§ 481-a. Legislative findings and purpose. For the past decade, society has witnessed broad changes in family structure. These changes have created unique stresses on our children as well as on those who care for them. Among the most dire results of family stresses is the increasing frequency of child abuse and maltreatment, represented by a steady increase in reports of abuse and maltreatment to the statewide central register of child abuse and maltreatment. Additionally nearly one-fifth of homicides, and an even larger proportion of assaults occur within the home between members of families. Among the contributing causes of family violence are economic stress, social isolation, drug and alcohol abuse, parental attitude regarding discipline and child rearing, as well as acceptance of violence as a way of life. The reported incidents of both adult domestic violence and child abuse and maltreatment (including intergenerational family violence) represent only a portion of the total number of incidents in the pervasive and persistent problem of family violence. The development and support of prevention programs for child abuse and maltreatment and domestic violence (including intergenerational family violence) and services to victims of family violence is, therefore, of major importance to the state.

It is the intent of the legislature that the funds for the William B. Hoyt Memorial children and family trust fund shall be a new source of funding which shall increase the funds available for prevention and treatment services to victims of family violence. The legislature does not intend that these funds be used as a substitute for any funds currently available from federal, state or local sources for the provision of prevention or treatment services to these victims.