

Child Abuse Prevention Council of San Benito County



**Strategic Plan
2018 - 2021**

About Us

Our Mission

To ensure all children in San Benito County are safe, healthy, loved and have the opportunity to reach their full potential in life.

We do this by coordinating the community's efforts to prevent and respond to child, family, and community violence.

Our Vision

- **All children** are resilient, thriving and surrounded by a supportive, kind and loving community.
- **All families** have the knowledge, skills, support and resources to raise happy, healthy children.
- **All organizations and policymakers** prioritize the health, safety and well-being of all children in policy, funding and programmatic decisions.
- **All community members** share the responsibility for making San Benito County an "Abuse-Free Zone" that is free from all forms of child, family and community violence.

Our Values

CAPC of San Benito's actions and efforts are guided by the following values and principles:

- **Compassion** – We are empathetic and nonjudgmental in our response to any child or adult that has experienced or perpetrated abuse or violence.
- **Prevention** – We prioritize and advocate for policies, programs and services that promote the health and well-being of children and families and prevent problems before they occur.
- **Honesty & Integrity** – We are sincere in our intentions for the community, and we share and listen to diverse perspectives. We believe in always doing the right thing for the benefit of children in our community, even when it's difficult or not required of us.
- **Perseverance** – We are persistent and steadfast in our efforts to make positive changes in our community.
- **Collaboration & Partnerships** – We are unified in our mission to end all forms of abuse and violence. We share our ideas, talents, and resources as we work together to achieve common goals.
- **Accountability** – We seek input, listen, follow through on commitments, and share the responsibility for achieving the greater good.

Our Role and Responsibility in the Community

Our History

In 1989, the California state legislature passed **The Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council Act** (the Act), declaring that “child abuse is one of the most tragic social and criminal justice issues of our time. It found that victims of child abuse and their families face complex intervention systems involving many professionals and agencies; coordination between child protection agencies and professionals improves the response to victims and their families; and the prevention of child abuse requires the involvement of the entire community.”¹ The Act authorized the use of federal funds for county child abuse prevention programs and authorized counties to establish a Children’s Trust Fund with revenue from birth certificate fees. The Act specified that **each county shall fund at least one Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC)**, using allocations from the county Children’s Trust Fund, to fulfill these requirements:²

Purpose: The primary role of CAPCs is to coordinate the community’s efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse.

Representation: CAPCs are encouraged to include representatives from a number of categories of professional and community agencies, including:

- **Public child welfare services**, including the county welfare or children’s services department, the probation department, and licensing agencies;
- **The criminal justice system**, including law enforcement, the office of the district attorney, the courts, and the coroner;
- **Prevention and treatment services**, including medical and mental health, community-based social services, and public and private schools; and
- **Community representatives**, including volunteers, civic organizations, and the faith-based community.

Functions: CAPCs play an important role in the community, fulfilling key functions such as:

- **Provide a forum for interagency cooperation and coordination** in the prevention, detection, treatment, and legal processing of child abuse cases.
- **Promote public awareness** of abuse and neglect and the resources available.

¹ Promising Practices for Child Abuse Prevention Councils. California Institute on Human Services, Sonoma State University. 2005. <http://www.cirinc.org/pdfdocs/promisingpractices2005.pdf>

² http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?division=9.&chapter=12.5.&part=6.&lawCode=WIC&article=2.

- **Encourage and facilitate training** of professionals in detection, treatment, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- **Recommend improvements in services** to families and victims.
- **Encourage and facilitate community support** for child abuse and neglect programs.

The Act states that CAPCs may form committees to carry out specific functions. In addition, CAPCs receiving funding under the Act are required to:

- Develop a protocol for interagency coordination and provide yearly reports to the county board of supervisors.
- Provide a local cash or in-kind match of 33-1/3 percent or a partial match of \$1 for every \$3 in grant funds.

Following the passage of the Act, the San Benito County Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance 786, establishing the Child Abuse Prevention Council of San Benito County to implement the goals and objectives outlined in the Act, with funding from the county's Children's Trust Fund.

Every Child Deserves to Thrive

The Important Role of Parents & Primary Caregivers

Raising children to become healthy, thriving adults is one of the most difficult, important, and fulfilling jobs that many people will ever have. All parents and primary caregivers – biological, foster or adoptive parents, grandparents, or other relatives or family friends raising children – need guidance, encouragement, support or “on-the-job training” at some point in their children's lives. Positive, nurturing parenting practices and family environments are essential for raising healthy, thriving children. Decades of research confirm that a child's relationships and experiences – particularly in the earliest years of childhood – shape the developing brain and lay the foundation for future social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. While there are many other social, economic, and environmental factors that affect children's health and development, the quality of parenting and caregiving is considered one of the essential “building blocks” of lifelong health and well-being.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

However, the reality is that not all children have the same opportunity to thrive. A growing body of research indicates that children who experience multiple or chronic sources of stress and adversity are at greater risk for developing physical, mental, emotional, behavioral and learning problems in childhood and later in life. Exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) –

including physical or emotional abuse, neglect, a caregiver’s mental illness or substance abuse, a parent in prison, exposure to domestic violence, or the cumulative effects of poverty – can create toxic levels of stress that disrupt children’s developing brains and impair healthy development.

As the number of adverse experiences in a child’s life increases, so does the risk for developing poor health behaviors and outcomes later in life. The groundbreaking ACE Study conducted in 1998 by Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention³ found that adults who reported experiencing four or more adverse childhood experiences were:

- 12 times more likely to attempt suicide
- 10 times more likely to use intravenous drugs
- 7 times more likely to be addicted to alcohol
- 5 times more likely to experience depression
- 2 times more likely to have cancer

A Snapshot of Child Abuse & Neglect in San Benito County

Many children in San Benito County are raised in loving, stable homes, and there are community-level trends that appear promising. In San Benito County, the rate of substantiated child abuse reports has decreased 69% over the last decade, 96% of emergency 24-hour child abuse investigations are completed in a timely manner, and the rate of entries into foster care (2.3 per 1,000) is the lowest it’s been in over a decade.

While these trends are promising, there are also signs that many other children are living with ACEs that can require costly, extreme interventions if left unaddressed. Indicators of risk that warrant a coordinated, collaborative response by CAPC members, other agencies and community members include:

- 59% of non-emergency 10-day child abuse investigations are considered “not timely.” This rate is nearly two times the State rate of 31%.
- 96% of domestic violence cases have children living in the home.
- Nearly two-thirds of domestic violence cases are witnessed by children.
- 15% of children under the age of 18 live below Poverty Level. The percentage is slightly higher (18%) among Latino children, who make up 71% of the county’s child population.
- 20% of adults reported binge drinking within the last 30 days.

³ Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults. Felitti, Vincent J et al. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Volume 14 , Issue 4 , 245 – 258.

- Nearly 80% of adult women have graduated from high school. However, less than 10% of Oaxacan women have completed high school, which can make it more difficult to achieve economic stability.
- Nearly 9% of women are likely to have experienced serious psychological distress in the past year.

In addition, San Benito County has approximately 700 indigenous community members, primarily of Triqui origin, who migrated from Oaxaca, Mexico. According to data cited by Lucila Alvarez in *Addressing Social Issues Affecting Vulnerable Populations in San Benito County through Community Events*, there were approximately 300 adults and 400 children of Triqui origin as of 2012 (First 5 San Benito 2012-14 Strategic Plan), representing about 8% of San Benito County's population (San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency, 2014).⁴

While indigenous community members contribute to the richness of San Benito County's cultural diversity, they are often at greater risk of experiencing social isolation due to language and cultural barriers. Alvarez' report states that, "Many times, Triqui community members arrive in the United States speaking and understanding only their native Triqui language. Their customs and traditions clash with those of the United States and due to fear they isolate themselves and do not seek any community services...The American beliefs and traditions vary greatly from the Oaxacan traditions in areas of child marriage, physical punishment and co-sleeping with children. These actions are viewed as child abuse and many times indigenous families have to face the child welfare system and risk having their families split apart."⁵ In addition, the 2014 report on *The Status of Women in San Benito County* estimates that 50% of Oaxacan women experience domestic violence, a risk factor that perpetuates social isolation and impairs children's health and well-being.

Although none of the risk factors described above are the sole cause of child abuse, neglect or domestic violence, they are often contributing or co-occurring factors that increase the cumulative risk. The data described above are summarized with sources in **Appendix A**, and they represent just a handful of indicators of strengths and risks in the community. The CAPC members have the ability to collect and share many more data points that could inform and engage partners and community members in ongoing efforts to prevent and end all forms of child abuse, neglect, and family violence.

⁴ Alvarez, Lucila, "Addressing Social Issues Affecting Vulnerable Populations in San Benito County through Community Events" (2017). Capstone Projects and Master's Theses. 212. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all/212

⁵ Ibid

Protective Factors

The good news is that even when children and families are faced with adverse experiences, many families also possess or develop Protective Factors that can mitigate the impact of cumulative risks. The Protective Factors described below are the foundation of Strengthening Families™, a research-informed approach developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.⁶

1. **Parental resilience:** Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma.
2. **Social connections:** Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support.
3. **Knowledge of parenting and child development:** Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development.
4. **Concrete support in times of need:** Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.
5. **Social and emotional competence of children:** Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.

Our Priorities

As a community council with an aspirational vision and modest resources, CAPC of San Benito County relies on its dedicated, passionate members to fulfill its mission and state-mandated functions. In an effort to achieve the ideal balance between vision and reality, the CAPC members agreed to focus their time, resources and efforts over the next three years on the following Priority Areas and Goals:

1. **Community Outreach & Engagement:** Increase community awareness about contributing causes and impacts of all forms of child abuse and neglect.
2. **Culturally Competent and Trauma-Informed Systems:** Enhance service providers' knowledge, skills, and commitment to provide culturally competent, trauma-informed services that are accessible, responsive, and strengths-based.

⁶ About Strengthening Families™ and the Protective Factors Framework. Center for the Study of Social Policy. <https://www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies/body/About-Strengthening-Families.pdf>

3. **Child Welfare Outcomes:** Support existing efforts to improve timeliness of non-emergency child abuse investigations and decrease the number of children in foster care.
4. **Strategic, Communitywide Response to Child Abuse, Neglect & Domestic Violence:** Engage community members and system partners in achieving a common goal of eliminating all forms of child abuse and neglect in San Benito County.

These priorities represent just a few of the issues that affect children’s and families’ health and well-being. They were selected during a strategic planning retreat based on the degree of fit with the CAPC’s purpose and community need (based on a preliminary analysis of community indicators of risk and child well-being).

Strategy Roadmap

CAPC members identified strategies (broad categories of activities) and recommended activities to address each priority area. Activities were categorized based on the recommended role for CAPC: **Lead** the implementation of the proposed activities, **Join** existing initiatives or efforts led by other entities, or **Fund** partners in the community to implement the activities. The summary of Priority Areas, Goals, Vision of Success, Strategies and Potential Activities listed below is intended to serve as a high-level road map to guide the CAPC’s work over the next three years, while also allowing flexibility to adapt strategies and activities as community needs or conditions change.

Priority Area 1: Community Outreach & Engagement

CAPC’s Goal: Increase community awareness about contributing causes and impacts of all forms of child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, exposure to domestic violence) and neglect.

Vision of Success

- Every CAPC member is aware of services available for children and families in our community.
- Partner agencies and community members are inspired to become – and stay – involved in communitywide efforts to prevent, mitigate, and end all forms of child abuse and neglect.

Strategies

- Conduct outreach in different parts of San Benito County to reach diverse community members and establish new partnerships.
- Engage partner agencies in offering and/or participating in community education about all forms of child abuse and neglect.

Activities

LEAD	Potential Partners
1. Coordinate and/or provide community education to professionals (e.g. Mandated Reporter Training)	San Benito County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) – Child & Family Services (CFS)
2. Advocate for and support County agencies to adopt a uniform policy on the frequency of Mandated Reporter Training (e.g. once every 2-3 years)	HHSA – CFS, County of San Benito
JOIN	Potential Partners
3. Support other agencies’ efforts to offer community education for parents (e.g. disseminate information about community education/events, recruit parent participants, attend in-services to learn about available resources, etc)	HHSA – CFS, First 5 San Benito, Probation, parenting programs
4. Work with partner agencies to increase the availability of community education for underserved populations	Community Solutions, Public Health, San Benito Health Foundation
FUND	Potential Partners
5. Provide funding for community education for children/youth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be funded through Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) funds and/or San Benito County Children’s Trust Fund 	Girls, Inc., Hollister Youth Alliance, Community Solutions, Other potential partners may be identified

Priority Area 2: Culturally Competent and Trauma-Informed Systems

CAPC’s Goal: Enhance service providers’ knowledge, skills, and commitment to provide culturally competent, trauma-informed services that are accessible, responsive, and strengths-based.

Vision of Success

- All dimensions of diversity (culture, language, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomics, etc) are acknowledged and valued as strengths.
- Child abuse prevention and intervention services and materials are culturally and linguistically responsive and accessible to all community members.
- Child abuse prevention and intervention policies, programs and practices are built upon principles of trauma-informed care and resilience.

Strategies

- Establish relationships with others who have knowledge, experience and relationships with diverse cultural groups in San Benito County.
- Increase opportunities for collaboration and training, as a vehicle for increasing cultural competence and capacity to provide trauma-informed care.

Activities

LEAD	Potential Partners
1. Build relationships and partnerships with “gatekeepers” – individuals, community-based groups and/or organizations that have relationships and/or direct experience with diverse populations (e.g. immigrant communities, indigenous communities from México, LGBTQ+ youth and parents, trauma survivors, etc) – who can assist CAPC members with increasing their own knowledge and skills to provide culturally competent, trauma-informed services	As identified
JOIN	Potential Partners
2. Partner with other agencies to coordinate or offer trainings for service providers (including CAPC member agencies) on providing culturally responsive services and trauma-informed care	As identified
3. Collaborate with other partners and cultural gatekeepers to create or obtain access to culturally and linguistically appropriate resources and materials	As identified

Priority Area 3: Child Welfare Outcomes

CAPC’s Goal: Support existing efforts to improve timeliness of non-emergency child abuse investigations and decrease the number of children in foster care.

Vision of Success

- Children and families experience a consistent, timely, supportive, and efficient response to reports of child abuse and neglect.
- Investigations are completed and closed in a timely manner, or referred for services, to minimize additional stress and trauma experienced by children and families.
- Children remain living at home with their families, in their communities.

Strategies

- Support Child & Family Services and other partners to improve responsiveness and services for children and families involved with the child welfare system.

Activities

LEAD	Potential Partners
1. Initiate ways to address burnout and secondary trauma (factors that impact timely investigations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and share formal recommendations to CFS around support for social workers • Support CFS in building team cohesion and effective practice 	San Benito County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) – Child & Family Services (CFS)
1. Act as an advisory council to CFS to ensure CFS goals, objectives and outcomes are addressed	HHSA – CFS
JOIN	Potential Partners
3. Assure services and systems are in place to prevent separation of families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prenatal screenings • Referrals to services • Toxicology screenings conducted at appropriate touchpoints 	HHSA – CFS
OTHER ROLE	Potential Partners
4. Support efforts to ensure accurate recording and monitoring of children in the child welfare system (e.g. request data, design practice accordingly)	HHSA – CFS

Priority Area 4: Strategic, Communitywide Response to Child Abuse, Neglect & Domestic Violence

CAPC’s Goal: Engage community members and system partners in achieving a common goal of eliminating all forms of child abuse and neglect in San Benito County.

Vision of Success

- San Benito County’s rates of child abuse and neglect and domestic violence decrease.

Strategies

- Disseminate CAPC’s strategic plan and engage partners in implementing activities.
- Increase awareness of and access to community-based prevention and family strengthening services.
- Establish a cross-sector Response Team to provide early intervention and treatment services for families who are at risk for or have experienced child abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.

Activities

LEAD	Potential Partners
1. CAPC members share the 3-year strategic plan; engage other agencies and community members in implementing activities	As identified
2. Disseminate CAPC information to other agencies and partners	As identified
JOIN	Potential Partners
3. Increase community’s awareness of and access to other programs/services for children, parents and families	HHSA, Community Solutions, Emmaus House, Victim Witness, Youth Alliance, CASA, Other partners
4. Support existing cross-sector collaboratives or Response Teams. Ensure the Response Team has the necessary knowledge, skills, capacity, partners and systems support to address all forms of child abuse and neglect	HHSA – CFS, law enforcement, schools, Community Solutions, Public Health
FUND	Potential Partners
5. Provide resources to support the oversight and exchange of ideas related to data tracking	As identified

Acknowledgements

This plan was developed based on the collective wisdom, experience, and passion of the members of the Child Abuse Prevention Council of San Benito County listed below. It will serve as a living document that simultaneously guides the CAPC's efforts and evolves to reflect successes and lessons learned.

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