



Exploring Opportunities to Improve Child Welfare in Idaho

Christine Tiddens, LMSW
ctiddens@jannus.org

September 22, 2017
Foster Care Study Committee

Idaho Voices for Children

- Idaho Voices for Children advances policies that improve the lives of Idaho kids and their families in four key areas of focus:



1. Child Safety & Welfare
2. Health & Access to Care
3. Education & School Readiness
4. Family Economic Stability

Improving the Welfare of Idaho Kids

Reduce the number of children entering foster care in Idaho:

- Invest in promising prevention efforts
- Build strong community support systems

Strengthen the foster care system and ensure kids receive support to:

- Process and heal
- Build lasting relationships
- Reach their full potential

REDUCING THE NEED FOR FOSTER CARE



Proven Prevention Efforts

- By promoting positive parenting practices and supporting parents in times of high stress, we can reduce the number of children entering foster care



Home Visiting Programs in Idaho

- The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program:
 - Provides family support and coaching
 - Is a voluntary program
 - Offers evidence-based services & referrals
- Available Home Visiting Programs:
 - Parents as Teachers
 - Nurse-Family Partnership
 - Early Head Start Home-Based



Benefits of Home Visiting Programs

- Studies have shown multiple benefits for Home Visiting Program participants:
 - A **48%** reduction in child abuse and neglect
 - **22%** fewer birth complications
 - A **56%** reduction in ER visits for accidents and poisonings
 - Mothers are **five times** more likely to enroll in school or training
- **Every \$1 invested in Home Visiting saves \$5.70 in future costs for families and communities**

48%

Reduction in
**child abuse
& neglect**

Investing in Idaho's Future

- Increasing state investments in Home Visiting Programs across Idaho will:



Prevent child abuse and neglect



Improve family economic security



Enhance child development and school readiness



Result in overall cost savings for taxpayers

Hillarie's Story



STRENGTHENING THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM



Sibling Bonds Promote Healthy Development

- Maintaining sibling bonds in foster care is proven to:
 - Help children achieve developmental milestones
 - Provide emotional support
 - Ensure a shared history, culture, and sense of community
 - Spare children the experience of yet another loss in their lives



National Efforts to Preserve Sibling Bonds

- Over half of states have legislation that addresses sibling relationships in foster care and adoption. Most policies stipulate:
 1. Consideration of siblings in foster placement
 2. Efforts to facilitate visitation or ongoing contacts with sibling groups not placed together*
 3. Consideration of siblings in permanency planning decisions
 4. Efforts for maintaining sibling contact post-adoption



** Unless it is contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings to do so*

Chalyce's Story



PRESERVING SIBLING CONNECTIONS



THANK YOU!

Christine Tiddens, LMSW
ctiddens@jannus.org

