



# FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS

President  
David S. Kass

Chief Operating Officer  
Miriam A. Rollin

Vice Presidents  
Amy Dawson Taggart  
Jeff Kirsch

## From America's Front Line Against Crime: A School and Youth Violence Prevention Plan

As an organization of more than 2,500 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and victims of violence, we are determined to see that dangerous criminals are put behind bars. But anyone who thinks that jailing a criminal undoes the agony of crime has not seen crime up close.

America's anti-crime arsenal contains no weapons more powerful than the proven programs that help kids get the right start in life—programs like pre-kindergarten and educational child care, youth development programs for the after-school and summer hours, child abuse prevention, and intervention programs proven to help troubled kids.

Yet today, inadequate funding for Head Start and other pre-kindergarten and educational child care programs, prevention of child abuse and neglect, after-school programs and counseling for troubled kids leaves millions of children at needless risk of becoming violent or delinquent teens and adult criminals—and leaves every American at risk of becoming a crime victim.

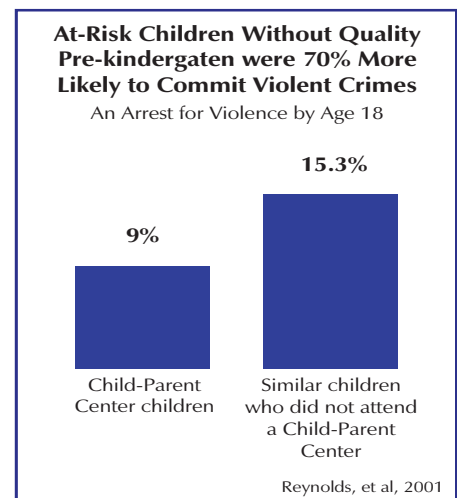
**We call on all public officials to adopt a four-part plan to dramatically reduce crime and violence, and help young people learn the skills and values they need to become good neighbors and responsible adults. No plan can prevent every violent act. But this common-sense plan—based on our experience and the latest research about what really works to fight crime—can make all of us safer.**

### Four Steps to Dramatically Reduce School and Youth Violence

#### 1. Provide all families access to quality pre-kindergarten and educational child care programs proven to reduce crime.

Law enforcement leaders have long known that intervening early in children's lives is the best way to prevent violence and crime. Rigorous social science and neuroscience studies now provide evidence that supports what many have known from experience: In the first few years of life, children's intellects and emotions, and even their ability to feel concern for others (a prerequisite to conscience) are being permanently shaped. When parents are at work trying to make ends meet, programs providing educational child care and pre-kindergarten for babies and toddlers can not only prepare children to succeed in school but also reduce later crime. For example:

- Chicago's government-funded Child-Parent Centers have served almost 100,000 three- and four-year-olds since 1967. Researchers tracked 989 of those children and 550 similar children not in the program for 14 years. The children who did not participate were 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18. This program also cut child abuse and neglect (see Section 2).
- In Ypsilanti, Michigan, three- and four-year-olds from low-income families who were randomly assigned to a control group were five times more likely to have become chronic lawbreakers by age 27 than those who were assigned to the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation's Perry Preschool program.



- In Syracuse, New York, at-risk children who were left out of a quality child development program, with parenting support for their mothers, were ten times more likely to be delinquent ten years later than similar children who participated in the program.

When parents are forced to leave their children in inadequate child care, all Americans pay a terrible price.

## 2. Improve deficient parenting and prevent child abuse and neglect by offering high-risk parents in-home parenting coaching. Make sure child protective services have policies and resources sufficient to protect and heal abused and neglected children.

Almost three million children are abused or neglected in this country each year. Studies show that being abused or neglected multiplies the risk that a child will grow up to be violent. It is imperative to expand parenting-coaching and family support programs that prevent children from being abused and neglected, prevent subsequent delinquency, and improve other outcomes for children. Research has proven the success of these programs:

- The Nurse-Family Partnership randomly assigned half of a group of at-risk families to receive visits by specially-trained nurses who provided coaching in parenting skills and other advice and support. Rigorous studies showed the children who were not in the program were abused and neglected five times more often. Fifteen years after the services ended, the mothers who were not in the program were five times more likely to have been arrested and their children were twice as likely to have been arrested.

---

*“America’s fight against violence must begin in the high chair, not the electric chair. Anything less leaves America’s police fighting with one hand tied behind our backs.”*

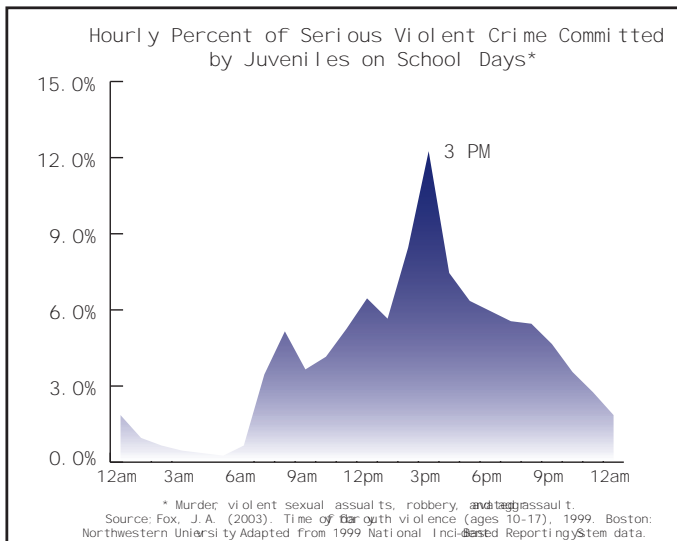
– George Sweat, Director, North Carolina Office of Juvenile Justice; former police chief, Winston-Salem, NC

---

- Chicago’s Child-Parent Centers preschool program for 3- and 4-year olds from poor neighborhoods includes a strong parental involvement requirement. Until they were 18, a study tracked children who participated in the preschool program and similar children who did not participate. It found that abuse and neglect of children in the program was cut in half.

Once a child has been abused or neglected, there must be a national commitment to provide child protective, foster care and adoption services with comprehensive policies and enough well-trained staff to protect and heal them.

## 3. Provide all school-age children and teens access to after-school youth development programs to shut down the “Prime Time for Juvenile Crime.”



In the hour after the school bell rings, turning millions of children and teens out on the street with neither constructive activities nor adult supervision, violent juvenile crime soars and the prime time for juvenile crime begins. On school days, **the peak hours for juvenile crime are from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM.** These are also the hours when kids are most likely to become victims of crime. Being unsupervised after school doubles the risk that 8th-graders will smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs.

Quality youth development programs can cut crime immediately and transform this prime time for juvenile crime into hours of academic enrichment, wholesome fun and community service. They protect both kids and adults from becoming victims of crime, and cut smoking

---

*“When the peak hours of violent juvenile crime are between the end of school and 6:00 P.M., it’s just common sense to provide the after-school programs that give kids the values and skills they need to say ‘no’ to crime and violence.”*

– Sheriff Leroy Baca, Los Angeles County, CA

---

and drug use, while helping youngsters develop the values and skills they need to become contributing citizens. For example:

- Five housing projects without Boys & Girls Clubs were compared to five receiving new clubs. At the beginning, drug activity and vandalism were the same. But by the time the study ended, the projects without the programs had 50 percent more vandalism and scored 37 percent worse on drug activity.
- Randomly selected high school freshmen from welfare families were assigned to participate in the Quantum Opportunities four-year after-school and graduation incentive program. Six years later, compared to those who received the program, boys left out averaged six times more criminal convictions, and girls and boys left out were nearly four times more likely to be without a high school degree. They were also 50 percent more likely to have had children during their high school years.
- Young people who were randomly assigned to a Big Brother or Big Sister were about half as likely to begin illegal drug use and nearly one third less likely to hit someone compared to those who were assigned to a waiting list.

#### **4. Identify troubled children and teens as early as possible, and provide them and their parents with the counseling and training necessary to help them avoid crime.**

Children who are overly aggressive and at risk for problems later in life can be identified at an early age and helped.

- In one study, children in Head Start were randomly assigned to The Incredible Years, a program that provides training in problem solving and social issues, or to a control group. Among the children with overly aggressive behavior problems, 96 percent of those who participated in Head Start/Incredible Years showed a significant reduction in problem behaviors, compared to 55 percent of children in the control group.
- A study found that 40 percent of school bullies had three or more criminal convictions as adults. Tested anti-bullying programs have cut bullying by as much as half, preventing adverse affects on bullies and their victims.

Many youths who are already involved in crime can become productive citizens with the right help.

- Three intensive family therapy programs that provide the parents or foster parents of violent juvenile offenders with effective tools to better control the children’s behaviors have been proven to cut crime. Research shows that new arrests of youths in these programs have been cut by as much as half compared to the re-arrest rate of youths not receiving this help.
- Another approach, known as Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), helps serious juvenile offenders learn and use social skills to avoid re-offending. Research studies show CBT reduces re-arrests among troubled youths by one third to two-thirds compared to those not receiving the services.

---

*“We could be saving thousands of lives—and sparing thousands of families unimaginable heartbreak—by investing up front in the proven early childhood care and youth development programs that can turn kids away from crime.”*

– Jean Lewis, Past President, National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children

---

## The Bottom Line: Investing in Kids Saves Lives and Money

When the country fails to invest in children, all Americans pay far more later—not just in lost lives and in fear, but also in tax dollars. The federal treasury will actually have *more* money to dedicate to other uses in the future—whether for Social Security or prescription drug benefits—by investing *today* in programs to help kids get the right start in life. Research clearly demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of these programs:

- Economist Steven Barnett found that the High/Scope Foundation’s Perry Preschool program produced a **net savings of \$17** for every dollar invested. Total savings were \$259,000 per child, \$172,000 of it in crime costs.
- A study conducted by researchers at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis showed that the return on investment in the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program was 16 percent after adjusting for inflation. Seventy-five percent of that return went to taxpayers in the form of decreased special education expenditures, crime costs, and welfare payments. In comparison, the long-term return on U.S. stocks is 7 percent after adjusting for inflation. Thus, an initial investment of \$1,000 in a program like Perry Preschool will return over \$19,000 in 20 years while the same initial investment in the stock market will return less than \$4,000.
- Professor Mark A. Cohen of Vanderbilt University estimated that for each high-risk youth prevented from adopting a life of crime, the country **saves \$1.7 million**.

---

*“We’ll win the war against crime when we’re ready to invest in America’s most vulnerable children without waiting for them to become America’s most wanted criminals.”*

– Seattle Police Chief R. Gil Kerlikowske  
Board Chairman, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

---

### Law Enforcement United in Calling for Crime-Prevention Investments in Kids

Who says these four steps are among our most powerful weapons to fight crime?

- The more than 2,500 law enforcement leaders and crime victims who make up Fight Crime: Invest in Kids.
- The **International Association of Chiefs of Police**, the **Fraternal Order of Police**, the **National District Attorneys Association**, the **National Organization for Victim Assistance** and dozens of other national and state law enforcement organizations have adopted forceful calls for boosting critical crime prevention investments in children.
- In response to a Mason-Dixon Polling and Research survey, an overwhelming 71 percent of the nation’s police chiefs, sheriffs and prosecutors chose providing “more educational child care programs for preschool age children and after-school programs for school-age youngsters” as the most effective strategy for reducing youth violence and crime.



## FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS

Launched in 1996, FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is a bipartisan, anti-crime organization led by more than 2,500 police chiefs, prosecutors, sheriffs, and victims of violence. It is a non-profit organization supported by tax-deductible contributions from foundations, individuals, and corporations, and receives no funds from federal, state, or local governments. Major funding is provided by:

The California Endowment • Robert Sterling Clark Foundation • Freddie Mac Foundation • Garfield Foundation • Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund • The Heinz Endowments • Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation • James Irvine Foundation • The Joyce Foundation • Charles Stewart Mott Foundation • The David and Lucile Packard Foundation • William Penn Foundation • The Pew Charitable Trusts—Advancing Quality Pre-Kindergarten for All • Rauch Foundation • The Skillman Foundation

For citations of studies referred to above or for a free subscription to research and policy updates, visit [www.fightcrime.org](http://www.fightcrime.org)  
Endnotes:

**1: Provide all school-age children and teens access to after-school youth development programs to shut down the “Prime Time for Juvenile Crime”.**

**Peak hours for crime are from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM:**

**Fox, J. A. (2003). Time of day for youth violence (ages 10-17), 1999. Boston: Northwestern University. Adapted from 1999 National Incident-Based Reporting System data.**

**Peak hours when kids are most likely to become victims of crime:**

**Fox, J. A. (2003). Time of day for youth violence (ages 10-17), 1999. Boston: Northwestern University. Adapted from 1999 National Incident-Based Reporting System data.**

**Being unsupervised after school doubles the risk that 8th graders will smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs:**

**Richardson, J. L., Dwyer, K., McGuigan, K., Hansen, W. B., Dent, C., Johnson, C. A., Sussman, S. Y., Brannon, B., & Flay, B. (1989). Substance use among eighth-grade students who take care of themselves after school. *Pediatrics*, 84(3), 556-566.**

**Boys & Girls Club research results:**

**Schinke, S. P., Orlandi, M. A., & Cole, K. C. (1992). Boys and Girls Clubs in public housing developments: Prevention services for youths at risk. *Journal of Community Psychology*, OSAP Special Issue, 118-128.**

**Quantum Opportunities research results:**

**Lattimore, C. B., Mihalic, S. F., Grotzinger, J. K., & Taggart, R. (1998). The Quantum Opportunities Program. In D.S. Elliot (Series Ed.), *Blueprints for violence prevention: Book four*. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.**

**Big Brothers/Big Sisters research results:**

**Tierney, J. P., Grossman, J. B., & Resch, N. L. (1995). Making a difference: An impact study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Retrieved from the Public/Private ventures Web site: <http://www.ppv.org/pdf/mad.pdf>**

**2: Provide all families access to quality pre-kindergarten and educational child care programs proven to dramatically reduce crime.**

**Chicago Child-Parent Center research results:**

**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.**

**High/Scope Perry Preschool research results:**

**Schweinhart, L. J., Barnes, H. V., & Weikart, D. P. (1993). Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.**

**Syracuse University Family Development research results:**

**Lally, J. R., Mangione, P. L., & Honig, A. S. (1988). The Syracuse University Family Development Research Program: Long-range impact on early intervention with low-income children and their families. In I. E. Siegel (Series Ed.) & D. R. Powell (Vol. Ed.), *Annual advances in applied developmental psychology: Vol. 3. Parent education as early childhood intervention: Emerging directions in theory, research, and practice* (pp. 79-104). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.**

**3: Help schools identify troubled and disruptive children at an early age, and provide children and their parents with the counseling and training that can help kids get back on track.**

**Montreal Longitudinal Study of Disruptive Boys research results:**

**Tremblay, R. E., McCord, J., Boileau, H., Charlebois, P., Gagnon, C., Le Blanc, M., & Larivée, S. (1991). Can disruptive boys be helped to become competent? *Psychiatry*, 54(2), 148-161.**

**New Jersey Study research results:**

**Bry, B. H. (1982). Reducing the incidence of adolescent problems through preventive intervention: One- and five-year follow-up. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 10(3), 265-276.**

**4: Improve deficient parenting and prevent child abuse and neglect by: a) offering high-risk parents in-home parenting-coaching; and b) making sure child protective, foster care and adoption services have comprehensive policies and enough well-trained staff to protect and heal abused and neglected children.**

**Almost three million children are abused or neglected in this country each year:**

**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/stat-info/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>: “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.”

**Studies show that being abused or neglected multiplies the risk that a child will grow up to be violent:**

**Maxfield M. G., & Widom, C. S. (1996).** The cycle of violence: Revisited 6 years later. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 150(4), 390-395.

**Nurse-Family Partnership research results:**

**For 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.

**Chicago Child-Parent Centers research results:**

**Reynolds, A. J., & Robertson, D. L. (2003).** School-based early intervention and later child maltreatment in the Chicago Longitudinal Study. *Child Development*, 74(1), 3-26.

• **The Bottom Line: Investing in Kids Saves Lives and Money**

**High/Scope Perry Preschool cost savings:**

**Barnett, S. W. (1993).** Cost benefit analysis. In L. J. Schweinhart, H. V. Barnes, & D. P. Weikart (Eds.), *The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27* (pp. 143-173). Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

**Arthur Rolnick and Rob Grunewald’s analysis on investment returns:**

**Rolnick, A., & Grunewald, R. (2003).** Early childhood development: Economic development with a high public return. Retrieved from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Web site: <http://minneapolisfed.org/pubs/fedgaz/03-03/earlychild.cfm>

**Mark A. Cohen’s cost analysis:**

**Cohen, M. A. (1998).** The monetary value of saving a high-risk youth. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 14(1), 5-33.

• **Law Enforcement United in Calling for Crime-Prevention Investments in Kids**

**Law Enforcement poll results:**

**Mason-Dixon Polling and Research. (2002, August).** National law enforcement leadership survey. Retrieved from the **Fight Crime: Invest in Kids** Web site: <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/nationalkidspoll2002.pdf>. Note: Many respondents favored adopting more than one strategy, and a majority ranked hiring more police officers as the second most effective approach.

**New endnotes for bullying section and Perry at 40 data.**

**The Incredible Years program research results: Webster-Stratton, C., Reid, M. J., Hammond, M. (2001).** Preventing conduct problems, promoting social competence: A parent and teacher training partnership in Head Start. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 30(3), 283-302.

**For Functional Family Therapy, see: Alexander, J., Pugh, C., Parsons, B., & Sexton, T. (2000).** Family Functional Therapy. In D.S. Elliot (Series Ed.), *Blueprints for violence prevention: Book three*. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. **For Multisystemic Therapy, see: Henggeler, S. W., Mihalic, S. F., Rone, L., Thomas, C., & Timmons- Mitchell, J. (1998).** Multisystemic

Therapy. In D.S. Elliot (Series Ed.), Blueprints for violence prevention: Book six. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. For Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care see: Chamberlain, P., & Mihalic, S. F. (1998). Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care. In D.S. Elliot (Series Ed.), Blueprints for violence prevention: Book eight. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

Lipsey, M.W., Chapman, G. L., Landenberger, N.A. (November, 2001), Cognitive-Behavioral Programs for Offenders. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 578 (1). Retrieved from: <http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/578/1/144>

Schweinhart, L.J., Montie, J., & Xiang, Z. (2004). Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through Age 40. High/Scope Educational research Foundation. Unpublished Manuscript.