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State invests in families through evidence based home visiting

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – State legislators demonstrated their commitment to investing in young families across the state by passing a budget that nearly doubles the amount of funding for evidence based home visiting programs. With an additional $1.4 million dollars allocated to these programs, funding has been restored to a level that hasn’t been seen since 2012, when funds were eliminated during the recession.

An amendment, sponsored by House Republican Caucus Chairman Ryan Williams (R-Cookeville) and Senators Becky Massey (R-Knoxville) and Steve Dickerson (R-Nashville), will allow home visiting programs, like those at Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee (PCAT), to reach more vulnerable families who may be at risk for abuse and neglect.

“When parents have access to the support and guidance that evidence based home visiting provides, they are able to build a strong relationship with their children and create a safe, healthy environment where they can thrive,” says Kristen Rector, PCAT CEO. “We are grateful for the leadership of Representative Williams and Senators Dickerson and Massey and the support of the legislature and our partners who made this restoration of funding possible, because we know it will have a long-term impact on Tennessee children and families.”

A coalition of organizations advocated for the funding increase, including PCAT, The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY), Tennesseans for Quality Early Education (TQEE), Save the Children Action Network, Children’s Hospital Alliance of Tennessee, March of Dimes, United Ways of Tennessee, the Home Visiting Leadership Alliance, and the Tennessee Justice Center. “We are most grateful for the providers across the state who serve and advocate for families every day,” says Rector. “We are so happy that legislators made a commitment that will allow them to continue their great work.”
Governor Bill Haslam and Deputy Governor Jim Henry have shown their support for educating the public about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and have invested in evidence based home visiting as a means to minimize the risk of ACEs. Reducing adversity experienced in childhood leads to lower health care costs, better mental health outcomes, lower incarceration rates, and a healthier, more productive workforce.

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For over 30 years, Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee's mission has been to support parents and the communities where they live in building loving homes where children feel treasured, adored and valued. We provide in-home parenting support in 30 counties in Tennessee and administer several statewide programs. Our goal across all programs is to foster healthy parent-child relationships and connect vulnerable families with community resources so that every child in Tennessee can have a great childhood. www.pcat.org