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For Immediate Release

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1/31/19

## **Family Support Services Accredited for Quality Service by Prevent Child Abuse America**

***Leading National Child Abuse Prevention Organization Accredits Healthy Families America sites in Putnam, Owen, Montgomery and Boone Counties to Serve Families***

**Greencastle, IN** - Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) announced today that the Healthy Families America (HFA) affiliate, Family Support Services of West Central Indiana has been accredited as a provider of high quality home visiting services to families who want to improve their child's health, nutrition and developmental outcomes in Putnam, Owen, Montgomery and Boone Counties.

HFA is a signature program of PCA America that has been providing home visiting services for more than 20 years. Expectant and new parents have common questions about their child's development. HFA connects with families through community partners like hospitals and pediatricians to find the answers to their questions, meeting within the familiarity and convenience of the family's own home. HFA is an accessible, voluntary and well received service.

"The American Dream starts with a happy, healthy childhood," said Dan Duffy, President and CEO of PCA America. "As parents, we all have questions from time to time. Our HFA professionals offer evidence-based best practices to provide answers to questions, individualized support when needed most, and linkages to community services. As we congratulate Family Support Services we also recognize the state and community leadership that has contributed to success in these counties.

The accreditation process is based upon a stringent set of 12 critical elements grounded in more than 30 years of research. The process involves an in-depth examination of the site's operation, as well as, the quality of the visits made by HFA home visitors.

"We commend the Family Support Services staff for opening itself up to such an intensive review process," said Kathleen Strader, National Director of HFA. "We believe that all families and all communities deserve access to quality home visiting services."

The Healthy Families Program is led by Program Director, Sherri Nield and is supported by 15 Program Supervisors and/or Healthy Family Specialists in the 4 counties that FSSWCI manages.

Nield said, "I am extremely proud of the hard work and dedication from our staff to make our communities a better place by improving the lives of families we serve. Most importantly we applaud our families for making the commitment to be a stronger healthier family that will support the needs of their child(ren)"

Home visitors in each community receive extensive training in a wide range of areas that can cause stress and worry to just about every new parent: caring for a new baby, ensuring the baby is receiving the nutrition needed, promoting healthy child development and coping with a myriad of other potential

stresses, such as financial, housing, partner relationship, etc., that may become heightened with an addition to the family. Healthy Families is here to serve expectant parents or parents of newborns under 3 months old from any background living in Boone, Montgomery, Owen or Putnam Counties. In addition, the program supports parents who are interested in receiving information about the community or parents who would like to know more about child development and related topics.

“Strengthening the foundation of our community one family at a time has been our goal for many years. This accreditation signifies many hours of hard work that our Healthy Families staff puts into serving our families. In 2018 alone, Healthy Families completed 166 visits to assess needs and share resources with first time parents, over 212 families participated in ongoing home visitation services and most importantly 21 families graduated the program after 3 years of participation.” Executive Director, Scott Monnett shared. “The need is great and our capacity to serve more exists, we urge our partners and individuals to reach out if they have a family that needs support.”

PCA America was established in 1972 with the belief that child abuse and neglect is preventable. The not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization is committed to preventing child abuse in all forms through education, research, public awareness, and public policy development. Today, PCA America has 50 statewide chapters.

PCA America implemented the Healthy Families America (HFA) initiative in 1992 in partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities, building on two decades of research in the field of home visiting. HFA serves families of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, meeting the needs of close to 600 communities in 40 states, DC, the U.S. Territories and Canada.

Healthy Families America is an effective and proven evidence-based home visiting program according to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. PCA America is proud to support HFA and to be part of a national coalition of organizations dedicated to improving the home visiting field.

Family Support Services of West Central Indiana is headquartered in Greencastle at 16 South Jackson Street. FSSWCI is a 501(c)3 non-profit domestic violence and sexual assault prevention and intervention organization and Healthy Families program provider focused on eliminating child abuse and neglect while building strong families. For more information about programs or services call 765-653-4820 or visit [www.fsswci.net](http://www.fsswci.net)

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