

In Home Parent Coaching Programs Protect Kids, Reduce Crime & Save Money: Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect in Pennsylvania

This brief is based on a report by FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS PENNSYLVANIA, an anti-crime group of over 200 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys, other law enforcement leaders, and violence survivors. It is part of the national organization FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS, headquartered in Washington, D.C., with more than 3,000 members. The report and citations for this brief are available at www.fightcrime.org/pa.

Summary

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS has taken a hard-nosed look at what works—and what doesn't work—to cut crime and violence. Exciting new research, combined with prior evidence, shows that most abuse and neglect in high-risk families can now be prevented. Doing so will spare thousands of Pennsylvania children from terror, agony, and despair and will also save lives. Sharply reducing abuse and neglect in Pennsylvania will save billions of dollars while greatly reducing the number of children who would otherwise grow up to become criminals.

The Annual Toll: 4,390 Pennsylvania Children Abused or Neglected in 2005

In Pennsylvania, there were 4,390 officially recognized victims of child abuse or neglect and 40 confirmed deaths from abuse or neglect in 2005. In 2003, 13,981 children were placed in foster care. Even those tragic numbers, however, may mask the real toll of child abuse and neglect in Pennsylvania. Nationally, the best estimate of the real number of children abused or neglected each year is closer to three times the official figure, and the Justice Department released a report saying deaths nationwide from abuse and neglect likely exceed 2,000 a year, instead of the 1,490 officially reported in 2004. So, the true number of Pennsylvania children abused, neglected or even killed is likely to be much higher than the officially reported cases.

The Future Toll: 175 More Criminals

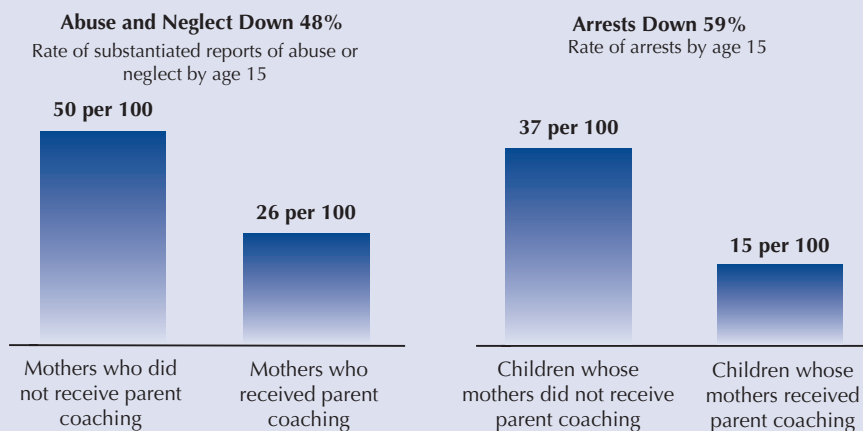
While most victimized children never become violent criminals, being severely abused or neglected can lead to permanent changes in children's brains. Some children have trouble learning empathy, while others develop a predisposition to misinterpret actions as threatening and react violently. This sharply increases the risk that these children will grow up to be arrested for a crime. The best available research indicates that, of the 4,390 Pennsylvania children who were confirmed victims of abuse or neglect in 2005, approximately 175 will become violent criminals as adults who would otherwise avoid such crimes if not for the abuse or neglect they endured as children.

Half of Abuse and Neglect in High-risk Families Can Be Prevented

Failure to invest now in programs proven to prevent child abuse and neglect puts everyone in Pennsylvania at greater risk of becoming a victim of crime. The more than 200 Pennsylvania police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys, other law enforcement leaders, and violence survivors who are members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS call on their state and federal governments to:

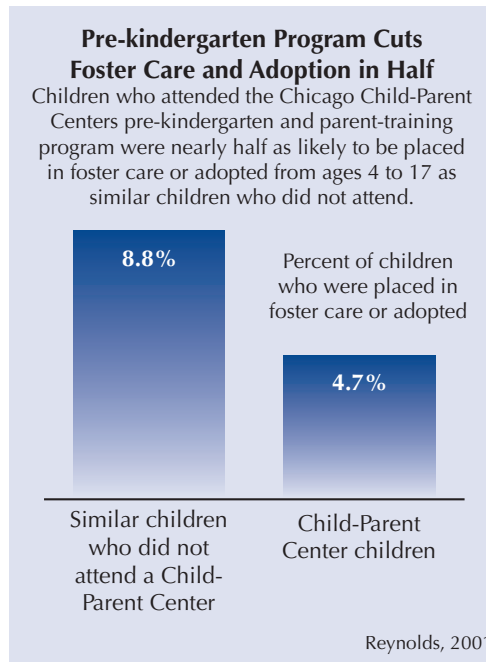
- **Offer high quality coaching in parenting skills to all at-risk parents.** The Nurse Family Partnership Program (NFP) randomly assigned at-risk mothers to receive home visits by nurses who provided coaching in parenting and other skills. Rigorous research, originally published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, shows that children of mothers in the program had 48 percent fewer substantiated reports of abuse or neglect. Put another way: in-home parent coaching services can prevent nearly half of all cases of abuse or neglect among at-risk children. In addition, by the time the children reached age 15, mothers in the program had 61 percent fewer arrests than the mothers left out of the program, and their children had 59 percent fewer arrests than the kids left out.

**The Nurse Family Partnership Cut Abuse and Neglect and Arrests in Half
Among the At-risk Kids it Served**



Olds, 2006

- Offer quality pre-kindergarten programs with parent-training for at-risk children. The Child-Parent Center (CPC) preschool program serves Chicago families in low-income neighborhoods. Similar youth not receiving CPC were almost twice as likely to be placed in either foster care or adopted as the youth in CPC. Youngsters left out of CPC were also 70 percent more likely to have been arrested for a violent crime by age 18, and 24 percent more likely to be incarcerated as an adult than those receiving CPC.



including \$966 million in state and local funding. Most of that went for providing necessary foster care and victim services, and that funding—while never adequate—must at least be maintained. Investing more now in preventing child abuse and neglect, instead of waiting to treat it, will save lives, reduce future crime and soon begin saving taxpayers’ money. For example, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that nurse home visitation programs saved taxpayers and crime victims five dollars for each dollar invested. The Child-Parent Center preschool program saved taxpayers, victims, and participants ten dollars for every dollar invested (taxpayers alone saved almost \$7).

The Nurse Family Partnership in Pennsylvania

The first three Nurse Family Partnership program sites in Pennsylvania were established in 1999 with four years of funding through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Currently, Nurse Family Partnership in Pennsylvania has 160 nurses working in 36 of the Commonwealth’s 67 counties serving more than 3,000 families. The Department of Public Welfare’s Office of Child Development and Early Learning now oversees the program. Since its inception in Pennsylvania, about 8,000 clients have been served.

Two-Thirds of Eligible Moms Not Served

Estimates show that there are 15,000 eligible high-risk “first time moms” in Pennsylvania who could benefit from the Nurse Family Partnership program. Research predicts that only six out of 10 eligible mothers take advantage of this voluntary program – leaving 9,000 eligible mothers in Pennsylvania who need and would participate in this program. Current funding from federal, state and local sources are only serving 3,000 eligible mothers in Pennsylvania.

Saving Lives, Preventing Crime and Saving Money

Child abuse and neglect costs America upwards of \$80 billion a year. Two-thirds of that is crime costs. In September 2003, almost 21,800 Pennsylvania children were in foster care. In 2004, \$1.7 billion was spent on preventing or treating abuse or neglect in Pennsylvania,

Law Enforcement Leaders are United

Pennsylvania law enforcement leaders are calling for greater investments to protect children from abuse and neglect, save taxpayers’ dollars, and make all Pennsylvanians safer. This call has been endorsed by the Pennsylvania State Troopers Association, the Fraternal Order of Police Pennsylvania State Lodge, the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association, the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, and the Pennsylvania Sheriffs’ Association. The evidence is in. We can save millions of dollars in Pennsylvania while preventing most abuse and neglect in high-risk families. The time to act is now.

Quality In-home Parent Coaching Saves Money

Taxpayers saved over \$5 for every \$1 invested in the Nurse Family Partnership program.



For every \$1 invested



Over \$5 was saved

Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2006

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is supported by tax-deductible contributions from foundations, individuals, and corporations. It receives no funds from federal, state or local governments. Major funding is provided by: The Atlantic Philanthropies • The Buffett Early Childhood Fund • The Butler Family Fund • The Annie E. Casey Foundation • Naomi & Nehemiah Cohen Foundation • Freddie Mac Foundation • Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation • The Horace Hagedorn Foundation • JEHT Foundation • The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation • The David and Lucile Packard Foundation • William Penn Foundation • The Pew Charitable Trusts - Advancing Quality Pre-K for All.

Major funding for FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS PENNSYLVANIA is provided by: William Penn Foundation • The Heinz Endowments • The Grable Foundation

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3/2007

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Endnotes:

The Annual Toll: 4,390 Children Abused or Neglected in 2005

Children Abused or Neglected in 2005 and confirmed deaths:

Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. (2006). *30th Annual Child Abuse Report*. Retrieved November 20, 2006 from <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/Child/ChildAbuseNeglect/ChildAbuseAnnualRpts/2005ChildAbuseRpt/2005TablesCharts/003674738.htm>

Total children in foster care:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (April 2005). *Foster Care FY1999-FY2003 Entries, Exits, and Numbers of Children In Care on the Last Day of Each Federal Fiscal Year*. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/statistics/entryexit2002.htm

The total number of children maltreated may be three times higher:

Sedlak, A. J., & Broadhurst, D. D. (1996). *Executive summary of the third national incidence study of child abuse and neglect*. Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Web site: <http://www.calib.com/nccanch/pubs/statinfo/nis3.cfm#national>. For a discussion of this report, see: Child Welfare League of America. (2002). *Child protection frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from <http://www.cwla.org/programs/childprotection>. In this document, it is reported, "The Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect, conducted in 1995, estimates that the real incidence of abuse and neglect may be three times greater than the numbers reported to authorities."

Deaths from abuse and neglect likely to exceed 2,000:

Langstaff, J., & Sleeper, T. (2001). *The National Center on Child Fatality review*. Retrieved from the National Criminal Justice Reference System Web site: <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojdp/fs200112.pdf>

1,490 deaths from abuse and neglect reported each year:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau. (2006). *Child maltreatment 2004*. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm04/index.htm>

The Future Toll: 175 More Criminals

Permanent injuries leading to lack of empathy or quicker violent response:

This is based on quotes taken from Bruce Perry. For these quotes, see: Perry, B. D. (2003). Bonding and attachment in maltreated children: Consequences of emotional neglect in childhood. Retrieved from The Scholastic Web site: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/bruceperry/bonding.htm>; Russakoff, D. (1999, May 15). Horror that burned into Littleton minds: Students' flashbacks of fear cast light on violence's physical impact on brain. *The Washington Post*, p. A3; Perry, B. D. (2003). *Aggression and violence: The neurobiology of experience*. Retrieved from The Scholastic Web site: http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/bruceperry/aggression_violence.htm

Estimate of Additional Criminals:

A full explanation is available in the Appendix of the full report, Protect Kids, Reduce Crime, Save Money: Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect in Pennsylvania, which can be found at <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/pacanreport.pdf>. For the original data from which the projections are based, see: Maxfield, M., & Widom, C.S. (April 1996). The cycle of violence: revisited 6 years later. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 150: 390-95.

Research Shows Most Abuse and Neglect in High-risk Families Can Be Prevented

Nurse Family Partnership Program research results:

For the original outcomes on the mothers in the program, see: Olds, D. L. (1997). Long-term effects of nurse home visitation on maternal life course and child abuse and neglect. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 278(8), 637-643. For outcomes on the children in the program, see: Olds, D. L. (1998). Long-term effects of nurse home visitation on children's criminal and anti-social behavior: 15-year follow-up of a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 280(14), 1238-1244. David Olds, the principal author, updated some of those findings using alternative statistical analysis. Those results are presented on his web site under research findings and an interview: <http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home>

Chicago Child-Parent Center research results:

For reduction of out-of-home placements and adult incarceration rates, see: Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., OH, S., Robertson, D. L., Mersky J. P., Topitzes, J. W., & Niles, M. D. (Publication Pending). *Effects of a school-based, early childhood intervention on adult health and well being: A 20-year follow up of low-income families*. For percent of juveniles likely to be arrested for a violent crime, see: Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Robertson, D. L., & Mann, E. A. (2001). Long-term effects of an early childhood intervention on educational

achievement and juvenile arrest: A 15-year follow-up of low-income children in public schools. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(18), 2339-2346.

The Nurse Family Partnership in Pennsylvania:

Nurse Family Partnership. (2006). Nurse Family Partnership-Pennsylvania. Retrieved December 4, 2006 from www.nursefamily-partnership.org.

Two-Thirds of Eligible Moms Not Served:

J.C. Stavrakos, Deputy Director, Public/Private Ventures (personal communication, November 30, 2006).

Saving Lives, Preventing Crime and Saving Money

Child abuse and neglect costs \$80 billion a year, mostly from crime:

There are two studies showing child abuse costs American's \$83 billion and \$94 billion. The second study concluded two thirds of that cost is from crime: Miller, T. et al. (1998). *Cost of child abuse and neglect, 1996*. Landover, MD: Children's Safety Network Economics and Insurance Resource Center, National Public Services Research Institute. This figure includes accounting for lost quality of life: Prevent Child Abuse America. (2001). *Total estimated cost of child abuse and neglect in the United States: Statistical evidence*. Retrieved from http://www.preventchildabuse.org/learn_more/research_docs/cost_analysis.pdf. This figure also includes, indirectly, an accounting for lost quality of life.

Total children in foster care:

See Above.

Total and state spending on child welfare:

Scarcella, C.A., Bess, R., Zielewski, E.H., & Geen, R. (2006). *The Cost of Protecting Vulnerable Children V: Understanding State Variation in Child Welfare Financing*. Retrieved from the Urban Institute Web site: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311314_vulnerable_children.pdf

Five dollars returned for every dollar spent on the Nurse Family Partnership Program by taxpayers:

Aos, S., Miller, M., & Drake, E. (2006). *Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates*. Retrieved from <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov>

Ten dollars returned for every dollar spent on the Chicago Child-Parent Centers:

Reynolds, A.J., & Temple, J.A., (January 20, 2006). *Prevention and cost-effectiveness in early intervention: A 20-year follow-up of a Child Parent cohort*. McEvoy Lecture Series on Early Childhood and Public Policy, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota.