



# Celebrating 30 Years!

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



## **Our Vision**

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

## **Our Mission**

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

## **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 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.

## **Our 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.

**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 | State Network Lead**

**Association of State and Tribal Home Visiting Initiatives |  
Member**

**Strengthening Families Protective Factor Framework | State  
Lead**

# 2024 Board of Directors

## OFFICERS

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Drummond Woodsum

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Administrative Office of the Courts

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Regional Vice President and Director  
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Savings Bank



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County Children's Task Force

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**Bruce Gerrity, Esq.**  
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Supports Services, Sunrise  
Opportunities

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(Executive Committee Member)  
Clinical Director, Maine Primary Care  
Association

**Kim Russell**  
State Director, Fight Crime: Invest in  
Kids Maine

**Charles Soltan, Esq.**  
(Executive Committee Member)  
Soltan Bass, LLC

**\*Represents a local Maine Prevention Council**

## MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we celebrate our 30th anniversary and look to the future, the mission of Maine Children’s Trust remains steadfast: to strengthen families, cultivate healthy relationships, and support communities in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Our refreshed branding embodies this hopeful pursuit, symbolizing our commitment to children, families, and communities with support and emphasizing the essential trust required for a connected community. We believe that this vision can be realized through collaborative partnerships that empower families and communities. Therefore, Maine Children’s Trust is dedicated to linking organizations and individuals across the state with the resources necessary to help children, families, and communities thrive.

Maine Children’s Trust is committed to implementing a variety of equitable and effective policies and services that have demonstrated success in supporting and strengthening families while preventing child abuse and neglect. Prioritizing and investing in prevention strategies is a shared responsibility and a critical first step toward ensuring that all families in Maine have the opportunity to flourish.

This Annual Report reflects a year of growth and collaboration, highlighting our continued commitment to fostering supportive communities and nurturing strong families throughout Maine. Within this report, you will find comprehensive information on how we are equipping agencies, professionals, and communities with the essential resources needed to enhance the well-being of children and families.

*Ben Gilman, Esq.*  
Board Chair

*Heidi Aakjer, MPA*  
Executive Director

# 2024 Major Focus Areas & Initiatives

- Child Abuse Prevention Month & Partners in Prevention
- Community-Based Spaces Asset Mapping with the Maine Prevention Councils
- The Front Porch Project of Maine
- Infant Safe Sleep & Abusive Head Trauma Prevention
- Maine Families Home Visiting Program
- Prevention Webinar Series
- Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support
- Strengthening Families Approach: The 5 Protective Factors

## 2024 Major Sponsors



# Maine Children's Trust

## Policy Priorities

Research shows that investing in proactive programs in Maine strengthens families, leading to better outcomes for children, thriving communities, and cost savings for taxpayers. The Trust collaborates with parents, policymakers, and community partners to implement effective policies and services that prevent child abuse and neglect. Key prevention strategies include:

- **Raise Public Awareness and Support for Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention in Maine:** With the right supports, improving child and family well-being in Maine is possible, but building sustained investments in family support programs begins with widespread public awareness that we all have a role. We know that everyone who lives in Maine has an interest in supporting child and family well-being – we all want to live in a place where our families thrive.
- **Strengthen Coordination of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Efforts:** Policymakers and other state partners must work together to prioritize and better coordinate primary prevention policies in order to optimize vital government resources and improve the state's capacity to implement and scale effective prevention strategies and programs.
- **Expand Family Support Services through Maine Families Home Visiting and Maine's Prevention Councils:** Increased funding to stabilize and grow the prevention workforce will help ensure vital services such as parenting education, developmental playgroups, and other services to support healthy children and prevent child abuse and neglect are available for all interested families.
- **Expand Access to Other Critical Prevention and Family Support Programs:** Research shows that a range of coordinated, evidence-based programs work together to produce better outcomes for children and families. These include early childhood interventions, economic supports and family-friendly workplace policies. Sustained policy support and funding for these critical programs mean increased safety for children and economic stability for families.

# Our Call to Action

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Maine Children's Trust is dedicated to prioritizing primary prevention and partnerships in our mission to promote the well-being of children and families in Maine. We recognize that our communities are vital in supporting families by offering a network of social connections, practical assistance, emotional support, and a sense of belonging. These elements help families navigate challenges, support nurturing children, and foster resilience during difficult times. This support includes access to essential services, opportunities for social engagement, and a shared sense of values and identity that contribute to overall family well-being. Our areas of action align with these commitments.

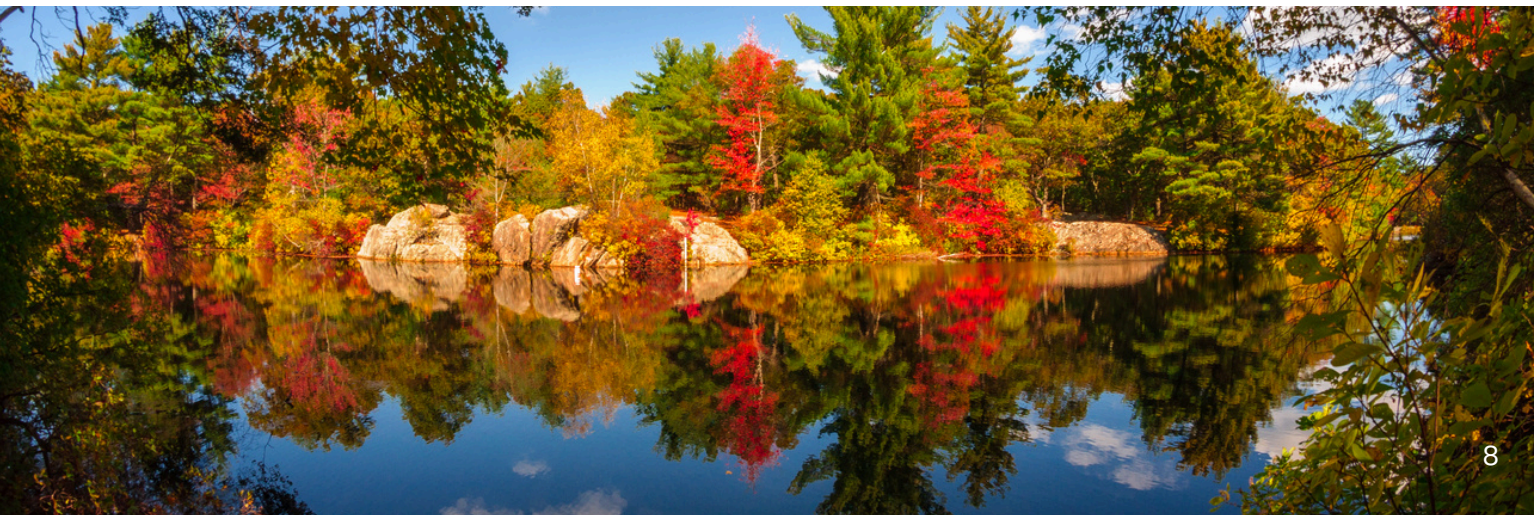
## Our Action Areas

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.

**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.

**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.





## ● Strengthening Communities -

- Prevention Councils align programming with local needs, annual assessments, and Advisory Board feedback from over **300** community leaders.
- Collaboration with over **16** local organizations, state/federal agencies, and local providers is essential to reducing child maltreatment. The Trust facilitated **62** trainings for these partner organizations.
- Partners conducted **358** trainings for professionals, **329** parenting education activities, **260** parent support activities, and **356** public awareness activities.

## ● Supporting Families -

- Family (Home) Visiting served **1,692** families through **18,500** visits, with **86%** of children receiving timely developmental screenings.
- Prevention Councils assisted families with everyday parenting challenges through **329** multi-session parenting education groups with **1,612** caregivers.
- Provided supportive environments for families to connect and share resulting in 121 caregivers participating in support groups
- Over **207,052** concrete supports were provided directly to families through our partners to include diapers, formula, breastfeeding supplies, safety items, and clothing.

## ● Leading Primary Prevention Efforts -

- In coordination with the Child Safety & Family Well-being Plan, the Trust supported the Prevention Councils to conduct Community-Based Spaces Asset Mapping.
- The Trust spearheads child abuse prevention in Maine with **19** community grants and research supported training to deliver high-quality services.
- Public awareness campaigns were conducted for April's Child Abuse Prevention Month and October's Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month.
- The Trust supports parent leadership and adheres to NFSN's Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support quality standards focusing on diversity and inclusion.
- The Trust convenes a statewide Infant Safe Sleep & Abusive Head Trauma Prevention Coalition to share research, best practices, and strategies.



## 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. Ten 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. In 2022, Maine Families piloted services to families referred from Child Protective Services with funding from Family First Prevention Services and in 2023 this effort expanded statewide.

***Funding for Maine Families is provided through the Department of Human Services: Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Child and Family Services.***

## 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 County**

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 & Part of Cumberland County**

Southern Maine Health Care  
207-490-7704

## Evidence-Based Services to Families

Maine Families Home Visiting is a voluntary program available statewide for pregnant women, expectant couples, and parents of children up to age three. Utilizing the evidence-based Parents as Teachers model, trained specialists provide support to ensure safe home environments and promote healthy development. The program adopts a compassionate, non-judgmental approach, empowering parents with essential skills. Services are tailored to family needs, allowing high-need families to receive more frequent visits. 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.

In 2022, all eleven Maine Families Home Visiting Programs underwent a year-long rigorous self-study and review process with the Parents as Teachers (PAT) National Center to demonstrate fidelity to the PAT model. As a result of this review, every Maine Families Program earned a prestigious endorsement from PAT as "Blue-Ribbon Affiliates" and continues to maintain this status in the 2024 performance year. This quality endorsement is an exclusive recognition offered only to top-performing home visiting affiliates within PAT's international network.

### Maine Families' Programs Received the National Recognition As Blue-Ribbon Affiliates





# Maine Prevention Councils

## Central Coordination

Maine Children's Trust has supported the Maine Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Councils since the 1990s through grants, awareness, and technical assistance. Since 2008, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has partnered with the Trust to lead and coordinate statewide child abuse prevention efforts. In 2015, Maine DHHS provided funding to establish a formal statewide infrastructure for the Maine Prevention Councils, which statutorily serve as county-level coordinators for prevention programs and supports. The Trust ensures consistent service delivery by providing central leadership, data, evaluation, best practices, and a toolkit, core training, and technical assistance across all counties in Maine.

*Funding for the Prevention Councils is provided through 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

### **Sagadahoc**

Midcoast Maine Community Action Program  
207-442-7963

### **Lincoln & Knox**

Healthy Kids  
207-563-1818

### **Penobscot & Piscataquis**

Penquis  
207-974-2481

### **Waldo**

Waldo Community Action Partners  
207-338-6809



## Maine Prevention Councils

Maine Prevention Councils use a community and parent centered approach to build a system of support for local communities and the families that live in them by utilizing:

- Primary and secondary child abuse prevention
- Utilization of the social-ecological model
- Implementation of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors framework
- Delivery of evidence-based curriculums
- Conducting annual Needs Assessments
- Developing Prevention Plans based on OCFS Child Maltreatment data
- Addressing unique county needs with SMART objectives
- Encouraging community participation through a diverse Advisory Board
- Evaluating parenting education and training for family-serving professionals

Prevention Councils support all families and focus on specific populations, offering programs for fathers, substance-affected families, co-parenting families, prenatal families, and child sexual abuse prevention education. Additionally, they provide training in areas like Infant Safe Sleep, Abusive Head Trauma Prevention, and the Protective Factors.

## Local Resources – Interactive Map

### Connection to Local Resources

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. Visit [www.mechildrenstrust.org](http://www.mechildrenstrust.org) and click on Local Resources to find out more.





# Maine Prevention Councils: Community-Based Spaces Asset Mapping

As a part of the Maine Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan, the Maine Prevention Councils outreached to community partners, parents, caregivers, and youth in 2024 to locate Community Based-Spaces for families in every county and assess opportunities to enhance or expand these spaces locally. To maximize the efficacy of child and family well-being efforts, guiding frameworks, approaches, and principles were utilized in the development of the definition of Community-Based Spaces for families. These included: the Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention, Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework, Principles of Family Support Practice, and the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support.

Community-Based Spaces for families are defined as: physical locations accessed by parents, caregivers, youth, and/or children that build at least one (1) protective factor of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework, which are:

- Parental Resilience,
- Social Connections,
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development,
- Concrete Support in Times of Need, and
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children.



## **A Community-Based Space for families must also have all of the following essential components:**

- **Physical Location:** Physical space that is welcoming and open to the public
- **Open and Accessible:** Any individual can access the space
- **Responsive & Flexible:** Supports are reflective and responsive to the needs, cultures, and interests of families and the community.
- **No Cost:** Offerings are free and/or at no cost.
- **Supports & Services:** Offered by staff, volunteers, or partners
- **Information & Referrals:** Information about resources is available, and parents, caregivers, youth, and children are connected to services.
- **Family-Centered:** A strengths-based approach that values families, and recognizes them as integral to the planning and development of the community-based space.

# 2024 Partners In Prevention for Child Abuse Prevention Month



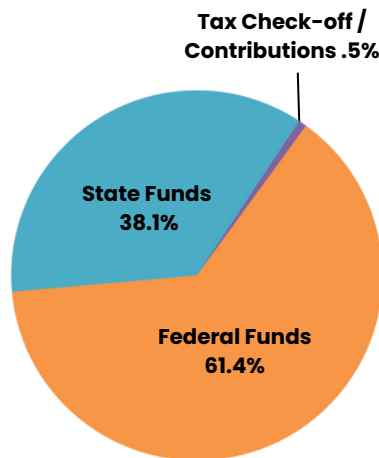
**Thank you to the 2024 Partners in Prevention who collaborated with Maine Children's Trust for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. The unified message emphasized that supportive communities and strong families prevent child abuse and neglect. Thirty partners participated in a public awareness campaign, sharing social media content, and information through various channels throughout the month.**

- Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine, Inc & The Kinship Program
- Alford Scholarship Foundation
- Count ME In
- Cross Cultural Community Services
- Daniel Hanley Center for Health Leadership
- Department of Public Safety
- Fight Crime: Invest In Kids Maine
- GEAR Parent Network
- Kennebec Savings Bank
- KidsPeace
- Maine Association for the Education of Young Children
- Maine Association of Nonprofits
- Maine Bankers Association
- Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
- Maine Chapter, National Social Workers Association
- Maine Chiefs of Police Association
- Maine Children's Alliance
- Maine Children's Home
- Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence
- Maine Council of Churches
- Maine Medical Association
- Maine Osteopathic Association
- Maine Parent Federation
- Maine Primary Care Association
- Maine Resilience Building Network
- Maine State Library
- Maine State Parent Ambassadors
- MaineHealth
- NAMI Maine
- Sweetser

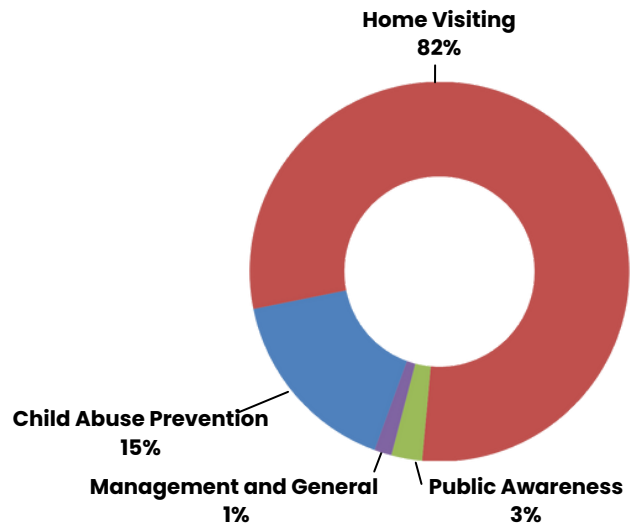
# FY24 Financial Overview

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 FY24 beginning on July 1, 2023.

## Agency Funding Sources



## Agency Funding Disbursed



### Total Revenue By Source

Federal Funds	\$7,859,462.75
State Funds	\$4,867,985.98
Tax Check-off/ Contributions	\$62,572.96
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$12,790,018.69</b>

### Total Disbursements by Category

Child Abuse Prevention	\$1,817,934.51
Home Visiting	\$10,373,915.09
Public Awareness	\$357,755.50
Management and General	\$178,581.87
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$12,728,186.96</b>

## Executive Team

Executive Director  
**Heidi Aakjer, MPA**

Finance & Operations Director  
**Kara Parks**



# GIVING is EASY



Every act of giving to Maine Children's Trust is in support of child and family well-being efforts across the state. Giving is quick, easy, and tax-deductible!

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

**1**

Simply "check off" a donation on your Maine Income Tax Return Schedule CP/Voluntary Contributions and Park Passes.

**2**

Mail a check to our address below:  
56 Leighton Road  
Augusta, Maine 04330

**3**

Go to [www.mechildrenstrust.org](http://www.mechildrenstrust.org) and click to donate by credit card or PayPal.

For more information:  
Phone: 207-623-5120  
Email: [info@mechildrenstrust.org](mailto:info@mechildrenstrust.org)



56 Leighton Rd., Augusta, ME 04330  
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[www.mechildrenstrust.org](http://www.mechildrenstrust.org)

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