prevention and family strengthening, increase funding levels to \$270 million for Title I and \$270 for Title II of the law, and increase accountability through more data driven approaches. The Senate bill also adds two new titles to CAPTA: one focused on preventing fatalities due to child abuse and neglect (Title III) and a second focused on addressing the needs of infants with prenatal substance exposure and their families (Title IV). The National Child Abuse Coalition was pleased to [endorse](#) both reauthorization bills.

The House and Senate are currently working to resolve the differences between their two bills, after which the agreed-upon text would be approved by each chamber and signed into law by the President. **It is critical that Congress take action to reauthorize the CAPTA program and increase appropriations for both Title I (State Grants) and Title II (Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grants).**

---

<sup>1</sup> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the total lifetime economic burden associated with child abuse and neglect for a single person was about \$592 billion in 2018.

**Side-by-side comparison: House and Senate CAPTA reauthorization bills**

NCAC Priority Recommendations	H.R. 485 – the Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act	S. 1927 – the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2021
<b>Increase authorization levels</b> to \$1 billion for Title I and \$1.5 for Title II. Any new requirements for states must be paired with funding increases.	Title I: \$270 million Title II: \$270 million	Title I: \$270 million Title II: \$270 million Title III (new): \$25 million Title IV (new): \$60 million
<b>Promote racial equity</b> by emphasizing family strengthening and primary prevention and requiring states to take steps to eliminate racial bias and disproportionality.	Adds promoting racial equity to research and TA topics. Includes new requirements for states to report what they are doing to reduce racial bias.	Adds promoting racial equity in research topics and TA. Includes new requirements for states to report on what they are doing to reduce racial bias; and additional requirements for states to report their efforts to reduce investigations solely on the basis of poverty or housing status, as well as new requirements for states to disaggregate data by demographic characteristics including race. Adds to the purposes of the CBCAP program increasing access to prevention services for diverse populations.
<b>Strengthen CBCAP grants:</b> Amend Title II to promote family strengthening, increased access to services, parent engagement, and fair and flexible payments to states.	Includes new language regarding protective factors, family strengthening, child and family well-being, and parent engagement to strengthen the program’s emphasis on an upstream prevention. Changes are made within the existing framework of the CBCAP statute.	Makes sweeping changes to CBCAP to restructure, streamline and update the program. Includes new language and emphasis on protective factors, family strengthening, child and family well-being and parent engagement, and new language on promoting racial equity.
<b>Improve transparency and accountability:</b> Require states to describe to the federal government what they are doing to implement key requirements of the law, and make targeted changes to the law’s plan of safe care requirements aimed at promoting a public health approach.	Requires states to provide descriptions of how they are implementing requirements related to plans of safe care; fatalities; cross-agency coordination; caseworker education and retention; IDEA Part C referral; professional development for CPS workers in sex trafficking; mandated reporter training; appropriate parental involvement and decision making; differential response; and reducing racial bias. Includes some reforms to plan of safe care requirements.	Requires states to provide descriptions of all the requirements in the House bill, as well as: activities to prevent, treat, and reduce child maltreatment; efforts to implement a systems-building approach to develop a continuum of prevention activities; efforts to improve CPS response to reduce unnecessary investigations by state and local CPS agencies of families solely on the basis of poverty or housing; and ensuring that all children are appointed a Guardian Ad Litem and attorney ad litem. Creates a new Title IV devoted to plans of safe care and renames them “family care plans” to emphasize a public health approach and improve implementation.

<p><b>Refocus the use of state grant funds to improve CPS response,</b> including rapid response for high-risk cases; promoting best practice in differential response and collaboration between child protection systems and other agencies and services, training for caseworkers, and data systems that facilitate sharing and real-time case monitoring.</p>	<p>Makes changes to the state grants in line with the Coalition’s priorities at left.</p>	<p>Makes changes to the state grants in line with the Coalition’s priorities at left. Includes a new requirement for states to describe their policies and procedures regarding their use of differential response and a timeline for the development and implementation of a rapid response system for high-risk cases.</p>
<p><b>Reduce child fatalities and near fatalities:</b> Establish a uniform definition of child abuse and neglect fatalities to improve federal data, require states to describe how they will use data on fatalities to prevent future occurrences, and strengthen disclosure rules.</p>	<p>Develops uniform standards for tracking and reporting of child maltreatment fatalities, requiring adoption of regulations and incorporating funding contingencies. Includes new requirements for states to describe efforts they are taking to reduce fatalities and near fatalities. Requires the HHS secretary to establish a national electronic interstate data exchange system that allows states to share information from their abuse and neglect registries with other states.</p>	<p>Adopts NCANDS definitions of fatalities and near fatalities. Requires HHS Secretary to develop an integrated federal data and analysis system for fatalities. Clarifies and strengthens public disclosure requirements. Includes new requirements for states to describe efforts to prevent child fatalities and near fatalities. Creates a new Title III focused on public health approaches to identify and prevent fatalities and near fatalities.</p>
<p><b>Build the evidence base to help states and communities implement what works to improve child, parent and family well-being:</b> Fund research that provides information about evidence-based and evidence-informed programs that support families and reduce child maltreatment.</p>	<p>Updates the law’s research and grant priorities to reflect a more targeted approach that is aligned with key priorities in the field.</p>	<p>Updates in a slightly different way the law’s research and grant priorities to bring them in alignment with key priorities in the field.</p>
<p><b>Reduce the incidence of child sexual abuse:</b> Support grants for research-based child sexual abuse prevention in schools and youth-serving organizations. Ensure that mandated reporters receive profession- and institution-specific training to identify and report child maltreatment, including child sexual abuse.</p>	<p>Requires that the state task forces under CAPTA make recommendations to their state on how to detect and prevent systemic child sexual abuse.</p>	<p>Adds child sexual abuse prevention to various federal training and TA grants.</p>