From science to policy to practice: The evolving implementation of federally mandated referrals from child welfare to Part C early intervention

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Abstract: Scientifically based federal legislation now requires states to develop and implement policies for referring children under age 3 years with substantiated cases of abuse or neglect to state Early Intervention systems. This legislation is a critical first step, but further attention is needed to translate it into scientifically based practice. This article describes initial state responses and the current status of state referral policies. The authors discuss ongoing challenges in system capacity, funding, policy development, and engaging families, and they provide promising strategies to address these issues.