Introduction:

No single organization or agency can address the causes and consequences of crime and violence, especially as it relates to promoting safe, healthy and non-delinquent children.

Policy Statement:

ACA encourages corrections practitioners to work with national, state and local leaders, service providers, representatives of public and private groups, and community members to facilitate safe and healthy environments for children and their families/caregivers, which evidence suggests will decrease the probability of negative justice system encounters in future years.

The corrections community should collaborate with other organizations and agencies to develop broad-based policies and programs that address the needs of children, youths and families/caregivers. In addition, correctional practitioners should:

A. Encourage the establishment of state, regional and local community initiatives that address high-risk behaviors in youths and families for the purpose of reducing the number of children and families who become involved in harmful actions;

B. Advance research, training and best practices when identifying risk factors, with specific emphasis on the overrepresentation of minorities in the specified populations;

C. Establish goals for correctional programs that reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors associated with violent and anti-social behavior at the individual and family levels; and

D. Encourage and support long-term commitments to a range of initiatives that include:

1. Prenatal, early childhood and parenting programs,
2. Early intervention programs such as parent education and skills development, family preservation and support services, child care and early home visits for parents of newborns,
3. Recognizing and addressing adverse childhood experiences,
4. Community-based services available and accessible to high-risk and delinquent youths and their families/caregivers,
5. Anti-violence and anti-bullying programs available to families/caregivers and to all children at an early age in schools and in the community,
6. Media and information campaigns to educate constituents about the relationship between substance abuse and delinquent/criminal behavior, and
7. Educational and vocational needs assessments and training for delinquent youths.
This Public Correctional Policy was unanimously ratified by the American Correctional Association Delegate Assembly at the 127th Congress of Correction in Orlando, Fla., Aug. 13, 1997. It was last reviewed and reaffirmed at the 2017 Winter Conference in San Antonio, TX, on January 24, 2017.