



Annual Report 2021





What if we all collectively helped to unburden parents, both in our communities and as a nation?

What could that look like and what would it take?

Our Mission

Maine Children's Trust works to strengthen families, promote healthy relationships, and support communities to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Our Vision

All Maine children grow up in safe, stable, nurturing families and communities.

Our Values

We believe:
That child abuse is preventable;
In fostering collaboration;
Our work must respect and engage differences;
We must be resource conscious.

Maine Children's Trust envisions a world where all children thrive, and all people are treated with dignity and respect. We recognize that communities of color face disproportionate effects of adversity. The Maine Children's Trust commits to looking inward and outward to do our part toward eliminating systemic racism and discrimination. We believe Mainers want the best for all children. We all have a role to play in ensuring equity and eliminating the disparities that impact our children's futures.

History

Maine Children's Trust was originally created by Statute in 1985 as a part of State Government. In 1994, legislation was enacted that transformed the Trust into a 501(c)3 non-profit governed by a Board of Directors and designated the Trust as a Maine income tax checkoff recipient. The Trust's governing guidelines remain in statute. The Trust provides leadership and coordination of efforts throughout Maine to prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs. The Trust provides funding and supports for prevention programming, as well as coordinates several statewide collaborative initiatives to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect.

Affiliations

- Office of the Administration for Children & Families
 Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention | State Lead
- Prevent Child Abuse America | State Chapter
- Brazelton Touchpoints Site | Maine Touchpoints Project
- Circle of Parents | State Chapter
- National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds |
 Network Affiliate
- Parents as Teachers | State Office
- National Family Support Network Affiliate | State Network Lead
- Association of State and Tribal Home Visiting Initiatives |
 Member

2021 Board of Directors

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Kim Russell

State Director, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Maine

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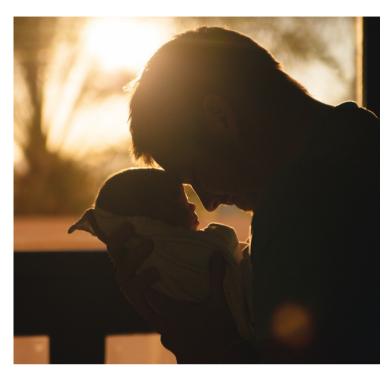
Executive Director, Franklin County Children's Task Force

*Represents a local Prevention Council

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIRS & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Uncertainty has been a universal experience of 2021. When will we return to the office? Will my childcare be open? How do I manage when the shelves at the grocery are so empty? How can I do my job while my children are quarantined at home? Will my elderly parents survive a bout with Covid? The pandemic has touched us all and caused an untold amount of stress this past year.

When you overlay the pandemic stressors on top of any of the all too prevalent stressors that many families face, such as lack of financial resources to meet basic needs, lack of support from family and friends or other social connections, lack of good physical or emotional health, or the lack of ability to bounce back from adversity, families become overburdened.



Parents who are overloaded are not able to be available to their children. This manifests in ways that are commonly thought of as neglect. Neglect is by far the most reported form of child abuse in Maine and nationally. Neglect doesn't mean that parents don't care about their children. In most cases it means that they do not have enough bandwidth to cope with all they are burdened with and still meet their children's needs. What if we all collectively helped to unburden parents, both in our communities and as a nation? What could that look like and what would it take? In our communities, we could make sure we know our neighbors and offer to lend a hand. We could share some words of understanding with the parent in the grocery whose child is having a meltdown. We could make sure our community has a place for families to find the resources and support that they need. As a nation, we could make sure that all new parents have some paid leave time to get to know their baby and to adjust to the demands that parenthood brings and we could strengthen economic security for families by offsetting the high cost of childcare. We could be sure that every family with babies and young children has access to the kind of support that they need such as family visiting.

We all have a role in being sure that every child is able to reach their full potential. In 2021, Maine Children's Trust supported the launch of the Front Porch Project, a new community-based initiative that provides community members with the knowledge, skills, and encouragement they need to take an active role in preventing abuse and neglect before it occurs. We encourage everyone to take part in a session to learn how you can become a supporter of child and family wellbeing and can help make your community the kind of community that everyone wants to live in – caring, supportive and connected.

Charles Soltan, Esq. Board Co-Chair

Ben Gilman, Esq. Board Co-Chair Pam LaHaye Executive Director



Our Call to Action

Every child is filled with tremendous promise and we all have a shared obligation to foster their potential, growth and development. Sadly, not all children are able to reach their potential due to maltreatment, but it doesn't have to be that way. We can change that trajectory for them by working together to make our state a place where children, including those who experience adversity, can thrive because adversity is buffered by support. Together, we can make Maine a place where everyone looks out for children and works to make their communities supportive and connected.

Children thrive when they have regular interactions with responsive, caring adults. Yet neglect is the most commonly reported form of child maltreatment, and it can have long-term effects on children's health and development. Neglect often occurs without intent to harm. Child neglect is more likely to occur in families that are experiencing an overload of stress. The weight of poverty can overload parents' abilities to provide the supportive relationships children need. Family issues, which also reflect broader systems issues such as poverty, mental health, homelessness, domestic violence and stress, can limit parental capacity and contribute significantly to a child being neglected.

Community conditions shape a family's life and a child's experiences. Much like a truck that can only carry so much weight before it stops moving forward, difficult life situations can overload parents, making it difficult for them to focus on the best care and support for their children. To support families in providing the best care possible, we need to assist with alleviating community burdens that weigh families down and remove unnecessary obstacles so families and communities thrive.

Our Action Areas

The Trust focuses our efforts to support Maine communities and families in three areas:



Strengthening Communities - We know when communities are strong, inclusive, and supportive then children and families thrive. Support is provided to communities through partnerships, resources, and evidence-based strategies.



- Prevention Councils match their programming to local needs based on annual community needs assessments and feedback from their local Advisory Boards (made up of 234 local community leaders), as well as community requests.
- We work with over 15 local organizations, as well as numerous state and federal organizations, because we know that no single individual, organization, or government agency working alone can stop child maltreatment. It is imperative that we work together, sharing best practices and expertise in learning communities, training, and resources.
- The Trust provided 55 trainings for our contracted partners. In turn, during the state fiscal year, our partners provided 265 trainings to family-serving professionals that included 1,178 educators, 876 childcare providers, and 681 social services professionals.



Supporting Families - Programs and assistance to families are tailored to the community needs by utilizing various data sets, evaluation results, community feedback, requests, and ongoing involvement by community leaders.



- Family (Home) Visiting, offering individualized parenting education and support, was provided to 1,926 caregivers with 1,739 children through 19,052 home visits last year.
- Prevention Councils assisted families were assisted with everyday parenting challenges through multi-session parenting education groups with 1571 caregivers attending last year.
- Provided supportive environments for families to connect and share resulting in 649 caregivers participating in support groups.
- Concrete supports provided directly to families through our partners included 13,711 diapers, formula, and clothing.



Leading Primary Prevention Efforts - The Trust is leading child abuse prevention efforts in Maine through training and expertise to guide proven prevention initiatives both locally and statewide.



- The Trust provided 24 community grants focused on child abuse prevention efforts distributed through an annual granting process to local agencies.
- Offering evidence-based child abuse prevention trainings, the Trust strengthens the capacity of local programs to deliver high-quality services.
- A social norms campaign with media messaging was developed to focus on normalizing the need for support for all families.
- To demonstrate quality in all we do, MCT utilizes the National Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support, evaluation, a continuous quality improvement process, and earned endorsement of programming.
- Unifying local, state, and regional organizational efforts, the Trust convenes a statewide Infant Safe Sleep & Period of Purple Crying Coalition to share data, best practices, resources, and expertise to protect our most vulnerable population, infants under one.

CBCAP Supported Initiatives

Maine Children's Trust (MCT), like 11 other Children's Trust Funds across the nation, is the designated Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) entity here in Maine. Established by Title II of CAPTA, the Children's Bureau provides this funding to a lead entity in each state as designated by the Governor to administer these funds for implementation of community-based and prevention-focused programs and activities designed to strengthen and support families to prevent child abuse and neglect. The purpose of the CBCAP program is to support community-based efforts to develop, operate, expand, enhance, and coordinate initiatives, programs, and activities to prevent child abuse and neglect and to support the coordination of resources and activities to better strengthen and support families to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect; and to foster understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of diverse populations in order to effectively prevent and treat child abuse and neglect.

Maine Children's Trust was established in statute to lead child abuse prevention efforts and the exercise of the powers conveyed by the statute is held to be an essential governmental function. MCT has been designated as the CBCAP lead since CBCAP was reauthorized in 2010, and for many years prior to that time, was the CAPTA state lead for prevention through the Community Based Family Resource and Support Program.

Core features of CBCAP follow with examples of how they are implemented by Maine Children's Trust:

- Federal, State, and private funds are blended and made available to community agencies for child abuse and neglect prevention activities and family support programs. In Maine, the Trust provides granting to local organizations to support child abuse prevention efforts in every county. The Prevention Councils (also in statute as the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Councils), which act informally as Family Resource Centers, are funded by OCFS. They conduct annual needs assessments, create OCFS approved annual prevention plans using child maltreatment data and input from an Advisory Board, that includes a mix of local leaders, parents, community members and OCFS representatives.
- An emphasis on promoting parent leadership and participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of prevention programs. Granting is provided with intentional coordination and support to the Prevention Councils to focus on family engagement efforts and parent leadership opportunities through our National Family Support Network affiliation (with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion focus) and uses the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support, a tool for planning, providing, and assessing quality practice.
- Interagency collaborations with public and private agencies in the States to form a child
 abuse prevention network to promote greater coordination of resources. The child abuse
 prevention network was formalized in 2015 with funding from OCFS, and was the first substantial
 statewide coordinated effort focusing on child abuse prevention efforts. Through this effort, the Trust
 supports nine agencies to staff 16 Prevention Councils in their statutory role as the county-level
 coordinating entity to lead and deliver child abuse prevention efforts. MCT works closely with the
 OCFS and the Maine CDC to offer prevention programming.

- Funds are used to support programs such as voluntary home visiting programs, parenting programs, family resource centers, respite and crisis care, parent mutual support, and other family support programs. In the past year, CBCAP funds in Maine supported the prevention workforce in both home visiting (Maine Families) and the Prevention Council network with professional development and training in diversity, equity, and inclusion as well access to translation and interpreter services. It funded supports for evidence-based and informed parenting education and support groups through the Prevention Councils. Clinical support was also provided to the Prevention Councils' staff.
- An emphasis on promoting the increased use and high quality implementation of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices. The Trust supports evidence-based and informed programs and practices for both home visiting and the Prevention Council network. There are over 17 state-approved curricula offered to our network. Additionally, we support our most vulnerable population-our children under the age of one with two national programs, Cribs for Kids and the Period of PURPLE Crying, in collaboration with DHHS and hospitals. The Trust provides portable pack n' plays to those in need of a safe sleep environment with required education on safe infant sleep practices through the Prevention Councils. MCT also trained Catholic Charities in this curriculum to provide safe sleep education and portable cribs to Maine's newly arrived asylum-seeking and immigrant populations in need in their native language. Infant safe sleep and shaken baby prevention education is provided by each Prevention Council in every county. Efforts for both are also coordinated with the statewide Infant Safe Sleep and Shaken Baby Prevention Coalition convened by the Trust.

Programs can also finance the development of a continuum of preventive services through public-private partnerships, financing the start-up, maintenance, expansion, or redesign or child abuse prevention programs, maximizing funding through leveraging funds, and financing public education activities that focus on the promotion of child abuse prevention.* MCT has three initiatives to provide community outreach and public awareness of child abuse prevention efforts. 1) Granting and training were provided to the Prevention Councils to support bystander public awareness and education - The Front Porch Project® of Maine (FPP). The goal is simple – to engage and train the community to help protect children, support families, and prevent abuse and neglect. 2) Our social norms campaign, In It Together Maine, is intended to normalize that parenting is hard and it is ok to ask for help. It helps parents navigate parenting during the uncertainties of this difficult time by connecting them with the local parenting resources the Prevention Councils provide, as well as fostering social connections. 3) April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and the Prevent Child Abuse America's (PCAA) Maine affiliate, we provide the PCAA public awareness toolkit to all Prevention Councils to share common messaging and promote prevention.

^{*} https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/grant-funding/community-based-child-abuse-prevention-cbcap-grants



Maine Families Home Visiting

Central Coordination

Maine Children's Trust has supported home visiting in Maine since the 1990's through advocacy, grants and training. In 2010, the Trust assumed responsibility for providing system coordination, quality assurance and technical assistance with all the State contracted home visiting sites. Nine years ago, all home visiting system supports came under the Trust's umbrella – quality assurance, quality improvement, training, technical assistance, staff credentialing, along with data collection and reporting. The Trust became the home of the Parents As Teachers State Office, the national model utilized by Maine's home visiting system. During this time, more in-depth Standards of Practice were created that allowed for even greater consistency in services offered by the local contracted agencies delivering the program.

In 2016, the Maine DHHS consolidated all home visiting contracts and the system supports (infrastructure) into one contract with the Trust. The Trust has managed the direct service contracts with the local agencies since that time for no additional cost to the grant beyond the infrastructure costs. All Maine Families sites have achieved and maintained Blue Ribbon Affiliate status with Parents as Teachers (PAT) after undergoing a rigorous endorsement process.

Funding for Maine Families is provided by the Department of Human Services: Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Local Contacts

Androscoggin, Oxford, & Northern Cumberland

Community Concepts, Inc. 207-783-3990

Aroostook

Aroostook Council for Healthy Families 207-532-1141

Greater Portland

The Opportunity Alliance 207-553-5801

Franklin

Franklin County Children's Task Force 207-778-6960

Hancock

Maine Family Planning 207-667-5304 Ext. 225

Kennebec & Somerset

KVCAP 207-859-1577

Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, & part of Cumberland

The Parent Program of MidCoast Maine 207-832-0343

Penobscot & Piscataquis

Penquis 207-974-2481

Waldo

University of Maine Cooperative Extension 207-342-5971

Washington

Down East Community Hospital 207-225-0438

York

Southern Maine Health Care 207-490-7704



Maine Families Home Visiting

Evidence-Based Services to Families

Offered in every county of the state through a well-established and rigorously accountable system of performance-based contracts with local agencies, Maine Families Home Visiting is a voluntary program available for pregnant women, expectant couples, and parents or primary caregivers of children from birth to age three.

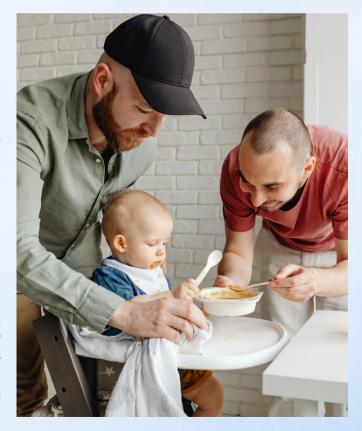
As affiliates of the international Parents as Teachers (PAT) evidence-based model, services are delivered by highly-trained specialists to ensure safe home environments, promote healthy growth and development for babies and toddlers, and provide key connections to needed services. Family visitors use a non-judgmental and compassionate approach that empowers parents with skills, tools, and confidence to nurture the healthy growth of their baby.

The intensity and length of service is matched to family needs in response to an individualized needs assessment. This allows for careful optimization of resources, in which highest-need families receive more frequent visits over a longer period of time. Maine Families consistently delivers positive outcomes for Maine's youngest children and their families in areas such as maternal and child health, child development, safety, and family well-being.

Maine Families Pandemic Response

When the emerging pandemic made visits in the home unsafe, Maine Families quickly shifted to working with families virtually. Maine Children's Trust provided training and guidance in using an interactive video conferencing (IVC) platform for family visits and families were able to continue to receive services by phone or IVC. As visitors and families became accustomed to this new way of connecting, it became clear that virtual visits worked well for many and are here to stay. Going forward we expect that visits will be a mix of in-person and virtual with the focus on what works best for each family.

The workforce that makes up Maine Families has been nothing short of heroic these past two years. They have been there for their families and helped to provide concrete supports and connections to resources that families needed. They have done this while managing many of the same stressors that the families they serve were experiencing. We are grateful for all they do.



Prevention Councils

Central Coordination

Maine Children's Trust has supported the prevention efforts of the Prevention Councils since the 1990's with grant funding, public awareness, and technical assistance. Since 2015, the Maine Department of Human Services has executed agreements with the Trust to lead and coordinate a statewide project to prevent child abuse and neglect. Through this effort, the Trust supports the Prevention Councils in their statutory role as the county-level coordinating entity to lead and deliver child abuse prevention efforts.

The Prevention Council statute guides the Trust in providing central statewide leadership, strengthening the network, and ensuring ongoing delivery of free evidence-based and evidence-informed child abuse programming in every county in Maine. A toolkit has been developed to guide data evaluation, integrate data with community feedback, and develop prevention plans and priorities. The Trust provides a centralized data system, core programming training, and technical assistance to ensure consistency in service delivery, as well as model fidelity.

Funding for the Prevention Councils is provided by the Department of Human Service: Office of Child and Family Services.

Local Contacts

Androscoggin & Oxford Community Concepts, Inc. 207-783-3990

Aroostook

Aroostook Council for Healthy Families 207-532-1141

Cumberland & York Kids Free to Grow 207-985-5975

Franklin

Franklin County Children's Task Force 207-778-6960

Hancock & Washington Sunrise Opportunities 207-225-3426

Kennebec & Somerset KVCAP 207-859-1577

Knox, Sagadahoc & Waldo Counties Midcoast Maine Community Action Program 207-442-7963

Lincoln Healthy Kids 207-563-1818

Penobscot & Piscataquis Penquis 207-974-2481



Prevention Councils

Evidence-Based and Informed Services to Families

The Prevention Councils use a structured approach to build a system of support for local communities and the families that live in them by:

- Focusing on primary and secondary child abuse prevention strategies
- Utilizing the social-ecological model
- Using the Protective Factor framework, a strengths-based approach developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy's
- Delivering evidence-based curriculums and supports
- · Conducting an annual Needs Assessment
- Creating an annual Prevention Plan that is informed by OCFS Child Maltreatment data
- Offering activities in response to unique county-specific needs and use SMART objectives for each county in Maine
- Encouraging active participation from the community through an Advisory Board comprised of diverse community leaders, as well as leveraging community partnerships
- Evaluating parenting education and professional training to ensure families voices are heard

The Prevention Councils also serve focused populations identified through prevention planning and offer programs for fathers, substance-affected families, co-parenting/separated families, prenatal families, as well as offering education in child sexual abuse prevention. In addition, the Prevention Councils provide training to family-serving professionals in each county in the following trainings: Infant Safe Sleep, Protective Factors, Mandated Reporting and Period of PURPLE Crying, an abusive head trauma prevention training.

Local Resources - Interactive Map





Local resources by county are shown on a interactive map easily accessible on the Trust's website. Here caregivers and professionals have the latest information on trainings, playgroups, support groups, events, and more provided by each local Prevention Council. The map can be searched by the age of the child(ren), by subject area such as specialty groups for fathers or families with children with special health needs, or by activity. Activities are often held virtually and participants can join from a location that works best for them. www.mechildrenstrust.org and click on Local Resources to find out more.



Strong Families = Strong Communities

What Families Need to Thrive

Science tells us what children need to thrive and affirms what we already know – children need safe, stable, nurturing environments with engaged and responsive caregivers. Social science also tells us what families need to thrive – these things are described as the five Protective Factors. The Strengthening Families Framework, developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.



The 5 Protective Factors

- 1) Knowledge of Child Development: Information on how kids grow
- 2) **Parental Resilience:** The ability to manage stress and cope with challenges
- 3) Concrete Supports in Times of Need: Access to services and resources such as food, shelter, and healthcare
- 4) Social-Emotional Competence of Children: Helping children understand their feelings
- 5) **Supportive Social Connections:** Having friends, family, and community that provide emotional support in tough times

What Communities Need to Thrive

CSSP has also developed recommendations for how to apply the Protective Factors approach to transform communities and address root causes of adversity. When the four community conditions below are met, all individuals and families are set up for success.

Essential/Basic Needs: Communities with access for all to things like high quality, affordable, and equitable early learning, k-12 and adult education; health care; safe, affordable, and reliable housing; and food security; along with economic opportunities and family-friendly employment

Social Support and Connection: Communities with social connections and neighborhood cohesion where community members are willing to reach out to one another and where help-seeking is normalized with a collective acknowledgement that parenting is hard and all parents benefit from support

Racial and Social Justice: Communities that foster an anti-racist and equitable social structure, including norms and practices that address historical and structural racism, where all can thrive

Social Contract: Communities that shift social norms to foster collective responsibility for the welfare of children create a shift in the social contract (the understanding and agreement between citizens and the government about what citizens are expected to do for themselves and what the government is expected to do). By shifting the norms, a community can encourage high level prevention efforts and messaging, restorative justice practices and a culture of looking out for one another.

Source: https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Community-Conditions-Strengthening-Families-Report-CSSP.pdf

CREATING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

In late 2020, Maine Children's Trust launched a new primary prevention project, The Front Porch Project® of Maine, funded in part by donations made on behalf of Marissa Kennedy, a child tragically lost to child abuse. The goal of the Front Porch Project® is simple – to engage and train the community to help protect children, support families, and prevent abuse and neglect.



This free training is provided by local Prevention Councils, both in person or virtually, and is open to everyone. Each training workshop offers facilitated discussions and interactive activities that can help community members navigate difficult situations involving children and families and offers strategies for offering support. The Front Porch Project® is flexible and can be adapted to meet the needs of a specific community. Community members who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and encouragement they need can take an active role in protecting children and supporting families in their community.

The Front Porch Project® was developed by the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance. Maine Children's Trust is the first organization to make this project available on a statewide basis.

Launched in the midst of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, the In It Together Maine campaign provides supports to help parents navigate parenting during the uncertainties of this difficult time by connecting parents with local parenting resources the Prevention Councils provide, as well as fostering social connections. Beyond the span of the pandemic, the campaign hopes to make a lasting effect in the way that Maine families consider the resources available to them, and to cultivate a community of parents that stay in touch and support each other long after the retreat of the virus. The campaign is comprised of a TV commercial, radio ads, social media campaign, and local promotional efforts by Prevention Councils, as well as an online map of resources.



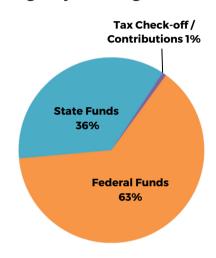
To achieve these goals, the campaign has four specific objectives:

- Change parental attitudes around reaching out for help
- Promote the free services of Prevention Councils as a parenting resource for all parents
- Normalize the idea that parenting is hard
- Provide supports to families during a difficult time

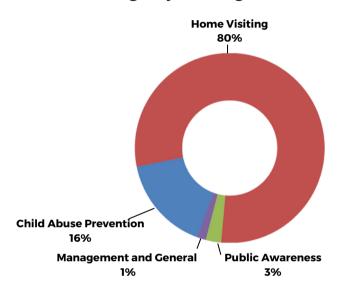
FY21 Financial Overview

Maine Children's Trust receives funding from both the federal and state governments, as well as individual donors, in support of our mission to prevent child abuse and neglect. According to the Trust's last audit, 99% of Maine Children's Trust funding is used to meet its' mission, with just 1% spent on overhead. Below is an overview summary of our agency funding sources and initiatives funded for FY21 beginning on July 1, 2020.

Agency Funding Sources



Agency Funding Disbursed



Total Revenue By Source				
Federal Funds	\$6,665,584			
State Funds	\$3,743,833			
Tax Check-off/ Contributions	\$74,031			
Total Revenue	\$10,483,448			

Total Disbursements by Category				
Child Abuse Prevention	\$1,700,747			
Home Visiting	\$8,312,080			
Public Awareness	\$274,049			
Management and General	\$153,400			
Total Disbursements	\$10,440,276			

Executive Team

Executive Director Pam LaHaye

Assistant Director & Prevention Coordinator **Heidi Aakjer, MPA**

Finance Director Kara Parks

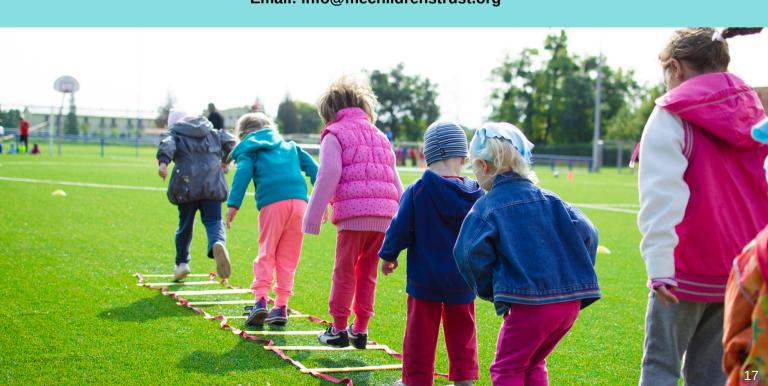
YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT PREVENTION EFFORTS IN MAINE

Every act of giving supports efforts to strengthen communities and support families like yours to prevent child abuse and neglect from occurring. You can make a tax-deductible donation to Maine Children's Trust with three easy options:

- Simply "check off" a donation on your Maine Income Tax Return Schedule CP/Voluntary Contributions and Park Passes
- Mail a check to our address below: 56 Leighton Road Augusta, Maine 04330
- Go to www.mechildrenstrust.org and click to donate by credit card or PayPal.

Did you know that over 99% of Maine Children's Trust funding is used to meet its mission, with just 1% spent on overhead!

For more information:
Phone: 207-623-5120
Email: info@mechildrenstrust.org





56 Leighton Rd., Augusta, ME 04330 207-623-5120 info@mechildrenstrust.org www.mechildrenstrust.org

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