

*Celebrating the Stories that Strengthen Us:  
A BPNN Webinar Celebrating National Parent  
Leadership Month  
February 28, 2025*



**Birth Parent National Network (BPNN)**

# WELCOME

Please share your name, state,  
and role in the chat box

# Welcome



**Mitch Sutter**  
BPNN Member  
Oklahoma



**Christina Simmons**  
BPNN Member  
Mississippi



**Kara Georgi**  
Lead Senior Associate of  
Parent Partnerships  
Children's Trust Fund Alliance

# Agenda

- Welcome
- Policy Updates
- Questions and Answers
- Celebratory Remarks
- National Parent Leadership Month Resources
- Parent Spotlights
- Resources
- Evaluation

# Public Policy Update



**Emily Hecht-McGowan**  
Public Policy Director  
Casey Family Programs

# **Executive Actions**

## **First 30 Days**

- Executive Actions: 108 Total
  - Executive Orders: 73
  - Proclamations: 23
  - Memorandums: 12

# Executive Actions

## Immigration

### ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

- Expansion of the use of “expedited removal” procedures from its limited application –
- Removal of restrictions that limited Immigration and Custom Enforcement’s ability to make arrests in sensitive locations

### EXECUTIVE ORDERS, PROCLAMATIONS, & DECLARATIONS

- Proclamation Guaranteeing the States Protection Against Invasion
- Executive Order Protecting the American People Against Invasion
- Executive Order Securing Our Borders
- Executive Order Eliminating Birthright Citizenship (Stayed by Federal Court)
- Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States

# Additional Executive Orders

- Executive Order Ending Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs and Policies
- Regulatory Freeze Pending Review
- Executive Order Establishing and Implementing the Department of Government Efficiency
- Executive Order Prohibiting the Provision of Gender-Affirming Healthcare for Children
- Executive Order Regarding Gender Identity Policy

# Additional Executive Actions

## RECISSION OF ADDITIONAL EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND ACTIONS FROM THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

- Executive Orders issued to rescind over 90 executive orders and memoranda issued between January 2021 and January 2025. The revoked actions include policies related to racial equity, environmental regulations, pandemic response, LGBTQ+ policies, immigration, health care access, climate change initiatives, voting rights, and education. Agency heads are directed to immediately stop implementing revoked actions.



# QUESTIONS

# Celebrating National Parent Leadership 21 Years



**Teresa Rafael**

Executive Director

Children's Trust Fund Alliance

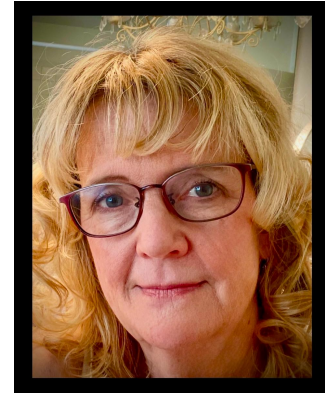
# NPLM Resource Guides



**Victoria Hilt**  
Washington  
ANPPC Co-Chair &  
BPNN Member

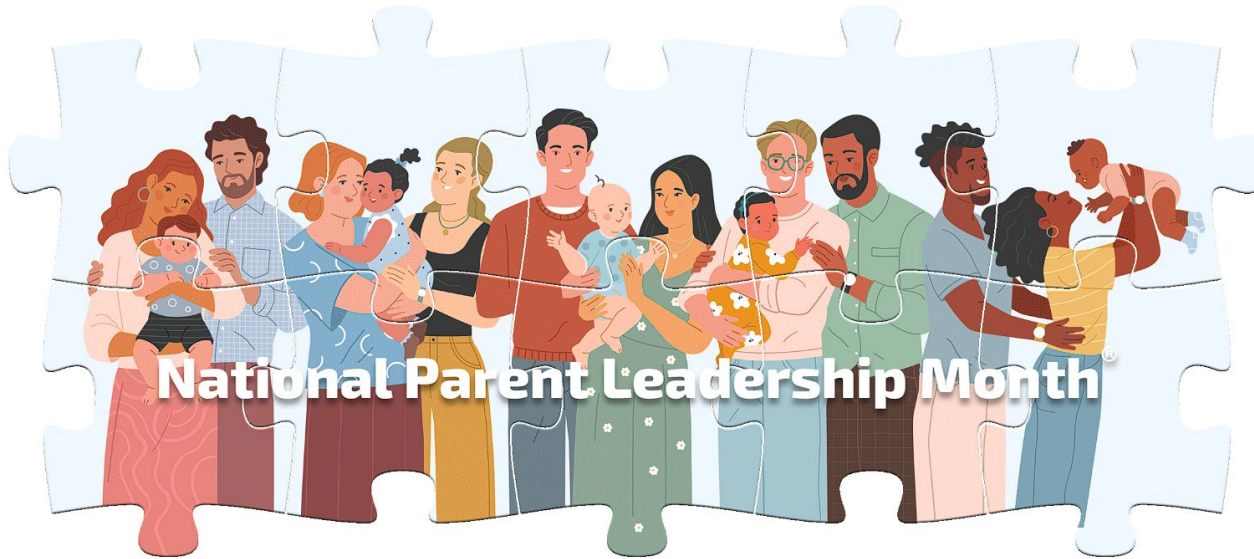


**Samanthia Moore Valentine**  
Georgia  
ANNPC &  
BPNN Member



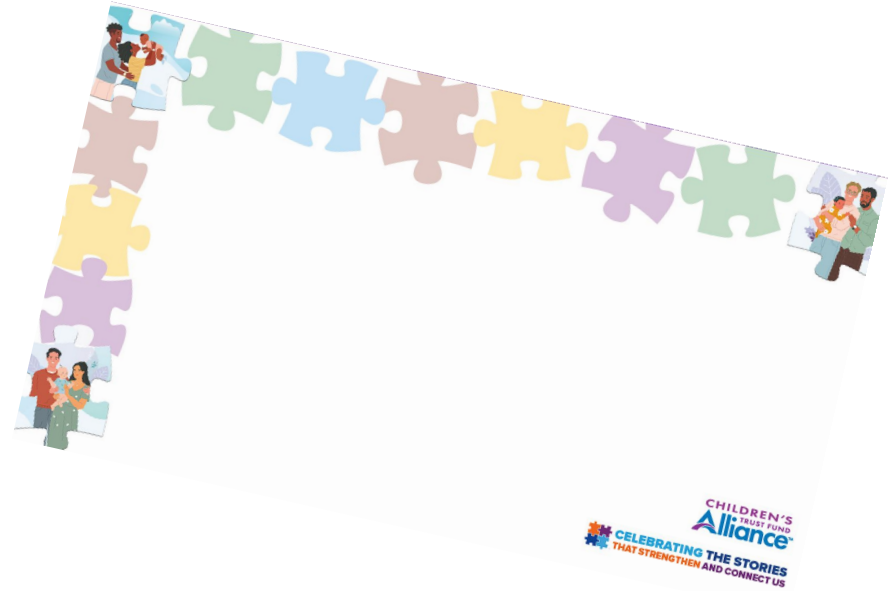
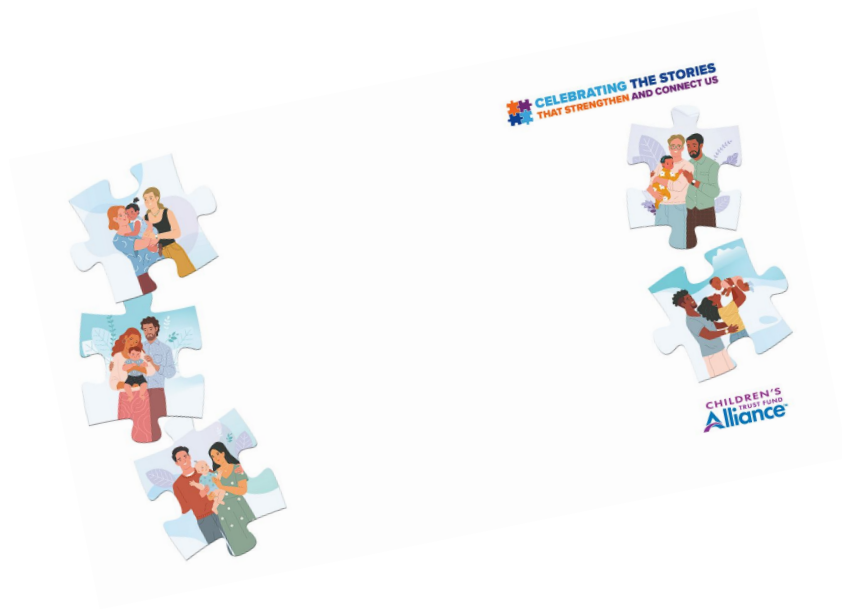
**Robyn Robbins**  
California  
BFPP &  
BPNN Member

# February is National Parent Leadership Month!



<https://ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/national-parent-leadership-month/>

# Zoom Backgrounds



# Calendars with Activities for Leadership and Families

**CELEBRATING THE STORIES THAT STRENGTHEN AND CONNECT US**

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
<b>Week</b>								
<b>1</b>	<b>Story Starters</b> Begin the month by having each family member come up with the beginning of a story. Share and combine your ideas to create a unique family story.						<b>1</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Shadow Storytelling</b> Use a flashlight to cast shadows on the wall while telling a story. Get creative with the shapes and characters you create.	<b>Nature Story Hunt</b> Go for a nature walk and take turns making up a story inspired by things you find in the environment. Use rocks, leaves, or trees as story prompts.	<b>Story in a Jar</b> Write different story elements (characters, settings, plot) on slips of paper & place them in a jar. Each family member picks a slip and collaboratively creates a story using those elements.	<b>Storytime Charades</b> Act out scenes from your favorite stories through charades. Have fun guessing which stories are being portrayed.	<b>Storytelling in Different Genres</b> Explore different genres of stories - adventure, mystery, fantasy, etc. Discuss the elements that make each genre unique.	<b>Story Mapping</b> Draw a map of an imaginary land and create a story that takes place there. Discuss the different regions and their significance.	<b>Shadow Puppets</b> Create shadow puppets and perform a short play. Craft a simple storyline or adapt a favorite fairy tale.	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Student Success Stories</b> Create a comic strip that highlights a support you received that led to success.	<b>Story Stones</b> Paint or draw on stones to represent characters, places, or objects. Use the stones to create and tell a story together.	<b>Family Story Podcast</b> Record a family podcast where each member shares a short story, poem, or personal experience. Listen together later.	<b>Valentine's Day Love Stories</b> Share heartwarming stories about love, kindness, and friendship. Write and exchange Valentine's Day cards with personalized messages.	<b>Storybook Potluck</b> Each family member selects a favorite book, and you recreate a dish inspired by the story or setting.	<b>Storytelling Through Art</b> Create a collaborative art project that tells a story. Use various art supplies to illustrate different parts of the narrative.	<b>Family Storyboard</b> Draw a storyboard for a story together. Each family member contributes a panel, and then discuss how the story unfolds visually.	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Storytime Picnic</b> Have a picnic indoors or outdoors while sharing stories. Pack favorite snacks and make it a cozy family time.	<b>Social Justice Stories</b> Create a haiku that describes how a collective resilience is stronger when linked together.	<b>Historical Stories</b> Explore historical events or figures through stories. Discuss the importance of preserving and passing down stories through generations.	<b>Family Folktales</b> Share folktales or fairy tales from your cultural background. Discuss the morals or lessons in each story.	<b>Travel Tales</b> Share stories about family vacations or memorable trips. Create a travel scrapbook together.	<b>Storytime Theater</b> Act out a favorite story or create a short play based on a book. Use props and costumes to enhance the performance.	<b>Story Swap</b> Each family member selects a favorite story and takes turns sharing it. Discuss what you love about each story.	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Family Story Journal</b> Start a family story journal. Each member contributes a paragraph to an ongoing story. Read the journal together at the end of the month.	<b>Storytime Yoga</b> Combine storytelling with yoga. Create a simple story with yoga poses incorporated. Practice the poses as you tell the story.	<b>Storytelling with Technology</b> Use technology to create a digital story. Combine photos, videos, and narration to tell a family story.	<b>Storytelling with Music</b> Choose a favorite song and create a story that goes along with the lyrics. Share your stories and discuss the different interpretations.	<b>Reflection and Future Stories</b> Reflect on the storytelling experiences of the month. Discuss future stories you'd like to create together as a family.	<b>Picture Book Day</b> Choose a favorite picture book and take turns reading it aloud. Discuss the story and create your own alternate ending.	<b>5</b>	

**Seek Social Connections**  
**Teach Knowledge of Parenting Or Child Development**  
**Offer Concrete Support in Times of Need**  
**Recognize Resilience**  
**Yield Social and Emotional Competence Of Children**

**CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND Alliance** **CELEBRATING THE STORIES THAT STRENGTHEN AND CONNECT US**

**Supporting**

<b>Protective Factors</b> Each protective factor is important and together they build strong and stable families.	<b>Advocacy</b> Celebrate 21 years of National Parent Leadership Month with a proclamation.	<b>Resilience</b> Print off our superhero and puzzle piece affirmations in the resource section and share with family and friends.	<b>Encouragement/Learning</b> You can learn in lots of ways, and one we suggest is a book club.	<b>Nurturing</b> Zero to Three has great resources for families to explore a child's early years.	<b>Talking</b> Explore this resource from The Kid Mental Health Foundation about talking to your youth about social media.	<b>Supporting</b> Chapin Hall has done lots of research about the importance of supporting families.
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	

**What are the building blocks that lead to you being resilient?**  
**Read the latest Within Our Reach report about actions you can take today.**  
**NPLM is dedicated to recognizing the important role of parents and caregivers in their homes and community.**  
**Action for Happiness has a great free monthly calendar you can download for encouragement.**  
**You can build strong communities by having conversations that matter.**  
**What's your story? Explore parents talking about their HERO stories.**

# Positive Affirmations



**Learn to Rest, Not to Quit!**

**I Can Ask for Help!**

**We Come in All Shades of**

**Beautiful!**

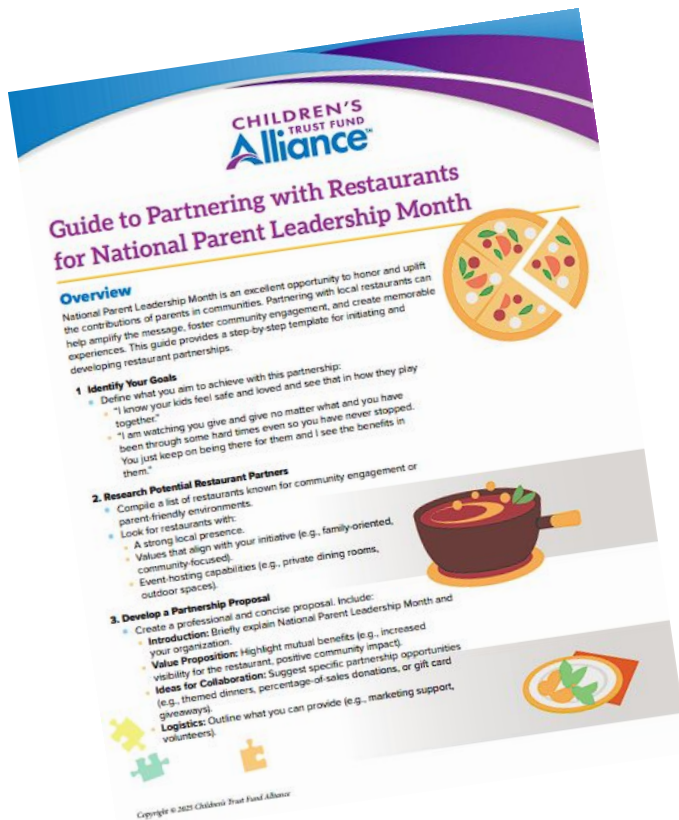
**I Am The G.O.A.T.!**

**I Am a Great Friend!**

**I Can Take Deep Breaths!**

**I Am Resilient!**

# Partnering with Restaurants





## Proclamation Timeline Guide

### December

- Submit Proclamations to municipalities (local and state).
- Educate community partners on the history of National Parent Leadership Month and Parent Leadership and how that is connected to prevention and building stronger families.
- Begin planning for a celebration event if you choose to do one.

### January

- Use Social Media campaigns to start educating and raising excitement.
- Follow up with municipalities to confirm signings.
- Incorporate local parent groups into the signing of proclamations across the region through strategic scheduling.
- Submit a letter to the editor sharing about the purpose and significance of National Parent Leadership Month.
- Ensure the Trust fund & Grantees are connected and aware of the campaign purpose.
- Confirm receipt of proclamations and any additional steps required for official submission.

### February

- Submit letters to Editors in local periodicals and bring awareness to the signings of events.
- Signing Proclamation at State and Local levels throughout the month.
- Host Celebrating Parents Event.
- Write letters to elected officials and submit Letters to Editors thanking municipalities for their recognition of National Parent Leadership Month.

# Start Planning for NPLM 2026!



**Proclamations  
can happen with  
schools, town,  
city, or state  
leadership!**

# Play BINGO or Create Your Own

**CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND Alliance**

## Creating Custom BINGO Cards

**Overview**  
Is there anything you want to add here? Or is this self-explanatory enough?

**Step 1: Define Your Theme and Goals**

- Visit the National Parent Leadership Month webpage for inspiration and ideas.
- Decide on the focus of your BINGO card. Example themes include:
  - Promoting parent leadership qualities.
  - Celebrating parental involvement in the community.
  - Encouraging participation in leadership development activities.
  - Advocating for parent voice in decision-making.

**Step 2: Choose Your Format and Design Your Cards**

**Create lists of tasks and categories.**

- Brainstorm 24-30 activities or prompts related to your theme, and divide the tasks into manageable categories, such as:
  - Learning:** Specific actions or activities.
  - Doing:** Encouraging participants to promote leadership online or in person.
  - Sharing:** Encouraging new resources or programs.
  - Exploring:** Discovering new resources or programs.

**Next, customize the BINGO cards to fit the theme.**

**Engagement BINGO**  
Include activities for parents to engage with local resources and networks. Incorporate interactive prompts like:

- Call your local representative.
- Join a parent support group.
- Participate in a leadership activity.
- Share a story of a parent leader you admire.
- Write a letter to a policymaker advocating for family support.
- Volunteer at a school or community event.
- Attend a workshop or training.

**History and Awareness BINGO**  
Feature parent leadership history or key facts about the NPLM. Add squares with trivia:

- What year did National Parent Leadership Month begin?
- Name a famous parent advocate in your state.

**Leadership Recruiting BINGO**  
Highlight tasks that encourage leadership:

- Nominate a parent leader.
- Attend a leadership webinar.
- Host a brainstorming session.
- Organize a family activity to discuss leadership.
- Learn about a local parent leadership organization.

**Event-Based BINGO**  
Focus on events or specific moments during the celebration. Create squares for:

- Take a photo at an event.
- Post using #ParentLeadershipMonth.
- Watch a webinar.

**BINGO**

Copyright © 2023 Children's Trust Fund Alliance

**CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND Alliance**

## CELEBRATING THE STORIES THAT STRENGTHEN AND CONNECT US

**B** How many years has NPLM been celebrated?

**C** Check out a resource in your community for families.

**N** Learn and explore what policies you want to teach others about.

**G** Join the BPNN

**O** List your community partners.

Where can you go for NPLM resources?

Attend an event at your local library.

Learn and explore what policies you want to teach others about.

Start a Book Club

Explore who your community leaders are and the topics they are passionate about.

How can you recognize a parent during NPLM?

Find a family friendly event and invite someone to go with you and your family.

**FREE!**

Explore the Protective Factors

Write a letter to a policymaker advocating for family support.

What is this year's NPLM theme?

Do an act of kindness in your community.

Identify your strengths as a leader.

Explore the BPPP Tools

Share a story of a parent leader you admire.

How can you share your story in February?

Find an activity or thing you can do to volunteer in your local community.

Write down some goals you have personally.

Start a Community Cafe

Attend a workshop or training.

# Certificates Available in English and Spanish

 **CELEBRATING THE STORIES**  
THAT STRENGTHEN AND CONNECT US

## Certificate of Appreciation



This certificate is awarded to \_\_\_\_\_

In recognition of National Parent Leadership Month, the Children's Trust Fund Alliance honors your unique story and the invaluable role you play in celebrating the stories that strengthen and connect us!

**Thank you for being the vital puzzle piece that connects us all.**

CHILDREN'S  
TRUST FUND  
**Alliance**

 **CELEBRATING THE STORIES**  
THAT STRENGTHEN AND CONNECT US

## Certificado de reconocimiento




Este certificado se otorga a \_\_\_\_\_

En reconocimiento al Mes Nacional del Liderazgo de los Padres, Children's Trust Fund Alliance honra su historia única y el papel invaluable que desempeña al celebrar las historias que nos fortalecen y nos conectan.

**Gracias por ser la pieza vital del rompecabezas que nos conecta a todos.**

CHILDREN'S  
TRUST FUND  
**Alliance**

# Multiple Ways to Celebrate Parents



## Celebrate Parents in Your Community!

Think about the families you care about in your neighborhood, community or who you connect with through social media. Explore doing one or more of these ideas in recognition of National Parent Leadership Month.

### Fun things to do!


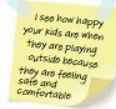

- Decide on one family you can have dinner with.
- Choose a family to invite to a celebration dinner.
- Arrange a free night or day of baby sitting.
- Create a basket with cookies or treats and a note to celebrate them for all the AMAZING ways they are showing up as parents! Deliver it in person with a hug or leave it on their doorstep as a surprise.
- Offer to help a family with carpooling to events.
- Help family, neighbor or community children create a note, make a chalk drawing outdoors or learn a song or skit for their parents to show how much they are appreciated.

### Words and Notes to share!

- Send a note of appreciation on social media or share in person!
  - "I see how happy your kids are when they are playing outside because they are feeling safe and comfortable."
  - "I know your kids must feel loved and cherished when I see how well they play together."
  - "I see you give all your love, support and energy to your children over and over no matter what challenges you are experiencing."
- Send a token of appreciation in the mail
  - Send parents a National Parent Leadership Certificate acknowledging them with a personal message.
  - Buy and send a gift card for a treat or even some much needed support.
  - Send a package with notes, stickers or a small craft project to share with their children.

### Build Connections!

- Share ongoing with parents the success you see them having.
- Share stories of your own parenting journeys and ask them about theirs also.
- Build connections in person or virtually with grandparents too!





**Celebrating  
Our Network  
of Parent  
Partners**

# Churmell Mitchell

## Alabama



"Being a parent leader means guiding with love, resilience, and unwavering commitment, setting an example through actions and sacrifices. As a father, especially as a single parent, it's about being both the foundation and the inspiration, showing strength in struggles and love in every lesson."



# Edward Casillas

## Arizona

"Being a parent leader means standing boldly for children and families, ensuring every child has the love, support, and opportunities they deserve. As a child-centered, family-focused fatherhood advocate, I strive to inspire, empower, and uplift fathers while advocating for the community support necessary for families to be strong. Strong families need strong communities, and I believe in fostering collective support to ensure fathers and families have the resources and encouragement they need to thrive."



# Melissa Zimmerman

## Arizona

"Parent leadership means to build a role model for parents and families. It is active engagement with systems to make the needed changes for our families and it is advocating for the needs of parents and their families."



# Leia Holland

## Arkansas

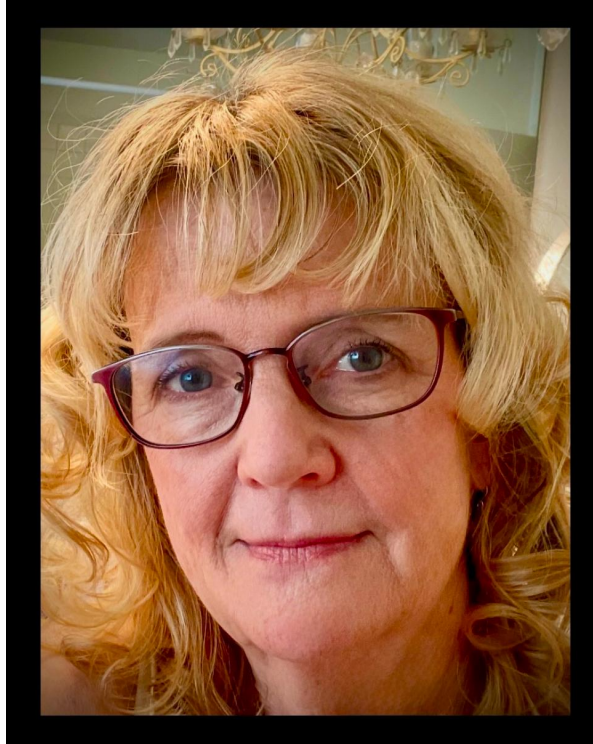
"Having the opportunity to help other parents strengthen their relationships with their children and families is such a blessing. Being a parent leader allows me to help create positive change and that means everything to me."

# Roger DeLeon

## California



"What Being a parent Leader means to me is being able to "Give to others what I would have liked to have been given to me and my family"! It's taking my "Trauma to Triumph" story and sharing it as a beacon of light and hope in the darkest moments for Parents and their children's lives!"



# Robyn Robbins

## California

"The best part of being a Parent Leader is having the opportunity to collaborate with other parents, to learn from them, grow with them, share resources and work together in a powerful way to support and strengthen all families."

# Jody Rodgers

## California



"What being a parent leader means to me is getting the opportunity to go back and support parents in the way they need. It means showing up for families and walking along side of them during a terrifying time. It means getting the opportunity to watch them grow, heal and come back stronger. It means sitting with them in moments of darkness and moments of happiness. It means that I get to ensure that parents don't have to face the system alone."



# Toni Miner

## Colorado

“Being a parent leader means building up other parents and helping them to see their true potential, their uniqueness and strengths. Walking alongside them while they discover that they possess the ability to be a leader in their life and in their communities.”



# Dee Bonnick

## Connecticut

“Being a parent leader has allowed me to live out loud my wildest dreams to advocate and serve others. Being in places and spaces that give voice and credibility to our collective experiences has been most rewarding.”



# Christina Romero

## Florida

"As a Parent Leader, I stand up for change, supporting my community and inspiring those affected by the system to believe in their power to create positive transformations in their own lives and the lives of others."



# Kimberly Fowler

## Georgia

“Being a parent leader has allowed me to help foster parents that are navigating through their struggles such co-parenting or partnership parenting . It has also allowed me to be apart of the development of Communicare which is a portal for communication between DFCS, foster parents and birth parents.”

# Erin Thomas

## Georgia



“Being a parent leader means that my lived experiences were not in vain. Elevating my own personal journey helps to shape policy, educate decision makers and helps to light the way for other parents whose journey has just begun within the child welfare system.”

# Madison Tomberlin

## Georgia



“Being a parent leader means stepping outside of your comfort zone to advocate for other parents in situations similar to yours. It means using your voice for parents who may not have a voice”

# Kimberly Nabarro

## Hawaii



"I remember feeling alone and misunderstood during my time navigating the Child Welfare system, parent leadership mentors the system to support families like mine. Every family, regardless of their challenges, has the potential to thrive. By providing support, opportunity, and unwavering belief in their strength, we create a future where all families can flourish, together."



# Jarrold Hummer

## Indiana

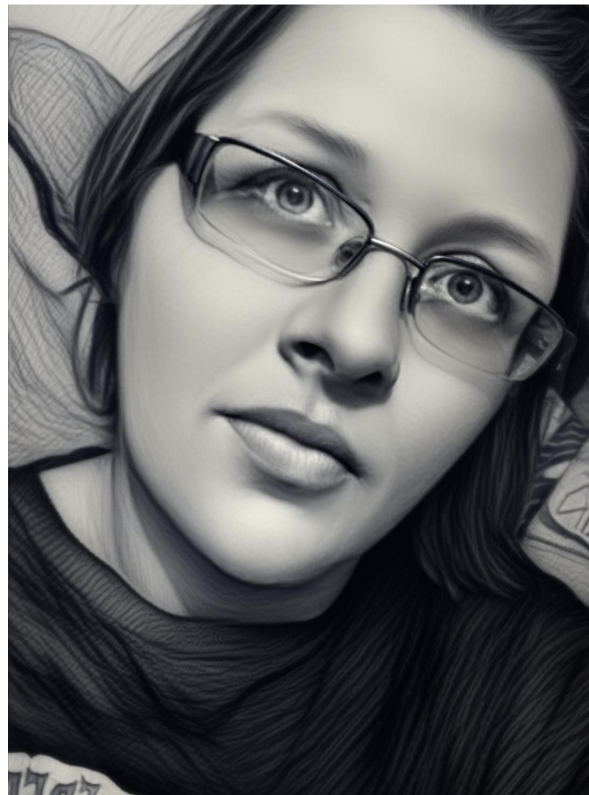
Being a parent leader is using my past experience to help others navigate situations and systems I once had to overcome, while also advocating for changes within those systems that will positively impact outcomes for families and children.



# Pasqueal Harutyunyan

## Louisiana

"Parent leadership means using my voice, my experiences, and my resilience to create change—not just for my own family, but for others who walk a similar path. It's about turning struggle into strength, advocacy into action, and ensuring that every parent and child has the support, dignity, and opportunity they deserve."



# Victoria Jordan Maine

"A parent leader means to be able to give hope and support to families to help strengthen them."

# Joe Whitmore

## Maine



“Being a dad is the toughest job I have ever loved. Building trust and support is essential to building thriving communities. Being a voice for dads means strengthening families without judgement and ridicule.”

# Katie Cook

## Michigan



"For me, being a parent leader means taking an active role within my family and community; advocating for children's needs while actively using my parental experiences to influence decisions and improve conditions for families around me."



# Jessica Joerin

## Michigan

“Being a parent leader to me means helping families grow stronger together to be the best they can be. If we work together to support families as a community we grow stronger so future generations won't struggle as past generations. Changing even one life will make a difference.”



# Ashley Ledon

## Michigan

"Over the summer, my toddler was afraid to walk through dirt without someone holding her hand. My mom saw this and said, "Everyone deserves someone to hold their hand through the dirt of life."



# Teresa Nord

## Minnesota

"Being a Parent Leader to me means hope for a future with systemic change, racial justice, and having a voice for those who don't."

# Emily Starks

## New York



“Being a parent leader is special because it allows you to make a positive impact on both your child's life and the community around you. Becoming a parent leader helps you grow as an individual, as you navigate challenges, build relationships, and work towards common goals for the benefit of everyone.”

# Eddie Torres

## New Hampshire



"Being a parent leader to me means that I get to use my lived experience and voice to positively impact our systems/agencies practices, policies and culture to make changes and improvements. Many families are still experiencing negative outcomes, and I want to help them get what they need to be successful and strengthened and to find healing, recovery and redemption. Seeking justice and breaking generational trauma is also very important to me."

# Betty Hawkins Emery

## Oklahoma



"Being a parent leader means I am loved unconditionally. It means strength, hope, joy."



# James Ray

## Oklahoma

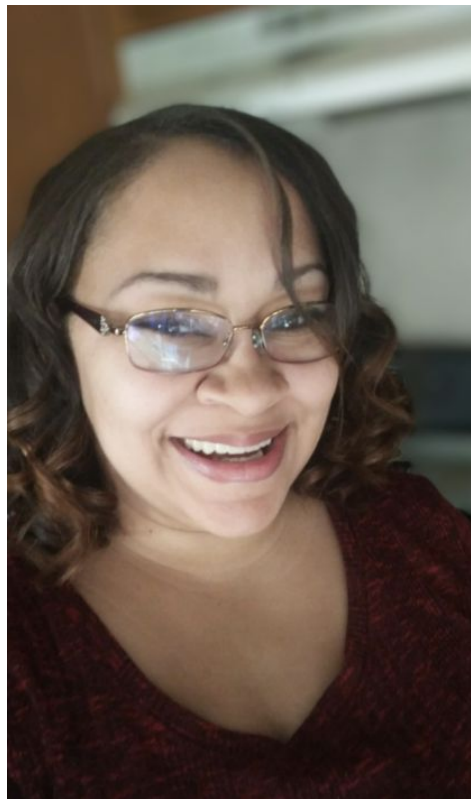
"As a Parent Leader, he hopes to help make changes and expand upon the resources provided by mental health and substance abuse services. He would also like to help families before and after involvement with child welfare services to achieve long-lasting positive change."



# Dustin McClard

## Oregon

"I enjoy being a parent leader because it allows me to empower and support other parents while fostering a strong sense of community and collaboration."



# Shelina Flarisse

## South Carolina

“Being a parent leader means hopefully being the friend or resource that I wished I had when I needed them.”

# Tecoria Jones

## South Carolina



"Being a parent leader is kind of magical. It usually involves experiencing pain, and taking that pain and transforming it to a light to others in the fog of hurt."

# Bea Blackmon



"The saying 'it takes a village' embodies what parent leadership means to me. As a parent leader, I can help drive positive change for families across Texas."



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council



# Jamie Chavez

"Being a parent leader means using my voice and experiences to be a champion for families and create positive change. It's about leading by example and empowering others to be involved in building a stronger community."



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council



# Jarel Francis

“Being a parent leader means setting the standard for my children through my actions, guidance, and unwavering support, ensuring they grow into strong, responsible individuals. It’s about leading with love, discipline, and wisdom while preparing them to navigate life with confidence and integrity.”



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council

# Michal Gomez



"Parent leadership begins with caregivers having a willingness to provide advisement based on their knowledge and experience, of their successes and failures, with the intent to strengthen families in the community."



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council



# Monique Gonzalez

“To me being a parent leader means being an active part of helping lead within your community. It means being someone that other agencies, families, and community members can turn to when they need input or advice.”



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council

# Donnie Lewis



"Parent Leadership is about creating a safe space where dreams are encouraged, values are instilled, and every challenge is met with love and understanding."



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council

# Olivia Miller



"Being a parent leader means being a champion for all children, supporting families, and driving positive change in collaboration with schools and communities."



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council

# Linda Pemberton



"Parent leadership is paramount in our lives, offering parent education, inspiration, and support. Parent leadership changes lives."



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council

# Natalie Seelig



"Being a parent leader means giving a voice to the needs of families and children, setting an example for others, and actively contributing to decision-making processes that impact families."



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council

# Marylou Sifuentes



"Being a parent leader means that I am able to be a voice for someone."



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council

# Alex Stelly



“Being a parent leader means voicing the needs of my child and community, building connections, and empowering others. It’s about leading with compassion, collaboration, and a commitment to creating positive change for all families.”



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council

# Luis Omar Vega



“Para mi ser un padre líder, es una forma de representar a todas las familias, y dar un grito hacia los grandes líderes y política de tu país”

“For me, being a leading father is a way to represent all families, and shout out to the great leaders and politics of your country.”



Texas  
Family Support Services  
Parent Advisory Council



## Texas Family Support Services Parent Advisory Council



“Parents taking on active roles in shaping policies, programs, and initiatives to build stronger, more supportive communities and states that benefit children and families.”

# Janae Moss

## Utah



“Embracing the role of parent leader has become one of my most treasured identities. Through this journey, I've discovered my authentic voice and am advocating for myself and my family with newfound confidence. This path has brought unexpected gifts—profound joy and inner peace that continue to sustain me.”

# Alisa Thornton

## Virginia



“The ability to use my lived experience to help support and encourage another parent or caregiver is truly rewarding. Using my voice to speak for those who can not. This helps them know they are NOT alone!”

# Melissa Dotson

## West Virginia



“Being a parent leader means gaining knowledge through lived lifelong experiences and being able to pass off what I’ve learned. I love helping others to realize that they are not alone and that they can have a voice.”



# Valerie Smith

## West Virginia

"Being a parent leader in my community has been a blessing! I have been able to help make plans to create events for families in our area, and help lead other parents to do the same. It fills my cup and warms my heart!"

# Kate Stewart

## West Virginia



"As a mom to both a teenager and a preschooler, being a parent leader means showing up for other parents and offering support in whatever way I can. It's about creating a space where we can share, listen, and learn from each other's experiences. We're all navigating different challenges, and I love being part of a group where we can lean on one another, grow together, and know we're not alone in this journey."



# Alishia Agee Cooper Washington

“Being a parent leader, to me means: leading from wherever you are even, even in fear—it’s speaking up regardless of who is in the room and using your experience to educate others while continuing to learn on how to change systems to prevent others from experiencing the same.”

# Kayla Burgess

## Wisconsin



" My favorite parts of being a parent leader are encouraging others to grow our knowledge as parents, meeting new friends along the way and seeing myself and others overcome parenting challenges. I also love the self confidence I am gaining along the way, not only in my parenting but also in myself."

# **Building Partnerships with Sharing Stories, Wisdom, Dreams and Big Ideas**



# Parent Partnership Organizations

A DIRECTORY OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTNER WITH PARENTS  
TO SUSTAIN HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND BUILD IMPROVED SYSTEMS



REVISED 2022

CHILDREN'S  
TRUST FUND  
**Alliance**  
Birth Parent National Network (BPNN)

## Support Groups, Parent Advisory Councils – Advocacy, Networks and Legal

Information on organizations that partner and support parents in a variety of ways to include local and national training academies, peer support groups, parenting initiatives and effective legal representation.

NAME	BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	WHO WE SUPPORT
<b>Support Center - Support Group</b> <i>Support from the Group</i>	This local birth parent support group provides: • Peer support and mentoring to all birth parents • Tailored made events provided in a relaxed environment • Connections with adoption minded individuals who honor birth parents with family friendly banquets	<b>Who:</b> Any individual that has been touched by adoption placement <b>Where:</b> Sarasota Central Florida
<b>Mid Above and Beyond's Trust Fund</b> <i>Princeton NJ</i>	Parents provide guidance to the Alabama Children's Trust Fund to: • Ensure strong parent voice • Help to shape programs, services and strategies • Work to improve family outcomes	<b>Who:</b> Parents who have used prevention services <b>Where:</b> Statewide initiative throughout Alabama
<b>Parent Ally</b> <i>Illinois</i>	Through collaboration, this committee works to: • Ensure parent voice into the development of child welfare policy and practice • Promote improved and equitable outcomes for families • Advocate for parent leadership in the direct service, training and public awareness activities that strengthen and support families	<b>Who:</b> An association of Parent Allies, parents who have successfully navigated the child welfare system, and child welfare system stakeholders <b>Where:</b> Washington State
<b>Center on Child Welfare Alliance for Justice (CCWAFJ)</b> <i>Princeton, NJ, Baltimore</i>	Through effective legal, legislative, and policy advocacy, this group seeks to: • Protect the rights, dignity and integrity of families involved in the child welfare system • Advocate for national child welfare justice • Provide training, resources and technical assistance	<b>Who:</b> Every parent who is in jeopardy of having a child removed <b>Where:</b> Across the United States
<b>Family (DCS) -</b>	Parents provide guidance to the Arizona DCS to: • Ensure strong parent voice • Help shape programs, services and strategies • Work to improve family outcomes	<b>Who:</b> Parents who have used prevention or experienced child welfare services <b>Where:</b> Statewide initiative throughout Arizona
<b>Parent Advisory Council</b> <i>Arkansas</i>	Parents provide guidance to the Arkansas DCS Prevention and Reunification Unit to: • Ensure strong parent voice • Help shape programs, services and strategies • Work to improve family outcomes	<b>Who:</b> Parents who have experienced child welfare services <b>Where:</b> Statewide initiative throughout Arkansas

CHILDREN'S  
TRUST FUND  
**Alliance**  
Birth Parent National Network (BPNN)



***WE'VE GOT  
EXCITING  
NEWS!!***



# QUESTIONS

# Engage with the BPNN, BFPP and PPLC!

## Together We Can Make a Difference

Join Us!

Become part of the Alliance's Birth Parent National Network (BPNN), a national network of hundreds of birth parents and organizations working together to strengthen families, communities and systems by engaging the voices of parents. Participate in quarterly webinars and an annual virtual convention. There is no charge to join.

[alliance.org/partnering-with-parents/bpnn](http://alliance.org/partnering-with-parents/bpnn)

### KNOWLEDGE

- Policies, practices and funding streams for strengthening families and communities
- How to work to partner with parents and work with systems
- The practice factors that lead to stronger family outcomes

### RESOURCES

- Child welfare and foster care systems and child welfare systems reform efforts
- Free virtual training on foster care and adoption
- Publications developed from a parent perspective
- Connections of parent partnership organizations

### LEADERSHIP

- Serve as BPNN Board members
- Co-facilitate BPNN webinars
- Represent BPNN at conferences and events
- Develop policies, practices and recommendations that help strengthen and support families and communities
- Create publications and tools
- Serve as a resource to the organization to share your perspective

### CONNECTIONS

- Build relationships with other birth parents, foster parents, and professionals
- Build relationships with other birth parents, foster parents, and professionals
- Build relationships with other birth parents, foster parents, and professionals

### SUCCESS

- Making a real difference in the lives of children and families
- Making a real difference in the lives of children and families
- Making a real difference in the lives of children and families

Orlando Simmons, BPNN member and Moderator

"Being a parent partner to me means being a voice of hope and change. My personal story of dealing with substance abuse changes how I try to advocate for those still suffering from parents and children."

Michelle Taylor

Michelle Taylor, BPNN member and Moderator

The Children's Trust Fund Alliance is the national membership organization for state children's trust funds. Since 2006, the Alliance has also developed and partnered with networks of parents to elevate their voices to decision makers and to help state foster care systems policies and practices that best support children and families. The Alliance's Birth Parent National Network provides and champions birth parents as leaders and strategic partners in prevention and systems reform. The Alliance partners with Casey Family Programs to support the BPNN.

Children's Trust Fund Alliance  
Copyright © 2020

## Customized Training and Technical Assistance

The Birth and Foster Parent Partnership: A Relationship Building Guide

The Birth and Foster Parent Partnership (BFPP) was formed in 2016 to support a national movement of birth parents, foster families, kinship caregivers and staff focused on improving relationships and using their collective voices to transform systems, culture, policies and practices to improve outcomes for children and families. The BFPP is managed through a collaboration between the Children's Trust Fund Alliance, Youth Law Center's Quality Parenting Initiative and Casey Family Programs.

The Birth and Foster Parent Partnership: A Relationship Building Guide

### Building and Sustaining Relationships between Birth Parents and Foster Parents

The Children's Trust Fund Alliance (Alliance) provides an array of training and technical assistance opportunities for agencies, groups, communities, and state entities that are working towards building relationships between birth parents, foster parents, kinship caregivers and agency staff to support families. The training and technical assistance is designed to help build system capacity and incorporate practices that support partnerships between parents and caregivers. The Alliance consulting team includes BFPP birth and foster parent consultants working as partners with the Alliance professional staff.

### The Alliance's Training and Technical Assistance includes topics such as:

1. Introducing child welfare staff, foster parents, kinship caregivers and parents on how to use the Birth and Foster Parent Partnership: A Relationship Building Guide.
2. Building initial relationships between birth parents and foster parents/kinship caregivers and staff through various approaches such as comfort calls and webinars.
3. Supporting and sustaining ongoing relationships between birth parents and foster parents/kinship caregivers through various communication formats such as newsletters, sharing photos, jointly attending school events, medical appointments, etc.
4. Keeping the relationship strong while working with the child welfare staff in planning for reunification or other alternative placement as appropriate.
5. Monitoring the relationship with the foster family after the birth family leaves the child welfare system.
6. Building supportive relationships between birth parents and foster parents/kinship caregivers with assistance from Parent Partnership/Foster Parent Mentors.
7. Using the Birth and Foster Parent Partnership: A Relationship Building Guide as a continuous quality improvement tool.
8. Discussing other relevant topics such as:
  - Encouraging child and foster agency staff to create policies that support effective partnership practices, including sharing information and reviewing guidelines for confidentiality
  - Encouraging child welfare staff to help birth parents and foster parents access community supports, including strategies they can do together (e.g., parenting classes, family development activities, etc.)

For more information contact Sofia Santillana at [sofia.santillana@alliance.org](mailto:sofia.santillana@alliance.org)

[alliance.org/partnering-with-parents/bfpp](http://alliance.org/partnering-with-parents/bfpp)

Copyright © 2020 Children's Trust Fund Alliance

## Parent Partner Learning Collaborative (PPLC)

Join an Orientation Session to learn more about the Parent Partner Learning Collaborative (PPLC)

Dates for Orientation Sessions

Date	Time
Tuesday, February 4, 2025	10:00 am - 10:45 am MT
Tuesday, May 6, 2025	11:00 am - 11:45 am CT
Tuesday, August 5, 2025	12:00 pm - 12:45 pm ET
Tuesday, November 4, 2025	6:00-6:45 am or 7:00-7:45 am Hawaii*

\*Time changes due to daylight savings

Join an Orientation Session to learn more about the Parent Partner Learning Collaborative (PPLC)

Dates for PPLC Webinars

Date	Time
Wednesday, April 16, 2025	11:00 am - 12:30 pm PT
Thursday, June 12, 2025	12:00 pm - 2:30 pm CT
Thursday, August 14, 2025	2:00 pm - 3:30 pm ET
Thursday, October 9, 2025	8:00-9:30 am or 9:00-10:30 am Hawaii*

\*Time changes due to daylight savings

We are excited to launch the new PPLC website!

<http://alliance.org/partnering-with-parents/pplc/>

learn collaborate share

We hope you will join us!

The PPLC is supported through a collaboration between the Children's Trust Fund Alliance and Casey Family Programs. The purpose of this collaborative is to build connections among stakeholders and staff of parent partner programs at sites that are creating, sharing and spreading knowledge, leverage existing resources, address common challenges, and highlight lessons learned.

CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND Alliance

Birth Parent National Network (BPNN)



# Save the Date

## Next Caring Conversation

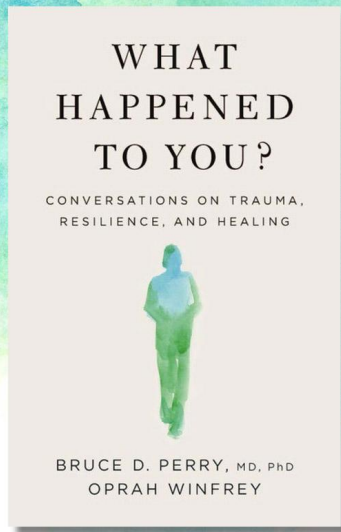
Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup>

1pm ET • 12pm CT • 11am MT • 10am PT

# 2025 Book Club Check Ins

Journey to Resilience: From Trauma to Healing

July 16th 2:00 pm–3:00 Eastern  
December 10th 2:00 pm–3:00 Eastern



Wednesday July 16th

2pm ET/1pm CT  
12pm MT/11am PT

# Family First Prevention Services Act



**FAMILY VOICES UNITED**

[familyvoicesunited.org](http://familyvoicesunited.org)

# Evaluation

<https://forms.gle/iiPB5k2yUWfc1f7g7>

# BPNN Contact Information

**Meryl Levine,**  
**National Director of Parent Partnerships**  
Children's Trust Fund Alliance  
E-mail: [meryl.levine@ctfalliance.org](mailto:meryl.levine@ctfalliance.org)

**Teresa Rafael,**  
**Executive Director**  
Children's Trust Fund Alliance  
E-mail: [teresa.rafael@ctfalliance.org](mailto:teresa.rafael@ctfalliance.org)

**Kara Georgi,**  
**Lead Senior Associate of Parent Partnerships**  
Children's Trust Fund Alliance  
Telephone: 315-729-4866  
E-mail: [kara.georgi@ctfalliance.org](mailto:kara.georgi@ctfalliance.org)

[ctfalliance.org](http://ctfalliance.org)