



# Colorado Statewide Child Abuse Reporting Hotline and Public Awareness Campaign

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## Colorado Children's Caucus Presentation January 13, 2014

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# Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy

In 2012, Governor Hickenlooper announced a new child welfare plan - “Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy”

- The original plan consists of five key strategies
  - Common practice approach
  - Performance management
  - Work force development
  - Funding alignment
  - Increase transparency and public engagement
- First year highlights
  - Implementation of C-Stat
  - IV-E Waiver
  - Expansion of Differential Response
  - Training Academy redesign
  - Near Fatalities and Egregious Incidents



# Governor's Child Welfare Plan 2.0

- Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy 2.0
  - Governor Hickenlooper's enhanced Child Welfare Plan was announced February 2013
  - With the support of the Colorado General Assembly - \$22.1 million of new investments
- The plan builds upon Colorado's strong child welfare framework, enhances existing services and introduces new practices
  - New prevention services
  - Implementation of IV-E Waiver
  - Statewide child abuse reporting hotline
  - Enhanced work force development
  - Increased transparency and public engagement



# Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy 2.0

## Focusing on Prevention

### Budget

- Create new prevention programs for families with young children “screened out”
  - SafeCare
  - Community Response
  - Nurse Family Partnership
- Core Services funding to counties to support safety services for children at home

### Legislative

- Expand mandatory reporting
- IV-E Waiver implementation and funding

## Consistent Decision Making

### Budget

- **Establish a statewide child abuse reporting hotline**
- **Create a public awareness campaign on reporting child maltreatment**
- Establish new competencies and training for child abuse hotline and screening & assessment staff
- Create new training for mandatory reporters
- Require consistent screening rules and practices for all counties (RED Teams)

### Legislative

- Public release of child identifying information in fatality reports
- Amend statewide referral and screening authority

## Investing in the Work Force

### Budget

- Fund new mobile technologies (tablets, laptops, smartphones) for caseworkers
- Transparency through public facing website

### Budget/Policy/Legislative

- Workload/caseload audit





# Consistent Decision Making

## Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Hotline and Public Awareness Campaign

- **Statewide hotline providing a toll-free number to report child abuse or neglect that will be operational by January 2015**
  - **Corresponding public awareness and child abuse prevention campaign**
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- Since June 2013, the Hotline Steering Committee has been meeting twice monthly to develop a recommendation for a statewide child abuse and neglect hotline reporting system and public awareness campaign. The committee's membership includes state staff and partners from the counties and community.
  - Through a competitive process that included a thorough review of proposals by committee members, the Department hired Hornby Zeller Associates and Pure Brand Communications to assist with the committee's work.
  - The Hotline Steering Committee formed a public awareness subcommittee to advise Pure Brand Communications and review other child abuse and neglect public awareness campaigns.



# Consistent Decision Making

## Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Hotline and Public Awareness Campaign

- **Statewide hotline providing a toll-free number to report child abuse or neglect that will be operational by January 2015**
  - **Corresponding public awareness and child abuse prevention campaign**
- 
- The committee has conducted extensive research on call handling in Colorado counties, hotline systems in other states, and telephone systems. Committee members participated in a tour of Arapahoe County's hotline, enhanced screening, and RED team operations; while HZA conducted site visits of Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Boulder, La Plata, Larimer, and Otero counties. In early September, the committee organized a team of 15 members and participants to explore the child abuse and neglect reporting systems in Columbus, OH and Albany, NY.
  - The statewide routing system will include a single number to report child abuse and neglect; improved training for mandatory reporters, hotline workers, and supervisors; improved screening consistency through statewide implementation of RED teams; a statewide public awareness campaign; and significant improvements to hotline data collection.



# Consistent Decision Making

## Statewide Hotline to Report Concerns about Child Abuse and Neglect

The committee has identified specific features of the statewide reporting system. The following is a summary of the committee's recommendations:

- Establish a statewide, toll-free number for reporting child abuse and neglect that will route calls to the county where the child resides.
- Counties will maintain their current practices of accepting reports of abuse and neglect, but to ensure proper routing, each county must have a dedicated line for child abuse and neglect reporting.
- Calls made directly to a county's dedicated line will also go through the statewide phone system, for data collection purposes, and will be re-routed directly to the county. This process will be automated and seamless, and will not require putting a caller on hold or causing any delay in answering calls.





# Consistent Decision Making

## Statewide Hotline to Report Concerns about Child Abuse and Neglect

The committee has identified specific features of the statewide reporting system. The following is a summary of the committee's recommendations:

- The statewide phone system will collect data on all calls received including call volume, call duration, speed of answer, wait time, and abandonment rate. Through Trails, call takers will capture data related to call categories, the number of calls that are reports of abuse, the number of calls from mandated reporters and general public, and categories of callers i.e., health care professional, educator, relative, etc.
- After hours, calls received through the statewide phone system will be routed to an after-hours number that is specified by the counties. There will be flexibility to change the after-hours number as needed.
- All calls will be recorded and linked to corresponding information in Trails. The recordings will be easily accessible and will be used for training, quality assurance, and follow-up analysis when a complaint is received.





# Consistent Decision Making

## Statewide Hotline to Report Concerns about Child Abuse and Neglect

The committee has identified specific features of the statewide reporting system. The following is a summary of the committee's recommendations:

- The system for routing callers to counties will be largely automated; however, callers will have the option of speaking with a live person through the Help Desk. The sole function of the Help Desk will be to route callers to the appropriate county. The committee recommends that the State contract with counties to operate the Help Desk, and that there should be multiple Help Desk locations across the state. The committee anticipates the Help Desk should be launched with 12 call takers.
- Callers who speak Spanish will be prompted to complete the call in Spanish (press "2"). Callers who do not speak either English or Spanish will be connected to the Help Desk, which will utilize the Language Line to help the caller complete the call.
- The statewide phone system will incorporate interactive voice response technology, which will allow callers to speak the name of the county where the child resides. Please see attached call flow diagram.



# Consistent Decision Making

## Statewide Hotline to Report Concerns about Child Abuse and Neglect

The committee has identified specific features of the statewide reporting system. The following is a summary of the committee's recommendations:

- If a caller does not know the name of the county or the system does not recognize the county name spoken, the call will be directed to the Help Desk, which will assist the caller in determining the county.
- All calls will be entered into Trails either directly or through an automated system. This will permit the identification of the types of calls received that are not reporting child abuse or neglect.
- A comprehensive training curriculum, specifically for those staff answering the hotline is being developed for all new workers who will be taking calls. A modified curriculum will be required for current workers who are experienced at taking calls. The existing training curriculum for caseworkers will be expanded to include a session on hotline screening.



# Consistent Decision Making

## Statewide Hotline to Report Concerns about Child Abuse and Neglect

The committee has identified specific features of the statewide reporting system. The following is a summary of the committee's recommendations:

- All staff whose job entails answering hotline calls must pass a certification process that the training office will develop. Annual recertification will also be required.
- An Enhanced Screening Guide has been developed to provide call takers with structured process for interviewing reporters who are calling the hotline. This guide is already being used by 37 Colorado counties. It will now be required for all counties, with training provided.
- In order to ensure continuous quality work, all supervisors will be required to review a sample of calls from every worker at prescribed intervals. This will occur either through monitoring live calls or listening to randomly selected recorded calls. A standardized call evaluation form will be developed. The number of calls to be reviewed for each worker will be determined later by the committee.



# Consistent Decision Making

## Statewide Hotline to Report Concerns about Child Abuse and Neglect

The committee has identified specific features of the statewide reporting system. The following is a summary of the committee's recommendations:

The committee has identified six critical components to ensure a successful implementation and roll out of the hotline reporting system:

- o A routing system that quickly routes calls to counties;
- o Data collection on all calls received through the system;
- o Training and certification for hotline workers and their supervisors;
- o Adequate staffing for counties and the state;
- o Continuous quality improvement; and
- o A public awareness campaign.



# Public Opinion Research

In an effort to develop an evidence-based public awareness campaign to promote a statewide hotline to report child abuse and neglect, primary opinion research was conducted to accurately understand perceptions of child abuse and neglect in the state of Colorado.

Qualitative and quantitative research was conducted in September 2013:

- Statewide telephone survey of 500 Coloradoans to produces results that are representative of the state's adult population-at-large.
- Additionally, the research sought to measure perception variances among Latinos, as well as the professionals required by law to report child abuse and neglect, listed in C.R.S.19-3-304 more commonly known as "Mandatory Reporters", to enable customized messaging and support the development of a culturally inclusive public awareness campaign.
- Two focus groups were conducted in the Denver, but reflective the socio-economic diversity of the state.
- The research findings will help develop recommended messaging and strategy for a public awareness campaign to help launch the statewide hotline.



# Do you see child abuse?

## Public Opinion Research Key Findings

This first question was an open-ended question. Survey respondents were asked to estimate **what percentage of our state's children and youth are victims of child abuse and/or neglect in any given year.**

The survey found that Colorado's adult general population believes that **more than one-in-four CO kids** statewide (26%) are the victim of abuse/or neglect, a view that softens somewhat (17%) when respondents are asked the same question in terms of their local area.

Among Latinos, perception of abuse/neglect is even more dramatic, with this subset of respondents saying they believe that the percentage of kids statewide who are victims is closer to **one-in-three Colorado kids (31%).**

When asked about the trend, a 51% majority of Colorado adults **believe that the percentage of abused or neglected kids is increasing** compared to ten years ago

**More than half of Colorado adults (51%) also say they have personally encountered a child that they suspected was a victim of abuse or neglect.** This number is **even higher for Latinos (57%),** and **the highest for Mandatory Reporters, among whom more than two thirds (67%) say they have encountered abused or neglected children.**



# Can you identify it?

## Public Opinion Research Key Findings

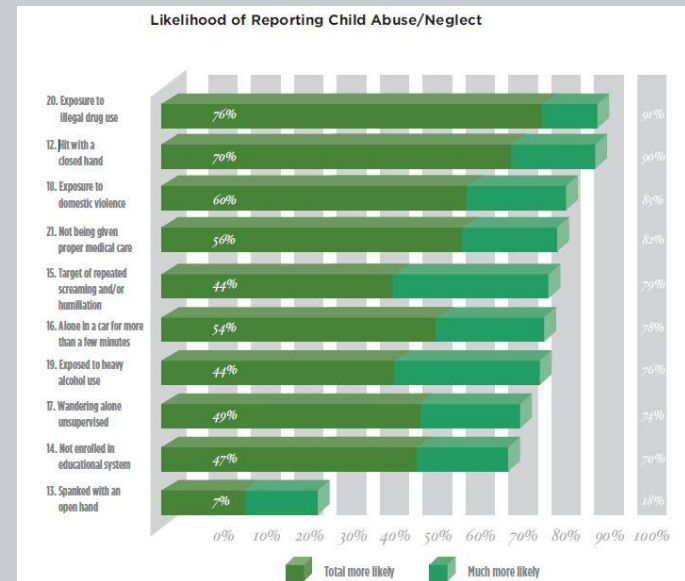
**Strong majorities of Colorado adults say they are confident that they can identify signs of abuse (73% say they are confident they could spot these signs of abuse) and neglect (70%).** These levels of confidence rise a bit among both Mandatory Reporters (81% abuse/75% neglect) and among Latinos (81%/77%). Most indicate that abuse is sometimes easier to identify than neglect.

### What situations are most and least likely to trigger a report to authorities?

Survey respondents were given a series of situations, and asked if they were to become aware of one of these scenarios, would they be more or less likely to report it.

At the top of the list of situations that would compel the general population to report is a scenario where “a child is being exposed to illegal drug use in the household” (91% more likely to report).

A close second, “a child being hit with a closed hand” (90%) also ranks at the top. With the exception of “a child being spanked (18%), **nearly every scenario** compelled two-thirds or more of Coloradans to **say they would report it**.







# Do you know what to do?

## Public Opinion Research Key Findings

**68% of Colorado adults said they definitely know (38%) or probably know (30%)** what steps to take if they become aware of potential child abuse/neglect. Even more confident are Latinos (72% definitely/probably know correct steps), with Mandatory Reporters reporting the most confidence (83%) in knowing what to do.

So, the data at this point in the survey shows that Coloradans :

- **believe it's a widespread problem;**
- **they are confident that they can spot the signs;**
- they **say** that they are **very likely to report a litany of typical abuse and neglect situations;** and
- a majority says **they know the proper steps** to take in these scenarios.



# What would you do?

## Public Opinion Research Key Findings

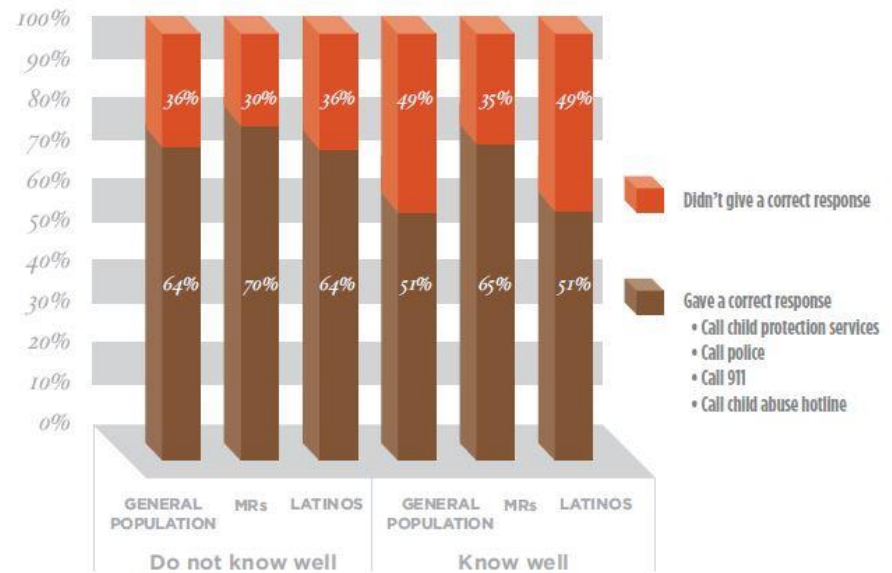
### What would you do if you know the abuser?

Only half of Colorado adults (51%) can name a proper next step (call child protection services, county hotline, police, or 911) in circumstances where they have encountered suspected abuse or neglect and know the suspected abuser. Correct responses increase to 64% in a scenario where **they do not know the abuser**.

### Mandatory Reporters

Less than two-thirds of Mandatory Reporters surveyed (65%) name a proper step in where they knew the suspected abuser, with this percentage rising to **70% in cases where they did not know the abuser**.

Knowledge of Next Steps





# So, what's the hesitation?

## Public Opinion Research Key Findings

The biggest cause for pause is “I don’t know enough about the situation and worry that I might be wrong” (65% say this lack of complete information would make them less likely to report).

	TOTAL LESS LIKELY	
	Gen Pop	Latinos
22. Worried about negative reaction from parents	34%	25%
23. Not my place to intrude on family privacy	39%	26%
24. Isn't my responsibility	28%	21%
25. Don't know enough about the situation	65%	57%
26. Don't want to be involved in a complicated situation	34%	27%
27. Know the suspected abusers or the family involved	33%	22%
28. My ideas about how to raise children are different from others	43%	31%
29. Don't think my report will be kept anonymous and/or confidential	32%	24%
30. It could just make things worse for the child	47%	43%
31. Don't think that reporting will result in real, timely, or proper action	37%	26%



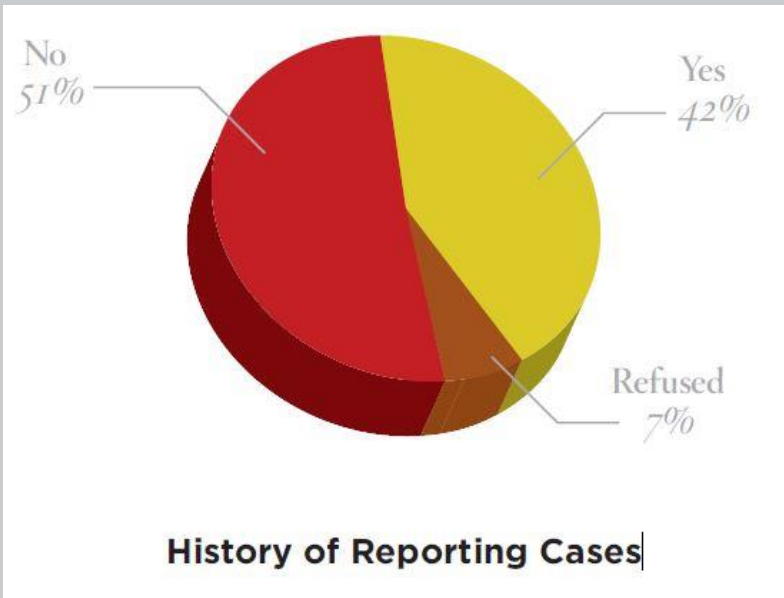
# Mandatory Reports

## Public Opinion Research Key Findings

While **79% of Mandatory Reporters know that they have this status**, nearly half of this group report that they **do not recall having received any training** from their employer on the subject.

Mandatory Reporters were also asked to share whether they had ever reported a case of suspected child abuse or neglect. **More than half (58%) say they have never reported a case.**

By comparison, earlier in the survey:  
More than two thirds of Mandatory Reporters (67%) said they have personally encountered abused or neglected children.





# Public Awareness Campaign Messaging

- Coloradoans are well aware child abuse and neglect is a problem, believing that one in four children experience abuse or neglect.
- Strong majorities of Coloradoans say they are confident that they can identify signs of abuse and they say that they are very likely to report a litany of typical abuse and neglect situations.
- More than half of Coloradoans (51%) say they have personally encountered a child that they suspected was a victim of abuse or neglect.
- Perception is very different from reality. During SFY12-13, it is estimated that **75% of reports came from mandatory reporters**, 15% came from family members, and **only 10% came from the general public**.
- Only half of Coloradoans (51%) can name a proper next step (call child protection services, county hotline, police, or 911) in circumstances where they have encountered suspected abuse or neglect and know the suspected abuser. Less than two-thirds of mandatory reporters surveyed (65%) named a proper step when they knew the suspected abuser well, rising to just 70% when they did not know the abuser.
- The biggest perceived barrier to reporting child abuse and neglect: “I don’t know enough about the situation and worry that I might be wrong” (65% said this lack of complete information would make them less likely to report).



# Any Questions?



Some children in this presentation are featured in Colorado's Heart Gallery

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