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REDUCING UNNECESSARY SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS



**PREPARED FOR: THE CENTER FOR
THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY**

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Dedication

This report is dedicated to my mom, Neelam. Navigating a child welfare system that targets low income, immigrant women of color and minimizes your experience as a domestic violence survivor, while struggling through financial obstacles and a language barrier was not easy. Thank you for keeping us together.

Disclaimer

The author conducted this study as part of the program of professional education at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, University of Virginia. This paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of the course requirements for the Master of Public Policy degree. The judgments and conclusions are solely those of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Batten School, by the University of Virginia, or by any other agency.

Honor Pledge

On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.

Glossary

CPS – Child Protective Services, the agency responsible for responding to and investigating child abuse and maltreatment to prevent further harm

DV – Domestic Violence (when referring to organizational structures or cases)

CSSP – The Center for the Study of Social Policy, the client

OCFS – Office for Children and Family Services, New York State's child welfare agency

Non-offending parent – In this context, the domestic violence survivor or the parent who has not abused the child

Executive Summary

In Child Protective Services (CPS) cases with co-occurring domestic violence, too many children are unnecessarily separated from non-offending parents leading to further trauma and long-lasting negative impacts. Non-abusive parents, usually mothers, face significant barriers to leaving their abusers, such as the risk of homelessness, threats of stalking or murder, cultural factors, and more (Carter et al., 1999, p.13; Pritzker Center, 2021). Yet, systemic misunderstandings around domestic violence co-occurrence in child neglect cases lead to children being removed not just from the situation, but also from the abused parent. Outdated failure to protect laws, which charge non-abusive parents with child neglect, are a major factor: as of 2015, 48 states still implement failure to protect statutes that classify this form of neglect as a misdemeanor or felony (Mahoney, 2019, p. 435). Additionally, the lack of collaboration between CPS and domestic violence (DV) organizations and the consequent lack of CPS' domestic violence knowledge, integrated protocol, and training contributes to unnecessary separations. Lack of court integration and systemic gender bias are other contributing causes.

This practice is not only misinformed and unjust but highly dangerous: children placed out of home experience significantly greater adversities compared to children with similar circumstances who were not removed. Forced separation from a caregiver is greatly traumatic, resulting in a six times higher risk for behavioral issues (American Bar Association, 2019). Furthermore, foster care experiences include maltreatment rates that may be worse than children's in-home experiences (Meier & Sankaran, 2021, p. 20). Research on life-long implications for children removed from homes demonstrates a doubled risk of developmental delays, lower graduation rates and earnings, a tripled propensity for arrests and juvenile justice involvement, and a 1.5 times higher all-cause mortality rate as compared to children with similar circumstances who were not removed (American Bar Association, 2019; Doyle, 2007; Ryan & Testa, 2005; Sugrue, 2019). These consequences are serious and damaging, highlighting the importance of reducing unnecessary separations from non-abusive caregivers.

Existing literature on the reduction of this removal rate suggests increased collaboration between CPS and DV organizations through better risk assessment, cross-training, co-located DV advocates in CPS offices, and family preservation programs are the most implemented interventions. Legislative changes in policy outlining CPS separations and failure to protect laws offer another promising change avenue. There is less relevant literature on court integration.

Taking this research into consideration, I proposed the following three policy alternatives to address the issue of unnecessary separation in the state of New York, where my client, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, is located:

1. A Legislative Exception for Child Neglect Cases with Co-Occurring Domestic Violence

Legal standards for removal would be raised to no longer classify domestic violence co-occurrence as grounds for separation alone.

2. Expand the Number of Offices with DV Advocates to 50%

DV advocates are co-located within CPS offices to increase collaboration between DV organizations and CPS caseworkers. About 21 out of 62 counties in New York currently have a DV advocate program. This alternative aims to expand that to 31.

3. The Safe and Together Model

The current approach to evaluating child neglect cases, specifically caseworker documentation and assessment procedures, would be rewritten to emphasize CPS' partnership with survivors and a recognition of the abuser's patterns.

These alternatives are evaluated against the criteria of cost-effectiveness, administrative feasibility, political feasibility, and equity. Through this evaluation, Safe and Together demonstrated the highest cost-effectiveness with the overall lowest cost, good administrative and political feasibility, and the highest equity. This alternative costs approximately \$1,052,126.86 over 10 years and prevents about 7,758.6 removals over this time. This results in a cost of \$135.61 per family, which is much lower than the \$1,200+ costs of other alternatives. Administrative feasibility was higher than or equivalent to other alternatives. Political feasibility was comparable to or higher than other alternatives. Lastly, Safe and Together scored the highest of all the alternatives on equity.

Therefore, I recommend the Safe and Together program, which aims to keep families together by emphasizing a partnership with the domestic abuse survivor and outlining the abuser's patterns of coercion. Safe and Together targets the lack of CPS and DV collaboration by combining multiple levels of intervention, such as rewriting foundational documentation requirements and assessment procedures to align with, rather than systematically work against, survivors. Training caseworkers further ensures proper implementation while increasing CPS' knowledge on the nuances of cases with domestic violence co-occurrence. Through these changes, Safe and Together reduces unnecessary removals.

Safe and Together demonstrates a promising way to protect children (and mothers) already experiencing traumatic circumstances from unnecessary removals that further exacerbate their trauma and have intensely damaging, long lasting consequences. Changes in CPS case assessment and subsequent training for caseworkers to ensure efficient implementation are the next steps to reduce the number of unnecessary removals of children from non-offending parents.

Introduction

Over a quarter of a million children are separated from their parents on grounds of child neglect annually (Raz & Sankaran, 2019). Though most separations aim to protect children, out-of-home placement may have the opposite impact in cases with co-occurring domestic violence and cause serious, long-lasting harm to already traumatized children. Given that up to 10 million children witness domestic abuse each year, this issue has far-reaching implications (Davidson, 1995, p. 369).

Therefore, this report offers an analysis attempting to address the following problem: **In Child Protective Services cases with co-occurring domestic violence, too many children are unnecessarily separated from non-offending parents leading to further trauma and long-lasting negative impacts. Children placed out of home experience significant adversities such as higher maltreatment rates, a doubled risk of developmental delays, lower graduation rates and earnings, a tripled propensity for arrests and juvenile justice involvement, and a 1.5 times higher all-cause mortality rate as compared to children with similar circumstances who were not removed (American Bar Association, 2019; Doyle, 2007; Ryan & Testa, 2005; Sugrue, 2019).**

This analysis first outlines and defines this problem before providing background information that elucidates the key underlying causes of the issues and the most relevant consequences of unnecessary separations. Then, existing literature on potential solutions is discussed to contextualize the practices that have already been implemented and evaluate their effectiveness. The existing literature highlights increased collaboration between CPS and DV organizations through interventions like cross-training, risk assessment updates, co-located DV advocates in CPS offices, and family preservation programs. Though there is limited research, changing legislative standards for removal was identified as a promising intervention. Court integration and abuser accountability programs, however, are likely less effective solutions. This research prefaces the alternatives I propose to mitigate the issue.

The proposed alternatives to reduce child removal rates in child neglect cases with co-occurring domestic violence and a non-offending parent are: classifying DV as a legislative exception to child neglect removals on a state level, increasing the number of New York CPS offices with DV advocates to 50%, or implementing the Safe and Together Model.

To evaluate these alternatives, I first establish criteria, including cost-effectiveness, administrative feasibility, political feasibility, and equity. I then use these criteria to carry out my analysis of each alternative. I demonstrate key results with an outcomes matrix and provide my final recommendation, which is Alternative III: Safe and Together. As evident in the matrix and findings evaluation, Safe and Together demonstrated the best cost-effectiveness with the overall lowest cost, good administrative and political feasibility, and the highest equity. Safe and Together costs approximately \$1,052,126.86, preventing about 7,758.6 removals over 10 years. This results in a low cost of only \$135.61 per family. Compared to the cost effectiveness of alternatives I and II, \$1,866.99 and \$1,203.44 per family, respectively, this is relatively high. The administrative feasibility, measured by the level of collaborative effort required, the novelty of the alternative, and the bureaucratic burden, is equivalent to alternative II's (DV advocates) and higher than the alternative I's (legislative exception). Political feasibility, measured by the type of change required, existing precedent, and support from New York legislators is comparable to alternative II's and higher than alternative I's. Lastly, equity was measured by how well each alternative addressed

issues of gender, race, and class disparities. Safe and Together ranked higher than other alternatives.

Safe and Together directly addresses the lack of CPS and DV collaboration on a higher level than common interventions such as cross training or DV advocates alone, by changing existing manuals and assessment procedures to actively highlight this issue. To ensure domestic violence survivors are not villainized by the child welfare system, Safe and Together rewrites caseworkers' assessment documentation to record survivors' protection attempts in the context of partner abuse. Outlining perpetrator's pattern of harm and coercion also shifts blame away from survivors. Safe and Together training both teaches caseworkers this new method and provides critical knowledge on approaching domestic violence in child neglect cases more generally. These interventions together reduce the chances of improper removals.

Lastly, I outline steps and challenges for implementation. Implementation requires a hiring Safe and Together trained consultant to rewrite existing assessment components, updating software with these changes, and training caseworkers.

Client Overview

The goal of my client, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), is to “connect community action, public system reform, and policy change to create a fair and just society in which all children and families thrive” (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2022). CSSP is an advocacy and research-centered non-profit that develops policy solutions, works to advance policy ideas at multiple levels of government, and fights policy proposals that harm families. More specifically, CSSP partners with public agencies, elected officials, judicial systems, advocates, private providers, and others to “develop, test, and promote approaches that help improve child welfare policy and practice” (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2022).

CSSP specifically highlights issues families at the intersection of child welfare and domestic abuse experience, including traumatizing and unnecessary family separation, which perpetuates unjust systems of gender, race, and economic inequality. CSSP’s child welfare webpage states, “Too many children and youth enter foster care unnecessarily, experience poor outcomes while in care, and exit without permanent family connections. Children and families involved with child welfare systems experience disparate treatment and outcomes” (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2022). This report directly supports this claim and narrows in on the subset of these children who experienced this due to domestic violence co-occurrence. The well-being of children and families necessitates exploring this historically repressed and currently pressing issue, which aligns explicitly with CSSP’s mission.

My client is also well-positioned to utilize my APP in the development, advocacy, and implementation stages. CSSP functions as an advocate and advisor to child welfare agencies to improve agency functionality and redirect resources where they are needed most. My APP provides a policy analysis that CSSP can use in its advocacy and advisory role. CSSP’s work in pushing policy on a state level also relates directly to the development and implementation of this APP’s alternatives. Its status as a court-appointed monitor also means CSSP can evaluate system performance against state and federal standards of practice, providing third-party accountability. In these ways, CSSP can aid in ensuring the best implementation.

Background

Scale/Scope

An estimated 3.3 million to 10 million children witness domestic violence in their homes (Davidson, 1995, p. 369). These children are significantly more likely to be placed outside of the home, as their mothers are six times more likely to be reported for maltreatment and neglect with about 28% declared neglectful, putting those millions of children at risk for unnecessary removal from non-offending, battered mothers in a system that misunderstands DV cases (Kohl et al., 2005, p.1168; Davidson, 1995, p. 358; Moles, 2008, p. 675).

Given that child neglect makes up the majority of alleged maltreatment cases in the US as of 2020, researchers infer that failure to protect cases remain an urgent issue within the foster care system (Victor et al., 2021). Furthermore, new research suggests that the problem has worsened during COVID-19, where isolation and financial stress led to an at least 8.1% spike in intimate partner violence, making this issue even more relevant for the Center for the Study of Social Policy (Council on Criminal Justice, 2021; Nikos-Rose, 2021).

However, the extent to which child welfare systems actually classify domestic abuse as child maltreatment is unclear due to a lack of precise data and the competing definitions of neglect as a failure to provide versus a failure to protect (American Bar Association, 2019; Victor et al., 2021). These gaps in data measurement emphasize the dysfunction of child welfare systems when domestic violence is involved and perpetuate the issue of unfair review. Since lower income, minority women are most likely to be affected, data collection has not been emphasized, leading to worse outcomes for an already intersectionality marginalized group and a limited understanding of the issue's full scope (Mahoney, 2019, p. 437).

Causes of Unnecessary Separation

Non-offending parents and their children in domestic violence situations are separated after CPS involvement due to several reasons outlined below. These include outdated legislation, lack of agency collaboration, fragmented courts, gender bias, and others.

Failure to Protect Clauses

“Failure to protect” is a key cause of separation. It refers to the idea that parents cause harm to their children by staying with an abuser, which is interpreted as a form of child maltreatment or neglect (Pritzker Center, 2021, p.15). Data on the current relevance of the clause has not been updated, but as of 2015, 48 states still used failure to protect statutes that classified the crime as either misdemeanors or felonies (Mahoney, 2019, p. 435). Both federal and state statutes categorize failure to protect as maltreatment: the current federal Child Abuse and Prevention and Treatment Act’s minimum threshold definition includes “failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (Victor et al., 2021). Courts upheld the failure to protect clause since the 1980s until it was brought into question by the Nicholson v. Scoppetta class action lawsuit in NYC, which set a precedent for systemic reform regarding unnecessary displacement for children with battered mothers (Harris, 2010, p. 184; Toussaint, 2006, p. 4). However, reform efforts after the NYC case have been slow, with most states still operating with outdated directives (Victor et al., 2021).

The policy's original goal was to reduce the duration of abuse by encouraging caregivers to report child abuse more often (Mahoney, 2019, p. 435). Though this is a logical policy when the non-offending parent is not abused, it fails to consider the complexities of domestic violence incidents (Tatum, 2000, p. 288). The policy shifts blame to the survivor while reducing accountability for the abuser, assuming that battered women can stop the violence (Carter et al., 1999, p.13). Realistically, battered mothers make the calculated decision to stay due to financial constraints and the high risk of homelessness, fear of retaliation, threats of murder, immigration concerns, cultural and social factors, etc. (Carter et al., 1999, p.13; Pritzker Center, 2021, p.15; Davidson, 1995, p. 363). Given that 20% of caseworkers do not describe the context failure to protect was cited and 40% of write-ups did not offer any justification for substantiation, it is evident that cases are not holistically reviewed with emphasis on the nuances of domestic violence when invoking the clause (Victor et al., 2021).

Divide Between CPS and Domestic Abuse Support

Failure to protect both contributes to and partly stems from CPS' lack of understanding of domestic violence responses, which is a key cause of unnecessary placement. As CPS is often the first outside service provider to learn of DV cases and has the power to remove children from homes with or without a court order, this is a root cause of unfair failure to protect placement, making either collaboration with or training from DV support networks necessary (Aron & Olsen, 1997). Understanding this foundational cause is vital to identifying sustainable, long-term solutions for my client.

The two major systems my client studies, child welfare (CPS) and domestic violence (DV) support, have been historically divided, and hostility after the lawsuit worsened the clash between child and women advocates (Meier & Sankaran, 2021, p. 1). CPS focuses on child safety planning practices, which necessitate physically leaving the abuser (e.g., moving out) or seeking divorce, even though domestic violence statistics show that leaving is often the most unsafe option (Victor et al., 2021). There has been little progress in developing the necessary collaborative understanding of the issue: the systems have developed separately due to different target groups, and the two still see their goals as incompatible in abuse cases such as the NYC one (Ogbonnaya & Pohle, 2013, p. 1401). Furthermore, CPS operates within government agencies and juvenile courts, while DV advocates operate within private organizations and civil/criminal courts, leaving little room for judicial or organization overlap (Meier & Sankaran, 2021, p. 1; Pritzker Center, 202, p. 7). Furthermore, CPS' history of using failure to protect to revictimized survivors has become a fundamental obstacle to collaboration, leading to unnecessary placement (Meier & Sankaran, 2021, p. 5). Though federal law does require CPS to make "reasonable efforts" to prevent family separation, most states do not consistently evaluate if and how children can remain with non-offending parents and have no specific DV assessment procedures within child welfare (Meier & Sankaran, 2021, p. 21; Carter et al., 1999, p.13). It is valuable for these organizations to reconcile their goals in the context of domestic violence as removing children retraumatizes them and further endangers the mothers, leading to negative consequences for both institutions (Aron & Olsen, 1997).

Fragmented Courts

A fragmented court system further perpetuates unfair failure to protect policies and the CPS and DV divide. A court order generally precedes removals, or a court petition is filed after. Furthermore, mothers are tried here for long-term separation cases. Since this is where failure

to protect is legally and actionably used and removal order are granted, studying this cause will be key to reform. Custody control is the means through which family separation occurs, and courts carry this out without a holistic review of family histories (Mahoney, 2019, p. 441). Family courts are rare and may not have jurisdiction over both the civil and criminal aspects of the issues as their scope is limited to private custody litigation (Davidson, 1995, p. 360; Meier & Sankaran, 2021, p.1). Within these courts, lawyers that specialize in domestic violence differ greatly from those in child welfare and are not trained together (Davidson, 1995, p. 360). This holds true for judges as well, who see mothers' failed interventions as inaction and tend to impose harsh punishments on mothers despite proof of a non-abusive relationship between her and the child (Mahoney, 2019, p. 441). The lack of integrated court proceedings mean survivors are often involved in multiple court hearings at different courthouses both civilly, as a victim of abuse, and criminally, as a neglectful parent, which increases the risk of unnecessary placement (Davidson, 1995, p. 359).

Gender Bias and Lack of Abuser Accountability

Inequities within the court and CPS system also reveal significant gender bias. Feminist critiques highlight that a disproportionate emphasis on the mother's role, while acquitting abusive fathers, also contributes to out-of-home placement. Domestic and international researchers have criticized family courts for failing to evaluate domestic violence and child abuse cases, showing hostility towards mothers, and awarding custody to abusive fathers (Meier & Sankaran, 2021, p. 54). Though men statistically spend less time with children, they are responsible for about half of children's physical abuse incidents and for most serious abuse cases but are not held accountable to the degree that mothers are (Aron & Olsen, 1997; Laing, n.d., p. 3). Even when male partners are known to commit child abuse, interventions have focused primarily on women (Laing, n.d., p. 3). As juvenile courts only hold jurisdiction over the child, batterers have the option to terminate parental rights, making it difficult to hold them accountable (Carter et al., 1999, p.13). The result is a greater emphasis on mothers' roles, leading to increased out of home placement.

Consequences of Unnecessary Separations

Child removal has two major immediate implications: unnecessary foster care placement and family separation. Each lead to significant and varied consequences on the individual, societal, and nationwide level, highlighted in the figures below. Though all highlighted pathways to harm are important, detailing each is not feasible within this report, given the complexity of this issue. Therefore, this report focuses on consequences specifically to the children who are removed from the home and placed elsewhere.

Figure 1: Consequence Map I

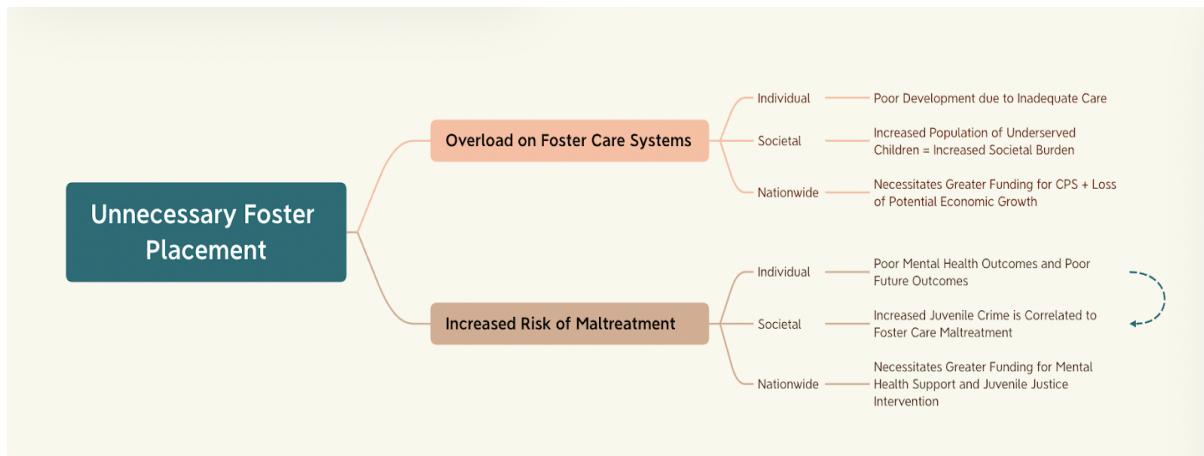
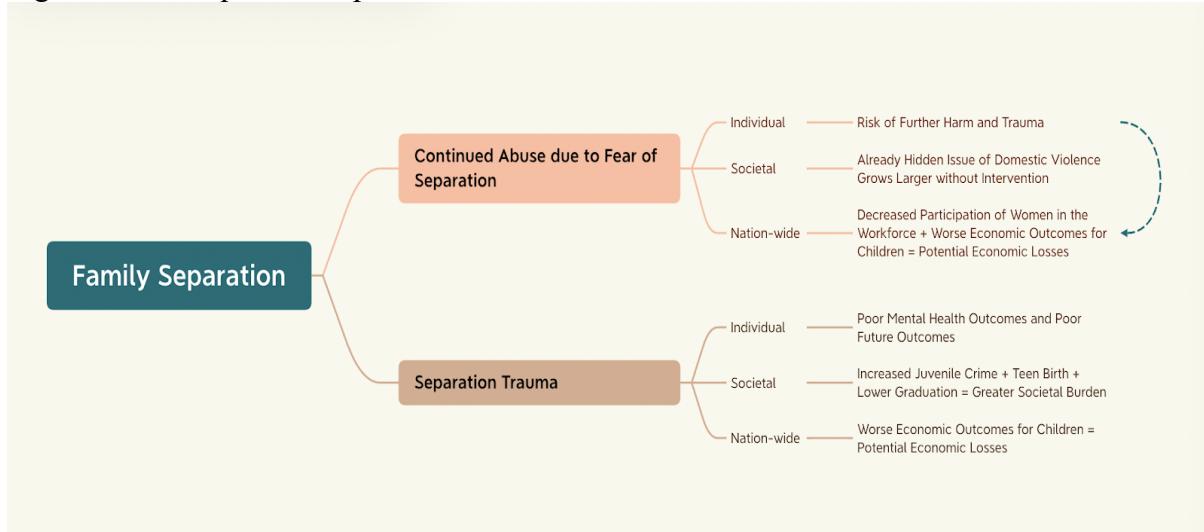


Figure 2: Consequence Map II



Continued Abuse and Maltreatment

A critical, though often overlooked, consequence is the risk of continued abuse and maltreatment even after removal. Though the goal of failure to protect clauses and removals is to decrease abuse incidents, both the risk of unnecessary placement and placement itself perpetuate further abuse. This is the primary consequence of these policies which directly contradicts its own purpose and that of my client, making it a key focal point in my analysis. More specifically, fear of custody loss deters battered mothers from reporting violence, resulting in continued abuse for both the mother and the children (Davidson, 1995, p. 373).

Given the gender bias within welfare systems and the lack of accountability for fathers, abusers often threaten to report mothers to CPS themselves. In cases where children are actually physically abused, fathers may even use evidence of their own abuse within the report (Mahoney, 2019, p. 447).

Furthermore, foster care experiences also often involve high maltreatment rates, which could be worse than children's home experiences (Meier & Sankaran, 2021, p. 20). Foster parents, child welfare providers, and agency protocol all pose risks to children's well-being though risk assessments rarely take this into account (American Bar Association, 2019). Healthcare statistics of foster children may best elucidate the extent of maltreatment. According to a 2005 Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study, rates of medical health issues in foster children are worse than those of lower-income children on Medicaid (American Bar Association, 2019). About 34% of children did not receive key immunizations, 32% had identified health needs that went unchecked, and 12% did not receive health care at all (Trivedi, 2019).

Therefore, despite having the opposite goal, the current system actually increases the risk of child maltreatment in cases with domestic violence co-occurrence.

Trauma and Consequential Future Risks

Whether or not further maltreatment occurs, separation itself leads to further traumatization and worse outcomes for children. This is arguably the best-studied consequence and also inhibits the institutional goals of CPS and my client to ensure children's well-being. Forced separation from a caregiver is intensely traumatizing, making it the most significant predictor for behavioral issues, which foster children are six times more likely to experience (American Bar Association, 2019). Children placed in foster care show greater rates of neurodevelopmental disorders and emotional problems than those with similar early life events who were not removed, with the effects lasting well into adulthood (Pritzker Center, 2021, p.7). Placement instability, which is frequent in foster systems, coupled with the loss of a loving caregiver, lead to dysregulated responses to chronic stress, which are linked to worse cognitive development (Pritzker Center, 2021, p.7). This means that children are twice as likely to have learning disabilities or developmental delays (American Bar Association, 2019). Alarmingly, PTSD rates for this population may be up to twice as high as those of US war veterans (American Bar Association, 2019).

Unnecessary placement also alters children's life trajectories since the resulting trauma is associated with worse outcomes. This consequence exemplifies how long lasting the effect can be for those individuals, and it also has implications for national and economic progress. Since emotional dysregulation leads to engagement in riskier sexual behavior, teen birth rates are higher for this group than those who were not removed (Doyle, 2007). Graduation rates are also significantly lower for foster children as compared to the general population (Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study 2005). This then leads to lower earnings among children who were removed when compared to those in similar situations who stayed (Doyle, 2007). The most drastic consequence may be the increased all-cause mortality rate across the ages of 20 to 56 (Pritzker Center, 2021, p.7). More specific studies suggest that this mortality risk is 1.5 times higher for those placed outside of their homes compared to similar children who were not (Sugrue, 2019).

Juvenile Justice System Involvement

One significant, well-studied life-altering consequence is criminal justice involvement. Foster care placement after maltreatment charges increases the risk of juvenile justice interventions, and this consequence is so indisputable that it has led to the concept “foster care to prison pipeline” as an emerging area of focus. Nearly 20% of those under the age of 30 in US prisons reported involvement in foster care systems (Doyle, 2007). Meta analyses show that in 82% of reviewed studies, maltreated children placed in care had greater rates of juvenile criminal activity as adults than similar children who remained home (American Bar Association, 2019). Meier & Sankaran, 2021, p. 20). Those on the margins of foster care placement who are then placed show three times greater arrest propensities, and 16% of foster care children have at least one delinquency petition as compared to 7% of the children who were not removed (Doyle, 2007; Ryan & Testa, 2005). Furthermore, according to Baglivio’s 2016 study, placement in the child welfare system also leads to increased recidivism, while experiencing abuse alone does not (Development Services Group, 2021).

Equity Implications

On a larger scale, it is also important to recognize how out-of-home placement perpetuates socioeconomic inequalities, specifically gender bias, racial discrimination, and income disparity. Failure to protect primarily targets mothers and is rarely applied to fathers (Davidson, 1995, p. 364). When mothers allege child abuse in court, they lose custody to the abuser 33-56% of the time, though this pattern does not appear when genders are reversed. Furthermore, federal surveys show that communities of color are disproportionately involved with child welfare/DV violence systems, which have racial bias built into them (Wright & Thomas, 2003). Specifically, African American and Native American children are disproportionately placed out of home, and racism within CPS may lead to exacerbated trauma, especially during juvenile justice interventions for which they are already at high risk (Wright & Thomas, 2003). Gender and racial bias necessitate intersectional understandings of the failure to protect clause, given that women of color are surveilled and referred to CPS at disproportionate levels and are more likely to be substantiated for failure to protect and child removal (Victor et al., 2021). Poorer families also face higher involvement with these systems, specifically with neglect and maltreatment charges (Gustavsson & MacEachron, 2021, p. 279). Cases frequently involve mothers who lack resources and need to work to build financial stability, which necessitates leaving children with their partners during shifts (Mahoney, 2019, p. 441). Therefore, though lower income, minority women are the group most likely to face abuse, they are also most likely to be punished for it through failure to protect clauses (Mahoney, 2019, p. 437). Their history of mistrust around police, social workers, and CPS caseworkers further exacerbates their inability to seek help despite being the group that most needs it (Mahoney, 2019, p. 437).

Evidence

This evidence overview aims to address existing or lacking evidence on solutions to prevent unnecessary removals. Overall, forms of collaboration between CPS and DV systems have been implemented as solutions most often, leading to a moderate amount of concentrated evidence around systems collaboration, while court integration and legal language adjustment have very little relevant research. Consequently, this section spends most of its space breaking down interventions at various levels of the CPS/DV process in child maltreatment cases, including initial risk assessment, short-term cross-training, long-term DV specialists, sustainable collaborative models that combine those components, and others. This allows for a detailed overview of the history of efforts to address the problem. After addressing existing evidence, the brief acknowledges key gaps in the literature. The lack of trauma-informed court processes and legislative changes in policy language are key reasons for this issue, necessitating a review of related literature despite a lack of implemented interventions.

Existing Literature

Collaborative CPS and DV Reform

Most existing literature on the reduction of unnecessary foster care placement in the context of domestic violence has centered around systems collaboration and resulted in strong evidence of its effectiveness. There is international agreement that child maltreatment is a “wicked problem”: the systems involved are inextricably linked to one another, and attempts to reform one without the other would be highly ineffective (Herbert & Mackenzie, 2014, p. 39). Furthermore, system synergy approaches have high success rates: meta-analyses established more generally in 2000 that multi-agency collaborations are seen as the most effective method to serve their target communities (Herbert & Mackenzie, 2014). Therefore, most policy suggestions, implemented models, and evaluative research projects have centered around increased collaboration between DV and child welfare systems (Cross et al., 2014; Kohl et al., 2005, Cameron & Lart, 2000; Sloper, 2004). Increased collaboration is effective in a few ways: 2020 US Department of Health and Human Services report shows that child welfare agencies who generally develop supportive relationships with families, including those facing domestic violence, remove fewer children, save more money, and reduce recurring cases (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020). The Greenbook Initiative was a foundational step in applying this approach to CPS and DV systems: it funded 6 communities to establish plans for increased system collaboration and evaluations showed that though building these relationships required intensive work, this was the initiative’s main success (Herbert & Mackenzie, 2014).

Risk Assessment

Implementing greater systems’ collaboration takes several forms at different steps of the child welfare process. One method is start at the initial stages of the process of risk assessment, where caseworkers evaluate if the child is at risk of harm, by whom, and to what extent. Researchers have identified better risk assessment as a necessary piece of the solution, arguing that removal decisions must be made with as much information as possible. Therefore, much of the CPS and DV collaborative curricula have focused on better assessing risk, but given the difficulty of experimentally isolating this factor, there is little resulting causal evidence on removal rates themselves (Mills & Yoshihama, 2002). However, there is some strong evidence that risk assessment reform increases the identification of domestic

violence within CPS cases (Magen et al., 2000). For example, a 2001 study's introduction of a domestic violence questionnaire within child maltreatment assessments resulted in a 100% increase in the identification of battered mothers (Magen et al., 2001). However, a serious limitation of this approach is the increased risk of separation for those identified without further collaborative casework.

Given the inherent biases caseworkers may hold, artificial intelligence (AI) based risk assessments have been tested as another solution, but there is little evidence that they're effective within this context. AI risk assessments use predictive analytics modeling tools to project the risk of harm to children. Developers suggest that with ethical oversight, these predictive analytics would enhance decision making and elucidate biases, but results have not reflected this (Child Welfare Information Gateway, n.d.). In fact, algorithms actually perpetuate existing inequities and leads to a disproportionate loss of privacy for poor families of color (Almedom et al., 2021).

Cross Training between CPS and DV Agencies

As necessary risk assessment reforms alone have the potential to increase risk for battered mothers, they are often combined with strongly supported cross-training models, where DV and CPS staff receive parts of the other's training. Research on collaborative efforts has heavily focused on cross-training in both systems, which has resulted in strong evidence for training models within states that implemented them (Mills & Yoshihama, 2002; Whitney & Davis, 1999; Findlater & Kelly, 1999b). Both Massachusetts, which pioneered collaborative training efforts between CPS and DV systems, and Michigan reported substantive changes in CPS caseworker's attitudes towards DV cases, reduced victim blaming, and more holistic assessments (Pritzker Center, 2021). California counties also reported that cross-training programs were effective in increasing CPS competency and compassion in DV cases (Mills & Yoshihama, 2002). Additionally, trainings generally increased women's perceived ability to protect themselves and established a more trusting relationship between them and caseworkers (Magen et al., 2000). However, these studies also identified key limitations to this approach. Trust building and collaboration took time to show results in Massachusetts, and other states faced challenges attempting to reverse decades of mistrust between agencies (Pritzker Center, 2021). Interviews with New York DV workers illuminated how concerns over CPS' attitudes towards them largely hindered cross-training efforts (Magen et al., 2001). On the technical side, a social work study in Virginia shows that over half of CPS supervisors see several overwhelming barriers to cross training such as lack of time/staff, travel distances (Button & Payne, 2009). However, the confirmed positive benefits outweigh the struggle to overcome these barriers in every study mentioned above. Furthermore, CPS perceptions of both systemic and individual barriers decreased after training, indicating that training creates space for effective collaboration (Hass, 2011).

Domestic Violence Specialists or Advocates within CPS

Continued collaboration must be a sustained effort. Trainings are temporary, and their long-term effects have not been evaluated well. Even with states' success with cross training, researchers warn that training itself is not enough (Haas et al., 2022). Therefore, incorporating long-term DV specialists within CPS agencies has been studied within multiple larger collaborative efforts with limited evidence.

Massachusetts was one of the first states to integrate DV specialists to educate CPS agencies on the relationship between domestic violence and child maltreatment, offer consultation in specific cases, and provide safety planning programs (Aron & Olson, 1997; Shanahan, 2007). San Francisco and Florida then implemented a similar model, focusing on trauma-informed approaches to domestic violence within child maltreatment cases and connecting with local DV organizations for these services (Pritzker Center, 2021, p. 13). There is positive suggestive evidence for the effectiveness of DV specialists, in these initiatives, leading researchers to label it as promising. The Greenbook Initiative, which funded collaborative efforts in California, Colorado, New Jersey, New Hampshire, and Oregon, found stronger evidence that creating DV specialist positions was “key to successful collaboration” (DiBella et al., n.d., p. 4). CPS caseworkers acknowledged the benefits of working with DV specialists who pushed the agency to become a resource for families and streamlined partnerships with other related agencies (Banks et al., 2008). However, concrete research on this intervention is still lacking. These studies could not isolate the effectiveness of DV specialists as this intervention is a component of a broader state collaborative plan (Findlater & Kelly, 1999a). A more specific 2014 study on New York’s model attempted to address this gap and showed that though co-located specialists increased cross agency knowledge and communication, there were no significant differences in child removal rates (DiBella et al., n.d.). Therefore, DV specialists are a promising intervention, but require more rigorous research.

Family Preservation Models

The interventions identified above are key individual components of increased systems collaboration, but the strongest evidence of decreased family separation in domestic violence contexts comes from models that combine and implement them together. These models allow agencies to align their goals with a focus on family preservation. The Safe and Together Model is one of the most widely utilized DV and CPS models, aiming to keep children with the non-offending parent. It has been field tested as a promising best practice model, incorporating multiple of the above components (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). The model incorporates knowledge of domestic violence experiences into the CPS assessment process itself by requiring that caseworkers document the various ways battered mothers attempted to protect their children from abuse and outline how the abuser has coerced and harmed the family (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). This leads to a foundational shift in how cases with co-occurrence are evaluated while changing caseworkers’ perspectives on domestic violence survivors. It produced strong results when implemented in 2012 in Northwest Florida, where the removal rate for DV-related cases dropped from 20.6% to 13.6% in only the first 6 months and then down to 9.1% in another 6 months. This model showed a 60% increase in confirmed DV maltreatment cases combined with a significant decrease in removals of over 50%, which is exactly the type of success DV and CPS systems’ collaborative efforts aim for (Safe & Together Institute, 2018). Connecticut demonstrated a similar impact: results after 18 months showed a decrease in removal rates (DiBella et al., n.d.). Implementation in Ohio showed evidence that CPS workers assigned less blame to battered mothers, which could influence a decline in instant removals (DiBella et al., n.d.). Other family preservation services programs include Michigan’s Families First program. A 1997 evaluation showed that it was able to keep battered mothers and their children together 95% of the time (Findlater & Kelly, 1999a, p. 92). Older evidence generally shows that intensive family preservation programs may lead to lower placement rates, with some outliers that show no difference in rates at all (Blythe et al., 1994). However, long term evaluations and follow ups are needed as there is little recent evidence on the topic. Additionally, each state model focuses on differing aspects of collaboration and adds context specific

interventions: Michigan decreased workers' caseloads and emphasized DV safety planning while Connecticut relied heavily on DV specialists (Findlater & Kelly, 1999a; DiBella et al., n.d.). It becomes difficult to isolate factors to attribute results to, which is a key research limitation. Since each state's combination of components varies, these results are also difficult to generalize as the exact combination of collaborative efforts needed is context dependent.

Abuser Intervention

Many effective family preservation models also integrate abuser intervention programs. In the Safe and Together Model, for example, caseworkers outline the perpetrator's pattern of control and its harmful impact on the family (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). However, unlike the previous components, these programs alone have not proved to be beneficial and require more rigorous research. (Eckhardt et al., 2013; Aaron & Beaulaurier, 2017).

Other policy strategies focusing on engagement with fathers are also rare (Eckhardt et al., 2013). Therefore, many advocates call for punishing abusers instead of engaging them by removing perpetrators from the home, requiring mandatory arrest provisions, and holding them accountable. (Panko, 1995; Dowd et al., 2006; Magen, 1999). However, these suggestions have not been implemented so research on causal effect is lacking.

Gaps in Existing Literature

The previous research reflects popular solutions implemented more widely. However, there are several other spaces in the intersection between CPS and DV that hold potential for solutions but lack literature on implementation for various reasons. The rest of this section explores these.

Collaborative Models in Court

Research on court focused reforms reflects a gap in the existing literature on attempts to reduce unnecessary removals. Collaborative models have rarely integrated civil courts despite courts being the primary systems responding to co-occurrence and the lack of constitutional rights entitling parents to counsel in child maltreatment cases (Meier et al., 2021; Shanahan, 2007). This is largely due to courts' resistance to hearing about co-occurrence in both DV and CPS cases as reported by advocates in multiple states (Meier et al., 2021; Brico, 2019). Some advocates have gone as far as to eliminate this as a potential solution, saying that interaction between courts and social services like CPS "only exacerbates the problems that exist within each system, at the expense of the children and families these systems are designed to serve" (Picker, 1993). Nevertheless, there have been a few successful cases in adjacent court reforms: in Lincoln County, Nebraska, all court members receive specialized DV training, which the University of Nebraska evaluated to be successful in juvenile courts (Pritzker Center, 2021, p.13). It is unclear if the results could be generalized to CPS cases.

Policy Directives + Language

However, the greatest gap in the literature around potential solutions involves changing legal and policy directive language. Researchers have made cases to lobby for legislative changes in definitions of neglect and maltreatment to remove assigned blame for battered women. Some have advocated for redefining child abuse entirely by removing DV cases or making DV an exception to definitions of neglect to decrease burden on the CPS system and preserve

families (Tatum, 2000). This has precedent in California and Massachusetts, who have done this for homelessness or poverty (Pritzker Center, 2021, p. 16). Washington's Keeping Families Together Act similarly changes the criteria for removal in cases with poverty and other care barriers (Washington Courts, 2023). The phrase "failure to protect" itself also has a case for being removed but few policy directives have properly implemented language solutions around this (Victor et al., 2021; Pritzker Center, 2021, p. 14).

Redefining language could also create opportunities for more tangible interventions. The Family First Prevention Services Act provides funding and services for "at risk" children, which states define. By broadening the definition of "at risk," children in DV cases could be candidates for coverage, potentially reducing out of home placement (Pritzker Center, 2021, p. 13). Using "substantial risk" as the terminology to justify removal is also dangerous as no harm needs to occur for this to be invoked (Pritzker Center, 2021, p.14). New York has necessitated that caseworkers identify harm before removal, which has somewhat balanced the system and could be used as a template after more research on the causal effects of this change (Brico, 2019).

Scope: New York State

The background above highlights overarching issues of child welfare and domestic violence. However, to provide a more detailed analysis, this report will narrow its scope in on policy alternatives to improve this problem in the state of New York. Given that the Center for the Study for Social Policy is based in New York, choosing this state best aligns with my client's goals and expertise.

Though New York is one of the most progressive states in terms of child welfare and DV programs and policy, its child welfare system remains inequitable and inefficient, making it a unique case for analysis. In New York, the statewide Office of Children and Family Services along with the New York City focused Administration for Children's Services carry out programs relevant to neglected children. Comparatively to other states, New York has an extensive record of attempting to solve this problem. The landmark 2004 class action lawsuit in New York, *Nicholson v. Scopetta*, was filed on behalf of domestic abuse survivors in NYC and resulted in the ruling that mothers should not be charged with exposing children to violence as neglect (Lee, 2015). However, a 2015 ethnographic study found that despite this win and subsequent policy changes, New York's child welfare system still does not adequately address DV cases, especially for poor women of color who are charged most often (Lee, 2015). New York also has existing cross training programs, co-located DV advocates in at least one out of three CPS offices, and some family preservation programs (OCFS). Yet, evidence following COVID-19 highlighted the rising issue of unnecessary removals. Removal pauses in COVID-19 showed children were safer with fewer family separations, but removals have crept up by almost 25% since and advocates argue that New York's child welfare system has failed to learn its lesson (Friedman and Rohr, 2023; Newman, 2023). The reality of traumatizing, unjust, and unnecessary separations is very much alive despite progressive attempts to correct the situation. Therefore, New York's record of programs and solutions should not mean that further reform is unnecessary.

Alternatives

With the context established by the survey of existing literature, I propose three alternatives for New York, inspired by the previous research. Proposed alternatives to reduce child removal rates in child neglect cases with co-occurring domestic violence and a non-offending parent include, classifying DV as a legislative exception to child neglect removals on a state level, increasing the number of New York CPS offices with DV advocates to 50%, or implementing the Safe and Together Model.

Alternative I: Classifying Domestic Violence as an Exception

Existing child neglect laws do not account for the complexity of domestic violence. Though it is neither safe nor feasible to remove failure to protect adjacent laws, given that they're meant to decrease child abuse by incentivizing reports and are deeply embedded into state directives, there is precedent for creating exceptions for removals. About half of US states do include exemptions for poverty within child welfare directives, citing the importance of differentiating between neglectful situations and financial instability (Williams et al., 2022; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018). For example, inadequate food provision for children by itself would no longer qualify as neglect unless the parents were aware of food assistance programs and withheld care, and this difference in qualifiers would lead to less unnecessary removals (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018). This alternative would create policy change to implement similar provisions for DV cases. New York's Administration of Children's Services currently lists "exposing a child to family violence" as an example of child neglect (Administration for Child Services, n.d.). With an exception for domestic violence, exposure to family violence itself would no longer qualify as neglect unless the survivor did not attempt to protect the child or withheld care. The difference between parents engaging in or allowing abuse and being constrained in abusive situations would be considered before removals occur. Therefore, this alternative should decrease the number of children separated from domestic abuse survivors or non-offending parents.

Washington's Keeping Families Together Act provides a template for this change. It lists similar exceptions and changes how courts make removal decisions (Washington Courts, 2023. Effective July 2023, it raises legal standards for removal and states that "the existence of factors, such as family poverty, inadequate housing, substance abuse, etc. do not by themselves constitute imminent physical harm" (Washington Courts, 2023). In New York, this alternative would establish domestic violence as this type of factor.

Alternative II: Expanding the Number of Domestic Violence Specialists within CPS to 50%

As highlighted in the existing literature, co-located DV advocates increase collaboration between CPS and DV agencies, the lack of which is a key cause for unnecessary separations. Currently, about 21 out of 62 New York counties have a DV specialist or advocate co-located within a CPS office (Futures Without Violence, 2014). Given that the last recorded state increase in DV advocate programs expanded to 11 offices, proposing co-location in 11 more, or a total of 50% of all offices, is the most feasible increase (Futures Without Violence,

2014). DV specialists' requirements for hiring include having at least one year of domestic violence related work experience and being an employee of a New York Domestic Violence program. They are co-located within the county CPS office in close proximity to CPS workers and must work at least three full days per week (Futures Without Violence, 2014). Specific tasks include: facilitating existing cross trainings relevant to domestic violence, joint home visits, joint safety planning, attending team meetings, providing survivor support and advocacy, and ongoing consultation. A maximum of two advocates or specialists are hired per county with the funding disseminated from Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act funds (Futures Without Violence, 2014). As CPS caseworkers' understanding of domestic violence can be lacking, this alternative aims to improve joint case practice to reduce removal rates through systems collaboration.

Alternative III: Family Preservation Models: Safe and Together

The Safe and Together model is one of the most widely utilized DV and CPS models, aiming to keep children with the non-offending parent. It has been field tested as a promising best practice intervention, incorporating multiple prevention components to reduce unnecessary removal at several levels of intervention (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). It addresses the systemic bias against domestic violence survivors by emphasizing default support for the non-offending parent and recognizing abuser patterns to keep families together safely with removal as a last resort. Specifically, the model requires that the Administration for Child Services must rewrite existing case worker manuals and documentation/assessment requirements to include investigative questionnaires on the full spectrum of non-offending parents' protection attempts (actions taken to keep the children safe) and outline patterns of abuser coercion and violence (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). The agency would work with a Safe and Together trained consultant to write new components of the CPS process and implement these changes. Caseworkers must receive Safe and Together training to understand this agency-wide shift in the approach to domestic violence and accurately recognize protection attempts and coercion patterns. Analyzing DV related cases from this lens shifts the entire assessment process to a survivor-partnered approach in order to lower removal rates (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). This model may take up to a year to implement given its complexity. The funding would then be drawn from the state budget towards child welfare and prevention services—the same source of the currently scattered programs that share similar goals of safe family preservation (Administration for Child Services, 2023).

Criteria

To evaluate proposed alternatives in New York constructed from the previous evaluation of existing literature, this report first establishes four key criteria of cost-effectiveness, administrative feasibility, political feasibility, and equity.

Cost-Effectiveness

The alternatives above aim to decrease the number of unnecessary separations from non-offending caregivers, specifically mothers experiencing domestic violence, whenever safe and possible. For each such alternative, this criterion measures the ratio of the alternative's cost to the number of removals prevented. Cost is measured as the total implementation and operating costs for the policy over the course of 10 years. Effectiveness is measured as the number of children prevented from being removed from the care of a non-offending parent over 10 years. The total cost is divided by the number of separations prevented.

Administrative Feasibility

As a lack of agency cooperation and systems integration is a key cause of unnecessary placement, alternatives that require multiple agencies for implementation are rated lower as this decreases feasibility. Additionally, alternatives that require the establishment of entirely new offices and programs will be scored lower, while those that expand existing programs will be rated higher. Alternatives that create great additional bureaucratic burden will also be rated lower than those that create less. These evaluations are operationalized through this rubric:

Table 1: Administrative Feasibility Rubric

	0	1	2
Collaborative Effort	More than two agencies or organizations must collaborate in order to implement the alternative, and relevant work occurs across multiple agencies/organizations.	Two agencies or organizations may collaborate to manage implementation and relevant work occurs across these two agencies/organizations.	One agency/organization primarily manages implementation and relevant work occurs within the same agency or organization.
Novelty	An entirely new program or office must be created to implement the alternative.	A new program or office is required but builds on existing programs and practices or uses an existing program as a template.	No new programs or offices are required to be created. The alternative is implemented within existing programs or reasonably expands existing programs.
Bureaucratic Burden	Multiple administrative steps are required in the process, with high bureaucratic burden. These include approval by managers, rewriting	A few administrative steps are required in the process, with moderate bureaucratic burden.	Minimal administrative steps are required in the process, with low bureaucratic burden.

	language, changing CPS manuals, or hiring new caseworkers.		
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Political Feasibility

Political feasibility measures the likelihood of relevant decision makers taking action to enact each policy option. Those requiring regulatory changes will be rated higher, or more likely, as these occur within agency and subsequently need less processing time and less approvals, compared to those requiring legislative changes, which involve state level approvals with greater processing steps. I will review the standings of New York's legislative leaders to assess how likely they are to enact or support each policy alternative. These evaluations are operationalized through this rubric:

Table 2: Political Feasibility Rubric

	0	1	2
Type of Change	A policy change on a state level is required for implementation.	State government approval is required, but most changes occur within the agency.	Only regulatory changes, or within agency changes, are required for implementation.
Precedent	New York has no previous legislation or policy similar to this.	New York has some previous legislation or policy similar to this.	New York has extensive previous legislation or policy similar to this.
NY Legislators: Governor NYC Mayor Senators and Representatives	The state actors have mostly opposed relevant legislation in the past.	The state actors have generally not addressed relevant legislation in the past or are equally divided in their opinions.	The actors have mostly supported relevant legislation in the past.

Equity

Unnecessary separations from the non-offending parent have multiple significant equity implications as outlined throughout this report. These include evident gender disparities, socioeconomic biases, and racial discrimination, which often intersect. All three equity concerns carry equal weight, and policy alternatives will be evaluated based on whether or not they address the three equity concerns and how effectively they do so. This is assessed through both qualitative data, including directives within programs that may clearly state goals to create more equitable outcomes, or qualitative data gathered from demographic information on maltreatment cases before and after these interventions were implemented in other locations.

Table 3: Equity Rubric

	0	1	2
Gender Disparities	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential	Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue

	to worsen it.	issue positively.	positively.
Socioeconomic Biases	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.	Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.
Racial Discrimination	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.	Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.

Findings

Each proposed alternative is evaluated here through the previously established criteria.

Alternative I: Classifying Domestic Violence as an Exception

Cost-Effectiveness

Costs

Costs include IT costs, training costs, and administrative costs to the Attorney General's office (Department of Children, Youth, and Families, 2021). Washington's HB 1227, the Keeping Families Together Act, provides a multiple agency fiscal summary of these costs, leading to an estimated operating expenditure of \$19,206,000 over 10 years. Please see Appendix II for detailed calculations.

Effectiveness

Tightening removal standards by creating a legislative exception for DV cases is estimated to reduce unnecessary removals by approximately half. With a 50% reduction, this would prevent 10287.15 children from being separated from non-offending parents. Please see the Appendix II for detailed calculations.

Cost-Effectiveness

The cost effectiveness is calculated by dividing the approximate \$19,206,000 cost by 10287.15, the number of removals prevented. Therefore, the cost per family separation prevented is \$1,866.99.

Administrative Feasibility

Classifying domestic violence as an exception to child neglect for non-offending parents would likely require collaboration and work across CPS, state legislators, the Office of Children and Family Services, and the Administrative of Children in writing, advocating for, and implementing this policy change, giving it a 0 for collaborative effort. However, implementation will be within CPS and existing agencies; language change does not necessitate novel programs or offices, giving this a 2 on novelty. Bureaucratic burden, however, is extremely high. Implementation will require several drafts of policy language changes, approval from multiple legislators, changes in CPS manuals, etc., giving this a 0 for bureaucratic burden.

Table 4: Alternative I Administrative Feasibility Rubric

	0	1	2
Collaborative Effort	<i>More than two agencies or organizations must collaborate in order to implement the alternative, and relevant work occurs across multiple agencies/organizations.</i>	Two agencies or organizations may collaborate to manage implementation and relevant work occurs across these two agencies/organizations.	One agency/organization primarily manages implementation and relevant work occurs within the same agency or organization.

Novelty	An entirely new program or office must be created to implement the alternative.	A new program or office is required but builds on existing programs and practices or uses an existing program as a template.	<i>No new programs or offices are required to be created. The alternative is implemented within existing programs or reasonably expands existing programs.</i>
Bureaucratic Burden	<i>Multiple administrative steps are required in the process, with high bureaucratic burden. These include approval by managers, rewriting language, changing CPS manuals, or hiring new caseworkers.</i>	A few administrative steps are required in the process, with moderate bureaucratic burden.	Minimal administrative steps are required in the process, with low bureaucratic burden.

Political Feasibility

This alternative receives a score of 0 for type of change since it requires a policy change on the state level. As New York does have an exception for poverty as a sole reason for removal in neglect cases, it receives a 1 for precedent scoring (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018). Furthermore, in 2019, NY passed the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act, which allows courts to retroactively shorten sentences for women who survived domestic violence. This may set precedent for the new exception, making it easier to pass. Lastly, it receives a 1 for NY legislators' support. Governor Hochul is supportive of DV reform as indicated by previous legislation and statements like "committed to eradicating domestic violence and supporting survivors - a mission that has been a lifelong journey for generations of women in my family" (Governor's Press Office, 2022). However, in 2022, her proposed budget included an \$800 million dollar cut for Office of Children and Family Services' funding (Kielar, 2022). Mayor Eric Adams is similarly supportive of DV reform, signing legislation expanding domestic violence victim definitions to include economic abuse in 2023, but has been inconsistent in commenting on child welfare policies (Office of the Mayor, 2023; Fitzgerald, 2021). Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand have been generally supportive of both DV and child welfare legislation (Senate Democrats, 2022; Congress, 2023; Gillibrand, 2021).

However, this does not mean NY legislators are likely to support this particular alternative. According to experts, lawmakers face significant political pressure to appear tough on child abuse cases (Summers et al., 2022). This makes it difficult to amend existing laws on child welfare and DV. In other states, this type of reform has not gained much traction and has only been enacted in 2 out of 50 states. Furthermore, neither NY's governor, Kathy Hochul, nor the NYC mayor, Eric Adams, have prioritized the intersection between child welfare and DV.

Table 5: Alternative I Political Feasibility Rubric

	0	1	2
Type of Change	<i>A policy change on a state level is required for implementation.</i>	State government approval is required, but most changes occur within the agency.	Only regulatory changes, or within agency changes, are required for implementation.
Precedent	New York has no previous legislation or policy similar to this.	<i>New York has some previous legislation or policy similar to this.</i>	New York has extensive previous legislation or policy similar to this.
NY Legislators: Governor NYC Mayor Senators and Representatives	The state actors have mostly opposed relevant legislation in the past.	<i>The state actors have generally not addressed relevant legislation in the past or are equally divided in their opinions.</i>	The actors have mostly supported relevant legislation in the past.

Equity

This alternative receives a score of 1 each in terms of addressing gender disparities, socioeconomic biases, and racial discrimination, for a total equity evaluation of 3. Though gender disparities are not explicitly addressed, domestic abuse impacts women at higher rates than men and mothers are more likely to lose custody to abusers, while fathers are not (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d.; Davidson, 1995, p. 364). Therefore, targeting domestic violence as an exempt situation would indirectly affect gender disparity within child welfare systems positively. Low-income families are more likely to face CPS involvement, especially with neglect and maltreatment (Gustavsson & MacEachron, 2021, p. 279). Furthermore, financial abuse occurs in about 99% of DV cases (Adams, 2011).

Therefore, this policy also indirectly alleviates socioeconomic disparities.

Proponents of Washington's Keeping Families Together Act have argued the policy counters systemic racism within child welfare, given that Black and Indigenous children are removed at double the rate as white children (Brown, 2021; Shapiro, 2021)

Table 6: Alternative I Equity Rubric

	0	1	2
Gender Disparities	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.	<i>Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.</i>	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.
Socioeconomic Disparities	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.	<i>Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.</i>	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.
Racial Discrimination	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.	<i>Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.</i>	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.

Alternative II: Expanding the Number of Domestic Violence Specialists within CPS to 50%

Cost-Effectiveness

Cost

Taking into account the cost of establishing DV advocate offices in past years and the sustained cost of the salaries and fringe benefits of two DV advocates per county, the estimated cost over 10 years is \$12,409,632.20. Please see Appendix II for detailed calculations.

Effectiveness

Taking averages of studies in 2011 and 2014 gives an approximate 50.12% removal decrease, which would lead to the prevention of 10311.8 child removals over 10 years. Please see Appendix III for detailed calculations.

Cost-Effectiveness

The cost effectiveness is calculated by dividing the \$12,409,632.20 cost by 10311.8, the number of removals prevented. Therefore, the cost per family separation prevented is \$1,203.44. Please see the appendix for detailed calculations.

Administrative Feasibility

Hiring DV specialists requires cross agency collaboration between a partnered DV organization and the CPS office, but no other agencies or organizations, giving it a score of 1 on collaborative effort. It does require a new administrative or physical space to be created within CPS for DV advocates or specialists to work within, but not an entirely new office or program, giving it a 1 on novelty (Futures Without Violence, 2014). The hiring of new DV specialists and their acclimation to CPS offices requires moderate administrative steps, scoring it a 1 on bureaucratic burden.

Table 7: Alternative II Administrative Feasibility Rubric

	0	1	2
Collaborative Effort	More than two agencies or organizations must collaborate in order to implement the alternative, and relevant work occurs across multiple agencies/organizations.	<i>Two agencies or organizations may collaborate to manage implementation and relevant work occurs across these two agencies/organizations.</i>	One agency/organization primarily manages implementation and relevant work occurs within the same agency or organization.
Novelty	An entirely new program or office must be created to implement the alternative.	<i>A new program or office is required but builds on existing programs and practices or uses an existing program as a template.</i>	No new programs or offices are required to be created. The alternative is implemented within existing programs or reasonably expands existing programs.
Bureaucratic Burden	Multiple administrative steps are required in the process, with high	<i>A few administrative steps are required in the process, with moderate</i>	Minimal administrative steps are required in the process, with low

	bureaucratic burden. These include approval by managers, rewriting language, changing CPS manuals, or hiring new caseworkers.	<i>bureaucratic burden.</i>	bureaucratic burden.
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Political Feasibility

This alternative receives a score of 1 for type of change. Though state approval is required for funding, the implementation occurs primarily within CPS (in coordination with a DV organization). It receives a higher score of 2 for precedent as New York already has co-located DV advocates in at least 21 counties (Futures Without Violence, 2014). Governor Hochul and Mayor Eric Adams' support for DV legislation and DV organizations signals potential support for DV advocates (Governor's Press Office, 2022; Office of the Mayor, 2023). Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand have shown similar support for DV policies (Senate Democrats, 2022; Congress, 2023; Gillibrand, 2021). Therefore, alternative II receives a 2 for NY legislators' support.

Table 8: Alternative II Political Feasibility Rubric

	0	1	2
Type of Change	A policy change on a state level is required for implementation.	<i>State government approval is required, but most changes occur within the agency.</i>	Only regulatory changes, or within agency changes, are required for implementation.
Precedent	New York has no previous legislation or policy similar to this.	New York has some previous legislation or policy similar to this.	<i>New York has extensive previous legislation or policy similar to this.</i>
NY Legislators: Governor NYC Mayor Senators and Representatives	The state actors have mostly opposed relevant legislation in the past.	The state actors have generally not addressed relevant legislation in the past or are equally divided in their opinions.	<i>The actors have mostly supported relevant legislation in the past.</i>

Equity

This alternative receives a score of 1 on gender disparities, 1 on socioeconomic biases, and a 0 on racial discrimination for a cumulative score of 2. As DV advocates would primarily work with mothers and women, given the gendered impact of domestic abuse, the policy vaguely addresses gender disparities (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d.; Davidson, 1995, p. 364). Furthermore, financial abuse occurs in about 99% of DV cases (Adams, 2011). Therefore, this policy also indirectly alleviates socioeconomic disparities. However, racial discrimination is not addressed and though CPS does disproportionately target communities of color, DV advocates themselves are not likely to address this disproportionality.

Table 9: Alternative II Equity Rubric

	0	1	2
Gender Disparities	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.	<i>Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.</i>	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.
Socioeconomic Biases	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.	<i>Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.</i>	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.
Racial Discrimination	<i>Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.</i>	Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.

Alternative III: Family Preservation Models: Safe and Together

Cost Effectiveness

Cost

Safe and Together offers multiple relevant courses on domestic violence for caseworkers, two of which current case workers and any additional hires over 10 years would be required to complete: Multiple Pathways to Harm: A Comprehensive Assessment Framework and Safe & Together™: An Introduction to the Model. These courses focus most specifically on partnering with survivors and perpetrator pattern recognition (Safe and Together, 2023a). As these are all e-courses, no additional materials such as training spaces or props are required. Updating assessment and documentation processes is also low cost. The CONNECTIONS case management system is “a single statewide integrated system for the collection and recording of child protective services” within which caseworkers input required data and assessments (SUNY Training Strategies Group, n.d.). Updates would be automated within CONNECTIONS, minimizing cost, and occur within agency so there is no cost to the state. Furthermore, training time is built into caseworkers’ schedules—Safe and Together modules would replace existing DV cross trainings, which means additional training time is not added as a cost (OFSC). However, a Safe and Together consultant must be temporarily hired (up to one year) to revise existing assessment practices and oversee training, adding to the total cost. Together, these expenses come to an estimated total of \$1,052,126.86 over 10 years. Please see Appendix II for detailed calculations.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness estimate for Safe and Together comes from analyses of implementation in Connecticut and Florida, from which we can assume an average removal reduction rate of 37.71%. This translates to 7758.6 less removals over 10 years. Please see Appendix III for detailed calculations.

Cost-Effectiveness

The cost effectiveness is calculated by dividing the \$1,052,126.86 cost by 7758.6, the number of removals prevented. Therefore, the cost per family separation prevented is \$135.61.

Administrative Feasibility

This alternative receives a total score of 3 for administrative feasibility. Safe and Together is implemented within CPS alone. Though it requires cooperation from DV specialists, it doesn’t require collaborative efforts from the DV organization itself. Therefore, it scores a 2 on collaborative effort. A new program, Safe and Together, may be created in this alternative, but the Safe and Together organization provides a template and builds on existing practices, giving this a 1 for novelty. As this requires multiple administrative steps such as approval by managers, rewriting language, changing manuals, and hiring new workers, this receives a 0 on bureaucratic burden.

Table 10: Alternative III Administrative Feasibility Rubric

	0	1	2
Collaborative Effort	More than two agencies	Two agencies or	<i>One agency/organization</i>

	or organizations must collaborate in order to implement the alternative, and relevant work occurs across multiple agencies/organization.	organizations may collaborate to manage implementation and relevant work occurs across these two agencies/organizations.	<i>primarily manages implementation and relevant work occurs within the same agency or organization.</i>
Novelty	An entirely new program or office must be created to implement the alternative.	<i>A new program or office is required but builds on existing programs and practices or uses an existing program as a template.</i>	No new programs or offices are required to be created. The alternative is implemented within existing programs or reasonably expands existing programs.
Bureaucratic Burden	<i>Multiple administrative steps are required in the process, with high bureaucratic burden. These include approval by managers, rewriting language, changing CPS manuals, or hiring new workers.</i>	A few administrative steps are required in the process, with moderate bureaucratic burden.	Minimal administrative steps are required in the process, with low bureaucratic burden

Political Feasibility

The total political feasibility score for this alternative is 4. It receives a 1 for type of change as state approval is needed for funding and changing existing assessment measures. However, the functional changes all occur within CPS itself. It receives a score of 1 for precedent as well since New York does have extensive cross training programs, but they don't involve explicit partnership with survivors (Dick, 2019). Lastly, it receives a score of 2 for legislators' support given that this policy is heavily survivor focused and all major New York politicians have supported legislation aiding domestic violence survivors (Governor's Press Office, 2022; Office of the Mayor, 2023; Senate Democrats, 2022; Congress, 2023; Gillibrand, 2021).

Table 11: Alternative III Political Feasibility Rubric

	0	1	2
Type of Change	A policy change on a state level is required for implementation.	<i>State government approval is required, but most changes occur within the agency.</i>	Only regulatory changes, or within agency changes, are required for implementation.
Precedent	New York has no previous legislation or policy similar to this.	<i>New York has some previous legislation or policy similar to this.</i>	New York has extensive previous legislation or policy similar to this.
NY Legislators: Governor NYC Mayor Senators and	The state actors have mostly opposed relevant legislation in the past.	The state actors have generally not addressed relevant legislation in the past or are equally divided	<i>The actors have mostly supported relevant legislation in the past.</i>

Representatives		in their opinions.	
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Equity

Safe and Together receives a total score of 4 for equity. Trainings explicitly address gender disparity in their discussion of the domestic abuse cycle and train caseworkers to identify unfairness of the current system towards mothers, leading to a score of 2 (Safe and Together, 2018). Though socioeconomic biases and racial discrimination are not a central focus, briefings do highlight that domestic violence training competence cannot be achieved without race and class integration, giving this alternative a score of 1 for each (Safe and Together, 2019).

Table 12: Alternative III Equity Rubric

	0	1	2
Gender Disparities	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.	Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.	<i>Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.</i>
Socioeconomic Biases	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.	<i>Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.</i>	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.
Racial Discrimination	Alternative does not address this equity concern or has potential to worsen it.	<i>Vaguely addresses this equity concern and/or indirectly impacts this issue positively.</i>	Directly addresses this equity concern and/or impacts this issue positively.

Outcomes Matrix

	Alternatives		
Evaluative Criteria	Legislative Exception	DV Advocates	Safe and Together
Cost to State over 10 years	\$19,206,000	\$12,409,632.20	\$1,052,126.86
Effectiveness: Removals Prevented over 10 years	10,287.15	10,311.8	7,758.6
Cost Effectiveness	\$1,866.99 per family	\$1,203.44 per family	\$135.61 per family
Administrative Feasibility	2	3	3
Political Feasibility	2	5	4
Equity	3	2	4

Recommendation

Based on each alternative's evaluation of cost, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, administrative and political feasibility, and equity, I recommend that CSSP advocate for alternative III, the Safe and Together model. Not only does cost-effectiveness demonstrate that the cost per family is significantly lower than other alternatives, providing the most value per dollar spent, but the overall cost is also over \$11 million lower than that of the other alternatives. The low expense and high impact make this an attractive policy for the CSSP to pitch. Furthermore, administrative feasibility matches or exceeds that of the other alternatives since only one agency is required for change and this builds on existing practices. Therefore, benefits will likely accrue just as fast, if not faster, than of the other policy options. Though its bureaucratic burden was high, this is due to the foundational change the alternative creates and reflects its high impact. Political feasibility is relatively high as well with a score only one point lower than the existing policy of DV advocates and two points higher than the legislation exception alternative, meaning adoption of this policy will likely be successful. Lastly, equity is ranked highest for Safe and Together. Safe and Together is the only alternative that specifically address gender disparities and mentions the importance of racial discrimination and socioeconomic biases in writing. This is a valuable component given that the child welfare system disproportionately targets lower income women of color. Safe and Together is a highly impactful, cost-effective, feasible, and equitable alternative for CSSP to proceed with in its advocacy efforts.

Implementation

To achieve the goal of keeping children with non-abusive parents, the implementation of the Safe and Together requires following principles of a strengths-based partnership with the non-abusive parent and holding perpetrators accountable to reduce further harm (Safe & Together Institute, 2017; Safe & Together Institute, 2018). Existing, successful adaptations in Florida, Ohio, Connecticut, Colorado, Ohio, Iowa, Edinburgh, and Melbourne offer insight into implementation steps (Safe & Together Institute, 2017; Safe & Together Institute, 2018; Safe & Together Institute, n.d.). Funding comes from the state budget for child welfare and prevention services, the source of programs that share similar goals of safe family preservation.

In order, the key implementation steps are:

1. Hire Safe and Together trained consultant
2. Consultant and OCFS create new assessment and documentation
3. Update CONNECTIONS software
4. Train caseworkers with Safe and Together courses

The remainder of this section breaks down these steps by outlining how the two key principles of this alternative, strengths-based partnerships and abuser accountability are implemented.

Strengths-Based Partnerships

A shift in how domestic violence survivors are evaluated as parents in child welfare cases requires explicitly highlighting non-offending parents' efforts to protect and promote the child's wellbeing, or their strengths, as opposed to their failure to protect. Audits of Safe and Together programs show that separations from the abuser, moving homes, and calling the police are the usual components of identifying whether or not survivors attempted to protect their children (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). In reality, safety can look different in every abuse case and disregards efforts including developing safety plans, maintaining medical and educational appointments, placing children in extracurricular activities, compliance with abuser's demands to prevent further violence, etc. (Safe & Together Institute, 2017; Pritzker Center, 2021).

Therefore, implementing this principle starts with the Office of Child and Family Services' policy writers and a Safe and Together moderator, the managers of the implementation process, creating a new investigative questionnaire meant to outline the full research-based spectrum of non-offending parents' protection attempts (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). Once this has been approved by the OCFS commissioner, Suzanne Miles-Gustave, it would be incorporated into existing, mandated risk assessment questionnaire packets in the CONNECTIONS software system. These two steps would take two to four months (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). Meanwhile, case workers, or child protection specialists, are tasked with carrying out these assessments. They would receive required Safe and Together™

trainings, purchased by the OCFS, on how to recognize protection attempts. Child protection specialists would then ask survivors, family and friends, and children new questions highlighting the survivors' plan of action to protect their children (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). DV specialists within OCFS units would oversee whether these questionnaires are efficiently and accurately used, taking on the fixer role in implementation.

Challenges to implementation include difficulty in shifting OCFS and caseworkers' preconceived notions of domestic abuse survivors. New York's child welfare services and DV organizations have a documented history of mistrust due to repeated victim blaming (Meier et al., 2021). Interviews with New York DV workers illuminated how concerns over CPS' attitudes towards them largely hindered cross training efforts (Magen et al., 2001). Therefore, caseworkers may not thoroughly investigate or document non offending mothers' protection attempts. This significantly damages the implementation of this principle: caseworkers are important stakeholders in the process given that they experience major workload changes and are most closely connected to case details. Noncompliance would block gains from this process and unnecessary separations would continue. However, cross training efforts in New York have increased in recent years, which may minimize the likelihood of this resistance (Poole, 2022). Implementation incentives such as unit wide recognition for thorough documentation may also help counter resistance.

Abuser Accountability

The second principle is what sets Safe and Together apart from New York's existing family preservation programs. The first step to implementing this component is mandating that professionals outline perpetrators' patterns of coercion. Existing policies disproportionately surveille mothers and a lack of information on the abuser leads to greater scrutiny of mothers' actions (Humphreys and Nicholson, 2017). This component shifts patterns of victim blaming and results in safer outcomes for both the mother and child, especially if enough evidence is gathered to later use to hold perpetrators accountable in court processes (Safe & Together Institute, 2017).

Implementation would first require OCFS policy writers to work with Safe and Together moderators in developing forms for caseworkers to document abuser patterns, which are then approved by the OCFS commissioner, Miles-Gustave. Administrators would then add this to existing documentation required from caseworkers while IT workers create a new section in the CONNECTIONS database to collect this information. This process should take two to four months (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). To ensure proper documentation, OCFS must also purchase Safe and Together™ trainings on this subject and mandate child protection specialists complete them to ensure accurate completion of this new component. Finally, as they take on cases, child protection specialists, the doers, would be required to submit all forms of abuse and control the perpetrator exhibited in the current and previous relationships, as opposed to outlining singular violent incidents (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). Then, they must outline how this has caused harm to the child, documenting what the child heard or saw, how the abuser treated them, and where they were during domestic violence incidents.

DV specialists within OCFS units take on the fixer role in ensuring implementation runs smoothly.

Challenges to implementing this component are in the difficulty of collecting relevant information, which could block this process from continuing. Information on the abuser could be found in criminal background checks, interviews/discussions with family and friends, case notes from survivors, etc. (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). However, family and friends may be unwilling to discuss the abusers' actions or be unaware of them entirely, as is the case in most abuse situations due to the isolation of the victim. Also, abusers are not often reported or charged, meaning information on previous abuse will be inherently limited. Melbourne's Safe and Together program documented the lack of police data on perpetrators' actions as a key hurdle to implementation, so this is a highly likely issue (Humphreys and Nicholson, 2017). Additionally, previous abuse is often not reflected in initial child welfare assessments and reports (Safe & Together Institute, 2017). Changing policing, judicial institutions, and the systemic lack of accountability for abusers is not a challenge this program has the capacity to address. However, multiple successful programs show that even the mental shift towards documenting perpetrators' actions as a pattern illuminates new aspects of the child welfare case that demonstrate survivors' fear in leaving and shift blame to the abuser rather than the victims (Safe & Together Institute, 2018). This in itself can result in better family preservation outcomes. Therefore, stronger trainings, especially using trainings specific to Safe and Together, could counter this challenge and shift case workers' attitudes away from victim blaming, consequently preserving more families.

Implementing principles of strength-based partnerships and abuser accountability have similar implementation steps that may run into predictable and solvable challenges. Both require initial cooperation between the OCFS and Safe and Together moderators to write new components of the intake and risk assessment process. Then, caseworkers are required to learn how to use these new documentation types. Challenges include possible caseworkers' resistance due to previously held beliefs on DV cases and a lack of information on abusers. However, strong trainings, which have been developed by Safe and Together with these in mind, have the potential to counter these challenges.

Conclusion

In child neglect cases, unnecessary separations from non-offending parents in abusive partnerships have intensely damaging and long-lasting consequences for children. Short term and long-term implications for children who were removed are significantly worse than those who were not removed. These include a sixfold increase in the risk for behavioral issues, potentially worse maltreatment rates in foster care, a doubled risk of developmental delays, lower earnings, a three times greater risk for criminal justice involvement, and a 1.5 times higher all-cause mortality rate (American Bar Association, 2019; Meier & Sankaran, 2021, p. 20; Doyle, 2007; Ryan & Testa, 2005; Sugrue, 2019). The serious harm caused to children already in difficult and traumatizing circumstances by unnecessary, forced separations from battered mothers necessitates better responses to domestic violence co-occurrence in neglect cases. To ensure better outcomes for these families, I recommend that New York implement a version of the evidence based Safe and Together Model. This policy option addresses a key cause of the issue, a lack of CPS and DV collaboration, and keeps families together at a cost of only \$135.61 per family by partnering with non-offending parents by default and outlining abuser patterns of coercion. This is a low cost, highly cost-effective, feasible, and equitable policy solution that can mitigate the damaging effects of removal for children that have already experienced or witnessed domestic violence, increasing their chances for success while bettering New York societally and economically. Rewriting case assessment and documentation components, then training caseworkers in Safe and Together principles, are key next steps to prevent 7,759 children from being unnecessarily removed from domestic violence survivors.

Appendix I: Assumptions

Average Number of Total Neglect Separations

Table 13: Children Entering Foster Care in New York State

Year	Number
2017	9,428
2018	8,600
2019	8,337
2020	6,576
2021	6,353

(Administration for Children and Families, 2021)

Average over this five-year period:

7858.8 children or 7858.8 separations per year

Table 14: Estimated Number of Failure to Protect and Neglect Cases with Indication of Domestic Violence

Study	Results
Shepard & Raschick 1999	33% of child welfare cases indicated domestic violence
Kantor & Little 2003 New Hampshire	36% of child welfare cases indicated domestic violence
Edleson & Beeman 1999 Minnesota	36% of child welfare cases indicated domestic violence
Coohey 2007	7.1% were “investigated and substantiated for exposure to domestic violence or failure to protect from domestic violence”
Washington 2005	38% of investigated cases indicated domestic violence
National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being 2005	14% of investigated cases indicated domestic violence
Palmer et al. 2017 California	29% of cases were failure to protect

New York State Office of Children and Family Services Commissioner Gladys Carrión 2009

30-60% of cases involve domestic violence

(Palmer et al., 2022; Child Welfare League of America, 2022; Lee, 2015; Henry, 2018)

Average percentage of cases that may incite failure to protect: 26.18%

Estimated Number of Children Separated from Non-Abusive Parents in Domestic Violence Cases

Total 7858.8 separations per year * .2618 = 2057.43 estimated separations per year

Appendix II: Cost Calculations

Alternative I

The estimate comes from Washington's Keeping Families Together Act. The bill's fiscal summary includes six key costs: (1) Staffing increases due to increases in the number of external caregivers' licensing to foster children and nonstandard costs (2) Combined in home service costs, (3) IT costs, (4) Training costs, (5) Costs to the Attorney General's Office, and (6) foster care maintenance payments (Department of Children, Youth, and Families, 2021). However, not all costs in the Washington bill are relevant to implementation for New York in a domestic violence context. For example, foster care maintenance payments given to licensed caregivers incorporated into the bill are not needed in this alternative because there would be no clause about increasing caregiver licensing. Staffing increases for licensing increases are similarly not relevant, though nonstandard costs which include goods/services, travel for meetings, copying documents, etc., will be added to this estimate. Combined in home services, which are preventative programs that support caregivers, would also not be included in the New York version. Therefore, this cost calculation includes IT costs, training costs, and administrative costs to the Attorney General's office. It should be noted, however, that operating expenses within Washington's equivalent of the OCFS, are not included in the fiscal summary, which labels it as "non-zero but indeterminate" (Department of Children, Youth, and Families, 2021). Similar legislation is rare and its parsed cost estimates even more so, leaving little room another estimate for agency level spending. Therefore, the total cost to the Attorney General's office, which is most similar to New York's OCFS out of the fiscal summary's listed costs, is doubled to account for this cost. Though the actual cost to OCFS may be higher, this is currently the closest available estimate for a legislative exception not yet implemented in any state.

Upfront Costs

- (1) According to the bill's fiscal summary note, one time IT costs are at least \$10 million. This is comparable to other states' expenses of building new IT modules, given that the bill introduced significant changes to the majority of steps in the child welfare investigation process' (Department of Children, Youth, and Families, 2021).
- (2) One time training costs are \$50,000 (Department of Children, Youth, and Families, 2021).
- (3) Nonstandard costs during the first year would be at least \$488,000 (Department of Children, Youth, and Families, 2021).

Other Costs

(1) Attorney General Office Costs

These costs are split over two years. The second year's cost is adjusted for inflation and discounted at the rate of 1.3% as outlined by the Office of Management and Budget's 2022 rates (Office of Management and Budget, 2022).

The cost for the initial year is \$2,258,000.

The given cost for the year after is \$2,076,000. Adjusted for inflation at an estimated future rate of 2.2%, this is \$2,121,672 (Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, 2023). Lastly, with discounting ($\$2,121,672 / (1 + 0.013)^1$), I obtained the net present value of \$2,094,444.23.

(2) Office of Child and Family Services

The above cost is used to estimate OCFS administrative costs.

Aggregate Cost Over 10 Years

\$10 million

+\$50,000

+\$488,000

+ (\$2,258,000 + \$2,076,000) X 2 = \$8,668,000

= \$19,206,000

Alternative II

Upfront Costs

The initial expense is estimated using the average of two cost estimates.

Estimate 1: It cost \$823,893 to fund DV advocates at 11 child protective CPS offices across the state in 2014 (Borges, 2009). With CPI adjustment to February 2023 (most recent available data) using the Bureau of Labor Statistics calculator, this is \$1,040,335.66 in today's dollars (U.S. Department of Labor, 2023a). On average, this amounts to \$94,575.96 per county (\$1,040,335.66/11).

Estimate II:

A webinar presented by the Family Violence Prevention & Services Program, Family & Youth Services Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Futures Without Violence, cites that with a maximum of two full-time advocates, the average program cost is approximately \$65,000 (Futures Without Violence, 2014). With CPI adjustment, this is \$82,075.97 per county program in today's dollars.

Average Estimated Upfront Cost per Program:
(\$82,075.97 + \$94,575.96)/2 = \$88,325.965 per county

Currently, 21 out of 62 counties have DV specialists or advocates (Futures Without Violence, 2014). Expanding to 50% requires 11 new county programs. With \$88,325.965 per county, this costs **\$971,585.62 total in upfront costs**.

Continued Costs

DV advocates must be provided a salary and benefits the years after the initial program start up. The current average salary of a DV advocate in New York is \$41,481 (ZipRecruiter, 2023). This salary will change through the following 9 years after initial implementation. Though there is no data on the projected salary change for co-located DV advocates since this is a unique role, DV advocates are classified as state level social workers. Therefore, I use the projected salary for social workers, which has been increasing (Zippia, 2023). To do so, I took an average below of how much social workers' salaries have increased by over the past 10 years.

Table 15: Average Salary Increase for Social Workers Over Past 10 Years

Year	Salary Increase in % Change
2014	+2.9%
2015	+2.5%
2016	+2%
2017	+2.2%
2018	+0.9%
2019	+2.6%

2020	+2.1%
2021	+2.4%
2022	+1%
2023	+1.6%
Average Increase: +2.02%	

(Zippia, 2023)

Fringe Benefits:

On top of wages, I also account for fringe benefits. Data on fringe benefits for DV advocates specifically is not available. Therefore, I am using a rate of 38%, the 2022 average fringe benefit rate for state and local government employees calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. Department of Labor, 2023b). Though this may fluctuate through the years, this fluctuation likely won't be extreme, so I use 38% as the rate for each year (U.S. Department of Labor, 2023b).

To determine total continued costs, I added each year's projected salary to the consequent fringe benefits. This is multiplied by 2 to obtain the per office or per county cost. The per office cost is multiplied by 11 to obtain the total cost. Each annual cost total is then discounted with annual rates of 1.3% for years 1-3, 1.6% for years 3-5, 1.9% for years 5-7, and 2.1% for years 8 and 9 as recommended by the Office of Budget Management (Office of Budget Management, 2022). These calculations are summarized in the table below.

Table 16: Continued Cost Calculations for Alternative II

Number of Years after Initial Year	Projected Salary	Fringe Rate	Per Office Cost	Total Cost	Discounting Calculations	Net Present Value
Original Salary	\$ 41,481.00					
1	\$ 42,318.92	\$ 16,081.19	\$ 116,800.21	\$ 1,284,802.30	\$1,284,802.30/((1 + 0.013)^1)	\$ 1,268,314.22
2	\$ 43,173.76	\$ 16,406.03	\$ 114,487.56	\$ 1,310,755.30	\$1,310,755.30/((1 + 0.013)^2)	\$ 1,277,328.88
3	\$ 44,045.87	\$ 16,737.43	\$ 116,800.21	\$ 1,337,232.56	\$1,337,232.56/((1 + 0.013)^3)	\$ 1,286,407.63
4	\$ 44,935.59	\$ 17,075.53	\$ 119,159.57	\$ 1,364,244.66	\$1,364,244.66/((1 + 0.016)^4)	\$ 1,280,316.76
5	\$ 45,843.29	\$ 17,420.45	\$ 121,566.60	\$ 1,391,802.40	\$1,391,802.40/((1 + 0.016)^5)	\$ 1,285,609.41
6	\$ 46,769.33	\$ 17,772.34	\$ 124,022.24	\$ 1,419,916.81	\$1,419,916.81/((1 + 0.019)^6)	\$ 1,268,287.75
7	\$ 47,714.07	\$ 18,131.35	\$ 126,527.49	\$ 1,448,599.13	\$1,448,599.13/((1 + 0.019)^7)	\$ 1,269,781.31
8	\$ 48,677.89	\$ 18,497.60	\$ 129,083.35	\$ 1,477,860.83	\$1,477,860.83/((1 + 0.021)^8)	\$ 1,251,490.63
9	\$ 49,661.19	\$ 18,871.25	\$ 131,690.83	\$ 1,507,713.62	\$1,507,713.62/((1 + 0.021)^9)	\$ 1,250,510.03
Total Cost:						\$ 11,438,046.62

Aggregate Cost Over 10 years

\$971,585.62 (average initial program cost) +

\$11,438,046.62 (variable costs)

= \$12,409,632.2

Alternative III

Upfront Costs

(1) Firstly, this alternative requires hiring a temporary Safe and Together consultant for the initial year. The cost for a government consultant based on NY averages is \$101,141 per year (Comparably, 2023).

(2) Next, it requires purchasing Safe and Together training. Safe and Together offers multiple relevant courses on domestic violence for caseworkers.

Figure 3: Safe and Together Website Image

The screenshot shows the 'Foundational Courses' section of the Safe & Together Institute website. The top navigation bar includes the logo 'SAFE & TOGETHER INSTITUTE', a tagline 'Concrete strategies. Meaningful tools. Real change.', and links for 'PRODUCTS', 'OUR TEAM', 'CONTACT US', 'HELP', and 'SIGN IN'. Below the navigation, the heading 'Foundational Courses' is displayed. Six course cards are listed in two rows of three:

- Safe & Together™: An Introduction to the Model** (\$50): A course for 12 months, featuring a photo of hands holding a small house.
- Multiple Pathways to Harm: A Comprehensive Assessment Framework** (\$50): A course for 12 months, featuring a photo of a red house.
- Intersections: When Domestic Violence Perpetration, Substance Abuse, and Mental Health Meet** (\$50): A course for 12 months, featuring a photo of a bridge over water.
- Working with Men as Parents: Fathers' Parenting Choices Matter** (\$50): A course for 12 months, featuring a photo of hands holding a small house.
- Partnering with Survivors** (\$50): A course for 12 months, featuring a photo of hands reaching out against a sunset background.
- (Japanese: 日本語版) Safe & Together: イントロダクション【モデル入門】** (\$50): A course for 12 months, featuring a photo of hands holding a small house.

Each course card includes an 'Enroll' button and a price of '\$50'.

(Safe and Together, 2023a)

For this alternative, however, the required courses are:

Table 17: Safe and Together Courses

Course Title	Description	Cost per Caseworker
Multiple Pathways to Harm: A Comprehensive Assessment Framework	This e-course provides an introduction to the Safe & Together Model's Multiple Pathways to Harm assessment and critical thinking framework. The course provides tools to apply a comprehensive assessment lens to the impact of domestic violence perpetrator behaviors on child and family functioning. This child-centered approach sets high standards for men as parents, engagement standards for families of diverse backgrounds and provides guidelines for partnering with adult survivors.	\$50

<p>Safe & Together™: An Introduction to the Model</p>	<p>The Safe and Together™ Model is an internationally recognized suite of tools and interventions designed to help child- and family-serving systems become domestic violence-informed. Continuously refined based on years of experience implementing the Model across the United States and other countries, the Model helps improve competencies and cross-system collaboration related to the intersection of domestic violence and child maltreatment.</p> <p>This child-centered Model derives its name from the concept that children are best served when we can work toward keeping them safe and together with the non-offending parent (the adult domestic violence survivor). The Model provides a framework for partnering with domestic violence survivors and intervening with domestic violence perpetrators in order to enhance the safety and well-being of children.</p>	<p>\$50</p>
<p>Partnering with Survivors</p>	<p>Partnering with adult survivors around the safety and well-being of their children is a central focus of domestic violence-informed practice. Domestic violence survivors and professionals share the common goals: for the abuse to stop and for the children to thrive.</p> <p>By working with, not against the adult survivor, practitioners are more likely to be successful in their role related to child safety and well-being. The adult survivor is their natural ally.</p> <p>In addition, when practitioners partner well with an adult survivor, the survivor is more apt to share information about the perpetrator's pattern, the impact of the perpetrator on child and family functioning and the survivor's efforts around protection of the children.</p> <p>All three will improve assessment and lead to the development of more effective safety plans for the</p>	<p>\$50</p>

	adult survivor and children.	
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These courses focus most specifically on partnering with survivors and perpetrator pattern recognition (Safe and Together, 2023a). As these are all e-courses, no additional materials such as training spaces or props are required (Safe and Together, 2023a). Therefore, the total cost is \$100 per caseworker. There are about 7,175 caseworkers attending training (Dick, 2019). The cost for training the current workforce would be \$717,500. However, Safe and Together offers a 30% off offer if there are 300+ learners, bringing the total to \$502,250 in upfront training costs (Safe and Together, 2023b).

Continued Costs

However, new caseworkers throughout the next 10 years must also be trained.

I estimate the number of new caseworkers hired per year through an average of two sources.

1: 38% turnover rate (Brady-Stepien, 2021)

2: 24% turnover rate (Brady-Stepien, 2023)

(38+24)/2 = 31% turnover rate

Multiplying this rate by the existing workforce (7175 caseworkers X .31) results in an estimated 2224.25 new caseworkers hired per year. This is multiplied by \$100, the cost per caseworker, giving a cost of \$222,425 for training. However, with a 30% discount, this comes down to \$66,727.50.

This estimate is used to calculate the cost for training in the years after the initial implementation. That cost is adjusted with an inflation rate of 2.2% as used in previous alternatives. Though the Congressional Budget Office does outline specific inflation rates for the few years after 2023, it is unknown when exactly these alternatives would be implemented. Therefore, I chose to use the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget's analysis of the Congressional Budget Office's, which states that the inflation rate normalizes around 2.2% for each year beyond 2023 (Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, 2023). Table 2 details the steps of the continued cost calculation.

Table 18: Continued Cost Calculations for Alternative III

Number of Years After Initial Year	Inflation-Adjusted Cost	Discounting Calculation	Net Present Value
Original Cost:	\$ 66,727.50		
1	\$ 66,742.18	\$66,742.18 / (1 + 0.013) ¹	\$ 65,885.67
2	\$ 66,756.86	\$66,756.86/ (1 + 0.013) ²	\$ 65,054.45
3	\$ 66,771.55	\$66,771.55/ (1 + 0.013) ³	\$ 64,233.73
4	\$ 66,786.24	\$66,786.24/ (1 + 0.016) ⁴	\$ 62,677.57
5	\$ 66,800.93	\$66,800.93/ (1 + 0.016) ⁵	\$ 61,704.09
6	\$ 66,815.63	\$66,815.63 / (1 + 0.019) ⁶	\$ 59,680.57
7	\$ 66,830.33	\$66,830.33 / (1 + 0.019) ⁷	\$ 58,580.67
8	\$ 66,845.03	\$66,845.03 / (1 + 0.021) ⁸	\$ 56,606.09
9	\$ 66,859.74	\$66,859.74 / (1 + 0.021) ⁹	\$ 55,454.02
Total Cost:			\$ 549,876.86

Aggregate Cost Over 10 Years

$$\begin{aligned} &+ \$502,250 \text{ (upfront training costs)} + \$549,876.86 \text{ (continued training costs)} \\ &= \$1,052,126.86 \end{aligned}$$

Appendix III: Effectiveness Calculations

Alternative I

This estimate comes from predictions for Washington's Keeping Families Together Act, which hopes to reduce CPS removals by 50% (Shapiro, 2021; Open Minds, 2021). The predicted number of CPS removals in New York is currently 20574.3 children over 10 years. With a 50% reduction, this would prevent 10287.15 children from being separated from non-offending parents.

Alternative II

Effectiveness estimates for DV advocates vary. One study in Albany, NY did not find statistically significant differences in the number of removals between counties with co-located DV Advocates and those without (Center for Human Services Research, 2014). However, this study was in 2011, a time where domestic violence was generally less understood, and over the course of just two years, which may not be enough time to gauge the effectiveness of this policy in such a context. It also did calculate 5 removals at the end of the study compared to 9 at the start, which is about a 44% decrease (Center for Human Services Research, 2014). A 2014 study found that together with other practices, DV advocates were associated with about a 55.8% decrease in removals (Langenderfer-Magruder, 2018). Given that most researchers are in agreement that co-located DV advocate models do at least increase CPS workers' understanding of the domestic violence cycle and the barriers in leaving abusers, in counties without DV advocates, this analysis assumes a higher effectiveness rate than the 2011 Albany study.

(Center for Human Services Research, 2014).

Average Removal Decrease:

$$(44.44\% + 55.8\%)/2 = 50.12\%$$

$20574.3 \times .5012 = 10311.8$ less children removed over 10 years

Alternative III

The effectiveness estimate for Safe and Together comes from analyses of implementation in Connecticut and Florida. Measured after eighteen months of implementation, Connecticut's Safe and Together program resulted in a 25.42% decrease in removals (Mandel, 2008). Notably, it also resulted in additional action to address co-occurrence including improving changes to hotline assessments, coding of DV cases, and a DV investigation protocol (Mandel, 2008). In Jacksonville, Florida, the Department of Children and Families recorded a 50% reduction in removals in DV cases over a three-year period (Safe and Together, n.d.). From this, we can assume an average removal reduction rate of 37.71%.

$$(25.42 + 50)/2 = 37.71$$

$2057.43 \times .3771 = 775.86$ less children removed per year

$775.86 \times 10 = 7758.6$ less removals over 10 years

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End of Report