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## **STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **And Yet, There Is More To Do.**

**CHICAGO, IL, December 13, 2012** – With the release of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) report that "The number of reported child abuse and neglect incidents has dropped nationwide for the fifth consecutive year," we should all take a moment to celebrate the idea that the healthy development of all children is possible, that the culture around abuse may be changing, and that the prevention strategies being implemented across the country are working.

And yet, there is more to do.

We can also celebrate the following comments by George Sheldon, acting assistant secretary of ACF, "We have made excellent progress over the past five years. But what this report tells me is that we still have 681,000 children out there who need our help. We must continue coordination efforts among federal, state and local agencies to focus on child maltreatment prevention."

And yet in doing so, we need to recognize that there is more to do.

The work of prevention cannot only occur at the agency-level as described by Secretary Sheldon, but it must happen in communities and neighborhoods everywhere.

We must build the protective factors that enhance the lives of all children and all families. We must provide the supports they need, whether that's childcare, afterschool programming, or assistance finding work. We must also reduce the isolation and resulting stressors all parents can experience.

And yet, there is still more to do.

Because what we don't entirely know is why the numbers are dropping as they are. We believe in the prevention programming being implemented. We also believe that this may be result of changing demographics, parents having fewer children, and having them later in life.



But we need to know more.

Reporting laws vary from state to state, and even community to community, they are always changing, and when we cannot speak with complete confidence about the numbers being reported, we cannot help all children and all families in the ways they want to be helped.

Given that, we invite you to join us in this discussion and we ask that you consider doing so in the following ways:

- You can ensure that proven, effective prevention programming is present in your neighborhoods and communities;
- You can encourage your local media to ask the hard questions about these numbers, yet also highlight the good prevention work already in place; and
- You can ask your local business and political leaders what their plan is for children, all children, and their families, because without a plan, how can we know when we are doing what's right by them?

“There is just more we can do for children and families,” said James M. Hmurovich, President & CEO, Prevent Child Abuse America. “and there always is. But that’s because we want all children to live happy and healthy lives, not some, all. We also want to prevent child abuse and neglect before it ever occurs, and we want the future of these children, their families, and the nation itself to be as bright as it can be. What could be more noble than all that? Nothing I can think of.”

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#### **ABOUT PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA**

Prevent Child Abuse America, founded in 1972 in Chicago, works to ensure the healthy development of children nationwide. The organization promotes that vision through a network of chapters in 50 states and 530 Healthy Families America home visitation sites in 39 states, the Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and Canada. A major organizational focus is to advocate for the existence of a national policy framework and strategy for children and families while promoting evidence-based practices that prevent abuse and neglect from ever occurring. To learn more about what we’re doing to prevent child abuse and neglect and how you can help, please visit our websites, [preventchildabuse.org](http://preventchildabuse.org) and [healthyfamiliesamerica.org](http://healthyfamiliesamerica.org).