

# Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families

NEWS RELEASE

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## NATIONAL LEADERS CHOOSE COLORADO TO PROVE A BETTER SYSTEM AIMED AT PREVENTING CHILD MALTREATMENT IS POSSIBLE

### Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families Reimagines the Village

DENVER, CO (September 9, 2020) Colorado is one of four states chosen by the **U.S. Children's Bureau, Casey Family Programs, the Annie E. Casey Foundation** and **Prevent Child Abuse America®** to participate in a national effort to prove it is possible to fundamentally rethink child welfare by creating the conditions for strong, thriving families where children are free from harm.

This first-of-its-kind effort — [Thriving Families, Safer Children: A National Commitment to Well-Being \(Thriving Families\)](#)— will work across the public, private and philanthropic sectors to assist jurisdictions in developing more just and equitable systems that benefit all children and families and break harmful intergenerational cycles of trauma and poverty.

The Thriving Families effort will include diverse community stakeholders — most importantly families with lived expertise — to help them discern and develop the supports, resources, services and approaches to meet the unique needs of their families and promote the conditions to help them thrive.

"Families are our greatest asset in ensuring that all children are safe and have what they need to thrive and succeed — especially now, during the coronavirus crisis," said **Dr. Melissa T. Merrick, president and CEO of Prevent Child Abuse America**. "This extraordinary moment provides an opportunity to shift the narrative from child welfare to child well-being. We must leverage this new way of thinking to develop and deliver effective and impactful community-based resources that assist families in ways which strengthen and help keep them together."

Colorado will join teams from Nebraska, South Carolina and California/LA County in this multiyear commitment by receiving intensive technical support and resources from national partners to realize the creation of more just, equitable and humane child and family well-being systems.

Colorado's team began forming in 2019 and work is underway through an improvement collaborative known as the [Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families \(the Colorado Partnership\)](#). Partners are approaching this work differently than other states, as a county-administered human services system, by embracing local and creative solutions to prevent abuse or neglect of children before it ever occurs. Colorado's approach uses the socio-ecological model stressing a shared responsibility within local and state systems,

well-beyond child welfare, including, but not limited to, public health, economic development and health care systems.

“The Colorado Partnership is placing an emphasis on empowering families to be a part of this transformative work. Nothing about us without us. Together, we are focused on ensuring that every community in Colorado is creating the conditions where children are healthy, valued and thriving,” said **Heather Hicks, a parent of two young children and one of many parents and caregivers involved in the leadership and workgroups of the Colorado Partnership.**

The Colorado Partnership is focusing on three key priority areas:

- Aligning funding streams, programs, and outcomes within state and county human services, public health, and health care systems;
- Strengthening services and support throughout pregnancy and the first year of parenting; and
- Changing community norms to increase social connections and community support for families.

“It does take a village to raise a child. Child maltreatment prevention happens when friends, family, neighbors, government agencies, health care providers, community organizations, associations and employers strengthen families. This pandemic is shining a light on how challenging it is to parent children and everyone needs to ask themselves how they can help parents weather life’s challenges right now,” said **Jade Woodard executive director of [Illuminate Colorado \(Illuminate\)](#)**, a statewide nonprofit working to strengthen families, organizations and communities to prevent child maltreatment.

Illuminate is the backbone of the Colorado Partnership and the home of the Colorado Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America®. “With support from national partners, Colorado will have an opportunity to serve as a national model for reimagining a more just and equitable village to effectively prevent child maltreatment, identifying how we can all wrap around families in the process,” continued Woodard.

The Colorado Partnership is growing every day and includes more than 150 members and supporters from organizations representing multiple state and county government agencies, Colorado Children’s Trust Fund & Colorado Early Childhood Leadership Commission, Colorado Human Services Directors Association and Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials, research and evaluation partners, nonprofit agencies, philanthropic partners, as well as parents and caregivers.

Learn more about the Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families by visiting [COPartnershipForThrivingFamilies.org](https://COPartnershipForThrivingFamilies.org)

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