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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

Child Welfare Leaders from Across the Country Join Together to Form National Partnership for Child Safety

National Partnership for Child Safety Employs Safety Science and Shared Data to Reduce and Prevent Child Maltreatment & Fatalities

November 17, 2021 – In an effort to improve child safety and realign child welfare toward a more preventative child and family well-being system, child welfare leaders representing 26 state, county and tribal child and family serving agencies have formed the National Partnership for Child Safety (NPCS). The mission of NPCS is to improve child safety and prevent child maltreatment and fatalities by strengthening families and promoting innovations in child protection. Supported by Casey Family Programs, NPCS is a quality improvement collaborative formed to further key [recommendations and findings](#) of the federal Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities, which highlighted the importance and impact of safety science and data sharing to system change and reform.

Safety science provides a framework and processes for child protection agencies to understand the inherently complex nature of the work and the factors that influence decision-making. It also provides a safe and supportive environment for professionals to process, share and learn from critical incidents to prevent additional tragedies.

Enhancing the ability of child welfare agencies to share data and use data to identify and protect children at risk of maltreatment or fatality will help save children's lives. To strengthen accountability, promote collaboration and improve child safety outcomes, members of this partnership will share data and apply a set of strategies, including implementing a standardized platform for critical incident review and reporting of data, comparing critical incident and team culture data, sharing cross-jurisdictional safety notices and more.

The collaboration currently encompasses agencies that serve an estimated 807,000 children who are subjects of an investigation by child protection services each year across the country. With federal policies shifting to a more proactive and preventative approach to child welfare, the collaborative is working to promote collective responsibility, strengthen system and individual accountability, and apply the principles of safety science to child welfare systems. The University of Kentucky is the technical assistance provider for NPCS.

This partnership is a membership model similar to quality improvement programs in safety critical industries and can expand over time to include interested child welfare entities from other states, localities and tribes. A growing number of public safety industries have formed quality improvement collaboratives to share learning and data to improve safety, including the American College of Surgeons, National Surgical Quality Improvement Programs,

the World Association of Nuclear Operators and Children's Hospitals' Solutions for Patient Safety.

"In its groundbreaking report, the Commission explored the efficacy of applying safety science to child welfare systems," noted Jodi Hill-Lilly, deputy commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families and executive committee co-chair of the National Partnership for Child Safety. "Just as transportation industries apply safety science as a tool to better understand and prevent injury and fatalities, child welfare leaders are dedicated to working collaboratively to develop approaches and share information that will help prevent child abuse and fatalities and support more families in keeping children safe and thriving in their own homes."

"Better data and data sharing across jurisdictions are critical steps to developing approaches to address children who are most at risk," said Chip Spinning, executive director of Franklin County Children's Services in Ohio and executive committee co-chair of the National Partnership for Child Safety. "Working together, we can build the knowledge base of evidence-based practices that can reduce harm and prevent fatalities, before they occur."

"This group of committed leaders is advancing the field of child welfare by applying innovative approaches to safety from other industries," said David Sanders, former chair of the Commission and executive vice president of systems improvement for Casey Family Programs. "Preventing child fatalities and improving child safety require a public health approach with multiple systems and communities working together. Ultimately, we want to understand how and why maltreatment occurs and to work with families and communities to prevent it."

By adopting a public health approach that links CPS agencies with partners in the community, we aim to build support for and resilience within families before crises occur. Through implementation of these recommendations, we will be creating a learning laboratory, building from pilot sites, testing ideas, and learning from one another.

By implementing more proactive rather than reactive strategies, we hope to enhance quality improvement, reduce the current rate of workforce instability, and address the cycle of blame that occurs in response to critical incidents – a cycle which often leads to changes in leadership rather than needed systems change that would prevent future tragedies from occurring.

The partnership is supported by Casey Family Programs, the nation's largest operating foundation focused on safely reducing the need for foster care in the United States. Founded in 1966, Casey Family Programs works in all 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and with tribal nations across North America to influence long-lasting improvements to the well-being of children, families and the communities where they live. The Center for Innovation in Population Health at the University of Kentucky heads the technical assistance team, led by Michael Cull, PhD. Dr. Cull and his team work with partners around the world and represent 25+ years of clinical and research experience in public child welfare,

systems-theoretical approaches to critical incident review, and systems improvement. Here is an [overview](#) of their approach. [The National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention](#) at [MPHI](#) will serve as the data warehouse for the partnership.

Media Notes: To request an interview with a spokesperson for the National Partnership for Child Safety, please contact Jennifer Devlin at 703-966-3241 or jenniferdevlin7@gmail.com.

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About the National Partnership for Child Safety (NPCS)

The National Partnership for Child Safety (NPCS), initially formed in 2018, is a quality improvement collaborative to improve child safety and reduce child maltreatment fatalities through the application of safety science and shared data. Members of the collaborative have a shared goal of strengthening families, promoting innovations and a public health response to reducing and preventing child maltreatment and fatalities. Members of the National Partnership for Child Safety include:

- Arizona Department of Child Safety
- Arkansas Children & Family Services
- Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, California
- Connecticut Department of Children and Families
- Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
- Indiana Department of Child Services
- Maryland Department of Human Services
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- Missouri Department of Social Services
- Nebraska Division of Children & Family Services
- Clark County Department of Family Services, Nevada
- New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families
- New Jersey Department of Children and Families
- New York City Administration for Children's Services
- New York State Office of Children and Family Services
- Franklin County Children Services, Ohio
- Hamilton County Job & Family Services, Ohio
- Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- Oregon Department of Human Services
- Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Pennsylvania
- South Carolina Department of Social Services
- Spirit Lake Tribe, Spirit Lake Social Services
- Tennessee Department of Children's Services
- Vermont Department for Children and Families, Family Services Division
- Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families