

Press Release

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UNICEF Report Highlights Need For U.S. To Make Better Choices For Our Children

U.S. ranked second-to-last in child wellbeing

CHICAGO – February 16, 2007 – A study¹ released by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) this week ranked the United States second to last in child wellbeing, out of the world's twenty-one wealthiest nations. The report clearly highlights the need to reconsider the choices this country makes politically, economically and socially when it comes to communities, families, and child well-being.

"Reports like this should lead us all to ask ourselves what kind of society we want to live in," said PCA America President and CEO Jim Hmurovich. "We clearly need to turn our priorities and choices toward more comprehensive and effective ways for communities and systems to care for children and families."

The UNICEF study reinforces countless reports and government data showing that child neglect and maltreatment is a significant but preventable public health problem in our country today. Many critics of the study have cited the fact that the high-scoring countries are not free-market democracies or are countries with gigantic publicly-funded social welfare infrastructures. Prevent Child Abuse America believes the United States has a unique opportunity to demonstrate how a free market-based democracy can benefit from a robust but efficient commitment to its children.

"Not only is it our moral obligation, but there is also an enormous economic consequence to insufficiently addressing the needs of our children," added Hmurovich. "Parents and advocates should not be the only ones concerned about what this report says; businesses, communities and the public at large should take notice for the future of our country both socially and economically."

Studies such as the *Adverse Childhood Events (ACE) Study*² have demonstrated the correlation between neglect and maltreatment in childhood and the resulting behaviors in adulthood that negatively effect everything from productivity and employment stability to crime and the financial strain on our health care system.

ABOUT PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA

Prevent Child Abuse America, founded in Chicago in 1972, is the nation's leading organization working solely to prevent the abuse and neglect of our nation's children. Through its chapters in 42 states and its voluntary home visitation services provided by Healthy Families America® in more than 400 communities nationwide, Prevent Child Abuse America helps provide healthy, safe and nurturing experiences for more than 100,000 families every year. For more information, please visit www.preventchildabuse.org.

¹ More information on the report is available at the UNICEF website at http://www.unicef.org/media/media_38299.html

² Felitti VJ, Anda RF, Nordenberg D, Williamson DF, Spitz AM, Edwards V, Koss MP, et al JS. The relationship of adult health status to childhood abuse and household dysfunction. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 1998;14:245-258. www.acestudy.org

