

# How much money does the state appropriate for programs to prevent child abuse? \$0

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Dustin Dwyer / Michigan Radio

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In Lansing every year, there is a day set aside as Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Day. That day was yesterday. So, on the steps of the Capitol, people got up to speak, children from an elementary group sang and dozens of people involved in organizations that work to keep kids safe stood in the rain to show their support.

People like Luanne Beaudry, who is with [Parenting Awareness Michigan](#). The group helps train

educators across the state who run parenting classes. In those classes parents learn things about how to handle different stages in kids' development, such as how to redirect a child in their terrible twos, rather than just shouting no, or worse.

"That's just a simple example," Beaudry says. "But there are lots of those kinds of things we can teach parents, and they might not know that. You know, there's no manual."

These kinds of classes have been shown to reduce the number of child abuse cases in Michigan. And Beaudry says she wants state legislators to know that.

"It seems like when funding is cut, prevention is one of the first things to go," she says "And that means parenting education."

Money for programs like this in Michigan has been cut so much, actually, it doesn't exist at all. At least not from the state government, according to a House Fiscal Agency analysis. That's even as the number of confirmed child abuse cases in the state has gone up, as the nationwide numbers have dropped.

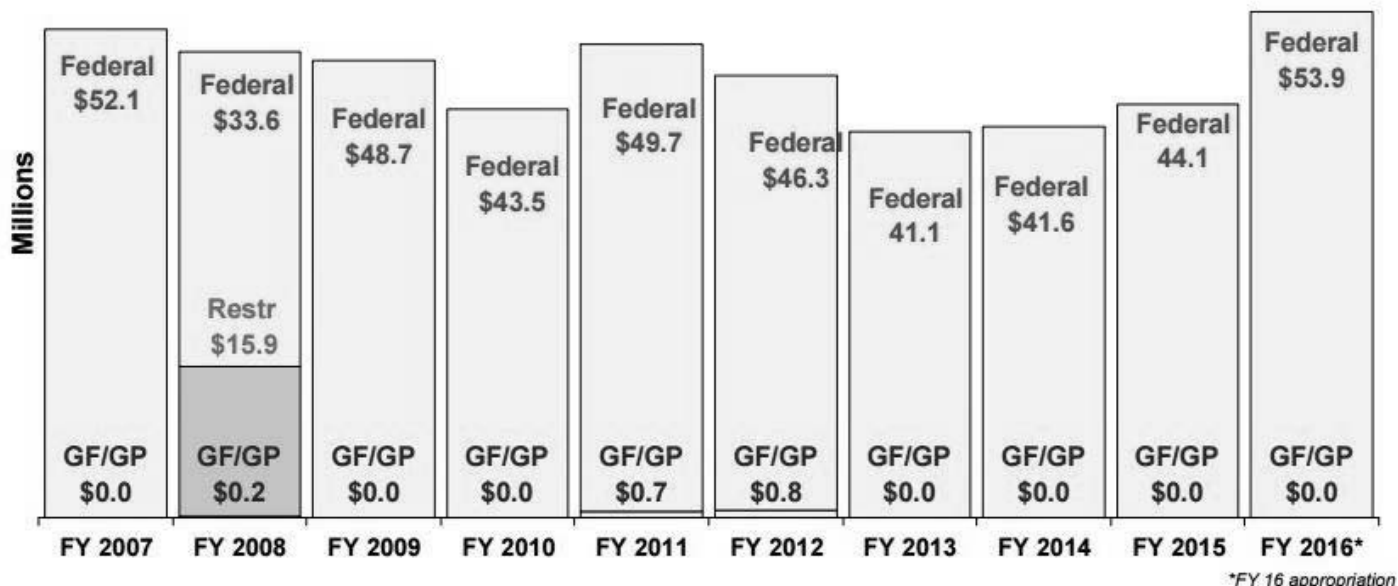
"All these legislators run on this notion that children are a priority ... and make all these campaign promises," says Matt Gillard of Michigan's Children. "But we just are not seeing the level of support or commitment from our state government into these programs."

Matt Gillard is CEO of an advocacy group called Michigan's Children. I met him at his office, where he told me about how many agencies on the front lines of preventing child abuse have to cobble together money from the federal government or from local governments or private donations. But none of it comes from the state's general fund.

"And, you know, all these legislators run on this notion that children are a priority ... and make all these campaign promises," Gillard says. "But we just are not seeing the level of support or commitment from our state government into these programs, certainly that other states are putting in, or that we're seeing from the private side here in Michigan."

# Family Preservation/Prevention Services Expenditures

By FY 2000-01 budget, most GF/GP was removed from program. Merit Award Trust Funds were appropriated in FY 2007-08 to better position the state to draw down additional TANF contingency funds. Most federal funding in this area is TANF block grant.



House Fiscal Agency: December 2015

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Credit Michigan House Fiscal Agency report / Michigan House Fiscal Agency.

There is a statewide organization that raises money and coordinates efforts to prevent child abuse in Michigan. That organization is the Children's Trust Fund. Mike Foley is its director. I met him Monday at his office in the same building where the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is set up.

And Foley told me the Children's Trust Fund is a bit of an anomaly in state government.

"We're housed here at the Department of Health and Human Services," he said, "but we're not like a division of the department in that there is an appropriation that comes to us."

Instead the money comes from fundraisers, like the annual dinner the Trust Fund puts on which happens May 18th this year in Lansing. It come also from license plates, if you choose a Children's Trust Fund license plate. You can also check a box to make a donation when you file your taxes.

But Foley, and just about everyone else, says that still doesn't raise enough money to meet the need.

Many agencies that are on the front lines working with families have to be creative.

After the rally on the steps of the capitol building yesterday, the group filed into a meeting room to warm up and eat some pizza.

That's where I met up with Theresa Roberts-Hummel, the executive director of the Crawford Roscommon Child Protection Council. The Council, based in the rural counties south of Grayling, gets \$11,000 from the Children's Trust Fund to do its work. Roberts-Hummel says that money isn't nearly enough to meet the need

"So we really have to rely on each other and rely on the community for any resources that we need," Roberts-Hummel says. "And we do a lot of fundraising, but it's those grass-roots fundraisings, the bake sales, the pinwheel sales, you know, everything we can think of to raise funds."

The fundraising helps pay not just for education, but for food deliveries to families. It pays for sleep sacks to keep infants safe.

Roberts-Hummel says the Crawford Roscommon Child Protection Council is even holding a garage sale next week to raise money, and every dollar they raise will be put to use helping families.

And none of it will come from state government.

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