

Protect Kids

Reduce Crime

Save Money

Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect in Antelope Valley

**A Report on In-Home Parent Coaching from
FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *California***



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Executive Summary

Protect Kids, Reduce Crime, Save Money— Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

The 355 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, other law enforcement leaders and violence survivors who are members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *California*, and their more than 3,000 colleagues nationwide, have taken a hard-nosed look at what works—and what does not work—to cut crime and violence. Extensive evidence shows that children who suffered abuse or neglect are more likely to grow up to commit crimes. Solid research shows that half of all abuse and neglect in high-risk families can now be prevented. Doing so will spare hundreds of children in the Antelope Valley from pain, agony and despair, and will also save lives. Sharply reducing abuse and neglect will save Antelope Valley and all California taxpayers tens of millions of dollars, while greatly reducing the number of children growing up to be violent criminals.

The Annual Toll: As Many as 2,766 Abused and Neglected Children The Future Toll: 111 Additional Violent Criminals from Every Year's Abuse and Neglect

Official figures for Palmdale and Lancaster mask the real toll of child abuse and neglect. Although 2,766 children were officially substantiated as being the victims of abuse or neglect in the one year, July 2004 to June 2005, the best estimate by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services of the real number each year is over 8,000.

While most victimized children who survive never become violent criminals, being abused or neglected sharply increases the risk that children will grow up to be arrested for a violent crime. The best available research indicates that, of the 2,766 children who had confirmed incidents of abuse or neglect in one year, approximately 111 will become violent criminals as adults who otherwise would have avoided such crimes if not for the abuse and neglect they endured. Year after year, abuse and neglect create more violent criminals in the Antelope Valley.

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

Failure to invest now in programs that coach at-risk parents in parenting and other skills which are proven to prevent child abuse and neglect puts every Antelope Valley resident at greater risk of becoming a victim of crime. Members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *California* call on the state of California and the federal government to offer high-quality in-home parent coaching to all at-risk parents of newborn babies.

Parent coaching provided in the home to parents of infants by trained professionals can significantly reduce abuse and neglect. The Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) in Elmira, N.Y. randomly assigned at-risk pregnant women to receive in-home visits by nurses. Starting before the birth of their first child and continuing until the child was age two, the nurses coached the expectant mothers in parenting and other skills, and helped the mothers address their own problems. 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.

Children of mothers who received the coaching also had 59 percent fewer arrests by age 15 than the children of mothers who were not coached. When this program was later replicated and carefully studied in Memphis, seven of the 515 children in the study whose parents did not receive in-home parent coaching had fractures and/or head trauma requiring hospitalizations while none of the 228 children

whose parents received the program were hospitalized for such injuries. A further replication underway in Denver has so far produced similarly strong results.

Saving Lives, Preventing Crime, and Saving Money

Preventing child abuse and neglect will not only save lives and reduce crime, it will also save taxpayers money. Just to maintain the existing child protective system in the Antelope Valley alone costs the federal and state governments combined over \$100 million a year. Until the number of victims of abuse or neglect can be reduced, those expenses are unavoidable. Yet that is only a small part of the overall costs to taxpayers and society as a whole from abuse and neglect. Two comprehensive studies, one done by Prevent Child Abuse America and the other commissioned by the U.S. Justice Department, have concluded that child abuse and neglect cost taxpayers and crime victims over \$80 billion a year.

Analysts from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy looked at savings to individuals as well as taxpayers from NFP. They concluded that, after subtracting costs, the program saved an average of over \$17,000 per family served, saving nearly three dollars for every dollar invested. Reductions in crime costs accounted for almost two-thirds of the savings.

Cutbacks leave 100 at-risk families without services

Los Angeles County has embraced the benefits of in-home parent coaching with a strong commitment to supporting the Nurse Family Partnership Program throughout the county, including two nurses who serve 50 at-risk families in the Antelope Valley. Jeanne Smart, Director of Los Angeles County's Nurse Family Partnership program reported that "To date, [NFP in Los Angeles County] has met or exceeded expectations for short-term outcomes [for our families served]. That indicates we are likely to meet the long-term positive outcomes as well."¹

However, there were originally four nurses for Antelope Valley, not two, and the county's plans originally called for six nurses for Antelope Valley. Because of shortfalls and cutbacks in state and federal funding, the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services has had to limit services. They are serving only a third of all the low-income first-time families in the Antelope Valley that had been targeted for services. Antelope Valley is unlikely to succeed in reaching the goal of preventing half of all abuse and neglect in at-risk families unless the state and federal government make new investments.

Law Enforcement Leaders are United

Law enforcement leaders and violence survivors are united in calling for investments to protect children from abuse and neglect, save taxpayers' dollars, and make life safer for everyone in the Antelope Valley.

A national survey of over 1,000 chiefs of police, sheriffs, and prosecutors was conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling and Research in 2002. The law enforcement leaders were asked, "Do you believe that offering parenting coaching for at-risk parents and expanding resources for other child abuse prevention and foster care programs will: significantly reduce youth crime and violence, or, have little impact on crime and violence?" Eighty-one percent of the chiefs, sheriffs and prosecutors said it would significantly reduce crime and violence.

The evidence is in. In-home parent coaching can save the Antelope Valley taxpayers well over \$100 million dollars a year while preventing half of the abuse and neglect in high-risk families and reducing crime. The time to act is now.

Chapter 1

The Hidden Toll of One Year of Abuse and Neglect

From shocking accounts on the evening news, most residents of the Antelope Valley are aware of the severe abuse and neglect some children suffer. Few people in the Antelope Valley, however, realize the breathtaking scope of the problem or the severity of the consequences. In the Antelope Valley during one year, July 2004 to June 2005, there were 2,766 confirmed incidents of child abuse.²

However, this is not the end of the tragedy. Though many abused and neglected children grow up to lead productive lives, children who live through abuse or neglect are far more likely than other children to go on to harm or kill someone else—or themselves. A year’s toll of abuse and neglect reaches well into the future, and well beyond the initial victims.

Finding the Children

In a society obsessed with statistics, data on abused and neglected children routinely misses thousands of children. Los Angeles County reports that there were 2,766 Antelope Valley children who were confirmed victims of abuse or neglect in the one year period, July 2004 to June 2005. (That figure does not include the victims of abuse and neglect for the smaller Antelope Valley communities in Kern County).³ Grim as those official numbers are, the truth is that the real

numbers of children injured and killed by abuse and neglect each year are much higher than the official counts.

According to the federal government’s The Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect conducted in 1995, the true number of children abused or neglected nationally each year is three times the officially recognized number.⁴ This includes children that social workers missed when they conducted their investigation and all the children who were never reported to authorities in the first place because no one knew about them or someone knew but was unwilling to make a report. Three times the figure of 2,766 confirmed cases would equal over 8,000 children abused and neglected in the Antelope Valley in one year. Because of the challenges in investigating reported cases of abuse or neglect, and the large number of unreported cases of abuse and neglect, it is impossible at this time to arrive at a firm number that everyone can agree on for how many children are abused and neglected each year. But there is little doubt that it is much higher than the officially reported figure.

Child Deaths from Abuse and Neglect

The number of deaths from child abuse and neglect of children, if available, would vary greatly from one year to the next in an area the size of

“I know that we can reduce the high number of children suffering abuse and neglect in the Antelope Valley by teaching at-risk parents how to better take care of their kids. It saves money and lives. It’s a proven solution. It’s just the right thing to do.”

Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca

Excerpts from the definition of abuse and neglect provided by The Children's Center of the Antelope Valley:

What is child neglect? Physical neglect is the failure to protect the child from harm or danger, failure to provide for the child's basic needs, including adequate shelter and food, failure to provide medical care, and failure to meet the educational needs of the child.

What is physical abuse? Physical abuse is any act that results in non-accidental physical injury to a child. Injuries include damage to the skin and surface tissue, damage to the brain, damage to other internal organs, and damage to the skeleton. Injuries may result from punching, kicking, belting, biting, burning or otherwise causing physical harm to the child.

What is sexual abuse? Child sexual abuse is generally defined as sexual activities involving a child and an adult or significantly older child. Sexual abuse includes both touching and non-touching offenses [including] indecent exposure, and exposing a child to pornographic material.

What is emotional abuse? Emotional abuse is psychological maltreatment which is defined as "acts that damage immediately or ultimately, the behavioral, cognitive, affective or physical functioning of a child." Harmful behaviors may include constant rejection of a child, terrorizing, failure to provide the physical or mental stimulation that a child needs to grow, exposure to domestic violence or corrupting influences such as drug abuse and criminal activity.

Antelope Valley. For the entire state of California, however, there were 140 reported deaths from abuse and neglect in 2004.⁵

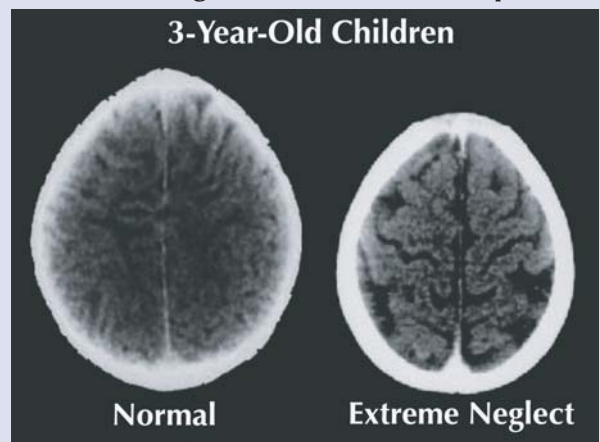
Creating Children Primed for Violence

Severe abuse and neglect, particularly when it occurs during the earliest months and years of life, can permanently injure children in ways that make them much more susceptible to violence. According to Dr. Bruce Perry, a neurobiologist and authority on brain development and children in crisis, "The systems in the human brain that allow us to form and maintain emotional relationships develop during infancy and the first years of life... With severe emotional neglect in early childhood the impact can be devastating."⁶ Perry explains that severely neglected children frequently respond with aggression and cruelty that "is often accompanied by a detached, cold lack of empathy."⁷ Research shows that neglect is as likely as physical abuse to lead to future criminal behavior when a child reaches adulthood.⁸ Physical abuse can cause post-traumatic stress disorders in children. Even when nothing is threatening them, abused children's brains can become "stuck" in high alert with very high resting heart rates and high levels of stress hormones in their blood. These children are predisposed to interpret others' actions as threatening, and are quick to respond impulsively and aggressively in their own defense.⁹ Perry warns, "The most dangerous children are

created by a malignant combination of experiences. Developmental neglect and traumatic stress during childhood create violent, remorseless children."¹⁰

Of growing concern is the role head injuries play in violent behavior, particularly injuries to the frontal or temporal lobes of the brain. The frontal lobes are the seat of the capacities for planning and self-regulation as well as abstract thinking and judgment, while the temporal lobes contain the limbic system that regulates aggression, impulsiveness, and the more primitive emotions

Effect of Neglect on Brain Development



These images are from studies conducted by a team of researchers from the ChildTrauma Academy in Houston led by Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.

Permission for reproduction granted by B. Perry, 2003

such as jealousy and rage.¹¹ A baby or toddler’s head is especially vulnerable to rough shaking or blows to the head that can cause shearing and microscopic lesions throughout the brain during this time of critical and rapid development. Early head injuries are often cumulative from repeated incidents of abuse and usually go undetected, except in the most extreme cases, because they leave no external marks. The damage done may not manifest itself until much later as the brain matures.¹²

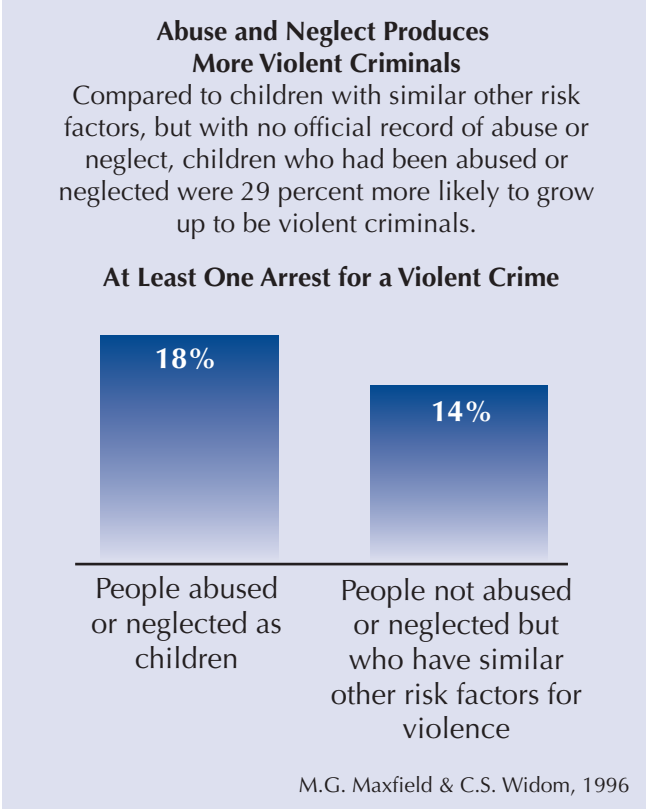
A number of studies on adolescents and adults link head injuries to recurring aggression and violence. Studies done on death row inmates by Dr. Dorothy Lewis and her colleagues show that a high percentage of them have a history of serious head injury.¹³ Many researchers are concluding that as many as 30 to 50 percent of individuals with a criminal history may have sustained injuries to their frontal or temporal lobes.¹⁴

Child Abuse and Neglect Produces Over 100 Additional Violent Criminals Among Antelope Valley Residents Each Year

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.¹⁵ Many of these individuals, however, also had other risk factors for crime in their lives, such as poverty or growing up in high-crime neighborhoods.

In an effort to isolate the specific impact of abuse and neglect by controlling for other factors, Dr. Cathy Spatz Widom, a professor of psychology at the New Jersey Medical School, identified 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 doubles the odds that a child will commit a crime as a juvenile.¹⁶

As for violent crime, Widom found that 18 in 100 of the abused or neglected youth went on to be



arrested for a violent crime either as juveniles or as adults, compared to 14 in 100 of similar individuals who shared the same other advantages and disadvantages as these children but who had not been abused or neglected as children – a nearly 30 percent difference.¹⁷

Applying Widom’s figure of four more violent criminals per hundred abused and neglected children to the 2,776 confirmed cases in Antelope Valley of abuse and neglect in July 2004 to June 2005 produces a figure of approximately 111 additional individuals who 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, the abuse or neglect will result in 111 additional violent criminals and all the violent crimes those individuals commit (see the Appendix for a more detailed discussion of this projection).

Widom cautions that her research does not indicate whether the same relationship would hold for unconfirmed cases of abuse or neglect, since those children may not have been as seriously harmed as the individuals whose abuse or neglect was confirmed. As previously discussed, it is estimated that there are three times as many actual

cases of abuse and neglect as the number of officially confirmed cases. Even if only a small percentage of these children go on to become violent criminals who otherwise would not have, the 111 figure will prove to be a significant underestimate of the number of additional violent criminals in the Antelope Valley resulting from the children who were abused and neglected in the one year, July 2004 to June 2005. And each year more victims of child abuse and neglect, and more future criminals, are added to the total.

What Does This Mean for the Most Serious Criminals?

Children who are abused and neglected are not only more likely than other children to commit crimes as adults, but they are also more likely than other criminals to be arrested at a younger age. This is a well-known risk factor that indicates these children might become both more serious and more chronic offenders, committing more crimes over their lifetimes.¹⁸

For example, a study done in Sacramento County, Calif. showed that children between the ages of nine and 12 reported to have been abused or neglected were 67 times more likely to be arrested than other children in that age group. Six percent of those who had been abused or neglected had already been arrested by age 12, compared to less than one-tenth of one percent of other children in that age group.¹⁹

In their Rochester Youth Development study, Carolyn Smith and Terence Thornberry tracked 1,000 seventh- and eighth-grade students from Rochester, N.Y. up to age 22. They found that the more frequent and severe the maltreatment, the more likely the child was to commit more violent acts of delinquency.²⁰

Perhaps most disturbing, researchers who have extensively interviewed extremely violent offenders are convinced that severe abuse or neglect was a defining influence in almost all of these violent offenders' lives.²¹ In addition to documenting the link between head injuries and extreme violence,²² Dorothy Lewis and Jonathan Pincus interviewed 14 of the 37 juveniles facing death sentences in 1986 and 1987. They found that only one of those interviewed had not suffered childhood family violence and severe physical abuse.²³ John Douglas, one of the experts who helped the FBI

develop violent criminal profiles, reached similar conclusions from his studies of very violent criminals.²⁴ In 2004, Lancaster and Palmdale combined had 25 murders according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report.²⁵

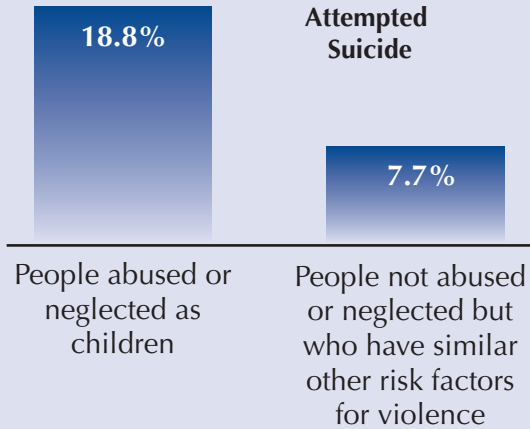
Abuse and neglect was apparently part of the history of at least two of Southern California's most notorious serial killers. William Bonin, nicknamed the "Freeway Killer," may have killed as many as 20 young men and boys in the 1980's. He had an alcoholic father and was frequently left in the care of his grandfather, a convicted child molester.²⁶ Richard Ramirez, known as the "Night Stalker," was convicted in 1989 of 13 murders and 11 sexual assaults. As an adolescent, he often spent time with an extremely violent older cousin. The cousin bragged of torturing and mutilating Vietnamese combatants during the Vietnam war and he showed Richard photographs to confirm his stories. The cousin shot his wife in the face, killing her, and Richard was reportedly next to the woman when this happened.²⁷

Child Abuse and Neglect Can Lead to Lost Employment, Failed Marriages, and Suicide

It is important to stress that most abused or neglected children never become involved in violent crime. While many grow up to lead productive lives, research by Widom and others shows that abuse and neglect often lead to other serious consequences for its victims. For example, individuals not abused or neglected as children were 40 percent more likely to be employed and 50 percent more likely to have stable marriages than similar individuals who were abused or neglected.²⁸ Because of the recession that Antelope Valley suffered through in the late 1990's, many in the community are familiar with the social consequences of increased unemployment and disrupted families. Antelope Valley's unemployment rates (6.7 percent for Lancaster and 5.8 percent for Palmdale) are still higher than the average for Los Angeles County as a whole (4.9 percent).²⁹ Certainly people become unemployed or divorced for many reasons other than prior abuse or neglect. It is important, however, to note that many people who have been abused or neglected have trouble maintaining stable families and employment, even during the best of times.

Abuse and Neglect Lead to More Suicide Attempts

Compared to children with similar other risk factors, but with no official record of abuse or neglect, children who had been abused or neglected were more than twice as likely to attempt suicide later in life.



C.S. Widom, 2000

Victims of child abuse or neglect, as they grow older, are also two and a half times more likely than other children to attempt suicide. Widom's research indicates that 18.8 percent of abused or neglected children later attempted suicide, compared to 7.7 percent of children with similar risk factors but who had not been abused or neglected.³⁰ This means that over 300 additional Antelope Valley residents who were the victims of abuse and neglect in the one year, July 2004 to June 2005, will ultimately attempt suicide (see Appendix A). Although the number of these abused or neglected individuals who will succeed in killing themselves cannot be reliably estimated, a large number undoubtedly will succeed.³¹ Failing to reduce abuse and neglect would be especially tragic for the Antelope Valley, because it is already suffering from the second highest rate of suicides among eight different areas in Los Angeles County.³²

A Cycle of Violence

Research shows that all too often negative behaviors and consequences, violent or otherwise, are passed on to the next generation, and the cycle continues. One rigorous study showed that poor mothers who had been severely physically abused as children were 13 times more likely to abuse their children than mothers who had emotionally supportive parents.³³

Chapter 2

Research Shows Abuse and Neglect Can Be Prevented

Waiting to act against abuse and neglect until after it occurs will always be too late, and it may be fatal. Child protective services and available foster care families are essential services that can help protect children who have already been identified as abused or neglected.

Even when children are identified as victims and receive services, healing their physical and emotional injuries is difficult. And some injuries can never be undone. For instance, early neglect can stunt brain development and prenatal exposure to alcohol can cause mental retardation. For many children, treatment is too frequently limited in its duration and effectiveness.

As a child grows older, it becomes more difficult to undo damage and is more expensive to treat the consequences of abuse and neglect. Even more troublesome is the plight of the thousands of Antelope Valley children who receive no treatment at all because they fall through the cracks and never come to the attention of child protection services. As long as these “lost” children remain unidentified, there will be few opportunities to repair the damage done to them or to protect communities from the risk that they might become future criminals. For these “lost” children, prevention is probably their only hope.³⁴

Research shows there are rigorously tested solutions that can significantly reduce child abuse and neglect in high-risk families. Programs beginning in the earliest months and years to help families develop parenting skills and change problem behaviors have proven effective in preventing child abuse and neglect. To protect vulnerable children—and all others—these

programs must be made available to all families who need them before abuse or neglect takes place.

The Nurse Family Partnership Program Shows What In-Home Parent Coaching Can Accomplish

Beginning during pregnancy, individualized in-home coaching for at-risk parents of newborns can dramatically reduce abuse and neglect. Who are those “at-risk” parents? While there are parents from all income levels and walks of life who abuse and neglect their children, some families face more challenges than others.

Nationally, almost half of the families referred to child protective services for abuse or neglect are receiving welfare at the time and more than half of all families have received assistance in the past.³⁵ In a study conducted in Illinois, 40 percent of the children placed into foster care came from families currently receiving welfare (while only 15 percent of all families in Illinois were on welfare at the time) and another 20 percent of children in foster care were from families that had recently received welfare.³⁶

Failing to graduate from high school is also a risk factor. Compared to parents with a high school degree, those without a degree are almost five times more likely to be officially reported for abuse or neglect.³⁷ And risk factors such as being young parents can pile up. Single mothers without a high school diploma are 10 times more likely to be officially reported for abusing or neglecting their children than women in two-parent families with more education.³⁸



The Nurse Family Partnership cut abuse & neglect and arrests by half among the at-risk kids it served.

Abuse & neglect: -48%
Arrests: -59%

These results are for a randomized control trial of children and mothers who were in NFP. The children were followed-up until age 15. Nurse Family Partnership Website, 2006.

Groundbreaking research initially conducted in Elmira, N.Y. showed that parent coaching in the homes of new at-risk young parents can be extraordinarily effective in reducing child abuse and neglect when provided with enough quality

and frequency. The Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) randomly assigned half of a group of single, poor, first-time young mothers to receive visits by carefully trained nurses. The nurses provided coaching in parenting skills and other advice and support. Starting in 1978, the women in the program received an average of nine home visits during their pregnancy and 23 visits from birth to their child's second birthday. 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.³⁹

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.⁴⁰

A replication study of NFP, also using a rigorous random assignment design, began in 1990 in Memphis. Though the program was not designed

Nurse Family Partnership in Memphis:

Hospitalizations for which injuries or ingestions were detected

Separate admissions of children whose mothers were visited by nurses prenatally up to age 2 (N=228)		Separate admissions of children whose mothers were not visited by nurses (N= 515)	
Diagnosis	Days in hosp.	Diagnosis	Days in hosp.
Burns	2	Head trauma	1
Coin Ingestion	1	Fractured fibula/congenital syphilis	12
Ingestion of iron medication	4	Strangulated hernia w delay in seeking care/burns	15
		Bilateral subdural hematoma	19
		Fractured skull	5
		Bilateral subdural hematoma/aseptic meningitis, 2 nd hospitalization	4
		Fractured skull	3
		Coin ingestion	2
		Child abuse/neglect suspected	2
		Fractured tibia	2
		Burns (2 nd and 3 rd degree to face/neck)	5
		Burns (2 nd and 3 rd degree to bilateral leg)	4
		Gastroenteritis/head trauma	3
		Burns (splinting/grafting) 2 nd hospitalization	6
		Finger injury/osteomyelitis	6
Total days hospitalized	7	Total days hospitalized	89

to be ongoing, the mothers and children served are still being followed. There is no data available yet on the children's arrest records, and the official abuse and neglect records are not adequate to directly measure whether the children were maltreated.⁴¹ Compared to children in the program, however, the children whose parents did not receive the parent coaching and family support were more likely to be hospitalized for injuries or ingestions and spent five times more days in the hospital for those causes. While children can certainly be injured without being abused or neglected, such extreme differences reinforce the findings of the earlier study in Elmira, N.Y. Moreover, in Memphis, hospitalized children who were not in the program sustained more serious injuries. For example, while seven of the 515 children in the group that did not receive parent coaching had fractures and/or head trauma requiring hospitalizations, none of the 228 children in the program were hospitalized for fractures or head trauma.⁴² Finally, another replication underway in Denver is also generating strong positive results for the children.⁴³

There were many other benefits. For example, the children in the Elmira, N.Y. program were brought before local courts as juveniles in need of supervision for incorrigible behavior 90 percent less often than the children not in the program.⁴⁴ The mothers receiving parent coaching in Elmira also averaged 21 percent fewer births 15 years after delivery of their first child and one-third fewer months on welfare than the mothers not receiving

coaching.⁴⁵

The Nurse Family Partnership in the Antelope Valley

Los Angeles County began serving the Antelope Valley with a Nurse Family Partnership program in 1997. The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services surveyed the need for the program and based on the findings applied for funding from the state of California to use Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to pay for six nurses to serve 150 at-risk pregnant young women in the Antelope Valley. In 1997, the county received funds to provide four nurses for the Antelope Valley, but funding has since been cut back. Currently, there are only two nurses serving 50 families.⁴⁶

Continuous Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

The Nurse Family Partnership has been very scientific about how it approaches expanding services to new areas. Instead of just assuming new sites are implementing the program as it was designed, NFP carefully collects a wealth of data at each site to determine whether the program is being implemented as designed and whether it is gaining results comparable to other programs throughout the country. This continuous improvement process ensures that the best research is being turned into best practices on the ground in each site, and that new lessons learned

Nurse Family Partnership in the Antelope Valley

The Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) Program uses Public Health Nurses to provide intensive home visitation case management and referral services to young, first-time pregnant and parenting teens/women in Los Angeles County who are living in poverty. The goals of NFP are: fostering healthier pregnancies, improving the health and development of children, and encouraging family self-sufficiency. Home visits are initiated by nurses before the 28th week of mother's pregnancy, and continue until the child reaches his/her second birthday. Nurse home visitors follow tested protocols focusing on six areas including personal health, building support networks, and understanding how to access health and social service programs in the community. The program's evaluation staff regularly monitor data related to the child and mother's health and the child's development.

Currently, the Los Angeles County's NFP program consists of just 20 nurses, and 8 other staff for the whole county. As noted, only two of those nurses serve Antelope Valley, and NFP is working on securing grants for one additional nurse in Antelope Valley who will be working closely with a program serving African American first-time pregnant mothers.

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Health Services' Nurse Family Partnership Program

Los Angeles Nurse Family Partnership Outcomes

Data is current as of March 31, 2006

Population Served

- 1,350 infants born to NFP mothers
- Median age of mothers: 17
- 89% unmarried
- 63% receiving Medicaid, 85% receiving WIC

Outcomes for NFP Mothers

Smoking: 26 percent reduction in the number of women smoking during pregnancy.

Education: By 24 months infant age, of those mothers who entered the program without a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED):

- 21 percent continued to work toward their diploma or GED
- 38 percent had earned their diploma/GED
- 14 percent were pursuing education beyond high school.

Employment: Between program intake and infant age 24 months:

- For those 18 years or older, workforce participation increased from 23 percent to 33 percent.

Outcomes for NFP Babies

- Birth Outcomes: The NFP enrolls women who are at higher risk for poor birth outcomes than the general population.
- 8.3 percent of NFP babies were premature, which is better than the overall California rate of 10.5 percent (2003).
- 6.6 percent of NFP babies born to at-risk mothers were low birth weight, equal to the overall California rate of 6.6 percent (2003).

Immunizations: Across a range of immunizations, the results for NFP children were far better than the average state level for immunizations.

Language Development: The NFP national goal is to have less than 25 percent of children served by NFP scoring low on language development (falling below the 10th percentile on a common test of early language abilities). Children served by NFP in Los Angeles County more than met that goal - only 13 percent of the children scored low for language development.

ER visits: 93% of children had one or no visits to the ER by age 24 months, with the majority of those visits (78%) due to illness rather than injury or ingestion – those results are similar to the positive results reported in the NFP trial in Memphis. Protecting children from injury is an important part of NFP teaching.

Source: Los Angeles County Nurse Family Partnership

from around the country will be quickly adopted throughout the NFP system.

Jeanne Smart, Director of Los Angeles County's Nurse Family Partnership program explained that "To date, [NFP in Los Angeles County] has met or exceeded expectations for short-term outcomes.

That indicates we are likely to meet the long-term positive outcomes as well."⁴⁷

Other in-home parent coaching programs in the Antelope Valley

Early Head Start provides pregnant mothers

with home visitation services in Palmdale.⁴⁸ The Children’s Center of Antelope Valley in Palmdale and Lancaster provides in-home parent coaching as part of its Even Start (adult literacy) program. The Children’s Center trains its coaches using the Parents As Teachers (PAT) curriculum. Because in-home parent coaching is just one element of these programs, they will not be discussed in detail here. Evidence shows, however, that Early Head Start can be effective across a range of outcomes, including improving children’s behavior,⁴⁹ and the PAT program has also shown it can be effective in improving a number of child outcomes, particularly when serving at-risk parents.⁵⁰

The real challenge is funding

In 1997, the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services determined that there were at least 150 at-risk new mothers in Antelope Valley who

should be receiving services through the Nurse Family Partnership program. One important sign that services are needed is that, in 2001, Antelope Valley had the highest rate of infant mortality of any area in the county. Antelope Valley’s rate was 9.4 per 1,000 live births, almost twice as high as the county average of 5.4 per 1,000.⁵¹ Yet there are currently only two nurses funded for Antelope Valley serving 50 families, or one third as many nurses as are needed.⁵²

Relying on the state to redirect TANF funds for NFP is an unreliable method to sustain adequate, quality services for at-risk families in Antelope Valley. The Los Angeles County NFP program is submitting grant proposals for new funding to maintain the program. But stable federal and state funding will be needed if NFP is going to be able to cut in half abuse and neglect among at-risk Antelope Valley families.

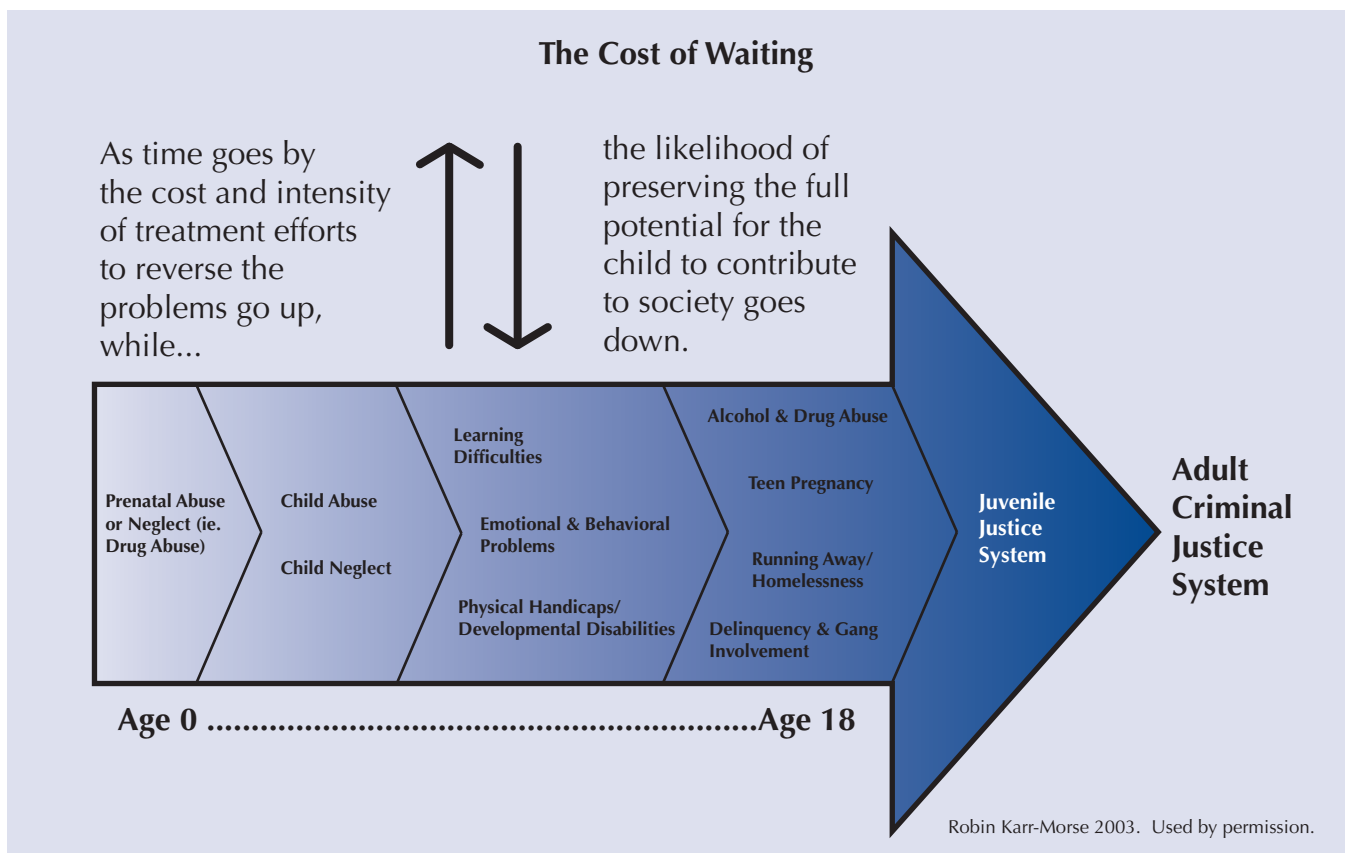
Chapter 3

Saving Money While Protecting Kids and Preventing Crime

Stopping child abuse and neglect before children are hurt is not only the right thing to do, it is also the fiscally sound thing to do. 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.⁵³ Prevent Child Abuse America found that abuse

and neglect costs Americans \$94 billion a year – and that two-thirds of that cost is due to increased crime costs.⁵⁴ When the Children's Safety Network broke down the costs for each state, it found that the share of abuse and neglect costs for California amounts to over \$18 billion every year.⁵⁵

The direct taxpayer costs alone of paying for child abuse and neglect in California are huge. According to the Urban Institute, in fiscal year 2002 the federal and state governments each paid about half of the costs, with the total cost to tax-



payers reaching more than \$4 billion.⁵⁶ The direct child protective costs do not include later indirect costs borne by taxpayers. These include educational, welfare, medical, and criminal justice costs when many of the abused or neglected children fail to become productive adults.

How much does abuse and neglect cost Antelope Valley? Available data shows that 2.8 percent of all confirmed abuse and neglect cases in California took place in Antelope Valley.⁵⁷ Multiplying the Urban Institute's \$4 billion cost of abuse and neglect in California by the 2.8 percent figure for just Antelope Valley produces a cost estimate of more than \$100 million for the valley alone.⁵⁸

By waiting to pay for services until the problems cannot be avoided, Antelope Valley taxpayers are paying huge sums to cover the costs of holding children back in school, providing special education services, paying for welfare, and especially paying for arresting and imprisoning criminals. Not only is this an unbalanced investment strategy, it ignores the opportunity to act when the interventions are less expensive and more likely to succeed.

In-home Parent Coaching Can Save Money

Studies of NFP consistently show it is a wise investment.⁵⁹ In one of the most recent studies,

Quality In-home Parent Coaching Saves Money

Taxpayers saved over \$3 for every \$1 invested in the Nurse Family Partnership program.



For every \$1
invested



Over \$3 was
saved

Washington State Institute for Public Policy

analysts from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy looked at savings to individuals as well as taxpayers from the NFP programs in Elmira, Memphis and Denver. They concluded that, after subtracting costs, the program saved an average of over \$17,000 per family served, saving nearly three dollars for every dollar invested. Reductions in crime costs accounted for almost two-thirds of the savings.⁶⁰

With such potential savings, California and the federal government should seize the opportunity to ensure that Los Angeles County's in-home parent coaching programs reach their full potential and are offered to all at-risk new parents in Antelope Valley.

Chapter 4

From the Front Lines of the Battle Against Crime: A Call to Action

The 355 police chiefs, sheriffs, and prosecutors who are members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *California* and their more than 3,000 colleagues throughout the United States are determined to put dangerous criminals behind bars. They also are committed to keeping kids from becoming criminals in the first place.

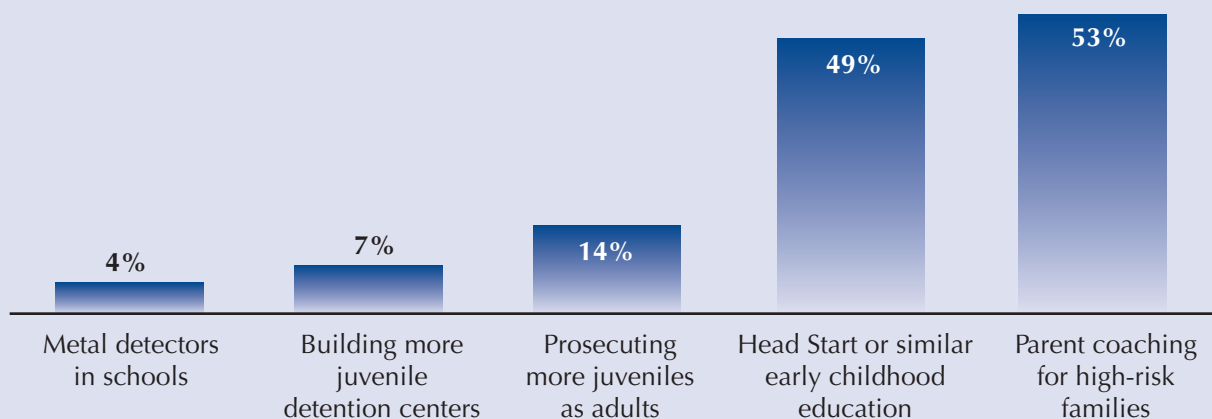
The good news is that research shows how to prevent child abuse and neglect before children are hurt and before those children can go on to hurt others. Solid research shows that high quality in-home parent coaching services beginning prenatally can prevent nearly half of all cases of abuse or neglect among at-risk children. They can save children's lives now while helping to prevent over 100 children a year in Antelope Valley from growing up to be violent criminals. The programs

will prevent murders and suicides in Antelope Valley. All this can be accomplished, while saving taxpayers tens of millions of dollars each year.

Government's most fundamental responsibility is to protect its citizens. When more than 1,000 children nationwide are dying each year from abuse and neglect and tens of thousands more are growing up to be violent criminals as a result of abuse or neglect, federal, state, and local governments clearly are not doing enough. Antelope Valley's in-home parent coaching efforts are still far from reaching their goals. It is time that elected leaders at the state and federal levels invest in a comprehensive, research-driven plan to eliminate half of all abuse and neglect in high-risk families by investing in in-home parent coaching.

Police Chiefs Rate Parent Coaching and Pre-Kindergarten Programs as Effective Crime Prevention

Police Chiefs nationwide were asked: "Please rate the following strategies on a scale of 1 to 5 on their value as a crime prevention tool." This chart shows the percentage for each strategy that received a "1" rating by the Police Chiefs.



S. Keeter & S. Mastrofski, 2000

Appendix

Technical Notes on Estimating the Number of Violent Criminals, Murderers, and Those Who Attempt Suicide Who Will Emerge from the Children Abused and Neglected in July 2004 to June 2005

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 4 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.

The four-percentage point difference can be applied to the number of substantiated cases of abuse and neglect in Antelope Valley from July 2004 to June 2005—2,766 (which is a conservative count of the number of children abused and neglected every year in Antelope Valley). Four percentage points multiplied by that number results in an estimate of 111 additional individuals who will be arrested at least once for violence at some time in their life after having been abused and neglected in the one year [$2,766 \times .04 = 111$]. Other research cited in this report, however, indicates that each year there are three times as many children who were victims of abuse or neglect that were not confirmed, or over 2,000 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 111 figure is a significant underestimation of the number of additional violent criminals arising out of the children who were abused and neglected in one year from July 2004 to June 2005.

In a national version of this report, FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS projected that there will be at least 250 additional individuals arrested for homicide which would not take place if not for that abuse and neglect these children suffered in 2001 (see www.fightcrime.org). Given the smaller numbers for Antelope Valley, however, this report does not attempt to make such projections. The research is clear though: if Antelope Valley can significantly reduce abuse and neglect now, it will be preventing many murders in the future.

When Widom later looked at attempted suicides, she determined that 18.8 percent of children with substantiated cases of abuse or neglect went on to attempt suicide at some point in their life, whereas 7.7 percent of the children without abuse or neglect later attempted suicide. The difference is a dramatic 11.1 percentage points. Applying that 11.1 percentage point difference to the number of confirmed cases of abuse or neglect in Antelope Valley from July 2004 to June 2005 produces over 300 additional suicide attempts that presumably would not happen if not for the lingering suffering from the abuse and neglect suffered in that one year [$2,766 \times .111 = 307$].

Endnotes

- ¹ Jeanne Smart, Director, Nurse Family Partnership Program, Los Angeles Department of Health Services, personal communication, June 27, 2006.
- Endnotes:
- ² Rick Bryant, Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services, Palmdale office, personal communication, June 19, 2006. This data is from the Lancaster and Palmdale offices, and does not include children in Antelope Valley who are outside Los Angeles County.
- ³ Rick Bryant, Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services, Palmdale office, personal communication, June 19, 2006.
- ⁴ 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>. According to a discussion published by the Child Welfare League of America, "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." Child Welfare League of America. (2002). Child protection frequently asked questions. Retrieved from <http://www.cwla.org/programs/childprotection>
- ⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau. (2005). Child maltreatment 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cmreports.htm>
- ⁶ Perry, B. D. (2002). Childhood experience and the expression of genetic potential: What childhood neglect tells us about nature and nurture. *Brain and mind*, 3, 79-100.
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- ¹⁴ D. Golden, C. J., Jackson, M. I., Peterson-Rohne, A., & Gontkovsky, S. T. (1996). Neuropsychological correlates of violence and aggression: A review of the clinical literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 1, 3-25. For a discussion of the various research on the links between head injuries and violence, see: Karr-Morse, R., & Wiley, M. S. (1997). *Ghost from the nursery: Tracing the roots of violence*. New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press.
- ¹⁵ Zingraff, M. T., Leiter, J., Johnsen, M. C., & Myers, K. A. (1994). The mediating effect of good school performance on the maltreatment-delinquency relationship. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 31(1), 62-91.
- ¹⁶ Widom, C. S. (2000). Childhood victimization: Early adversity, later psychopathology. Retrieved from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service Web site: www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/jr000242b.pdf
- ¹⁷ Maxfield, M.G., & Widom, C.S. (1996). The cycle of violence: Revisited 6 years later. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 150, 390-395.
- ¹⁸ Hawkins, J. D., Herrenkohl, T., Farrington, D. P., Brewer, D., Catalano, R. F., & Harachi, T. W. (1998). A review of predictors of youth violence. In R. Loeber & D. Farrington (Eds.), *Serious and violent juvenile offenders: Risk factors and successful interventions* (pp. 106-146). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
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- ²¹ One of these researchers, Dr. Lonnie Athens, interviewed a large number of violent criminals and concluded that children who became seriously violent criminals were almost always trained to be violent by violent individuals in their lives. For a profile on Athens, see: Rhodes, R. (1999). *Why they kill*. New York: Randomhouse. See the rest of the text for additional examples.
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- ²⁴ Douglas, J., & Olshaker, M. (1999). *The anatomy of motive*. New York: Scribner.
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later psychopathology. Retrieved from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service Web site: www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/jr000242b.pdf

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³² The only other Service Provider Area (SPA) that has a greater suicide rate is the South Bay which includes the cities of Hawthorne, Redondo Beach, Long Beach, Torrance, Rolling Hills, and Carson. The data on suicides in this undated publication is from 2001. Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. (nd). Key Indicators of Health by Service Planning Area. Retrieved on June 23, 2006 at: <http://www.lapublichealth.org/wwwfiles/ph/hae/ha/key-health.pdf>

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⁴⁰ 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>

⁴¹ The rate of state-verified cases of child abuse and neglect among low-income first-born children in Memphis was too low to serve as a reliable outcome in this setting. Olds, D. L., Henderson, C., & Eckenrode, J. (2002). Preventing child abuse and neglect with prenatal and infancy home visiting by nurses. In K. Browne, H. Hanks, P.

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⁵¹ The data on infant mortality in this undated publication is from 2001. Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. (nd). Key Indicators of Health by Service Planning Area. Retrieved on June 23, 2006 at: <http://www.lapublichealth.org/wwwfiles/ph/hae/ha/key-health.pdf>

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⁵³ Miller, T., Cohen, M., & Weirsema, B. (1998). Cost of child abuse and neglect, 1996. Landover, MD: Children's Safety Network Economics and Insurance Resource Center, National Public Services Research Institute. The figure includes an accounting for lost quality of life.

⁵⁴ 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/

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⁵⁵ The \$18 billion figure is from the Children's Safety Network, National Economics and Insurance Resource Center. (2000). Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in California. Retrieved on June 26, 2006 from <http://www.edarc.org/pubs/can/ca-can.htm>

⁵⁶ The exact figure is \$4,328,207,000 for 2004. The federal figure is \$1,888,513,000, the state figure is 1,422,736,000, and the local figure is 1,046,958,000. Scarcella, C., Bess, R., Zielewski, E., Geen, R. (May 2006). The Cost of Protecting Vulnerable Children V: Assessing the New Federalism. The Urban Institute. Retrieved on July 14, 2006 at:

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311314_vulnerable_children.pdf

⁵⁷ There were 2,766 confirmed cases of abuse and neglect in Antelope Valley in the year July 2004 to June 2005. Dividing that number by the 98,201 figure for confirmed cases of abuse or neglect in California in 2004 yields a figure of 2.8 percent. Rick Bryant, Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services, Palmdale office, personal communication, June 19, 2006; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau. (2005). Child maltreatment 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cmreports.htm>

⁵⁸ The 2.8 percent figure is derived above. Applying that to the \$4,328,000,000 figure for the cost to taxpayers in California produces a figure of \$121,184,000 for the residents of Antelope Valley who reside in LA County. Scarcella, C.A., Bess, R., Zielewski, E.H., Warner, L., Geen, R. (n.d.). Scarcella, C., Bess, R., Zielewski, E., Geen, R. (May 2006). The Cost of Protecting Vulnerable Children V: Assessing the New Federalism. The Urban Institute. Retrieved on July 14, 2006 at:

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⁵⁹ See for example a study soon to be released by the Minneapolis Federal Reserve: Burr, J., Grunewald, R. (February 2006). Lessons learned: A review of early childhood development studies. Draft. Retrieved on June 29, 2006 from

<http://www.minneapolisfed.org/research/studies/earlychild/index.cfm>. Grunewald confirmed that the figures on NFP's cost benefit results will not change when they finalize this report. The current analysis is based on: Karoly, L.A., Greenwood, P.W., Everingham, S.S., Houbé, J., Kilburn, M.R., Rydell, C.P., Sanders, M., & Chiesa, J. (1998). Investing in our children: What we know and don't know about the costs and benefits of early childhood interventions [Online]. Retrieved from the RAND website: <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR898/>.

Grunewald's update of the RAND analysis concluded that NFP saved an average \$28,000 per family after subtracting costs, saving five dollars for every dollar invested. Because the Washington State analysis includes Memphis and Denver data, and therefore includes the somewhat lower savings experienced by the program following welfare reform, David Olds, the primary researcher of the Nurse Family Partnership program, has recently chosen to begin presenting the Washington State analysis as the most reliable current estimate of NFP savings, and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids follows his approach.

⁶⁰ Aos, S. (2004, September). Benefits and costs of prevention and early intervention programs for youth. Olympia, W.A.: Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Also available online, www.wsipp.wa.gov





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