



About CAPTA: A Legislative History

Introduction

The key Federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect is the **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)**, originally enacted in 1974 (P.L. 93-247). This Act was amended several times and was most recently amended and reauthorized on June 25, 2003, by the **Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-36)**.

CAPTA provides Federal funding to States in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities and also provides grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for demonstration programs and projects. Additionally, CAPTA identifies the Federal role in supporting research, evaluation, technical assistance, and data collection activities; establishes the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; and mandates the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information. CAPTA also sets forth a minimum definition of child abuse and neglect.

The complete text of the law (U.S. Code title 42, chapter 67) can be downloaded from the Cornell University Legal Information Institute website at www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/42/ch67.html. A booklet presenting CAPTA as amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, including the Adoption Opportunities program and Abandoned Infants Assistance Act, as amended, is available on the Children's Bureau website at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws/capta03/index.htm. Print copies of this booklet may be ordered from the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information.

Summary of Legislative History

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was originally enacted in P.L. 93-247. The law was completely rewritten in the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption and Family Services Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-294, 4/25/88). It was further amended by the Child Abuse Prevention Challenge Grants Reauthorization Act of 1989 (P.L. 101-126, 10/25/89) and the Drug Free School Amendments of 1989 (P.L. 101-226, 12/12/89).

The Community-Based Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Grants program was originally authorized by sections 402 through 409 of the Continuing Appropriations Act for FY 1985 (P.L. 98-473, 10/12/84). The Child Abuse Prevention Challenge Grants Reauthorization Act of 1989 (P.L. 101-126) transferred this program to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, as amended.

A new Title III, Certain Preventive Services Regarding Children of Homeless Families or Families at Risk of Homelessness, was added to the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Treatment Act by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act Amendments of 1990 (P.L. 101-645, 11/29/90).



The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act was amended and reauthorized by the Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, Adoption, and Family Services Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-295, 5/28/92) and amended by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Amendments of 1992 (P.L. 102-586, 11/4/92).

The Act was amended by the Older American Act Technical Amendments of 1993 (P.L. 103-171, 12/2/93) and the Human Services Amendments of 1994 (P.L. 103-252, 5/19/94).

CAPTA was further amended by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Amendments of 1996 (P.L. 104-235, 10/3/96), which amended Title I, replaced the Title II Community-Based Family Resource Centers program with a new Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program and repealed Title III, Certain Preventive Services Regarding Children of Homeless Families or Families at Risk of Homelessness.

CAPTA was most recently amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-36, 6/25/03), which amended Title I and replaced Title II, Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program with Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.