

2006

# WISCONSIN'S STATE PLAN TO PREVENT CHILD MALTREATMENT

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Recommendations from the State Call to Action Workgroups and Governor Jim Doyle's Summit to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

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## A STATE CALL TO ACTION

Working Together to  
End Child Abuse and  
Neglect in Wisconsin

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

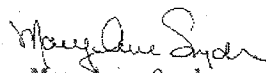
*Hundreds of professionals have made room in their busy schedules to contribute to this initiative.*

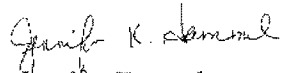
Wisconsin's State Call to Action to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect would not be possible without the time, energy, and commitment of individuals and organizations throughout the state. Hundreds of professionals have made room in their busy schedules during the past 2 years to contribute to this initiative—whether helping to plan Governor Jim Doyle's Summit to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect, serving on a workgroup to develop the recommendations that appear in *Wisconsin's State Plan to Prevent Child Maltreatment*, or forging new partnerships to better serve children and families in Wisconsin communities. With the publication of the *State Plan*, we hope the groups of contributors and partners at the state and local level will continue to grow.

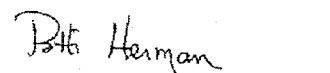
For the past year, a smaller group of individuals have focused on organizing the work done on the State Call to Action into the *Wisconsin State Plan to Prevent Child Maltreatment*. More than 120 committed workgroup members lent their time and energy to formulate the diverse and exciting recommendations that make up the body of the *State Plan*. The co-chairs of all six workgroups, each of whose daily work is dedicated to improving conditions for the children of Wisconsin, made an extraordinary commitment to convene, facilitate, and report on the efforts of their respective workgroups. We are grateful to the workgroup members and co-chairs for their commitment and are inspired by the vision they helped shape.

Supporting the workgroups and compiling their results into this *State Plan to Prevent Child Maltreatment* was the task of the sponsoring agencies. We and our staff colleagues attended workgroup meetings, provided in-kind and financial support when needed, convened meetings, and provided training for the co-chairs. A special thanks to Cailin O'Connor of the Children's Trust Fund, who spent countless hours compiling the workgroup reports into a *State Plan* with a common vision and voice. Credit is also due Norma Sampson, Children's Trust Fund, for designing this report. We extend our appreciation to our boards of directors for their support of our efforts to improve children's lives by preventing child maltreatment.

As the Steering Committee for the State Call to Action to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect, we will promote, monitor, and support the implementation of the *State Plan's* recommendations, and seek new partners and champions for the various initiatives outlined here. Please join us in making Wisconsin a safe place for children to grow and thrive.

  
Mary Anne Snyder  
Executive Director  
Children's Trust Fund

  
Jennifer Hammel  
Director  
Child Abuse Prevention Fund  
of Children's Hospital  
and Health System

  
Patti Herman  
Executive Director  
Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Unless someone like you  
cares a whole awful lot,

Nothing is going to get  
better. It's not.

*The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss

public-private partnership of the Wisconsin's Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (also known as Children's Trust Fund), the Child Abuse Prevention Fund of Children's Hospital and Health System, and Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin.

With support from Governor Jim Doyle and leaders from both sides of the aisle in the state Legislature, as well as participation from all of the major state agencies whose work affects children and families, the State Call to Action is a bipartisan, statewide effort intended to:

- Raise awareness of the human and economic costs of child abuse and neglect;
- Propose short- and long-term child abuse and neglect prevention strategies; and
- Strengthen public will, resources, and community capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The first phase of the State Call to Action was the combined work of 160 participants in the April 2004 Governor's Summit to Prevent Child Abuse and 443 people who attended web cast discussion forums held across the state. They brainstormed, shared experiences, and generated hundreds of ideas about strategies to make child maltreatment prevention more effective in Wisconsin.

Child maltreatment—encompassing physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well as physical and emotional neglect—is an everyday tragedy for thousands of children in Wisconsin. In addition to the devastating immediate effects of abuse and neglect on a child's physical and emotional health, maltreatment has effects that are long-term and far-reaching, not only for children and their families, but also for society. It is time for all of us who care about children's well being to rethink how we work with children and families. This means making a commitment to invest in prevention, expand proven strategies, and implement new approaches to the prevention of child maltreatment.

In recent years, at the national level and in several states, coalitions of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, advocates, and families have come together to formulate a new approach to child maltreatment prevention. Initiated in 2004, the Wisconsin State Call to Action is spearheaded by a

## A STATE CALL TO ACTION

Working Together to  
End Child Abuse and  
Neglect in Wisconsin

From this input, six areas of concern were selected to be the focus of the State Call to Action. In Phase 2, between October 2004 and March 2005, workgroups

*Recurring ideas indicate an emerging consensus about priority strategies.*

\* in each of those six areas  
\* formulated specific  
\* recommendations for  
\* short- and long-term  
\* implementation. The  
\* recommendations of

those six workgroups make up Phase 3, *Wisconsin's State Plan to Prevent Child Maltreatment*. The recommendations are listed here, following descriptions of the workgroups that generated them.

The *State Plan* includes recommendations that can be enacted at the state and local level, as well as legislative changes that would pave the way for some state and local initiatives. Several recommendations appear more than once, and others overlap with one another. These recurring ideas, arrived at independently by multiple workgroups, indicate an emerging consensus about priority strategies coming out of the State Call to Action.

## The Workgroups and Their Recommendations

● **Uniform, Comprehensive Systems of Family Support.** Family support is an investment in the creation of happy, healthy, and productive citizens, and is effective in preventing child abuse and neglect and in reducing the stresses that contribute to child maltreatment. All families should have access to family support systems in communities throughout Wisconsin.

**Recommendation 1.1:** Establish multidisciplinary local community coordinating councils throughout Wisconsin to build non-stigmatizing systems of prevention that promote a culture where all families receive support

**Recommendation 1.2:** Establish a universally accessible continuum of family support in all communities in Wisconsin, beginning before or at the birth of an infant and available, as needed or desired by the family, throughout the child's growth and development

**Recommendation 1.3:** Expand to all communities in Wisconsin an intensive, evidence-based home visiting program that makes available ongoing support services for challenged, new families and their infants and young children

**Recommendation 1.4:** Build a system of Family Response Teams in Wisconsin counties to foster critical circles of support for challenged families and children

● **Family Economic Success.** Stressors stemming from poverty and the inability to meet basic needs put children and families at increased risk for abuse and neglect. Both at a policy level and in approaches to supporting individual families, Wisconsin can take steps to alleviate those stressors.

**Recommendation 2.1:** Raise the minimum wage in accordance with the Governor's Minimum Wage Council

**Recommendation 2.2:** Increase awareness of, access to, and the amount received of federal and state tax credits for low-income families

**Recommendation 2.3:** Increase access to Wisconsin SHARES child care assistance for parents pursuing educational programs

**Recommendation 2.4:** Increase eligibility for BadgerCare

**Recommendation 2.5:** Support innovative approaches to increasing employer provision of health insurance

● **Mental Health and Substance Abuse.**

Adults who struggle with issues of mental health and substance abuse are faced with significant challenges to their ability to parent and nurture children in their care. Both substance abuse and mental health have a major impact on the child welfare system.

**Recommendation 3.1:** Support the development of local collaboratives to implement evidence-based or promising practices for child abuse and neglect prevention targeted at families where the parent has a mental illness or substance abuse disorder

**Recommendation 3.2:** Implement universal and targeted home visiting statewide in Wisconsin

**Recommendation 3.3:** Enact mental health and substance abuse parity in commercial insurance to improve access to treatment services

**Recommendation 3.4:** Increase Medicaid reimbursement for mental health and substance abuse assessment and treatment

**Recommendation 3.5:** Provide additional funding to address the stigma associated with mental illness and substance abuse disorders

**Recommendation 3.6:** Create state-level policies that focus on enhancing parenting among adults with mental illness and substance abuse disorders

● **Child Abuse and Domestic Violence.**

Independent of one another, child abuse and domestic violence can endanger children, impair development, and lead to long-term negative outcomes. The co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse compounds even further the negative effects children are likely to experience in the short-term and over their lifetime.

**Recommendation 4.1:** Establish and distribute multidisciplinary training grants for agencies working on the intersection of domestic violence and child abuse and neglect

**Recommendation 4.2:** Promote and support the development of multidisciplinary teams in Wisconsin communities

**Recommendation 4.3:** Improve training for law enforcement related to children on the scene of domestic violence

● **Children's Mental Health.** Many children suffer from organic mental illnesses and have loving and devoted families, but their parents often need support to help them cope with the special needs of their child. These families should have access to quality mental health care as well as support for parents and caregivers.

**Recommendation 5.1:** Increase the availability of respite care services for families that include children with mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders

**Recommendation 5.2:** Increase the availability of parent-to-parent support systems, including advocacy, for families that include children with mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders

**Recommendation 5.3:** Promote and implement collaborative systems of care to provide comprehensive mental health screening, assessment, early intervention, and treatment

**Recommendation 5.4:** Institute policies and structural changes to expand collaboration within and across state agencies

**Recommendation 5.5:** Implement evaluation systems to determine the efficacy of children's mental health programs

**Recommendation 5.6:** Address workforce shortages among mental health care providers

**Recommendation 5.7:** Enact mental health insurance parity

● **Child Sexual Abuse Prevention.** Currently, the majority of programs addressing child sexual abuse in Wisconsin focus their efforts on educating children, instead of emphasizing adult responsibility to protect children and seek treatment. New approaches are needed to strengthen families and communities in preventing or stopping child sexual abuse.

**Recommendation 6.1:** Design and launch a child sexual abuse prevention initiative to be implemented throughout Wisconsin, using community and statewide resources

# Next Steps in the State Call to Action

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Moving from the drafting of a *State Plan* to changes in how Wisconsin works to prevent abuse and neglect of children will not take place overnight, nor will it be a centralized process. Some recommendations will be taken up and implemented on a large scale; others will be

*The success of the State Call to Action rests on each of us—community members and leaders, at all levels.*

implemented at the local level, depending on each community's needs and readiness. Ultimately the success of the State Call to Action will rest on each of us—community members and leaders, at

all levels—strategically implementing recommendations in our communities, in our agencies and organizations, and in our interactions with families.

The Steering Committee for the State Call to Action will continue to promote and monitor the implementation of the *State Plan* at all levels. During 2006, several conferences will offer training that focus

on *State Plan* recommendations. Details about these conferences will be posted on the Call to Action website at <http://wctf.state.wi.us>. The Steering Committee will also advocate making funds available at the state level to support implementation.

While much can be accomplished through increased collaboration and pooling of funds within communities and state agencies, there is also a need for substantial new investments in prevention. Wisconsin needs to identify partners who may not already be at the table, seek out influential champions for new initiatives, and explore various funding options as critical steps in the implementation of the State Call to Action.

Implementation of the State Call to Action will demand increased collaboration at all levels, creative thinking about funding sources, and a long-term commitment to the vision of a society where all children are safe from abuse and neglect.

# THE STATE CALL TO ACTION

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Child maltreatment—encompassing physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well as physical and emotional neglect—is an everyday tragedy for thousands of children in Wisconsin. In addition to the devastating immediate effects of abuse and neglect on a child's physical and emotional health, maltreatment has effects that are long-term and far-reaching, not only for children and their families, but also for society. Maltreated children are more likely than other children to do poorly in school, to commit crimes as adolescents and adults, to struggle with drug and alcohol addictions, and to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults [1]. Indeed, child maltreatment is a strong contributing factor to many of our social problems.

There is growing evidence of the effects of child maltreatment, as well as increasing understanding of the effectiveness of preventive interventions. As this knowledge base develops, it becomes more and more clear that allowing abuse and neglect to occur is unconscionable. In terms of child and family development, we know what children need to be healthy, and we understand how parents can be supported by formal and informal systems. In terms of economics, we know that early investments in children and families yield significant returns—with levels of effectiveness rarely achieved through treatment [2]. We also know that the American public views child abuse as a major social problem, but most people don't know what they can do to make a

difference [3]. It is time for all of us who care about children's well being to rethink how we work with children and families. This means making a commitment to invest in prevention, expand proven strategies, and implement new approaches to the prevention of child maltreatment.



**Don't give up!  
I believe in you all!**

**A person's a person,  
no matter how small.**

*Horton Hears a Who*  
by Dr. Seuss

# A New Approach to Prevention

In recent years, at the national level and in several states, coalitions of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, advocates, and families have come together to formulate a new approach to child maltreatment prevention [4, 5]. Initiated in 2004, Wisconsin's State Call to Action is spearheaded by a public-private partnership of the Wisconsin's Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (also known as Children's Trust Fund), the Child Abuse Prevention Fund of Children's Hospital and Health System, and Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin.

With support from Governor Jim Doyle and leaders from both sides of the aisle in the state Legislature, as

well as participation from all of the major state agencies whose work affects children and families, the State Call to Action is a bipartisan, statewide effort intended to:

- Raise awareness of the human and economic costs of child abuse and neglect;
- Propose short- and long-term child abuse and neglect prevention strategies; and
- Strengthen public will, resources, and community capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Work on the State Call to Action has taken place in three phases.



Governor Jim Doyle's Summit to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect:

**A STATE CALL TO ACTION**

## PHASE I: The Governor's Summit and Statewide Web Casts

In the spring of 2004, Governor Jim Doyle announced the State Call to Action to end child abuse and neglect. In partnership with the Children's Trust Fund, the Child Abuse Prevention Fund of Children's Hospital and Health System, and Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin, Governor Doyle convened a Summit April 29 and 30 in Madison. The Summit had two objectives:

- Define the critical elements needed in a comprehensive, community-based family support system that prevents child maltreatment; and
- Identify action steps that Wisconsin can take to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Within that context, Summit participants began to identify community expectations, forms of personal conduct, policies, and programs that prevent the initial occurrence of child abuse and neglect.

The Governor's Summit to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect was videotaped for an archived web cast that took the Call to Action statewide. During May and June 2004, at 23 meetings across the state, volunteer facilitators worked with concerned citizens to view key portions of the Governor's Summit via web cast, to review the Summit's draft recommendations, and to submit their own recommendations to the State Call to Action Steering Committee.

The first phase of the State Call to Action was the combined work of the 160 people present at the April 2004 Governor's Summit; the 443 people who attended one of 23 web cast discussion forums held across the state; and several individuals who participated in an online web cast and responded to a related survey. The outcomes of these discussions are summarized in "A Report on Governor Jim Doyle's Summit to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect: A State Call to Action" (available at <http://wctf.state.wi.us>).

## PHASE II: Workgroup Recommendations

Based on the work of Phase I, workgroups were formed around six topic areas to continue into Phase II of the State Call to Action. The workgroup topics are:

- **Uniform, Comprehensive Systems of Family Support.** Family support is an

investment in the creation of happy, healthy, and productive citizens, and is effective in preventing child abuse and neglect and in reducing the stresses that contribute to child maltreatment. All families should have access to family support systems in communities throughout Wisconsin.

- **Family Economic Success.** Stressors stemming from poverty and the inability to meet basic needs put children and families at increased risk for abuse and neglect. Both at a policy level and in approaches to supporting individual families, Wisconsin can take steps to alleviate those stressors.
- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse.** Adults who struggle with issues of mental health and substance abuse are faced with significant challenges to their ability to parent and nurture children in their care. Both substance abuse and mental health have a major impact on the child welfare system.
- **Child Abuse and Domestic Violence.** Independent of one another, child abuse and domestic violence can endanger children, impair development, and lead to long-term negative outcomes. The co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse compounds even further the negative effects children are likely to experience in the short-term and over their lifetime.
- **Children's Mental Health.** Many children suffer from organic mental illnesses and have loving and devoted families, but their parents often need support to help them cope with the special needs of their child. These families should have access to quality mental health care as well as support for parents and caregivers.

- **Child Sexual Abuse Prevention.** Currently, the majority of programs addressing the problem of child sexual abuse in Wisconsin place the responsibility for prevention on the child victims instead of emphasizing adult responsibility to protect children and seek treatment. New approaches are needed to strengthen families and communities in preventing or stopping child sexual abuse.

Workgroups were charged with the task of formulating recommendations for long-term and short-term strategies for the prevention of child maltreatment. Each workgroup put forth extraordinary efforts to submit short-term recommendations by the end of 2004 for the Governor's Office to consider for the 2005–2007 budget proposal. The workgroups then elaborated and expanded upon their ideas and submitted their full reports in March 2005. (The full report of each workgroup is available on the the State Call to Action website at <http://wctf.state.wi.us>.)

The creativity of their ideas and the quality of their work on a short timeline are impressive, and the State of Wisconsin owes each of the co-chairs and members of the workgroups a debt of gratitude. The co-chairs and members of the workgroups are listed in the Appendix A on page 63, along with the scope and purpose from which they worked.

### PHASE III: *The State Plan to Prevent Child Maltreatment*

This report comprises Phase III of the State Call to Action, summarizing the recommendations of the six workgroups. It includes recommendations that can be enacted at the state and local level, as well as legislative changes that would pave the way for some state and local initiatives.

Within each of the six workgroup topics, a brief background explains how the issue relates to child abuse and neglect. The recommendations that follow are those submitted by the workgroups to the State Call to Action Steering Committee in March 2005. Implementation details for each recommendation are provided, including partnerships and lead agency,

legislative and policy changes needed, existing efforts that can be duplicated, immediate steps and short-term strategies, and accountability and evaluation.

Details about the financial resources needed to implement a recommendation are included in those cases where workgroups were able to estimate them.

These details are most often given for statewide, legislative or policy change recommendations. For implementation of a recommendation at the community level, it is difficult to generalize resources needed. If quality

*The State Plan contains recommendations for state and local levels and for policy changes.*

programs are in place, resources are already directed toward prevention, and partners are flexible in how they deliver their services, communities may find that not many additional resources are needed to implement a recommendation. On the other hand, communities that are not already investing in prevention may need to consider redirecting resources, or seek new funds from local and state sources to make implementation of a recommendation possible. Because of this variation among communities, financial details are included only when state-level expenditures could be estimated.

*Cultural competence needs to be a focused component when implementing any recommendation.*

Workgroups also included suggestions on how to address cultural competency in the implementation of each recommendation. Cultural competency goes beyond an awareness of and tolerance for diversity. Culturally competent individuals and organizations enhance their knowledge of cultural values and traditions to more effectively reach out to families and communities of various backgrounds and cultures. With increasing diversity in Wisconsin, cultural competence has become a necessity for community leaders and service providers, and a concern of policymakers. It needs to be a focused component of the implementation of any recommendation from this report, just as it needs to be woven into any initiative that reaches out to families and communities.

Several strategies were recommended by more than one workgroup. In this report, the details of those recommendations from multiple workgroups were combined and placed with the first appearance of the recommendation. Subsequent appearances of the same recommendation are kept brief.

## Why a State Call to Action Now?

Wisconsin's State Call to Action began in 2004 when the environment in the state was conducive to this type of initiative for many reasons. Collaboration between systems was increasing at state and local levels, facilitating conversations between service providers, administrators, and policymakers who had previously worked in relative isolation from one another. Encouraging even greater integration between systems is logical because various agencies have similar long-term goals for children and families. It is also promising from a fiscal perspective as shrinking federal and state budgets necessitate more effective use of available resources.

Another impetus for this initiative is the accumulating evidence about the effectiveness of preventive interventions. With advanced statistical methods such as meta-analysis, and the application of economic principles to conduct cost-benefit

analysis, stronger arguments are being made for the effectiveness of certain types of interventions with children and families [2, 6]. These advances make it clear that by directing funds toward thoughtfully chosen programs and policies, Wisconsin can reduce child maltreatment, thereby reducing future expenditures on social services, crime, and treatment of abuse victims.

This evidence also demonstrates what we have long known—that experiencing abuse or neglect has devastating effects on children, both at the time of the abuse and throughout their lives. The State Call to Action seeks to harness the knowledge and energy of diverse agencies, organizations, and individuals in Wisconsin to put an end to the maltreatment of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Finally, Wisconsin was ready for a State Call to Action in 2004 because the political will was there for it.

Governor Doyle's *KidsFirst* Initiative placed children's welfare in the spotlight. In the State Legislature, there was bipartisan support for improving the state's approach to child abuse prevention. Among state agencies and nonprofit organizations, individuals and agencies were ready to engage in public-private

partnerships to better serve children and families. In short, Wisconsin was ready to make a statement that it would no longer tolerate the abuse or neglect of its youngest citizens, and the State Call to Action was launched.

## Implementing the State Plan

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Moving from the drafting of a *State Plan* to changes in how Wisconsin works to prevent child maltreatment will not take place overnight, nor will it be a centralized process. Some recommendations will be taken up and implemented on a large scale; others will be implemented at the local level, depending on each community's needs and readiness. Ultimately the success of the State Call to Action will rest on each of us—community members and leaders, at all levels—strategically implementing recommendations in our communities, in our agencies and organizations, and in our interactions with families.

The Steering Committee for the State Call to Action will continue to promote and monitor the implementation of the *State Plan* at all levels. Their efforts will include

*The Steering Committee will  
promote and monitor the  
implementation of the State Plan.*

- \* incorporating many
- \* recommendations
- \* from the *State Plan*
- \* into the sponsoring
- \* organizations

strategic plans, identifying partners to champion other recommendations, and advising and supporting local community coordinating councils in implementing recommendations. The Steering Committee will also engage interested legislators in efforts to enact policies and legislation recommended in the *State Plan*.

To track the impact of the State Call to Action and the *State Plan to Prevent Child Maltreatment*, the Steering Committee created an electronic feedback form on the Children's Trust Fund's website at <http://wctf.state.wi.us>. The Steering Committee asks local leaders and community coordinating councils to fill in the form when they implement a recommendation from the *State Plan*. This feedback will be used to:

- Help the Steering Committee monitor the implementation of recommendations around the state;
- Attract additional funding and resources to support implementation efforts;
- Build a network of communities implementing similar recommendations;
- Share lessons learned; and
- Select local initiatives to highlight in newsletters, on the Call to Action website, and in other materials developed by the Call to Action partners.

Just as representatives of many state and private agencies and concerned citizens formulated the *State Plan*, it will be implemented at many levels, in large and small ways, through the collective power of the people of Wisconsin.

**Note:** To track the impact of the State Call to Action and the *State Plan to Prevent Child Maltreatment*, a feedback form is available on the Children's Trust Fund's website at <http://wctf.state.wi.us>.

# REMARKS to Wisconsin's Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board May 16, 2005

In submitting these recommendations, we hope that they will assist those who must make the difficult decisions about the use of Wisconsin's resources to understand how those decisions affect young children and their families. Research emphatically tells us that the foundations for later learning and emotional health are laid down in the first 3 years of life. This new understanding of child development is at once promising and disturbing. With the right input at the right time, almost anything is possible for a child—but unless someone holds, strokes, sings, talks, smiles, reads, and plays, a child may never recover from those lost opportunities.

We cannot afford to ignore the infants and toddlers who are born to parents who are too young, inexperienced, poor, or overwhelmed to care for their children without support. It's not okay that there are children born in our communities whose parents have neither a blanket to wrap them in nor a home to take them to. It's not okay to send babies home with terrified parents who don't have a clue what to do with them and for them. And it is an enormous risk to send a child home with a single parent who has no one to call when the baby won't stop crying and the sleep-deprived parent is at the end of her rope. No one I know has raised a healthy, well balanced child alone—we all had help. Yet there are countless parents who are very much alone, and they need and deserve our support.

We have a continuing, collective responsibility to create a community that is nurturing, supportive, and enriching for every child. We can't let budget decisions just be about politics. The stakes are far too high. And we can't end child abuse and neglect in a 4-year term. Children are counting on us. There is nothing we can do that is more important than to care for them.

We are aware that there are more problems than there are resources, and that we have to learn to prioritize. The ever-present problems of poverty, family violence, substance abuse, crime, and unemployment are familiar to all of us. But we believe that until we make children a priority in our communities, none of these problems will go away. If we fail to spend time and money for prevention and early intervention, is it really money saved, or just debts postponed? Most of the adults we are trying to fix were once the children that someone else abused or neglected. It seems so much cheaper and wiser to take care of children now than to pay for the results of child abuse and neglect later.

Our workgroup took on this daunting task because we believe that it is absolutely possible to change the world by creating communities that nurture and support and cherish children. But we know that can only happen if people like you, people like us, and others around the state are willing to accept responsibility for children, and willing to motivate and educate others to accept theirs.

### **Polly Snodgrass**

*Co-Chair of the Uniform, Comprehensive Systems of Family Support Workgroup*  
Program Director of Healthy Families/Early Head Start/Family Service of Northeast Wisconsin in Green Bay

*If we fail to spend  
time and money  
for prevention and  
early intervention,  
is it really money  
saved, or just  
debts postponed?*

