Exploring Opportunities to Improve Child Welfare in Idaho

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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
Investing in Idaho’s Future

- Increasing state investments in Home Visiting Programs across Idaho will:
  - Prevent child abuse and neglect
  - Enhance child development and school readiness
  - Improve family economic security
  - 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!