



**What is the Community Partnerships for Protecting Children approach?**

**T**he Community Partnerships for Protecting Children approach aims to keep children safe from abuse and neglect and to support families. The approach recognizes that keeping children safe is everybody's business and that community members must be offered opportunities to help vulnerable families and shape the services and supports provided. In communities around the country, partnerships of public and private agencies, professionals, and residents are working together to help prevent abuse and neglect, respond quickly and effectively when it does occur, and reduce the re-occurrence of child maltreatment through tailored family interventions.

## **UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES**

- ◆ Families are stronger when all members, including caregivers, are safe from abuse.
- ◆ There is no substitute for strong families to ensure that children and youth grow up to be capable adults.
- ◆ Families need supportive communities to help them be strong.
- ◆ Children can best be kept safe when families, friends, residents, and organizations work together as partners.
- ◆ Children should stay with their own families, whenever possible.
- ◆ Services and supports need to be available earlier, before crises occur, and must be closely linked to the communities in which families live.
- ◆ Government alone, through the public child protective services (CPS) agency, cannot keep children safe from abuse and neglect.
- ◆ Efforts to reduce abuse and neglect must be closely linked to broader community initiatives and priorities.

- ◆ All families should receive high-quality services, with no disparities among racial, ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic groups.
- ◆ Each community must shape the strategies and network of services based on its own resources, needs, and cultures. In other words, residents of different communities will come up with different ways of putting these principles into action.

## **GOALS**

### *For families*

- ◆ Child abuse and neglect are reduced.
- ◆ Needed services and supports are more accessible to caregivers and their informal support system.

### *For participating agencies*

- ◆ Families receive quality services.
- ◆ Service capacity is adequate to meet needs.
- ◆ Services are tailored to match each family's strengths and needs.
- ◆ Collaboration increases and duplication decreases.

### *For the community*

- ◆ Residents are aware of and understand the child maltreatment challenge in their community.
- ◆ Residents have an active voice in decision making about community resources and investments to keep children safe.
- ◆ Residents seek help from their neighbors and local service agencies.
- ◆ Residents provide assistance and support to their neighbors.

## CORE ELEMENTS

- ◆ Services are individualized to build on strengths and address each child's and family's specific needs. Plans are developed through a family team meeting process that brings together family members, their support network, and service providers.
- ◆ The CPS agency adapts its policies and practices to support a community partnership approach. It helps staff members strengthen their connections with the neighborhoods they serve.
- ◆ A broad neighborhood network of services and supports is easily accessible for children and families.
- ◆ Decision making about service priorities and the direction of the partnership is shared by local residents, service providers, and representatives of the network.

## TYPICAL PRACTICES

- ◆ Partnerships establish staff capacity within CPS and other agencies to engage family members as planning partners, assess a full range of family issues, and build a team to support struggling families.
- ◆ Child protection workers may be placed within community agencies to improve collaboration with family support workers, battered women's advocates, substance abuse treatment providers, and mental health services staff.
- ◆ Outreach activities are used to identify vulnerable families and connect them with appropriate support.
- ◆ Leadership development opportunities help local residents deepen their involvement with the partnerships' work.

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**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**  
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The promise of community partnerships is that children will be safer, families will be healthier, and communities will be stronger.



*Keeping Children Safe  
Is Everybody's Business!*

**The Center for Community  
Partnerships in Child Welfare  
700 Broadway, Suite 301  
New York, NY 10003-9562  
212.979.2369 phone  
212.995.8756 fax  
[www.ccpcw.org](http://www.ccpcw.org)**