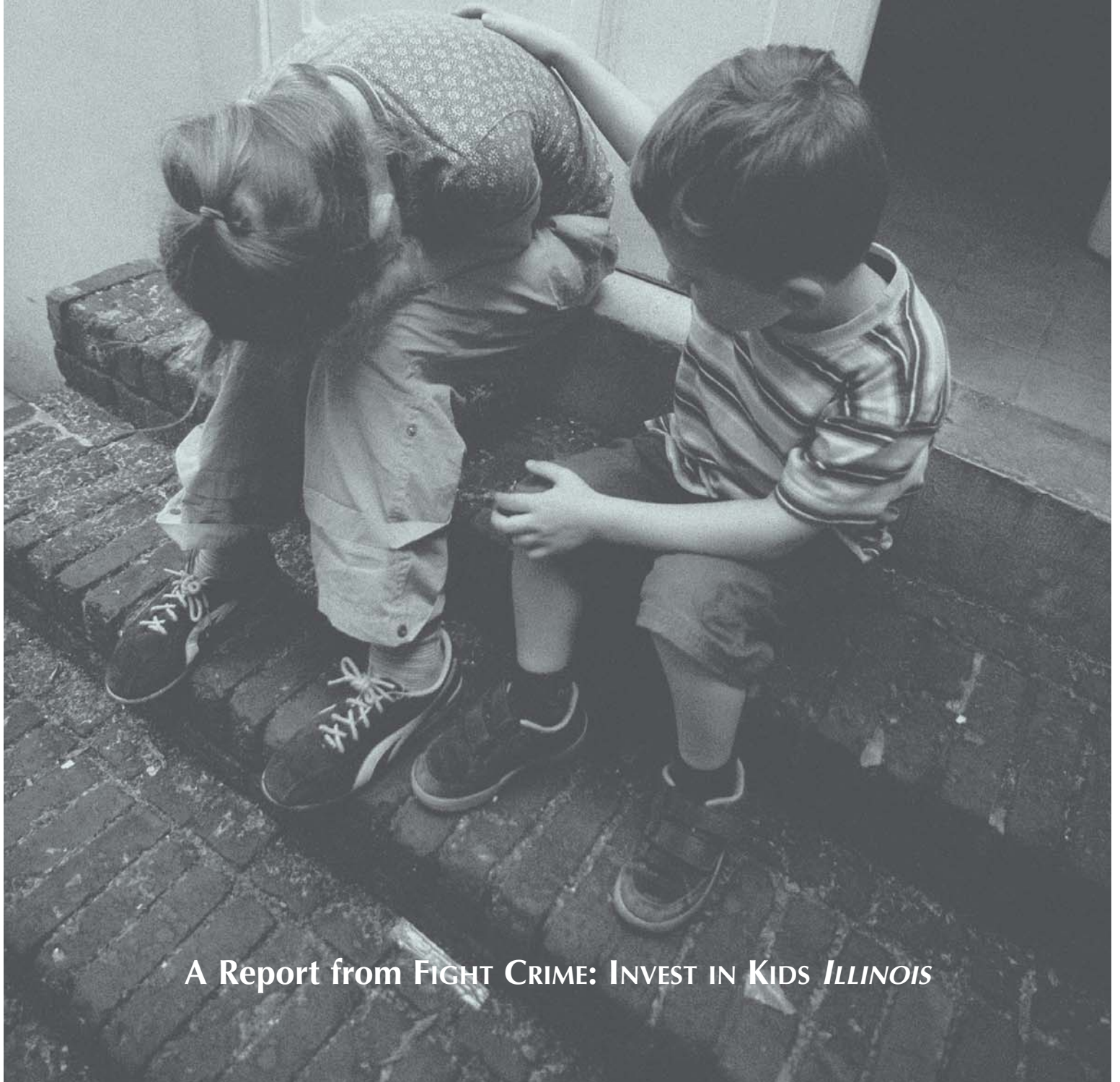


# Preschool: The Right Prescription to Cure Child Abuse and Neglect



A Report from FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *ILLINOIS*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Executive Summary

If today is like any other day, hundreds of Illinois children will be terrorized by abuse and neglect. Additionally, thousands of our youngest children will be in inferior child care situations when they could be gaining ground through a quality early learning experience. What do these have to do with each other? Plenty. New research shows that quality pre-kindergarten education not only improves school success and prevents kids from moving towards crime as they get older, but it also prevents child abuse and neglect. This report concludes that we can make a life-long double-impact on children's lives with a single investment. While most victims of child abuse and neglect never become criminals, and missing quality pre-kindergarten doesn't doom a child to a troubled life, why not start children out on the right track with a quality pre-kindergarten program that provides two benefits with one investment?

New research from the nationally recognized Child-Parent Centers in Chicago shows that a quality school-based pre-kindergarten program cuts child abuse and neglect by half. Comparing similar children not in the program to those who attended pre-kindergarten, researchers found those children who were not in the quality pre-kindergarten program were more likely to be listed in formal court petitions for abuse and neglect. They attribute these new findings to the emphasis on parental involvement of a quality pre-kindergarten program.

Illinois is in a unique position to make important, lasting change on children's lives and communities' futures with the single investment of pre-kindergarten. Illinois has made great strides in recent years with a \$90 million boost to the state's pre-kindergarten program. Now, the foundation is in place for a system for all families to access quality pre-kindergarten for their 3- and 4-year-olds if they want that for their children. More than 182,000 3- and 4-year-olds in Illinois do not have access to a quality pre-kindergarten program. Increasing the number of children served by pre-kindergarten, while at the same time reducing the number of children abused or neglected, will save millions of dollars, relieve agony and despair, and greatly decrease the number of children who will grow up to be involved in crime.

The Illinois Early Learning Council, a diverse body of stakeholders from around the state, proposed a "Preschool for All" plan, a high-quality early learning initiative for all Illinois 3- and 4-year-olds whose families choose to participate. The plan sets a five-year timetable to achieve "preschool for all" and gives priority to at-risk children. On February 12, 2006 Governor Rod Blagojevich announced his support for all the essential elements of the Early Learning Council plan.

The members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *ILLINOIS* know aggressive policing, prosecution and incarceration are vital to public safety, but that we can't start or stop there. We must also work to prevent crime before it starts: at the beginning before anyone is hurt. That's why crime survivors and law enforcement leaders who make up FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *ILLINOIS* across the state are calling on the Governor and the General Assembly to implement the proposed Preschool for All plan to support families' increased access to quality pre-kindergarten programs.

No punishment can undo the death of a loved one or the trauma of abuse, but one of our most powerful weapons of crime fighting is to keep kids safe in the first place and on the track to a productive and fulfilling life.

# Preschool: The Right Prescription to Cure Child Abuse and Neglect

## Fighting Crime With Early Investments

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS ILLINOIS takes a hard-nosed look at what works to prevent crime and violence to keep Illinois families safe. Members – police chiefs, sheriffs, state’s attorneys and crime survivors – believe in investing in proven crime prevention measures that give children the right start in life: quality early childhood education, safe after-school programs, child abuse prevention programs and intervention programs for troubled kids. These law enforcement leaders are determined to see criminals off the streets and behind bars. However, they know that no amount of punishment can undo the agony of crime and that they and the entire community are at risk when kids do not get the right start in life.

Illinois policymakers can help families make sure their children succeed, and prevent crime and violence in our communities. Illinois is in a unique position to help families in two ways with one investment. New research tells us that increasing our commitment to quality pre-kindergarten programs for 3- and 4-year-olds not only helps our children succeed in school, but also reduces incidents of child abuse and neglect. Doing so spares children terror, agony and despair while saving millions of dollars. Finally, these investments are proven to reduce the likelihood that a child will grow up to be involved in crime and violence.

Rigorous scientific research, and the experiences of teachers, parents and law enforcement, have shown that increasing the

number of kids in pre-kindergarten cuts crime, improves school performance, reduces welfare dependency and other social costs, and raises earning potential. Now, new research reports that quality pre-kindergarten programs are also effective at cutting abuse and neglect through the parent-coaching component of the program. Increasing the number of children served by pre-kindergarten, while at the same time reducing the number of children abused or neglected, will save millions of dollars, reduce agony and despair, and greatly reduce the number of children who will grow up to be involved in crime.

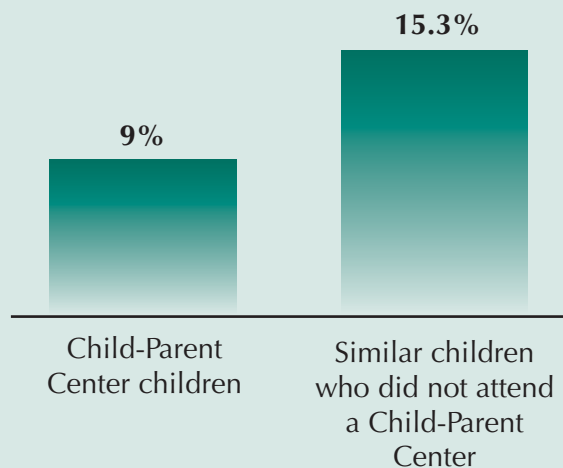
## Quality Preschool Cuts Crime and Abuse and Neglect

Research shows that quality pre-kindergarten programs can change the course of life for an at-risk child.<sup>1</sup> Professor Arthur Reynolds from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and his team have been studying the effects on 989 children born in 1980 who attended pre-kindergarten at the Chicago Child-Parent Centers versus a comparison group of 550 children not in the preschool program. The researchers examined crime rates, school performance, and other life outcomes of children who participated in the program compared to the similar children from the same neighborhoods who did not. The Chicago Child-Parent Centers have served 100,000 3- and 4-year-olds since 1967.

Reynolds’s research found that children from low-income neighborhoods who were

### At-Risk Children Without Quality Pre-kindergarten were 70% More Likely to Commit Violent Crimes

An Arrest for Violence by Age 18



Reynolds, et al., 2001

excluded from the program were 70 percent more likely to have been arrested for a violent crime by age 18 than similar children who attended the program. This program will have prevented an estimated 33,000 crimes by the time the children already served reach the age of 18.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, those not in the program were 67 percent more likely to be retained a grade in school and 71 percent more likely to have been placed in special education.<sup>3</sup> These results are themselves compelling evidence of the benefits of funding quality early childhood education efforts.<sup>4</sup>

A study of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, Michigan tracked both the children that attended the program and those left out of the program for 35 years. Researchers found that at age 27, at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds who were left out of the program were five times more likely to become chronic lawbreakers as adults compared to children in the program. At age 40, the grown-up children who did not attend the Perry Preschool Program were four times more likely to be arrested for drug felonies and more than twice as likely to become career offenders. Children

left out of the program were also nearly twice as likely to be arrested for multiple violent felonies.<sup>5</sup>

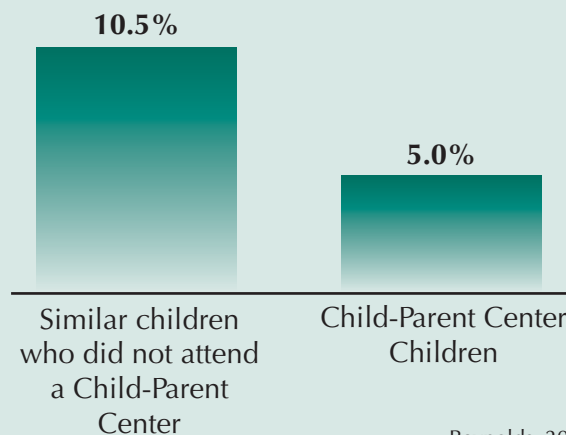
Now, new evidence from the Chicago Child-Parent Center program shows that quality pre-kindergarten programs also cut child abuse and neglect in half.

Child-Parent Centers are school-based programs with certified teachers holding bachelor's degrees, focusing on literacy and family support. The centers also include training parents, the most important people in children's lives. The parents have their own teachers and classrooms. The center staff conduct home visits and offer opportunities for parents to join in field trips or other activities with their children. Through program activities in the school and in the community, the centers aim to strengthen parenting skills, vocational skills and social skills, all of which are shown to reduce the likelihood of behaviors that can lead to abuse and neglect. The goals are to help parents to learn and practice better child-raising skills and to get them actively involved in their children's education.

New research by Reynolds shows that the children who were not in the program were

### The Child-Parent Center Pre-kindergarten Program Cut Abuse and Neglect in Half

Percent of children who were substantiated victims of abuse or neglect



Reynolds, 2003

more than twice as likely to be victims of abuse or neglect. From the ages of 4 to 17, 10.5 percent of the children not in the program were listed in formal court petitions as victims of abuse or neglect compared to five percent of children who participated in the program.<sup>6</sup>

Reynolds and his team found that cutting child abuse contributes to cutting crime. While the reduction in abuse and neglect was not the only explanation that contributed to lower crime among the children in the program, it was an important part of the explanation of why the children not in the program were 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18.<sup>7</sup>

Reynolds and his team concluded that comprehensive, school-based early childhood programs successfully reduce child maltreatment because of the focus on family socialization, parenting practices, and personal and educational development. Preventing child abuse and neglect may not be an explicit programmatic goal of early childhood education. Yet, it is an important benefit not to be overlooked, particularly in light of Reynolds' findings that "established, large-scale programs can significantly contribute to protecting children from harm."<sup>8</sup>

As the Chicago Child-Parent Centers demonstrate, when high-quality programs reach families facing similar risks for abuse or neglect as the families served in Chicago, the subsequent abuse or neglect of the children from those families could be cut in half.

## 25,000 Illinois Children Abused and Neglected Each Year

The realities of child abuse and neglect in America are startling. On a typical day, as many as 2,500 children will be terrorized, battered, bruised, left unfed, unwashed, ignored, sexually violated or killed by the people who are supposed to be caring for them. By the shocking accounts of child abuse that are reported in the news, the public is aware of

child abuse and neglect. But few realize the extent and toll child abuse takes on children, families and the public.

In Illinois, 25,344 children were victims of abuse or neglect in 2003, and 58 were killed as a result of their abuse or neglect.<sup>9</sup> Nationally, official reports to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) recorded 1,400 children killed by abuse or neglect in 2002 and an estimated 896,000 children were determined to be victims of child abuse or neglect in 2002.<sup>10</sup>

Other studies show that the true number is much higher. In California, an exhaustive review discovered that in 1996 and 1997, the number of children who died from abuse and neglect was nearly three times the number reported through the official NCANDS system.<sup>11</sup> In Georgia, when a state abuse and neglect fatality review board was instituted, official reports of deaths from abuse and neglect jumped 76 percent from the previous year.<sup>12</sup> An article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* concluded that North Carolina had systematically undercounted deaths in the state from abuse and neglect by a factor of three.<sup>13</sup> The National Center on Child Fatality Review concludes in a 2001 report released by the Justice Department that "an estimated 2,000 children in the United States die of child abuse and neglect each year."<sup>14</sup>

Illinois has a child fatality review committee that examines child deaths in order to provide informed advice to various agencies that can help reduce child deaths. Its records, however, don't distinguish between child abuse homicide and other deaths, making the information less useful for estimating the true number of deaths due to abuse and neglect in Illinois.<sup>15</sup>

## Child Abuse and Neglect Produces 1,000 Additional Violent Criminals in Illinois Each Year

The abuse or neglect inflicted on children is

heart wrenching. Too often, however, that abuse or neglect is only the first step in a long, sometimes multi-generational tragedy. While most victimized children will never commit a violent crime, being abused or neglected sharply increases the risk that children will become violent criminals as adults.

Although surveys report varying numbers, it is clear that a high percentage of criminals were abused or neglected as children. One review of the literature on prior abuse and neglect concluded that approximately half of the youth arrested for delinquency had been abused and/or neglected earlier in their lives.<sup>16</sup> Many of these individuals, however, also had other risk factors in their lives, such as living in poverty or growing up in high-crime neighborhoods.

In an effort to isolate the impact of abuse and neglect by controlling for other factors, Dr. Cathy Spatz Widom, a professor of psychology at the New Jersey Medical School, found individuals who had been abused and neglected as children and compared them to otherwise similar individuals who had no official record of abuse or neglect. By studying the subsequent arrest records, and controlling for other demographic risk factors, Widom found that being abused and neglected almost doubled the odds that a child will commit a crime as a juvenile.<sup>17</sup>

As for violent crime, Widom found that 18 percent of the abused or neglected youngsters went on to be arrested for a violent crime

either as juveniles or as adults, compared to 14 percent of similar individuals who had not been abused or neglected as children – a difference of four percentage points.<sup>18</sup>

If we apply Widom's findings to the 25,344 confirmed cases in Illinois of abuse and neglect in 2003, then about 1,000 individuals will be arrested for at least one violent crime beyond the number of those who would have been arrested had the abuse or neglect never occurred. In other words, abuse and neglect in Illinois will result in at least 1,000 additional violent criminals every year (see Appendix).

A recent study conducted in Washington State by Dr. Widom, Dr. Diana English, and Carol Brandford confirms that the more severe the abuse or neglect, the more likely children are to become violent criminals. The researchers looked at children whose abuse and neglect was serious enough that they were made wards of the court and placed directly into foster care. Fully three out of ten of these children (30.5 percent) were later arrested as a juvenile or as an adult for at least one violent crime whereas less than one in ten (8.9 percent) of similar children in this study who had not been abused and neglected became violent criminals. In other words, children who were severely abused or neglected were more than three times more likely to become violent criminals.<sup>19</sup>

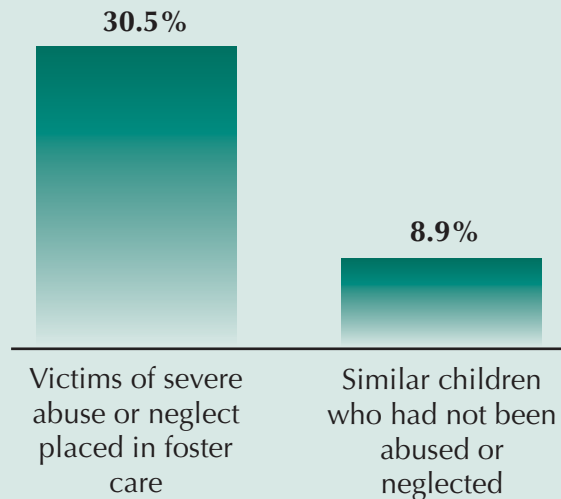
Certainly not all children who are abused or neglected grow up to be violent criminals. Children are incredibly resilient and there are

“My office has prosecuted thousands of cases of child abuse and neglect in my 19 years as a prosecutor. I've seen up close the terrible consequences these cases have on kids and the community. If we can spare even one kid in my county and thousands more across the state the terrible pain of abuse, not only will we improve lives, but we also reduce crime and violence and save money.”

Paul Logli  
Winnebago County State's Attorney  
President, National District Attorneys Association

## Abuse Creates Violent Criminals

Children who were abused or neglected seriously enough that they had to be placed in foster care were three times more likely to become violent criminals than children who had not been abused or neglected.



English, Widom, and Brandford

many proven, cost-effective programs to help abused children that mend much of the agony and pain caused by abuse and neglect. However, the lasting effects of abuse and neglect, and particularly the long-term crime consequences of not preventing abuse and neglect, can no longer be ignored.

## Abuse Costs Taxpayer Money

The Justice Department relies on The Children's Safety Network Economic Insurance Resource Center for major studies on the cost of crime. The Center analyzed the direct and indirect costs of child abuse and neglect to taxpayers and all those individuals impacted by the consequences of abuse or neglect. It concluded that child abuse and neglect costs Americans \$83 billion a year.<sup>20</sup> Prevent Child Abuse America found that abuse and neglect costs Americans \$94 billion a year – two-thirds of that cost is due to increased crime costs.<sup>21</sup> When the Children's Safety Network broke down the costs for each state, it found that the share of abuse and neglect costs for Illinois amounts to \$2.6 billion.<sup>22</sup>

The direct taxpayer costs alone of paying for child abuse and neglect in Illinois are huge. They include paying for social workers who must investigate cases of abuse or neglect, judges and others involved in deciding what steps must next be taken to treat and protect the confirmed victims, and then counselors and other social workers to provide treatment and monitoring of the victims to ensure they are healing and protected from further harm. Payments are also made to foster care parents and, to some extent, adoptive parents, to help defray the living costs of caring for these children if they are removed from their homes. According to the Urban Institute, in fiscal year 2002 the federal government spent \$738 million on child protective services expenditures in Illinois. The state spent \$635 million in additional dollars for a total of \$1.4 billion spent on state child protective services programs.<sup>23</sup>

Of the more than 25,000 children who were confirmed cases of abuse or neglect in Illinois in 2003, almost three-fifths of those children (15,036) were older than four. Given what we know from the Chicago Child-Parent Centers research, expanding pre-kindergarten to serve all 3- and 4-year-olds could cut abuse and neglect in half among those children and spare more than 7,500 children every year from the trauma and heartbreak of child abuse and neglect.<sup>24</sup>

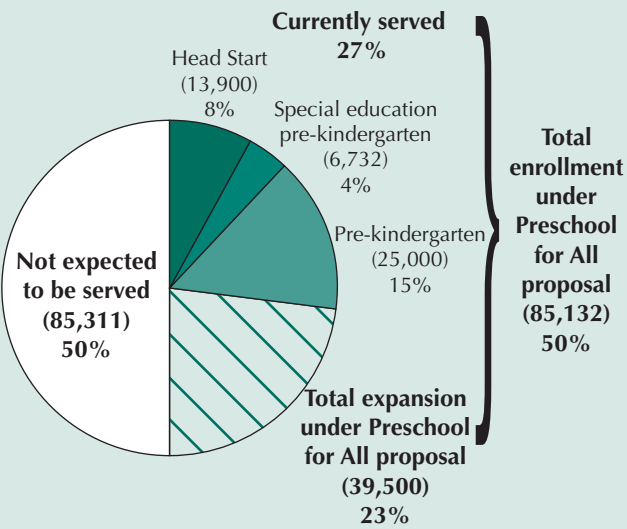
Failing to invest in these programs not only harms thousands of children, it is very expensive for taxpayers. The state of Illinois can save hundreds of millions of dollars in abuse and neglect costs by increasing its commitment to pre-kindergarten programs.

## Preschool In Illinois

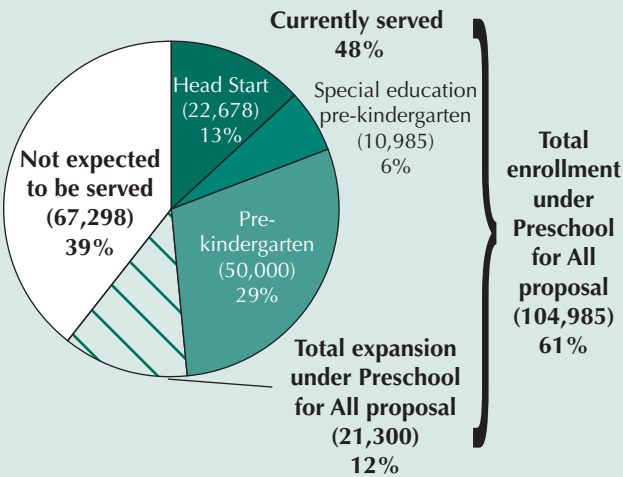
Illinois is in a unique position to help families in two ways – prevent abuse and neglect and boost school success – with one investment: preschool for all families who want it.

Over the past three years, Illinois has

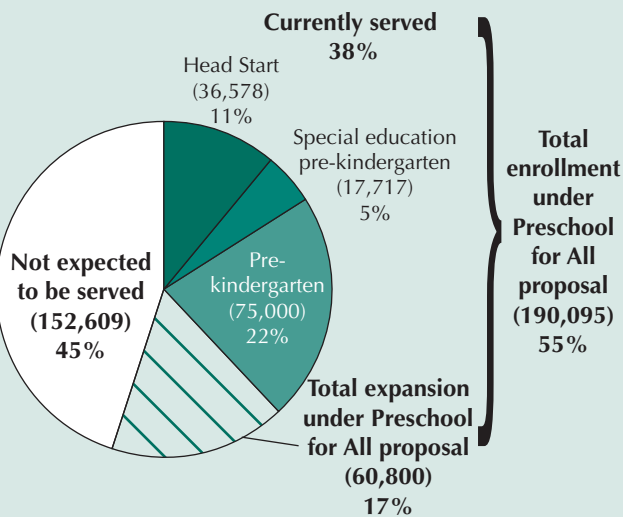
### 3-year-olds Served by Preschool



### 4-year-olds Served by Preschool



### Combined 3- and 4-year-olds Served by Preschool



impressively boosted funding for its pre-kindergarten program, the Early Childhood Education Block Grant. The state has added \$90 million to bring total funding to \$273 million. The program now serves 75,000 children in a variety of settings including public schools, non-profit community centers and child care centers. This fulfills Governor Blagojevich's pledge to increase preschool funding by \$90 million over three years, a substantial "down payment" toward ensuring all children someday have access to high-quality preschool services.

While these are steps in the right direction, there are still many children who are not in quality early childhood programs in Illinois. Only one out of three of the state's 3- and 4-year-olds – 48 percent of 4-year-olds and 27 percent of 3-year-olds – are known to be enrolled in a quality early childhood education program. In addition to the 75,000 children served by the Illinois pre-kindergarten program, 54,000 preschool age children access other early childhood programs through the federal Head Start program and state pre-kindergarten for special needs children. The Preschool for All plan projects that at full implementation 50 percent of 3-year-olds and 60 percent of 4-year-olds will be enrolled in a preschool program under the Preschool for All proposal. Under this scenario, an additional 39,500 3-year-olds and almost 21,000 4-year-olds would need to be served, a total of 61,000 additional slots.<sup>25</sup>

### Preschool for All

Governor Rod Blagojevich and the Illinois General Assembly established the Early Learning Council in 2003 as a diverse body of stakeholders charged with expanding and improving early childhood services. The Council is comprised of 47 gubernatorial and legislative appointees who serve on a voluntary, unpaid basis. Council members represent a broad range of constituencies, including schools, child care centers and homes, Head Start, higher education, state, local, and federal government agencies, the General Assembly, business, law enforcement, foundations, and parents.

## Birth to 3 programs in Illinois

The prevention of child abuse and neglect is important from a crime prevention perspective because, as discussed, it can lead to later criminal activity. Additionally, for law enforcement, the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect can be some of the most personal and heart-wrenching cases they encounter.

Illinois' pre-kindergarten program, the Early Childhood Education Block Grant, is unique in that it sets aside 11 percent of the funding each year for early intervention programs for at-risk families with children under age three. The Early Learning Council's Preschool for All plan continues that commitment to the "birth to three set-aside" with the same 11 percent portion of funding earmarked for these programs with a specific focus on the implementation of research-based parent coaching programs. Expansion of support for parent coaching programs for children under age three further strengthens the Preschool for All plan's outcomes in preventing the tragedy of child abuse and neglect.

Research shows that quality parent-coaching programs prevent child abuse and neglect, which also cuts crime and violence. Two programs for at-risk families with children under age three that have shown positive results are the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) and Healthy Families Illinois (HF).

The Nurse Family Partnership Program randomly assigned at-risk mothers to receive home visits by nurses who provided coaching in parenting and other skills and a similar group of mothers that did not receive services. Those children whose mothers were left out of the program were five times more likely to have been abused or neglected than the children whose mothers received parent coaching. Children of mothers left out had twice as many later arrests as the children of mothers who received home visits.<sup>26</sup> The Healthy Families approach has been scientifically evaluated and has shown it can deliver positive results but it does not yet have long-term results to report or results as consistently strong as NFP.<sup>27</sup> The parent-coaching field, however, is fortunate to have a strong and evolving research base that continues to inform practice. Ongoing research of NFP, HF, and other programs will allow the in-home parent coaching effort in Illinois to continue striving to achieve the full benefits shown to be possible. National and state-based researchers, together with the practitioners and advocates in Illinois, will continue working hard to find and implement best practices in the field.

After a year of intensive work involving hundreds of individuals, the Illinois Early Learning Council developed a "Preschool for All" plan – a proposed high-quality early learning initiative for all Illinois preschoolers ages three to five whose families choose to participate. The "Preschool for All" plan proposed by Governor Blagojevich retains all of the essential elements of the Early Learning Council plan and will require approval by the Illinois General Assembly to move forward.

Implementing the "Preschool for All" plan would build upon and be incorporated into existing programs – including state pre-kindergarten, Head Start, and child care – which would receive the assistance and funding they need to meet high-quality standards, as well as support the creation of new programs in communities. Thus, "Preschool for All" would enable every community to offer high-quality preschool in a variety of settings, including child care centers, family child care homes, public and private

schools, Head Start programs, and community-based organizations. Staffed by teachers who hold bachelor's degrees and specialized training in early education, the "Preschool for All" plan is designed to foster the full spectrum of skills – social, emotional, physical, and cognitive – that all young children need to achieve success in school and later life.

The proposed plan sets a five-year timetable to achieve "Preschool for All," with at-risk children receiving first priority. The "Preschool for All" plan would also improve access to early learning opportunities for children under the age of three who are at greatest risk of later school failure by improving the quality of existing services and expanding capacity. From a law enforcement perspective, the emphasis on the first years of life is an important element of the "Preschool for All" plan (see box).

Most importantly, the "Preschool for All" plan expands access so that more children – especially those at risk of school failure – will have an opportunity to succeed. Based on current participation rates and the experience in other states, the plan projects that up to 190,000 children will enroll in a "Preschool for All" classroom when the program is fully implemented.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, most at-risk children are not receiving quality programs like the Chicago Child-Parent Centers. Illinois' "Preschool for All" plan offers an excellent opportunity to achieve reductions in crime and child abuse as long as the providers ensure high quality and include parent training. The pre-kindergarten programs with the strongest outcomes for children very actively included parents in their children's educational development through either home visits or special classrooms and teachers provided for the parents.<sup>29</sup>

Important quality recommendations are contained in the plan that would contribute to the programs' potential to cut abuse and neglect among participants. These include:

- Teacher qualification requirements that include a bachelor's degree with early childhood certification for lead teachers
- Staff development plans to recruit qualified staff
- Well-designed, comprehensive, evidence-based curriculum
- Staff to child ratios no higher than one to 10
- Ensuring successful transition from home to preschool, and preschool to elementary school
- Providing developmental screenings and help linking to well-child services
- Intensive services for children at high-risk of school failure
- Consultation services to promote social and emotional development and manage difficult classroom behaviors
- Provide specialized services for non-English speaking children and their families, and disabled children
- Appropriate indoor and outdoor learning equipment

### Pre-k Saves Money

Preventing child abuse and neglect by investing in quality pre-kindergarten programs is not only the right thing to do, but is also fiscally sound. Failing to invest in programs proven to prevent abuse and neglect and put kids on the right track costs taxpayers millions of dollars and places children at greater risk of being abused or neglected, failing in school, or going to prison.

Research shows these programs save money. The Chicago Child-Parent Centers is saving taxpayers, victims and participants more than \$7 for every \$1 invested, and that is without including any accounting for the pain and suffering of the victims. Taxpayers alone are saving \$3, and 43 percent of those savings to taxpayers come from reduced costs to the criminal justice system. Of the 100,000 children served, this all translates to a savings of \$2.6 billion so far.<sup>30</sup>

Before the Child-Parent Centers programs were shown to cut abuse and neglect in half, many economists had already concluded that early childhood programs were among the best investments government can make. Arthur Rolnick, Senior Vice President and Director of Research at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, reviewed the results of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, Michigan and calculated that the return on investment in early-childhood development was 16 percent after adjusting for inflation or more than twice the return on Wall Street.<sup>31</sup> Chris Farrell, contributing economics editor at Business Week, wrote: "To put [Rolnick's figure] in perspective, the long term real return on U.S. stocks is 7 percent." Farrell urged liberals and conservatives to agree that, "government should provide disadvantaged youngsters with a high-quality preschool learning environment."<sup>32</sup>

The newest study of the Perry Preschool Program, released in November 2004, shows an even higher return to society than previously recorded. The Perry Preschool Program cut crime, welfare, and other costs so much that it saved taxpayers more than \$17 for every \$1 invested (including more than \$11 in crime savings).<sup>33</sup>

## Law Enforcement, Public Support for Action

The more than 180 police chiefs, sheriffs, state's attorneys and crime survivors who make up FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS ILLINOIS are on the front lines against the war on crime. These law enforcement leaders also know the most powerful weapons against crime are the ones that keep kids from becoming criminals in the first place. High-quality early learning opportunities not only teach children early literacy and math skills but also the social skills they need to get along with others. Abuse or neglect during childhood influences the architecture of the brain and can produce children who too easily respond to situations with violence, or children who have never

learned to feel empathy towards others. Too many of these children grow up to be violent criminals.

A survey of Illinois police chiefs, state's attorneys and sheriffs conducted in 2000 found they rated early childhood education, parent coaching to at-risk families, and after-school programs as more valuable crime prevention strategies than metal detectors in schools, more juvenile detention centers and prosecution of more juveniles as adults.<sup>34</sup>

Most Americans feel that preventing child abuse and neglect should be at the top of government priorities. In a poll conducted by Mason Dixon Polling and Research, 82 percent of the public said preventing abuse and neglect should be either a top or high priority for government, even higher than the 72 percent who picked improving schools as a top or high priority.<sup>35</sup>

Government's most fundamental responsibility is to protect its citizens. When thousands of children a year are not prepared for kindergarten or get there with bruises, we are not doing enough. It is time for a dedicated system of quality pre-kindergarten in Illinois that not only cuts crime and violence and prepares our children to succeed in school, but also cuts child abuse and neglect.

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS ILLINOIS urges the General Assembly and the Governor to move forward with a proposal to serve all families who want it with preschool – one that includes a strong parent coaching component and continues the birth to three set aside of the current program. Quality pre-kindergarten will have profound effects on cutting child abuse and neglect in Illinois – saving the state millions of dollars and saving thousands of children from hurt and agony.

# Appendix

Technical Notes on Estimating from the Number of Children Abused and Neglected in 2001 How Many will become Violent Criminals, Murderers, or Attempt Suicide.

The projections on how many abused or neglected children will grow up to be arrested for a violent crime, to be arrested for murder, or to attempt suicide are based on the original research of Michael Maxfield and Cathy Spatz Widom. Their article, "The cycle of violence: Revisited 6 years later," appeared in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine in April of 1996 (v.150: 390-395). Widom and Maxfield matched 908 children who had substantiated cases of abuse or neglect with a control group of 667 individuals with no substantiated cases of abuse or neglect. The individuals in the study were matched on the basis of their date of birth, race, sex, and approximate social class. Using official records, the researchers determined that the abused and neglected individuals were one quarter (4 percentage points) more likely to have had at least one arrest for violence, either as an adult or as a juvenile, than those otherwise similar individuals who had not been maltreated [18 percent - 14 percent = 4 percent]. In other words, while 14 percent of the abused and neglected individuals in this study would have been arrested for a violent crime whether or not they had been abused or neglected, an additional four percent of the abused and neglected individuals were arrested for a violent crime who apparently would not have been if they had not suffered abuse or neglect as children.

That four-percentage point difference can be applied to the number of substantiated cases of abuse and neglect in Illinois in 2003 — 25,344 (which is a conservative count of the number of children abused and neglected every year in Illinois). Four percentage points multiplied by that number results in an estimate of 1,000 additional individuals who will be arrested at least once for violence at some time in their life after having been abused and neglected in 2003 [ $25,344 \times .04 = 1,013$ ]. Other research cited in this report, however, indicates that each year there are twice as many children who were victims of abuse or neglect that were not confirmed, or 75,000 total children abused or neglected. Widom has cautioned that her research cannot answer whether the same rate of arrests for violence applies to the higher number of unconfirmed cases of abuse and neglect. Even if only a small percentage of these children go on to become violent criminals who otherwise would not have, the 1,000 figure is a significant underestimation of the number of additional violent criminals arising out of the children who were abused and neglected in 2003.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>7</sup> A.J. Reynolds, Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, (personal communication, March 21, 2003).
- <sup>8</sup> Reynolds, A. J. & Robertson, D. L. (2003). Preventing child abuse and neglect through school based early intervention: An investigation of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers. *Child Development*, 74, 3-26.
- <sup>9</sup> Table 4, retrieved from [http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/library/com\\_communications\\_cants2003.shtml](http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/library/com_communications_cants2003.shtml), for purposes of this report, state of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services data was used because it provided more detail rather than National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System data. Illinois child abuse and neglect figures throughout are Illinois DCFS data unless otherwise noted.
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- <sup>11</sup> California Department of Health and Human Services, Epidemiology and Prevention for Injury Control Branch. (1999). *Counting fatal child abuse and neglect, results of California reconciliation audit, 1996*. Retrieved from the California Department of Human Services website: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/epic/documents/FatalCANAudit96.pdf>; California Department of Health and Human Services, Epidemiology and Prevention for Injury Control Branch. (2000). *Counting fatal child abuse and neglect, results of California reconciliation audit, 1997*. Retrieved from the California Department of Human Services website: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/epic/documents/FatalCANAudit97.pdf>
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- <sup>24</sup> Of the total confirmed children abused or neglected in IL in 2003
- |                                     |                    |       |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Some were five years old. (3-5 yrs) | 4,748 x 1/3 = 1599 | 1,599 |
| Some were 6-9                       |                    | 5,808 |
| Some were 10-13                     |                    | 4,745 |
| some were 14-17                     |                    | 2,884 |
- All IL kids over 4 who were confirmed CAN cases in 2002
- |   |        |       |
|---|--------|-------|
| Those kids times 50% (.50) are the number protected | 15,036 | 7,518 |
|---|--------|-------|
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