



Head Start Cuts Crime In Oregon

A Report from FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS OREGON

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS OREGON is part of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS, a national, bipartisan, nonprofit, anti-crime organization. The national organization has a membership of more than 2,500 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, other law enforcement leaders and violence survivors. The members take a hard-nosed look at what works — and what doesn't work — to prevent crime and violence. They then recommend effective strategies to state and national policy-makers.

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Executive Summary

The law enforcement members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS are determined to put dangerous criminals behind bars. But those on the front lines know that locking up criminals is not enough to win the fight against crime. Law enforcement leaders recognize that among the most powerful weapons to prevent crime and violence are quality pre-kindergarten programs, like Head Start, that help kids get the right start in life. Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood development program for low-income 3- and 4-year-old children and their families providing integrated services in preschool education, child health, nutrition, social and emotional development, parent education, and family involvement.

Research shows that Head Start and similar pre-kindergarten programs cut crime. Children left out of Head Start are more likely to commit crimes when they grow up compared to children attending other preschool programs. The research shows that Head Start helps kids learn to get along with others and follow directions, and reduces problem behavior that can lead to youth and adult crime. Head Start has also shown strong results for children in improving language and math skills, reducing grade retention, and increasing graduation rates. This school success has led Head Start graduates to have higher rates of employment and earnings. Over 40 years, Head Start has given a literal “head start” to more than 20 million of the country’s most needy children, helping them to become contributing, responsible adults.

But many of Oregon’s children eligible for Head Start do not receive it. Last year, 40 percent of Oregon’s children eligible for Head Start were not served by the program, an estimated 6,400 children. These children not receiving Head Start’s benefits are at greater risk for future criminality. But children receiving high-quality early childhood programs like Head Start are as much as one-third less likely to go on to commit crimes. Providing high-quality Head Start services to all eligible children in Oregon can prevent as many as 500 children each year from becoming future criminals. That’s why the 126 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys, and violence survivors who are members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS OREGON, and the more than 2,500 members nationally, are committed to providing Head Start to all eligible children in Oregon and improving the already high-quality program even further by increasing teacher qualifications and compensation.

Head Start Cuts Crime In Oregon

Introduction

Head Start reduces later crime through a high-quality early education and child development program for low-income 3- and 4-year-olds. Children in Head Start programs receive comprehensive services, such as high-quality preschool education, health, nutrition, social and emotional development components, and parental involvement. Head Start uses National Performance Standards to ensure a quality program for each child in Oregon and throughout the nation. A nationally representative study found that the average quality of Head Start programs is higher than that of other early care and education programs.¹

Research Shows That Head Start And Other Quality Early Education Programs Cut Crime

Research proves what law enforcement professionals have learned from experience. Studies show that at-risk kids who attend Head Start and other high quality pre-kindergarten programs are less likely to commit crimes as adults than similar children who do not attend pre-kindergarten.

Head Start: Research shows that adults who attended Head Start as children are less likely to commit crimes than adults from similar backgrounds who did not attend Head Start. A

large national survey of Head Start graduates found that graduates were 8.5 percent less likely to be later arrested or charged with a crime than their siblings who attended other preschool programs.²

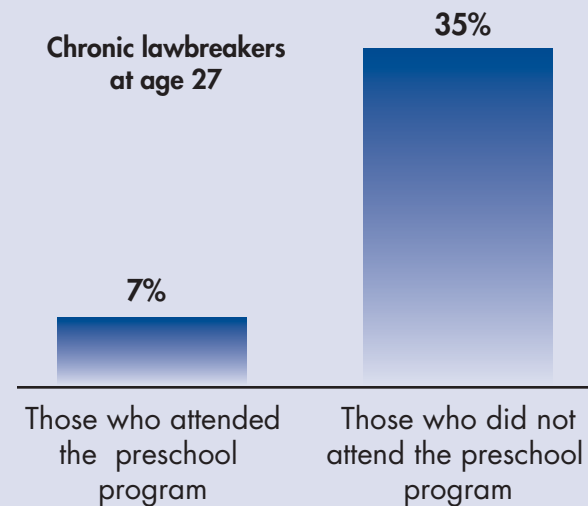
Evidence from Other High-Quality Preschool Programs

High/Scope Perry Preschool: The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation initiated in 1962 a random-assignment study of the Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, MI. The Perry Preschool Program was a high quality, one- to two-year long early educational program with an in-home parent coaching component. The researchers found lifetime crime prevention effects of the Perry Preschool Program:

- By age 27, the at-risk children excluded from the program were five times more likely to grow up to be chronic lawbreakers than those who attended.³
- At age 40, those who did not attend the Perry Preschool Program were twice as likely to be arrested for violent crimes than those who attended.⁴
- Those who did not attend the Perry Preschool Program were also more likely to abuse illegal drugs. Children left out of the program were four times more

Quality Pre-Kindergarten Cuts Future Crime

At-risk 3 & 4-year-olds randomly excluded from the High/Scope Perry Preschool program were five times more likely to become chronic offenders (more than 4 arrests) by age 27.



Schweinhart, et al, 1993

likely to be arrested for drug felonies, and seven times more likely to be arrested for dangerous drugs than those in the program.⁵

Chicago Child-Parent Centers: Chicago's federally-funded Child-Parent Centers have served 100,000 three- and 4-year-olds since 1967. The program is a center-based early intervention program that provides educational and family-support services to economically disadvantaged children.

A study comparing 989 children in the Child-Parent Centers to 550 similar children who were not in the program showed that children who did not participate in the program were 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18.⁶ This program will have prevented an estimated 33,000 crimes by the time the children who have attended the program reach the age of 18.⁷

Furthermore, the Chicago Child-Parent Centers cut the abuse and neglect of children in the

program in half.⁸ The reduction of abuse and neglect is significant in itself, but it is also compelling because of the potential impact on future criminal behavior. Studies show that children who were abused or neglected are more likely to be arrested as juveniles, and to commit crimes as adults, than children who were not abused or neglected.⁹

The research is clear: high quality pre-kindergarten programs like Head Start reduce crime and drug abuse. Cutting crime in Oregon is important to the social and economic well-being of the state and its citizens. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 180,750 crimes were committed in Oregon in 2003, including 10,520 violent crimes¹⁰.

Crime in Oregon¹¹

- 10,520 violent crimes
 - 68 murders or nonnegligent manslaughters
 - 1218 rapes
 - 2851 robberies
 - 6,383 assaults
- 170,230 property crimes
 - 28,626 burglaries
 - 122,615 larceny –theft
 - 18,989 motor vehicle theft
- Total: 180,750 crimes committed in Oregon in 2003**

Over 30,000 juveniles are arrested every year in Oregon.¹² Despite the best efforts of law enforcement, these crimes will continue to be committed unless serious measures are taken before – not only after – crimes occur. The Head Start program prevents crime by helping kids get the right start in life.

Head Start Helps Children Succeed

In addition to crime prevention, Head Start also helps children succeed in school. Every day, kindergarten teachers witness the difference between children who received high-quality pre-kindergarten and those who

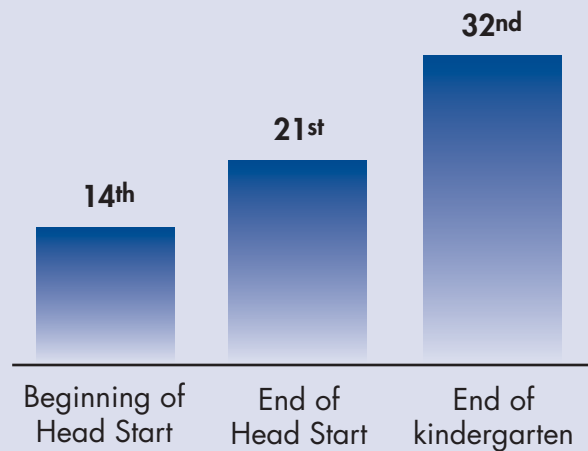
did not. According to a national poll of kindergarten teachers conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling for FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS, nine out of 10 teachers reported that children who attended pre-kindergarten programs are better prepared to succeed in school than those who did not.¹³

Decades of research also confirm that high quality pre-kindergarten programs have long-term educational and economic effects. A study with a nationally representative sample of 2,800 children showed that Head Start significantly raised average scores of children's performance. Moreover, the largest gains were made by the lower-performing children, especially in the areas of vocabulary and early writing. The program narrowed the school readiness gap between children from low-income homes who attended Head Start and children from higher-income homes. Test results also showed that Head Start graduates continued to outpace other similar children in their learning during kindergarten, thereby further narrowing the performance gap.¹⁴ A separate new national study, utilizing the best design possible – a randomized control trial – found that, "Head Start reduced, by almost half, the achievement gap in pre-reading skills between Head Start children and the national average for all 3- and 4-year olds."¹⁵ In another large national survey, researchers found that former Head Start students were more likely to graduate from high school and to attend college than their siblings who attended other preschools.¹⁶

In addition to these important gains in school performance, Head Start also promotes children's health and can reduce mortality from chronic childhood illnesses. One recent analysis examined data from Head Start's beginning years when the program was being phased in. It found that Head Start's health services and health screening led to a 33 percent to 75 percent decline in mortality rates for children at ages five to nine compared to similar children in other counties with less or

Head Start Narrows the Gap between Its Youngsters and Other American Children

Percentile ranking for vocabulary scores of Head Start children*



*A 14th percentile rank means that Head Start children scored above 14% of American children (of the same age).

no Head Start funding.¹⁷

Like Head Start, Early Head Start also helps low-income children prepare for future school success. Early Head Start was created in 1994 to provide comprehensive child development and family strengthening services to babies and toddlers from birth to age three. A large evaluation study of Early Head Start found that families randomly assigned to receive the combined center/in-home parent coaching approach were 62 percent more likely to read to their children daily than families who did not receive the program. Children left out of the combined Early Head Start approach were 34 percent more likely to score in the low range on a test of cognitive, social and emotional development than those enrolled in the program.¹⁸

The success of Head Start carries over into high school. Leading experts in the field of early education, like Dr. W. Steven Barnett of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), have critically reviewed Head Start studies and determined that the positive effects

of Head Start on academic ability and success are long lasting. In a number of large national studies, researchers found that former Head Start students were less likely to repeat a grade, less likely to need special education services, and more likely to graduate from high school.¹⁹

The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation found similar results. Compared to children who did not attend the Perry Preschool Program, those who did attend the program were more likely to graduate from high school.²⁰ Children who were not enrolled in the Perry Preschool Program were also twice as likely to be placed in special education classes and were a third less likely to graduate from high school on time than students who attended.²¹

Similarly, in the Chicago Child-Parent Center program, children who attended the program were 23 percent more likely to graduate from high school. In contrast, children who were not in the Chicago Child-Parent Center program were 67 percent more likely to be held back in school and 71 percent more likely to be placed in special education classes than students who attended.²²

Teacher Qualifications Are Essential

Research shows that the training and education level of teachers are essential for providing the high-quality early education to reduce later crime. Teacher qualifications, specifically their level of education, are key to early childhood program quality. Although teachers without four-year college degrees can be effective, the research evidence clearly shows that teachers with Bachelor's degrees (B.A.) or higher generally are better equipped to provide a high-quality learning experience for the young children they teach.

A national study of early childhood teachers and programs found that teachers with B.A. degrees were "more sensitive, less harsh and detached, and more appropriate...than were

teachers with less formal education."²³ This study also found that children with sensitive and responsive teachers had higher language scores and demonstrated a higher level of peer play compared to other children. A comprehensive review by a panel of early childhood experts for the National Research Council found that "both formal education levels and recent, specialized training in child development have been found quite consistently to be associated with high-quality interactions and children's development in center-based, family day care and even in in-home sitter arrangements."²⁴

Federal Head Start legislation passed in 1998 required that at least 50 percent of Head Start teachers have an Associate's degree (A.A.), B.A., or graduate degree in early childhood education or a related field by 2003. Nationally, Head Start has met that goal, with 57 percent of teachers having an A.A., B.A., or graduate degree in 2003.²⁵ Currently, across the country, 31 percent of Head Start teachers have B.A. degrees or higher.²⁶ Pending federal Head Start reauthorization legislative proposals would require teacher education requirements to 50 percent of teachers having B.A. degrees or higher in early childhood education by 2011.

Oregon is already making progress toward the proposed increase in teacher qualifications. Last year 43 percent of Head Start lead teachers in Oregon had B.A. degrees or higher, an eight percentage point increase from 2003, when 35 percent of lead teachers had B.A. degrees or higher.²⁷ Oregon will need help from the federal government to invest in teacher training to meet these proposed new goals.

For children in Head Start programs to benefit from increased teacher qualifications, teachers' compensation will also have to be increased in order to recruit and retain these higher-qualified teachers. NIEER estimates that increasing teacher salaries and fringe benefits would add 20 to 30 percent to the salary costs

for Head Start teachers, plus additional expenses to help pay the costs of teachers getting their college degrees.²⁸ The Center for Law and Social Policy estimates that the costs of increasing Head Start teacher education and compensation nationally as called for in current federal reauthorization proposals will be approximately \$2.7 billion to \$3.4 billion over six years.²⁹

Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten

Since 1988, Head Start services in Oregon have been funded by both the federal Head Start program and state dollars. *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* combines state and federal funding into one seamless program, and requires the same rigorous federal *Head Start Performance Standards* that help ensure quality services for children and families. Oregon Head Start uses the federal eligibility requirements, requiring 90 percent of children served to have family incomes at or below the federal poverty guidelines, \$16,090 for a family of three.³⁰ Oregon modifies this requirement slightly for state-funded Head Start children, allowing as many as 20 percent of children enrolled to have family incomes above the federal poverty guidelines. In addition to income, local programs use locally developed priority rating systems that include other family risk factors beyond income level (such as referrals from pediatricians, referrals for parent alcohol and drug addiction, and child abuse and neglect) to determine enrollment priorities among eligible children.

From 2003 to 2005, Oregon invested \$53,582,328 in state dollars for Head Start in addition to the federal Head Start program funds of \$99 million to serve Oregon's needy children over the two-year period, totaling \$152,582,328.³¹

Between 2003 and 2005, *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* served 19,094 children in 658 classrooms in all 36 counties. The program serves children from a variety of racial and

ethnic backgrounds, reflecting state demographic characteristics. In the 2003-2004 school year, 48 percent of enrolled children were white, 31 percent were Latino, seven percent were African-American, seven percent were biracial or multiracial, two percent were American Indian or Alaska Native, and two percent were Asian.³² Seventy-one percent of children in *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* speak English as their dominant language, 24 percent speak Spanish, two percent speak Asian languages, and two percent speak other languages as their dominant language.³³

About three-fourths (74 percent) of *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* families are employed full-time or part-time, and another 15 percent participate in job training programs or attend school.³⁴

Like Head Start programs around the country, *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* specializes in serving children with disabilities. Federal and state program rules require that at least 10 percent of the total enrollment be reserved for children with disabilities. Oregon exceeds this requirement and dedicates approximately 16 percent of its enrollment for children with disabilities.³⁵

Providing Head Start programs in rural areas can be a challenge due to the low population density and geographic dispersion of families throughout rural areas. Despite these inherent challenges, *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* provides Head Start services in rural communities, serving every county in the state.³⁶ Since local programs create their own budgets, some programs in rural communities address the geographic dispersion of families by devoting more resources to extensive transportation services to bus children from outlying areas to the program.

The federally funded Migrant Head Start program serves communities with large concentrations of migrant farm worker families. According to Dell Ford of the Oregon Head

Start Collaboration Office, there is one Migrant Head Start grantee in Oregon, the Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC), which operates 11 program sites across the state. OCDC provides services to 2,469 children ranging in age from birth to five. The Migrant Head Start program [or OCDC?] also operates two state-funded Head Start programs for children who meet the general Head Start eligibility criteria.³⁷

The federally funded Tribal Head Start program serves American Indian children. There are nine recognized tribes in Oregon, five of which have federal Head Start funding and provide services to 304 children. Additionally, the Grande Ronde Tribe allocates their tribal funds to serve an additional 27 children.³⁸

Despite Head Start's Benefits, 40 Percent of Eligible Children in Oregon are Not Served

Despite the school success and crime prevention benefits of Head Start for at-risk children, only 60 percent of eligible children in Oregon participate in the program. Last year, approximately 9,600 of Oregon's children were served by Head Start programs.³⁹ Of the estimated 16,000 children eligible for Head Start, 6,400 children—or 40 percent—did not receive the program in 2005 due to lack of

funding.⁴⁰

State agency officials report that local Head Start programs are at full capacity, and programs have waiting lists in all but one of the communities served. For example, in east Multnomah County, the Mt. Hood Community College Head Start Prekindergarten program has over 300 eligible children on the waiting list to receive Head Start.⁴¹ According to Oregon state government agency officials, there is a demand for additional Head Start services. If Oregon had additional federal Head Start or state pre-kindergarten funds, *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* could serve more children.

Recent federal budget cuts put further stress on the capacity of *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* to serve eligible needy children. The federal portion of Oregon's Head Start program is subject to a one percent budget cut, retroactive to October 2005. Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten agency officials estimate that to implement this budget cut, approximately 200 children could be cut from the program.⁴² In the President's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2007, Head Start will receive no additional funding, which will result in Oregon serving even fewer children due to inflation.⁴³

Fully Funding High-Quality Head Start Can Prevent As Many As 500 Children Each Year From Becoming Future Criminals in Oregon

As described earlier in this report, research shows that high-quality early childhood education programs such as Head Start can help at-risk children get on track towards being productive citizens and prevent them from becoming future criminals. Given this compelling crime prevention evidence, providing Head Start to all eligible children would benefit the citizens of Oregon by helping these children succeed in school and in life and

Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten Services and Unmet Need in 2005

| | Total Children (ages 3 and 4) | |
|---|-------------------------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Children Eligible (estimate) | 16,000 | 100% |
| Children Served (federal and state funded) | 9,600 | 60% |
| Eligible Children Not Served | 6,400 | 40% |

Source: Oregon Department of Education, 2005.

preventing future crimes.

What is the cost to Oregon in future crimes for not providing Head Start for all eligible children?

Using the best research evidence available, we can estimate the crime prevention potential of providing high-quality Head Start to all of Oregon's eligible children currently not receiving the program. Most children in Head Start, like most children in general, do not become criminals. However, one study using national data and tracking children into adulthood shows that approximately one in ten of the children with family incomes below the federal poverty guidelines will be charged with a crime later in life.⁴⁴

Approximately 16,000 children in Oregon were eligible for Head Start in 2005. Based on one national study on the proportion of Head Start eligible children who go on to be booked or charged with a crime, we can expect that approximately 1,600 of these children – 10 percent of the 16,000 children eligible for Head Start — are likely to be charged with a crime.⁴⁵ The rest will be law-abiding citizens.

How much of a difference can Head Start make in preventing future crime?

As described earlier in this report, one longitudinal study using national data demonstrated that children who attended Head Start were 8.5 percent less likely to be charged with a crime as youth or adults than were their siblings who did not attend Head Start but attended other preschool programs instead.⁴⁶ So even compared to Head-Start-eligible children who attended another preschool program, children who attended Head Start had a lower rate of future criminal behavior.⁴⁷

While Head Start's 8.5 percent reduction in future criminals is a compelling accomplishment, we have evidence that the

highest-quality early childhood programs can achieve even greater reductions in future crime. One such program, the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC), has been shown to cut overall crime among juveniles by one-third (32.6 percent).⁴⁸ The Chicago Child-Parent Center is a large-scale early intervention that provides comprehensive educational and family-support services to economically disadvantaged children. The CPC program is the second-oldest federally funded preschool program in the U.S. and is among the highest quality early childhood programs available. For example, every CPC program lead teacher has a Bachelor's degree. With improvements to Head Start program quality, especially increases in the number of teachers with four-year degrees, Head Start could achieve even higher rates of crime prevention, similar to the Chicago CPC program.

Therefore, we can expect that providing high-quality Head Start to all eligible children in Oregon can reduce the number of Head Start graduates who go on to be criminals by at least 8.5 percent and up to as much as one-third.

Head Start could prevent as many as 500 at-risk children in Oregon from becoming criminals each year.

Because these are rough estimates, we will use ballpark numbers to illustrate our points. (See appendix A for specific numbers).

Research shows that 8.5 percent of these 1,600 potential criminals in Oregon could be prevented from becoming criminals if they all received Head Start. That is approximately 140 children prevented from becoming criminals each year. (About two-thirds of them are already receiving Head Start, so Oregon is already reaping part of this unrecognized reduction in crime each year.)

If Head Start were improved in quality to the level of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers programs – including quality improvements in

pending reauthorization legislation – about one-third (32.6 percent) of those 1,600 children could be steered away from crime, or approximately 500 children each year.

Preventing 500 future criminals is fairly impressive; but we should consider that the reductions in the number of criminals adds up over time and some criminals are very active:

- Preventing 500 criminals is a per-year estimate; the reduction in future criminals from one Head Start school year will be multiplied many times over for each graduating class of children provided the highest-quality Head Start experience.
- Many of those criminals commit only one, fairly minor crime. But others go on to commit multiple crimes over their lifetime, including violent felonies. Therefore, a decrease in the number of future criminals will cut an even greater number of future crimes.

The federal government must increase its investment in Oregon’s high-quality Head Start for all eligible at-risk children. In doing so, Oregon can count on not only improving the number of children who succeed in school but also making a substantial reduction in the 180,750 total crimes and 10,520 violent crimes that happen every year in the state.⁴⁹

Law Enforcement Backs Investment in Quality Early Care and Education Programs

When law enforcement leaders nationwide were surveyed by the independent polling firm Mason-Dixon Polling and Research, an overwhelming 71 percent chose, “more after-school programs and educational child care programs” as the most effective strategy for preventing youth violence and crime.⁵⁰ The Oregon Association Chiefs of Police, the Oregon State Sheriff’s Association, and the

Oregon District Attorney’s Association have endorsed investments in quality early childhood care and education programs, as have national law enforcement organizations such as the Fraternal Order of Police and the National District Attorneys Association.⁵¹ It is time to ensure that more children have access to educational early childhood programs like Head Start that are proven to save money and cut crime.

Conclusion

Over 10,000 violent crimes are committed in Oregon every year. More than 30,000 juveniles are arrested in Oregon annually. Despite the best efforts from law enforcement, these patterns will continue, unless we take serious measures before – not after – such tragedies occur.

It’s time to invest in what works to prevent crime. The research evidence is clear: high-quality early education programs like Head Start are crucial to reducing crime. And with quality improvements, Head Start can make even more dramatic cuts in future crime. Providing high-quality Head Start to all eligible children in Oregon can prevent as many as 500 at-risk children each year from becoming criminals.

That is why the members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS OREGON are calling on Oregon’s elected leaders to ensure that Head Start services are available to all eligible children and that program quality is enhanced by increasing Head Start teacher qualifications and providing increased compensation to retain highly-qualified teachers.

APPENDIX A

Estimate of Head Start's Crime Reduction Potential

A national study found that 10% of children with family incomes below federal poverty guidelines (children eligible for Head Start) will be charged with a crime.^A

Number of 3- and 4-year-old children in Oregon eligible for Head Start: 16,000^B.

10% of 16,000 = 1,600 children in Oregon eligible for Head Start will go on to be charged with a crime.

Children who attended Head Start were 8.5% less likely to be charged with a crime as youth or adults than were their siblings who did not attend Head Start but attended other preschool programs instead.^C

Children who attended the very high-quality Chicago Child-Parent Centers program were 32.6% less likely to commit crimes as juveniles.^D

8.5% x 1,600 = 136, or roughly 140 children prevented from becoming criminals per year

32.6% x 1,600 = 522, or roughly 500 children prevented from becoming criminals per year

^A Garces, E., Thomas, D., & Currie, J. (2002). Longer-term effects of Head Start. *American Economic Review*, 92(4), 999-1012.

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⁴⁷ The 8.5% difference in future crime between children who attended Head Start versus other preschools was marginally statistically significant, at (p.<.06). Duncan Thomas, personal communication via e-mail to Cate Miller, Co-Director of Research on February 28, 2003, based on an analysis of data in Garces, E., Thomas, D., & Currie, J. (2002). Longer-term effects of Head Start. *American Economic Review*, 92(4), 999-1012.

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adopting more than one strategy, and a majority ranked hiring more police officers as the second strategy with the greatest impact.

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