Prevent Child Abuse America®

Melissa T. Merrick, PhD, is President and CEO of Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America), the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit organization dedicated to the primary prevention of child abuse and neglect. She has more than 20 years of clinical, research, and leadership experience related to the etiology, course, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Previously, Dr. Merrick was a senior epidemiologist at the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in Atlanta. She is recognized as one of the country's foremost experts on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs): in partnership with the US Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, she served for 8 years as the lead scientist for the ACEs study at CDC and is the lead author of CDC's *Vital Signs: ACEs*, the most nationally representative report on the topic.

Dr. Merrick successfully leverages her significant clinical and research experiences to communicate and disseminate the critical public health importance of preventing early adversity to key stakeholders with diverse priorities, backgrounds, and knowledge, including legislators, business and civic leaders, and members of the academic and medical communities. She is one of the principal architects of *Thriving Families, Safer Children: A National Commitment to Well-being*, an effort that aims to reshape child welfare in the United States by focusing explicitly on equity and prevention. *Thriving Families* unites PCA America, the Children's Bureau, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Casey Family Programs, among numerous other local partners, to proactively create the conditions and contexts for strong families and communities across the country.

Dr. Merrick received her BA in psychology, magna cum laude, from the University of Pennsylvania, and her master's and doctoral degrees in clinical psychology from the San Diego State University/University of California, San Diego, joint doctoral program in clinical psychology, where she served as a program coordinator for the San Diego site of the Longitudinal Studies on Child Abuse and Neglect consortium. Dr. Merrick was a National Institutes of Health-funded postdoctoral fellow at the University of Miami Child Protection Team (CPT), where she was involved in a multi-site program of research that examined child maltreatment risk and protective factors in families evaluated by CPTs across the state of Florida.

Dr. Merrick is married and has two young children who are still enthralled by the novelty of snow in Chicago.