




Learn To Quilt: A Federal Perspective

New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect 2023 Biennial Conference: The Intersection of Race, Poverty and Neglect in Child Welfare

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Agenda

- Over Surveillance
- The Role of the definition of “Neglect”
- Children’s Bureau’s Quilt of Supports

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Why a Quilt?

- In African-American culture, quilts are more than decorative. They are visual histories, stitching together centuries of triumphs, challenges, and resilience.
- Historically, quilts held secret maps for the Underground Railroad, illustrating support as a literal lifeline for escaping.
- The process of quilting shows how when woven together, diverse elements strengthen the fabric of our communities.



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Overview of the U.S. Children's Bureau

Codified in 1912 the Children's Bureau partners with federal, state, tribal, and local agencies to improve the overall health and well-being of our nation's children and families.

To achieve our goals, we participate in a variety of projects, including the following:

- Providing guidance on federal law, policy and program regulations
- Funding essential services, helping states, tribes, and territories operate every aspect of their child welfare systems
- Supporting innovation through competitive, peer-reviewed grants for research and program development
- Offering training and technical assistance to improve child welfare service delivery
- Monitoring child welfare services to help states and tribes achieve positive outcomes for children and families
- Sharing research to help child welfare professionals improve their services



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VISION

A loving approach to helping children obtain what they need to live with dignity by comprehensively supporting families through a collaborative network of carefully selected resources and effective public and private investments, grounded in community and culture, and a workforce fully devoted to serving with intentional equity.



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THE FOLLOWING ARE OUR PRIORITY GOALS:



Prevent Children from Coming into Foster Care



Support For Kinship Caregivers



Ensure Youth Leave Care with Strengthened Relationships, Holistic Supports, and Opportunities



Invest in the Child Welfare Workforce



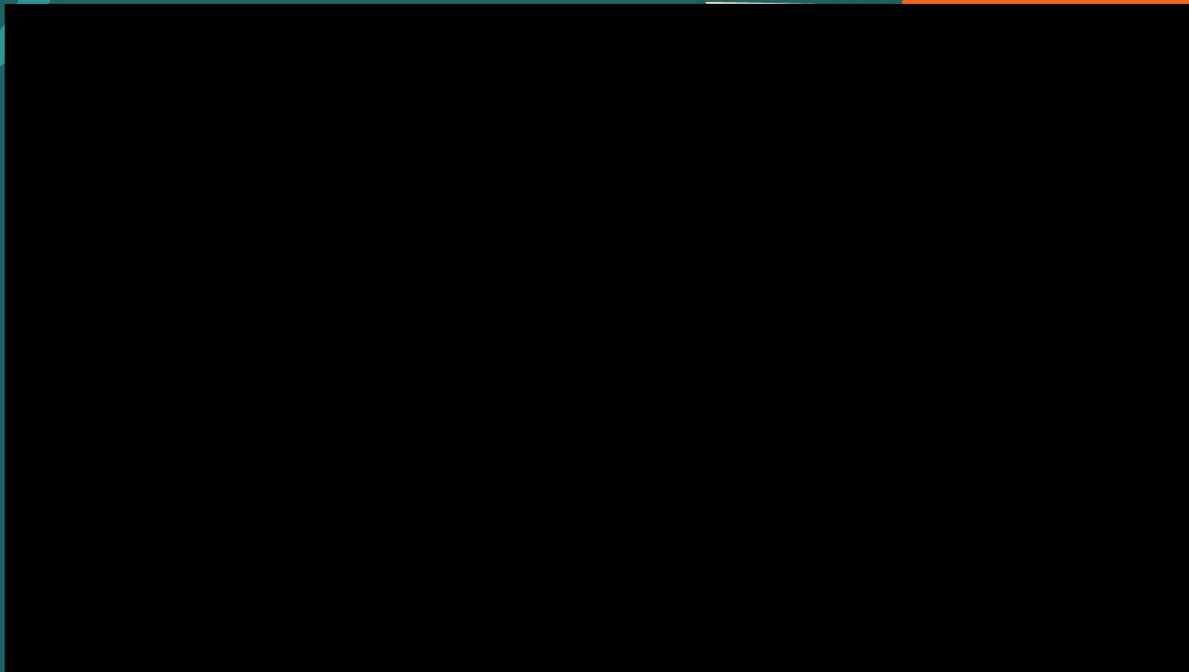
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Prevent Children from Coming into Foster Care

We call on jurisdictions to amend their definitions of child neglect to clearly distinguish neglect from poverty, so that children who can be safely supported in their communities are not separated from their families.



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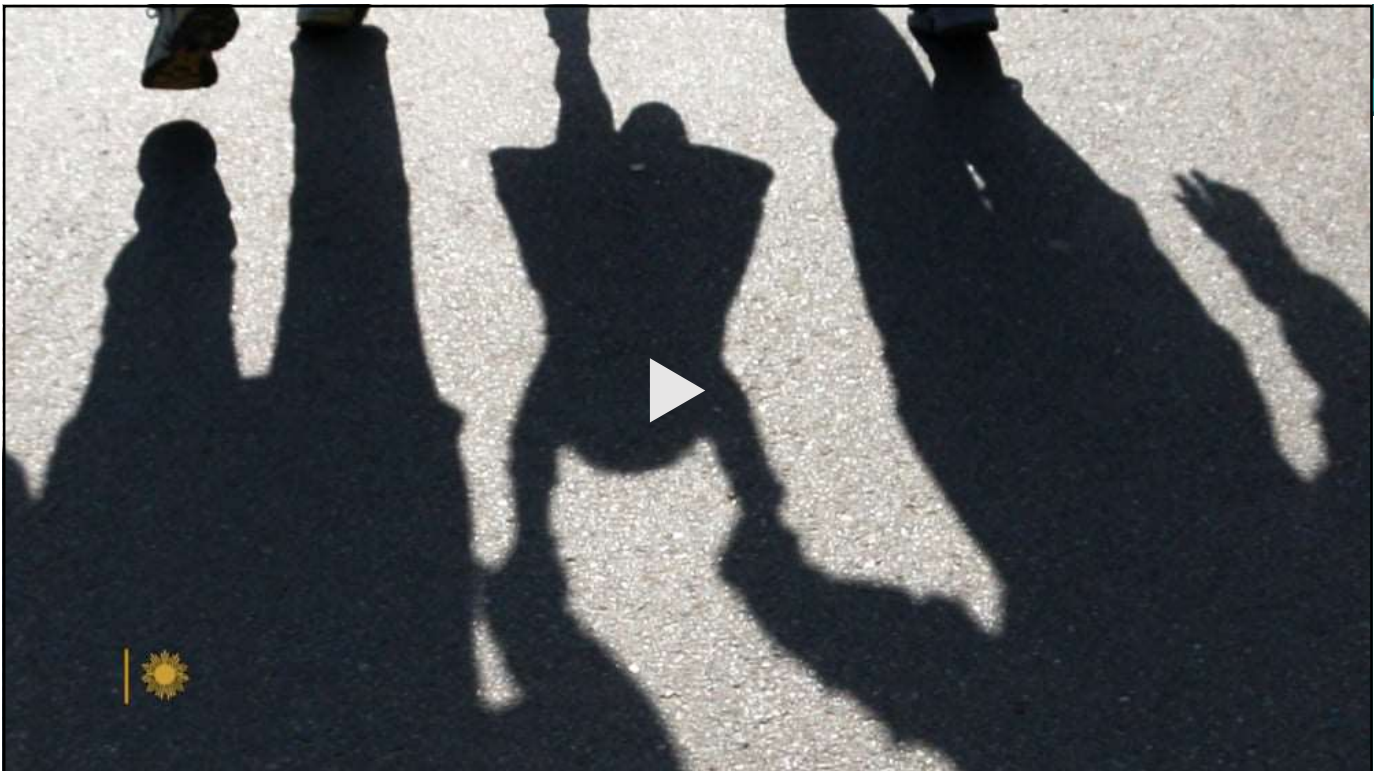


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It's unmistakably clear that Black families are over surveilled. This heightened scrutiny is anchored in systemic biases, and particularly, anti-black racism.



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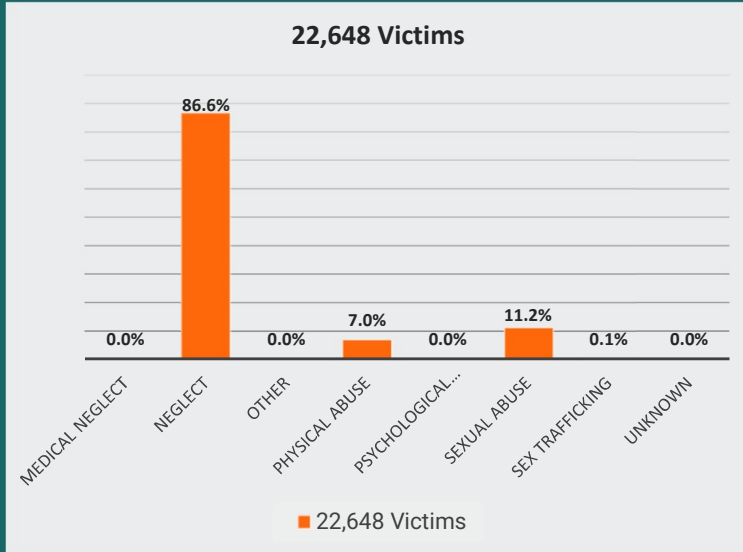


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State Examples of Current Neglect Language

Indiana

Black children: **11.4% of child population** | **17.4% of entry into care**



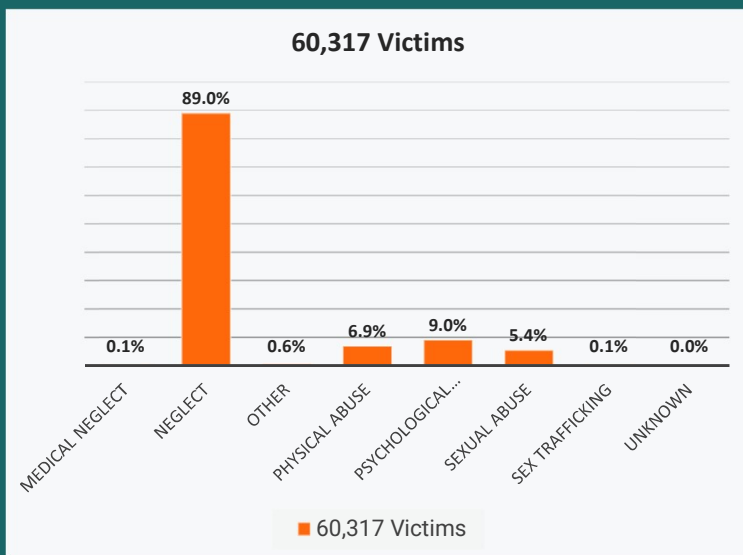
'Neglect' or 'neglected' means . . .
 The child's physical or mental condition is seriously impaired or seriously endangered as a result of the inability, refusal, or neglect of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2022). Child Maltreatment 2020. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>.

State Examples of Current Neglect Language

California

Black children: **5.0% of child population** | **15.3% of entry into care**



The child has suffered, or there is a substantial risk that the child will suffer, serious physical harm or illness as a result of . . .

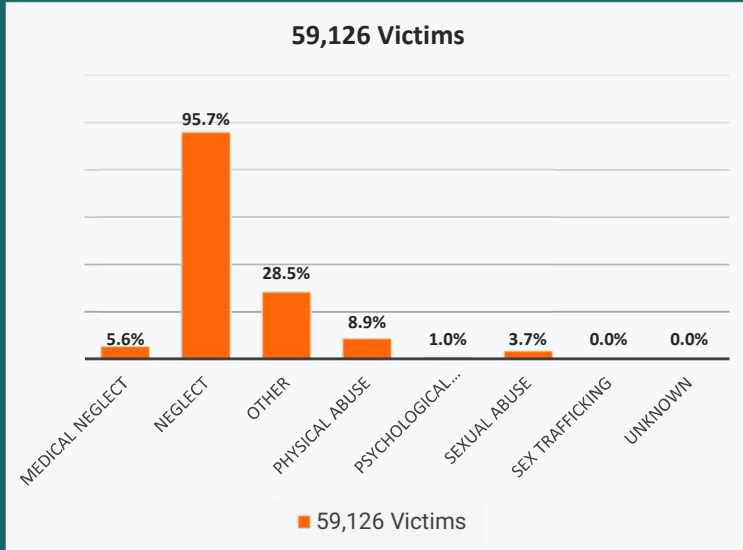
The willful or negligent failure of the parent or guardian to provide the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2022). Child Maltreatment 2020. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>.

State Examples of Current Neglect Language

New York

Black children: **14.8% of child population** | **32.6% of entry into care**



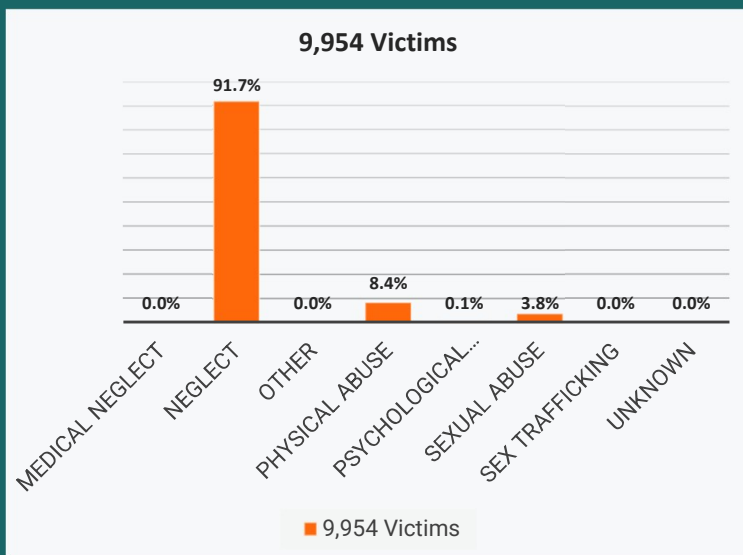
Neglect is defined as the failure of a parent or caretaker to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision to the degree that the child's health, safety, and well-being are threatened with harm.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2022). Child Maltreatment 2020. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>.

State Examples of Current Neglect Language

Arizona

Black children: **5.1% of child population** | **9.1% of entry into care**



'Neglect' or 'neglected' means . . .

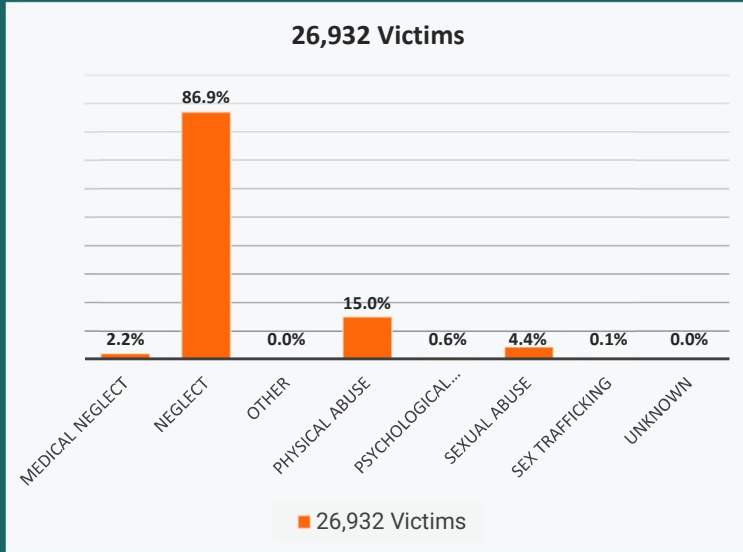
The inability or unwillingness of a parent, guardian or custodian of a child to provide that child with supervision, food, clothing, shelter or medical care if that inability or unwillingness causes unreasonable risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, **except** if the inability of a parent or guardian to provide services to meet the needs of a child with a disability or chronic illness is solely the result of the unavailability of reasonable services.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2022). Child Maltreatment 2020. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>.

State Examples of Current Neglect Language

Michigan

Black children: **16.0% of child population** | **25.2% of entry into care**



Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare that occurs through . . .

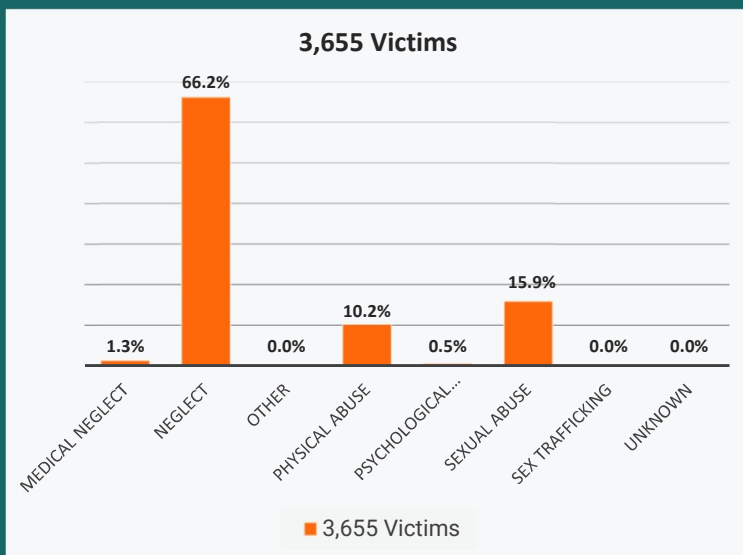
Negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2022). Child Maltreatment 2020. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>.

State Examples of Current Neglect Language

New Jersey

Black children: **13.4% of child population** | **28.7% of entry into care**



'Neglect' or 'neglected' means...

Neglect occurs when a parent or caregiver fails to provide proper supervision for a child or adequate food, clothing, shelter, education or medical care although financially able or assisted to do so.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2022). Child Maltreatment 2020. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>.

States embracing change!

STATE	NEGLECT DEFINITION	SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE
California	- General neglect defined as situations where a child is at “substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm.”	- Economic disadvantages are not considered general neglect.
Iowa	- Neglect refers to the failure of a caregiver to provide essential needs for a child, especially when financially capable.	- Adjusted definition to include “when financially able to do so or when offered financial or other reasonable means.”
Kentucky	- Failure to provide adequate care, supervision, food, clothing, shelter and education or medical care necessary for the child’s well-being.	- Added a similar poverty exception “when financially able to do so or offered financial or other means.”
Wisconsin	- Failure, refusal, or inability on the part of a caregiver, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care.	- Added a poverty exception.

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What Families Say they need:

- Affordable childcare
- Safe, stable housing
- Cash assistance
- Quick access to quality supportive services
- Legal Representation

“Research has found that spending on public benefit programs such as cash assistance, housing, childcare, the Earned Income Tax Credit and Medical Assistance Programs is associated with a reduction in child welfare system involvement and child fatalities due to maltreatment.”

Sege, R., Stephens, A., Templeman, A. (2022, June 9). *Child abuse rates dropped during COVID — the reasons point to economics*. The Hill <https://thehill.com/opinion/3517190-child-abuse-rates-dropped-during-covid-the-reasons-point-to-economics/>



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A Hard Look In the Mirror

ACF's Equity in Action

- ACF's strategy is our commitment to remove structural barriers rooted in racism and discrimination. Our mirror reflects a vision of advancing equity, making it integral to our every action.

Children's Bureau

- In response to President Biden's Executive Orders on Advancing Racial Equity, CB is laser focused on equity.
- Each CB division and regional office has channeled their visions into Equity Action Plans.

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Children's Bureau Quilt of Supports

Patchwork #1: Black Experience Roundtables

- For the first time, ACF held Black Experience Roundtables to directly address and understand systemic racism within our programs as experienced by Black people who have accessed ACF programs.

Patchwork #2: Support Kinship Caregivers

- Flexible licensing standards for kinship caregivers.
- Equal pay.

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Children's Bureau Quilt of Supports

Patchwork #3: Legal Support

- Expand access to legal representation for children in foster care, families who are not impacted by foster care but who need a lawyer for civil legal issues, and legal representation for tribal children .

Patchwork #4: Community Investment

- Trusting a community to design its own resolutions.

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Think about....

- 1 What bold changes you will make to address the disparity?
- 2 What role is over-surveillance playing? What can you do about it?
- 3 What can you do to make more concrete supports available to families who need them? Who will you partner with?
- 4 What will your quilt of supports look like?



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