

New Hope for Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect in Wyoming:

Proven solutions to save lives and prevent crime

This brief is based on a national report by FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS, an anti crime group of over 3,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, victims of violence, and youth violence experts nationwide, including more than 35 members in Wyoming. The national report and citations for this brief are available at www.fightcrime.org.

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 hundreds of Wyoming children from terror, agony, and despair and will also save lives. Sharply reducing abuse and neglect in Wyoming will save tens of millions of dollars, while greatly reducing the number of children who would otherwise grow up to become criminals.

The Annual Toll: 678 Wyoming Children Abused or Neglected in 2004

In 2004 in Wyoming, there were 678 officially recognized victims of child abuse or neglect and 284 children removed from their homes. From 1998 through 2004, there were 21 confirmed deaths from abuse or neglect. Even those tragic numbers, however, may mask the real toll of child abuse and neglect in Wyoming. 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 Wyoming children abused, neglected or even killed is likely to be much higher than the officially reported cases.

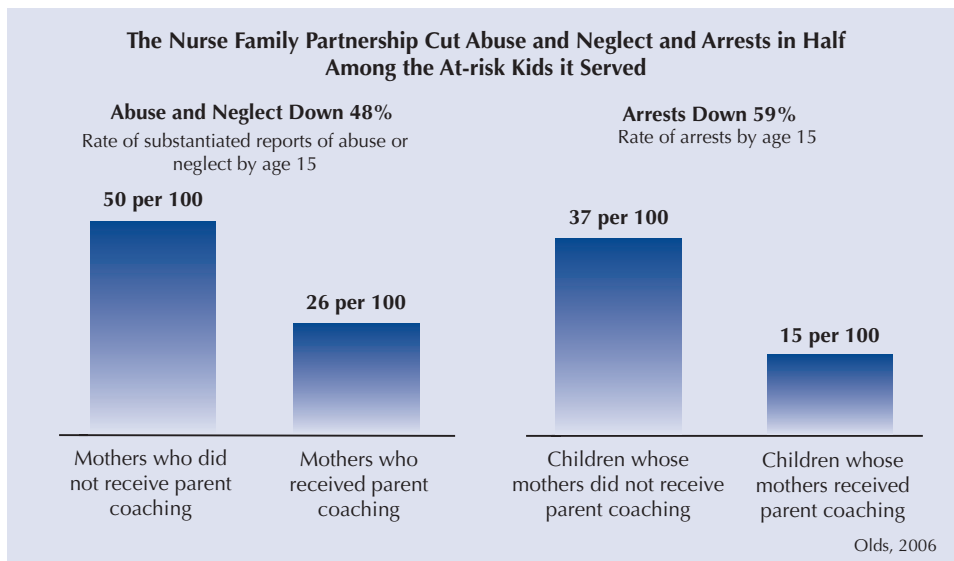
The Future Toll: More Criminals

While most victimized children never become chronic 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 crimes. Research by Dr. Cathy Spatz Widom found that children who were abused and neglected had almost twice the odds of being arrested as a juvenile.

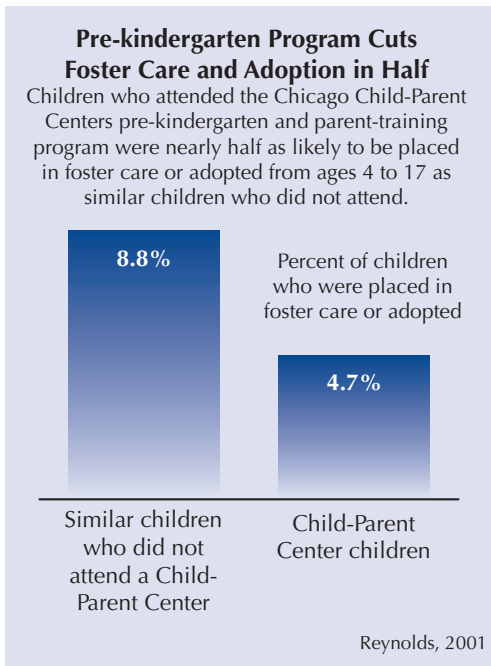
Half of Abuse and Neglect in High-risk Families Can Be Prevented

Failure to invest now in programs proven to prevent child abuse and neglect puts everyone in Wyoming at greater risk of becoming a victim of crime. The more than 35 Wyoming police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and crime victims 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. Presently, NFP operates one site serving all Wyoming counties.



- **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.



were in foster care. In 2004, \$27 million was spent on preventing or treating abuse or neglect in Wyoming, including \$18 million in state 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).

- **Ensure that pregnant women who are addicted have access to drug and alcohol treatment programs.** Maternal drug use during pregnancy can lead to brain damage in the child. Further, fetal alcohol syndrome is the leading cause of preventable mental retardation. The interaction of neurological damage at birth with deficient parenting multiplies the risk of criminality later in life. Research shows that an effective drug and alcohol treatment program for pregnant women in Baltimore dramatically reduced the number of babies who were born prematurely and at-risk for permanent brain damage that is associated with later criminality.

Law Enforcement Leaders are United
 Wyoming law enforcement leaders are calling for greater investments to protect children from abuse and neglect, save taxpayers’ dollars, and make all Wyomingites safer. This call has been endorsed by the Western States Sheriffs’ Association, and the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs & Chiefs of Police. The evidence is in. We can save millions of dollars in Wyoming while preventing most abuse and neglect in high-risk families. The time to act is now.

- **Provide mental health services for depressed or mentally ill parents.** People who grew up with a household member who was depressed, mentally ill, or who attempted suicide were two times more likely to have been physically abused than those who did not grow up in such a household. Just like other ill parents, depressed or mentally ill parents can effectively raise children if they receive treatment. Yet studies show only 25 percent of individuals nationally who suffer from depression receive adequate care for their illness.

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

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 more than 1,000 Wyoming children

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 • Buffett Early Childhood Fund • The Annie E. Casey Foundation • Marguerite Casey Foundation • Naomi & Nehemiah Cohen Foundation • Freddie Mac Foundation • JEHT Foundation • The Joyce Foundation • The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation • The David and Lucile Packard Foundation • The William Penn Foundation • The Pew Charitable Trusts - Advancing Quality Pre-K for All
 Source citation and other research are available at www.fightcrime.org.

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS, 1212 New York Ave., NW, Ste 300, Washington, D.C., 20005, 202-776-0027.

Endnotes:

The Annual Toll: 678 Children Abused or Neglected in 2004

Annual official figures for: children maltreated, children removed from their homes, and confirmed deaths:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau. (2006). *Child maltreatment 1998 through 2004*. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.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: More Criminals

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

This is based on quotes taken from Bruce Perry, as reported on page 4, paragraph 3 of the full report, *New hope for Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect*, which can be found at <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/CANreport.pdf>. 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

Additional criminals:

Widom, C. S. (January 2000). *Childhood victimization: Early adversity, later psychopathology*. *National Institute of Justice Journal*, pp. 2-9.

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.

Fetal alcohol syndrome and mental retardation:

Bradley, A. (2001). *Long-chain alcohol found to block mechanism of fetal alcohol syndrome: Paradoxical finding raises hope for pharmaceutical intervention*. Retrieved from the National Institute of Health Web site: <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/press/2001/longchain.htm>

Neurological damage at birth and later criminality:

Olds, D., Henderson, C., & Eckenrode, J. (2002). *Preventing child abuse and neglect with prenatal and infancy home visiting by nurses*. In K. Browne, H. Hanks, P. Stratton, & C. Hamilton (Eds.), *Early prediction and prevention of child abuse: A handbook*. London: John Wiley & Sons. For a review of the literature on pregnancy and delivery complications, see: 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; Moffitt, T. E. (1993). *Adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent antisocial behavior: A developmental taxonomy*. *Psychological Review*, 100(4), 674-701. Moffitt writes, "There is good evidence that children who ultimately become persistently antisocial do suffer from deficits in neuropsychological abilities." This is important because, while many males become delinquent during adolescence then settle down, these children are more persistently anti-social and criminal during their life course, and "the most persistent 5% or 6% of offenders are responsible for about 50% of known crimes." Moffitt's work has been further supported by other research, such as: Piquero, A. (2001). *Testing Moffitt's neuropsychological variation hypothesis for the prediction of life-course persistent offending*. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 7, 193-215; Tibbetts, S. G., & Piquero, A. R. (1999). *The influence of gender, low birth weight, and disadvantaged environment in predicting early onset of offending: A test of Modditt's Interactional Hypothesis*. *Criminology*, 37(4), 843-878.

Treatment for pregnant women who are addicted reduces under-weight births:

Svikis, D. S., Golden, A. S., Huggins, G. R., Pickens, R. W., McCaul, M. E., Velez, M. L., Rosendale, C. T., Brooner, R. K., Gazaway, P. M., Stitzer, M. L., & Ball, C. E. (1997). *Cost-effectiveness of treatment for drug-abusing pregnant women*. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 45, 105-113.

Children from households experiencing mental illness are twice as likely to be abused:

Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (1998). *Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults*. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), 245-253.

25 percent of depressed individuals receive adequate care:

Lennon, M. C., Blome, J., & English, K. (2001). *Depression and low-income women: Challenges for TANF and welfare-to-work policies and programs*. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.

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:

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

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.