

Prevent Child Abuse **New York**

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THE COSTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND THE URGENT NEED FOR PREVENTION



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research during the past twenty years demonstrates that an array of human and social problems resist solutions if we do not respond to the urgent need to prevent the abuse and neglect of our children. For too long, government has spent billions of dollars treating the consequences of child abuse and maltreatment and investing next to nothing in up front prevention.

Child abuse and maltreatment is a societal problem and preventing it requires universal support. With this paper, **Prevent Child Abuse** New York calls upon the great institutions in New York State government and philanthropy to halt the epidemic of child abuse by significantly increasing their investment in prevention.

Child Abuse is Often a Vicious Cycle

Typically, abusive parents have histories of abuse or deprivation in childhood and in turn treat their children similarly. It is estimated that about one-third of abused children will one day abuse their offspring.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence places children at greater risk for continuing the generational cycle of violence. In a domestic violence study, about 33% of the alleged abusers were abused by their parents and about 50% of their parents were themselves involved in battering relationships.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Alcohol and drug abuse and child abuse are risk factors for each other. Substance abuse is one of the top problems exhibited by families in child abuse and neglect cases. Children of substance-abusing parents are 3 times more likely to be abused and 4 times more likely to be neglected than parents who are not substance abusers.³ About two-thirds of people in drug treatment programs report they were abused as children.

Juvenile Delinquency and Adult Criminal Behavior

Child abuse is a risk factor for delinquent behavior in adolescents and violent adult tendencies. Being abused or neglected as a child increased the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53 percent, as an adult by 38 percent, and for a violent crime by 38 percent. Violent child victimizers are substantially more likely than those that victimize adults to have been physically or sexually abused as children.⁵

Mental/Emotional Problems

Victims of child abuse suffer in later years from mental and emotional problems, including low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, psychiatric disorders and suicide attempts.

Injuries and Health Problems

In 2000, 4,532 substantiated child injuries were sustained as a result of abuse in New York. However, this is probably a small percentage of all the injuries received by children since most are never reported.

Learning Problems

The most rapid period of brain development throughout the whole life span occurs during the first 3 years of life. Delayed and disordered development is very common in children that are abused or neglected, requiring extensive special services during childhood.

Foster Care

Foster care is costly socially as well as fiscally. Children in foster care often have emotional and behavioral troubles that lead to expensive social problems such as dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, homelessness, unemployment, criminal activity, incarceration and welfare dependency.

Homelessness

Adverse childhood experiences are powerful risk factors for adult homelessness. The likelihood of homelessness among individuals who experience a neglect and abuse during childhood increases tremendously.

Teen Mothers

Teenage childbearing often decreases opportunities for both mother and child. On average, the children of teen mothers are less healthy, more likely to suffer child abuse and be placed in foster care, more likely to engage in criminal behavior, and less likely to be economically and socially successful as adults.

Prostitution

Child prostitutes are victims of sexual abuse. A study of prostitution found that 70% of prostitutes reported that sexual abuse as children definitely affected their decision to become prostitutes and 90% of them were juvenile runaways often forced to engage in prostitution.

Public Assistance

Studies have concluded that being abused as a child increases one's chances of being unemployed and relying on public assistance in later life.

INTRODUCTION

Child abuse and maltreatment is not a new societal problem. Since the beginning of time, no class of people has been subjected to greater abuse and neglect than children. More than one million children are confirmed each year as victims of child abuse and neglect by child protective service agencies in the United States. Every day nearly four children die as a result of abuse and neglect and most are under the age of five. In New York State there were close to 45,000 substantiated cases of child abuse and maltreatment in 1999 following investigation of nearly 140,000 reports.ⁱ Of course many more cases are never brought to light.

According to a recent report by the *Violence Against Children Research Center*, crimes against youth are less likely to be reported to the police; youths have a much greater chance of being sexually assaulted than adults; and youths are more likely to be injured during victimization. Nationwide, in one-third of all sexual assaults reported to law enforcement, the victim was under the age of twelve.ⁱⁱ About 20% of inmates serving time in state prisons for violent crimes in 1991 had been convicted of a crime against a child victim. Two-thirds of all prisoners convicted of rape or sexual assault committed their crime against a child.ⁱⁱⁱ

During the past two decades, there has been significant research on the effects of abuse and maltreatment on children. While some children have suffered terrible childhoods and managed to become successful adults, the vast majority of research has demonstrated that the consequences of child abuse are grave, damaging and often spill over into a person's adult life. An abused child suffers from the abuse as well as from the long-term effects of the abuse. Adverse effects have been identified in maltreated children's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development.^{iv}

The failure to address child abuse through preventive measures not only harms a million children each year, it imposes a tremendous cost to society. Like most states, New York spends a considerable amount of fiscal and human resources to treat the numerous consequences of child abuse and maltreatment. The failure to invest in prevention results in a significantly greater amount of resources needed to treat the outcomes.

This paper primarily summarizes prior research studies in the area of child abuse and maltreatment, many of which have demonstrated a powerful link between abuse as a child and harmful consequences in later life. In addition, attention is given to the cost borne by New York State citizens to treat these consequences, some of which could be prevented by a greater investment of resources used to prevent child abuse.

Domestic Violence and the Continued Cycle of Abuse

Typically, abusive parents have histories of abuse or deprivation in childhood^v. A cycle of abuse and neglect is created as abused or neglected children mature and become parents who know discomfort, hunger, neglect, and loneliness as the norm. They in turn treat their children similarly.^{vi} It has been estimated that one-third of those who were abused as children will abuse their offspring.

Violence within the family has been part of the human condition throughout the recorded history of mankind and most murders are committed within the confines of kinship.^{vii} Research has found a link between exposure to violence and posttraumatic stress symptoms, problem behaviors at school, and difficulties with interpersonal relationships.

Parents who have been traumatized by violence feel frustrated and helpless to keep their children safe, and if they have been victimized, may be emotionally unable to care for their children.^{viii} Researchers have found that wife battering is often accompanied by physical and/or sexual abuse of the children.^{ix} Domestic violence also places children at greater risk for continuing the generational cycle of violence. In a study of battered wives, it was reported that 37% of the women and 54% of the men who had been abused beat their own children.^x

Violent patterns of spousal relationships usually are passed onto the children, beginning an intergenerational cycle that can perpetuate itself indefinitely.^{xi} In one domestic violence study, one-third of the alleged abusers were abused by their parents and about half of their parents were themselves involved in battering relationships. Results suggested that exposure to domestic violence during childhood, either as a victim or witness, is a strong predictor of domestic violence.^{xii}

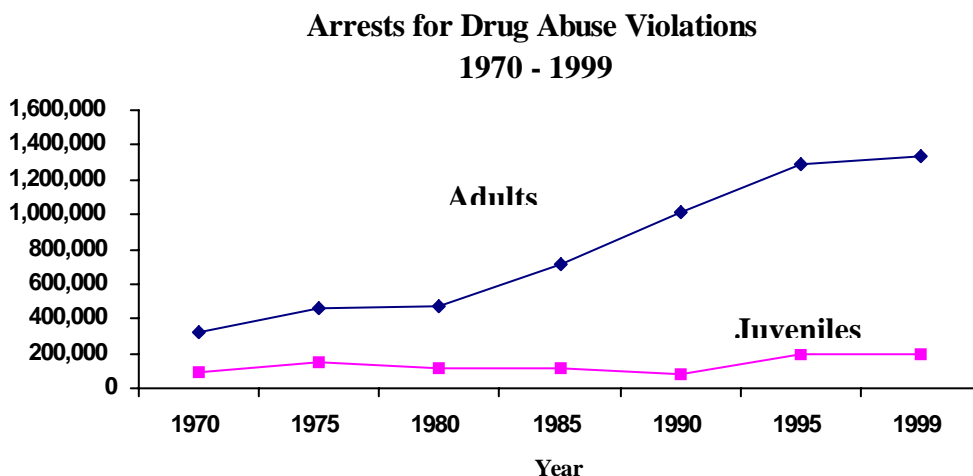
Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Alcohol and substance abuse are widespread in this country, with 14 million adults abusing alcohol and more than 12 million using illicit drugs.^{xiii} State child welfare records show that substance abuse is one of the top two problems exhibited by families in 81% of reported cases of child abuse and neglect.^{xiv} Eleven percent of U.S. children (8.3 million) live with at least one parent who is either alcoholic or in need of treatment for the abuse of illicit drugs.^{xv} Children of substance-abusing parents are three times more likely to be abused and four times more likely to be neglected than children of parents who are not substance abusers.^{xvi}

As many as two-thirds of all people in treatment for drug abuse report they were abused during childhood.^{xvii} A review of recent studies found that 30% to 59% of women receiving drug abuse treatment have posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).^{xviii} Even more frequent than PTSD among women who abuse drugs is a history of trauma. A review of the studies showed that 55% to 99% of these women reported a history of physical and/or sexual trauma, usually occurring during childhood and involving repetitive physical and/or sexual assault.^{xix}

In 1999, there were 283,497 people admitted to alcoholism and substance abuse treatment programs in New York State of which 14,919 were under the age of 18. The 2000-01 State Budget appropriated \$498,976,000 to support alcoholism and substance abuse services.

Arrests for drug abuse violations have risen dramatically since 1970. According to the FBI, in 1970, 322,300 adults and 93,300 juveniles were arrested in the U.S. In about 30 years, the numbers rose to 1,337,600 and 194,600 respectively.



Source: FBI, The Uniform Crime Reports

Juvenile Delinquency/Runaways

Research has consistently identified child abuse as a risk factor for violent behavior in adolescents. A lack of nurturing, hostility and neglectfulness can produce delinquent behavior.^{xx} Children who are abused or neglected are 50% more likely to be arrested while a juvenile, 40% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime as an adult, and 33% more likely to abuse drugs. The results of one study showed that 55% of status offenders and 45% of juvenile delinquents had substantiated histories of maltreatment. The percent of status offenders who had been sexually abused was seven times higher among runaways.^{xxi}

There are about 450,700 runaway children and 127,100 throwaway children each year in this country.^{xxii} Two major motivations of a runaway child are to avoid an emotional experience or consequence that they are expecting to occur or to escape a recurrent or ongoing unpleasant, painful or difficult experience in their life. Runaways are more likely to have a history of sexual abuse and child abuse and incest contribute significantly to the health problems of runaway adolescents and require special attention.^{xxiii} Life on the streets exacerbates the typical health problems of adolescents, where often they ignore signs of poor health due to the fear that they may be returned home.^{xxiv} In addition to health risks, runaways are often sought out by child pornographers, pimps and pedophiles, continuing to be victimized.

Adult Crime

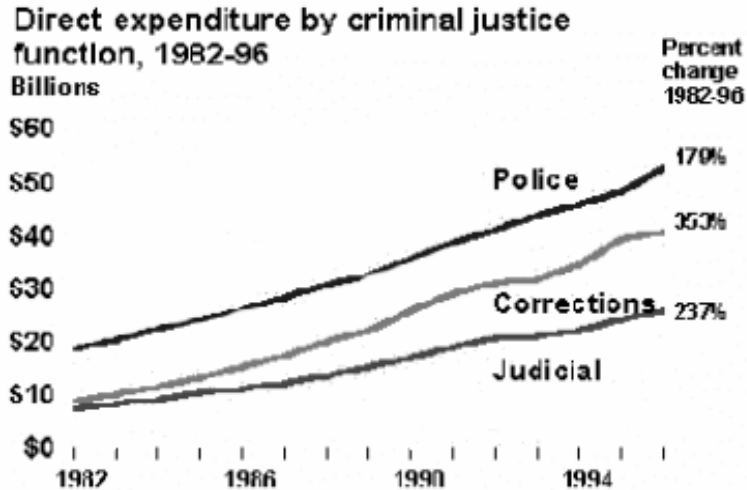
As of October 30, 2000, there were 71,667 people under the custody of the New York State Department of Corrections; 68,178 were males and 3,489 were females. In 1999, there were 21,402 arrests for offenses involving child victims (under the age of 17) in New York; 2,132 were for sex offenses. The remainder of arrests were for a number of crimes against children including criminal solicitation, assault of a child, murder, manslaughter, abandonment, and sale of a controlled substance or a firearm to a child. Of those convicted, about 35% were convicted of felonies, about 37% were convicted of misdemeanors, and about 28% convicted of lesser offenses.^{xxv}

An extensive body of research has demonstrated that a history of child abuse can lead to criminal activity. Violent child victimizers are substantially more likely than those that victimize adults to have been physically or sexually abused as children.^{xxvi} In a U.S. Department of Justice report, more than 40% of female inmates reported they had been physically or sexually abused. In the same survey, more than a quarter of inmates reported that their parents or guardians were alcohol or drug abusers.^{xxvii} Another report by the U.S. Department of Justice estimated that 14.4% of men and 36.7% of women in state prisons were child abuse victims.^{xxviii}

A study by the National Institute of Justice assessed the long-term criminal consequences of childhood abuse through the examination of official criminal histories of 908 validated cases of childhood sexual and physical abuse. Being abused or neglected as a child increased the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53%, as an adult by 38%, and for a violent crime by 38%.^{xxix} A 1993 study of 12 murderers diagnosed with dissociative identity disorder found definitive evidence of severe childhood abuse in 11 of the cases.^{xxx}

The rate of recidivism must be considered when viewing criminal justice policies since released prisoners are often rearrested for the same type of crime for which they served time. Of the 108,580 persons released from prisons in 11 states in 1983, about 63% were rearrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within 3 years, 47% were reconvicted, and 41% returned to prison or jail.^{xxxi}

Public protection is an expensive undertaking. Nationally, direct expenditures for corrections rose from \$9 billion in 1982 to \$41 billion in 1996. Expenditures for police rose from \$19 billion to \$53 billion, while judicial expenditures rose from \$7.7 billion to \$41 billion. During this period, state expenditures for criminal justice expenditures increased 275%.



Source: FBI, The Uniform Crime Reports

While violent crime has recently decreased in New York State, particularly in New York City, criminal justice services still comprises a significant portion of expenditures in New York State. In 1996, New York State ranked number 2 in the nation in per capita spending for corrections at \$210.^{xxxii} The 2000-01 State Budget included more than \$3.24 billion for Criminal Justice purposes. In addition, the State Budget provided more than \$15 million for the Capital Defender Office for public defense for criminal cases.

Criminal Justice Statistics for New York State 1999				
	Adult Arrests	Felony Prosecutions	Convictions	Sentences
Total Felony	181,052	53,458	334,066	
Violent	53,986	13,764		
Drug	51,210	21,904		
Other	75,856	17,790		
Total Misdemeanor	371,345		143,900	
Drug	94,484			
DWI	39,353			
Other	237,508			
Lesser			145,038	
Total Incarcerations				132,366
Prison				20,110
Jail				100,914
Jail & Probation				11,342
Probation				28,856
Fine				76,775
Other				96,069

Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

According to a two-year research effort by the U.S. Department of Justice, personal crime is estimated to cost Americans \$105 billion annually in medical costs, lost earnings, and public program costs related to victim assistance.^{xxxiii} When including pain, suffering and the reduced quality of life, the cost is estimated at \$450 billion annually. Violent crime causes 3% of U.S. medical spending and 14% of injury-related medical spending. It also results in wage losses equivalent to 1% of American earnings. Violent crime also imposes an enormous cost on mental health care. As much as 10% to 20% of mental health care expenditures in the U.S. may be attributed to crime, primarily for victims being treated as a result of their victimization. About half of these expenditures are for child abuse victims receiving treatment for abuse that occurred years earlier.^{xxxiv}

Mental/Emotional Problems

According to a new report by the U.S. Surgeon General, the nation is facing a public crisis in mental health for children and adolescents. In the U.S., 1 in 10 children and adolescents suffer from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment.^{xxxv} In 1997-98, there were 7,625 people admitted to programs at state psychiatric centers in New York State (1,766 under the age of 18). Results from numerous studies have concluded that victims of child abuse suffer from low self-esteem and numerous other mental and emotional problems in later years.^{xxxvi}

An 18-year longitudinal study conducted to gather information on childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and its consequences concluded that CSA, particularly severe CSA, was associated with increased risk of psychiatric disorder in young adults.^{xxxvii} Another long-term study found that 80% of abused young adults met DSM-III-R (the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-Revised) criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder at age 21. When compared to their nonabused counterparts, abused subjects demonstrated considerable impairments in functioning both at ages 15 and at 21. This included greater depression, anxiety, psychiatric disorders, emotional-behavioral problems and suicide attempts.^{xxxviii}

More than 2,100 children 19 years of age or younger committed suicide in 1996 in the U.S. Suicides have increased considerably in younger children in recent years, with an increase of 113% from 1980 to 1996 in children under the age of 15. An association between suicide and child abuse has been found in studies of adolescents who have attempted suicide. Adolescents who have attempted suicide often report a history of abuse. It has also been found that adolescent runaways have high rates of suicide attempts in addition to a history of physical or sexual abuse.^{xxxix}

Injuries and Health Problems

In 1993, about 3 million children nationwide were maltreated or endangered. About 55% of all victims experienced serious or moderate harm as a result.^{xl} In 2000, 4,532 substantiated child injuries needing hospital treatment were sustained as a result of child abuse in New York. However, this is probably a small percentage of all the injuries received by children since most are never reported. According to New York State Department of Health figures, the average cost of treatment for a traumatic injury to a child in 1999 was \$4,022.30.

There are numerous types of injuries that abused and maltreated children sustain short of death including lacerations, punctures, burns, broken bones, internal injuries and more. Abusive head trauma (AHT) is a dangerous form of child abuse that can be difficult to diagnose in young children. A recent study determined how frequently AHT was previously missed by physicians in a group of abused children with head injuries and determined factors associated with the unrecognized diagnosis. One hundred seventy-three children younger than 3 years with head injuries caused by abuse comprised the study population. Twenty-five (14.5 percent) of the 173 children died as a result of their head injuries. A total of 54 (31.2 percent) of 173 abused children with head injuries had been seen by physicians after AHT and the diagnosis was not recognized.^{xli}

Research indicates a high degree of risk for HIV and AIDS in children who have been sexually abused. The risk is two-fold; as a direct effect of the sexual abuse itself and also as a result of subsequent risky behavior by victims of abuse in later life, such as alcohol and drug use, unsafe sex, numerous sexual partners, and prostitution.^{xlii} Common medical complications of child sexual abuse include injury, pregnancy and sexually transmissible diseases (STDs).

A recent study explored the relationship of health risk behavior and disease in adulthood to the breadth of exposure to childhood emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, and household dysfunction. More than 9,500 adults answered questions about adverse childhood experiences, including psychological, physical, or sexual abuse; violence against the mother; and living with household members who were substance abusers, mentally ill, or ever imprisoned. Persons who had experienced four or more categories of household dysfunction, compared to those who had experienced none, had a significantly increased health risk for alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, suicide attempt, smoking, sexual promiscuity, sexually transmitted diseases and severe obesity. The categories of adverse childhood experiences were strongly interrelated and persons with multiple categories of childhood exposure were likely to have multiple health risk factors later in life such as heart and liver disease.^{xliii}

Learning Problems

The most rapid period of brain development throughout the whole life span occurs during the first 3 years of life.^{xliv} This brain growth is enhanced by positive environmental factors but is also vulnerable to negative factors such as malnutrition, maltreatment and abuse. Most victims of child abuse are under the age of five and often struggle for years in school, never catching up to their peers. Results from an Adolescent Health Survey of 36,000 7th to 12th grade students found that students with a history of sexual abuse had higher rates of poor school performance than did a comparison group.^{xlv}

Maltreatment can have negative effects on many areas of child development. Delayed and disordered development are a result of an abusive or neglectful environment. Research on the interactional environment of maltreated infants found that they are exposed to a different style of interaction than nonmaltreated infants. This interaction is less stimulating, less active, and more negative.^{xlvi} Data has also demonstrated developmental deficiencies for sexually abused children due in part to the internalizing of problems by the children.^{xlvii}

Children with disabilities are at greater risk for abuse not only because they are sometimes less able to articulate that they were abused but also because most professionals are not versed in working with disabled children. A survey of 165 trainers of health, social work, police, and education professionals revealed that less than one-third of the trainers addressed the abuse of children who are disabled. Even fewer of the respondents reported that they specifically discussed learning disabilities in their training programs. The trainers did not feel competent to develop training programs about children with learning disabilities.^{xlviii}

Foster Care

Foster care is costly socially as well as fiscally. Children in foster care often have emotional and behavioral troubles that lead to expensive social problems such as dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, homelessness, unemployment, criminal activity, incarceration and welfare dependency. Aside from these indirect costs, states and the federal government spend about \$7 billion annually on foster care.^{xlix}

A study by the Bureau of Justice on childhood abuse in inmates found that abuse was most common among prisoners who had lived in foster care.¹ Research studies over the past 20 years have firmly established that children in foster care represent a high-risk population for poor outcomes including socio-emotional, behavioral, and psychiatric problems.^{li}

Entrance into the foster care system is often a result of child abuse or maltreatment. The largest group is children between the ages 0 to 5. This group enters the system at about twice the rate of children ages 6 and older. Research has found that half the children in foster care have “adaptive functioning scores in the problematic range.” Among children in the 0 to 6 age group, 50-65% are developmentally problematic; among 2 to 17 year-olds, 50-60% have behavior problems; and among 6 to 17 year-old, approximately 40% have moderate impairments.^{lii}

According to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), of the 52,270 children in foster care as of December 31, 1997, the median stay was about 3 years compared to 2 years nationally, and double what it was in 1993. In December 1999, there were 47,761 children in foster care in New York State. Compounding the problem of entering the foster care system damaged, we know that some children continue to be victims of abuse in foster care.

Homelessness

Over the last decade the homeless population has increased with a growing number of women and children. Today, children make up the largest population of homeless persons. It is difficult to ascertain an exact number of homeless people at any given time. Generally, figures are based on the number of people seeking shelters at a given time. This however, does not account for all homeless since many of them never visit shelters. In November of 2000, New York City sheltered about 7,400 single adults and about 5,500 families. In upstate New York, the figures were 2,400 and 1,542 respectively.

A recent study compared homeless women who had childhood histories of foster care or other out-of-home placement to those who have not. One third of homeless women reported

being raised apart from their parents. Among women with children under the age of eighteen, 61.5% had children who had lived in foster care or other out-of-home care. Variables associated with homeless mothers' children living in foster care or other out-of-home placement were if the mother had an alcohol or drug problem, had been sexually abused as a child, and/or ran away from home as a child.^{liii}

Adverse childhood experiences are powerful risk factors for adult homelessness. Lack of parental care during childhood can sharply increase the probability of subsequent homelessness. The likelihood of homelessness among individuals who experience a lack of care and abuse increases tremendously.^{liv} In addition, the children of homeless adults who were abused as children likewise are often homeless. Effectively reducing child abuse and neglect may help to prevent homelessness.

Teen and Single Mothers

Teenage childbearing often decreases opportunities for both mother and child. Most mothers under the age of 18 are unmarried, have not completed high school, and are not settled into a job. Many young fathers are unable to provide financial assistance for the child. On average, the children of teen mothers are less healthy, more likely to suffer child abuse and be placed in foster care, more likely to engage in criminal behavior, and less likely to be economically and socially successful as adults. According to the Census Bureau, in 1995 only 3% of mothers age 15 to 17 received child support payments. Eight to 12 years after birth, a child born to an unmarried, teenage, high school dropout is 10 times more likely to be living in poverty as a child born to a mother without these characteristics.^{lv}

Child sexual abuse seems to be a risk factor for earlier pregnancy among adolescents.^{lvi} Studies have concluded that most infant homicides are committed by parents or stepparents. Half the homicides are committed within the first month of life. The most important risk factors for infant homicide are teenage mothers, teenage mothers with more than one child, and teenage mothers that have not completed high school.^{lvii}

In 1998, there were almost 485,000 babies born to teenagers 15 to 19 years of age, a birth rate of 51.1 live births per thousand women this age. The number of teenage mothers from age 15 to 19 in New York State was about 47,500 in 1998. States have reported some decline in the number of teen pregnancies due in part to safer sexual practices. While the teen birth rate has declined, the percent of unmarried teen mothers has increased considerably.

Child and Adult Prostitution

Child prostitution has only received attention as a major public concern in the last few decades. It is one of the most overlooked forms of child abuse, due in part to the misconception that child prostitutes are willing participants in their own victimization.^{lviii} *End Child Prostitution, Child pornography, and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Exploitation (ECPAT)* has estimated that there are between 100,000 and 300,000 children sexually exploited through prostitution and pornography in the United States.^{lix}

Child prostitutes are victims of sexual abuse, often unwilling and underage participants forced to engage in sexual acts. Some of them have run away from homes where they have been sexually or physically abused. Some come from families who no longer want them or who feel they can no longer handle them. These children often see themselves as their only supporter. Under such circumstances, they fall into prostitution as a way to survive or as a way to get the things they need. Unfortunately, these victims often become involved in the criminal justice system as offenders. In order to support themselves, or to escape the life that they have come to lead, they often get involved in the use and/or sale of drugs, theft, or robberies. It is through such actions that prostitution affects all of us.^{lx}

A study examining the antecedents to prostitution and the long-term consequences of child abuse found the following: 78% of women reported starting prostitution as juveniles; extremely high levels of sexual child abuse were found in their backgrounds; the mean age at the time of first victimization was 10; in 82% of the cases, some force was used; 70% reported that the sexual abuse definitely affected their decision to be a prostitute; and 90% of them were juvenile runaways.^{lxi}

Public Assistance

A study of the intergenerational cycle of child abuse and neglect found adults that suffered abuse during childhood to be significantly more likely than nonabused subjects to be receiving public assistance.^{lxii} A 1992 study found that 38% of women on public assistance were sexually abused as children.^{lxiii} The report concluded that women on public assistance who were sexually abused as children had an elevated risk of being sexually active at an early age, and were more likely to become pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers leading to reliance on public assistance.

Programs or policies that are able to prevent or mitigate the effects of childhood abuse may also lessen early sexual activity, dropping out of school, adolescent pregnancy and childbirth, and welfare dependency. Conclusions from other studies indicate that child sexual abuse adversely affects one's annual earnings due to the numerous other consequences associated with the abuse (e.g. mental/health impairments, criminal activity, and homelessness) and therefore makes one more likely to depend on public assistance.^{lxiv}

According to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, in 2002, there were more than 2.6 million public assistance recipients in New York State including people receiving temporary assistance, food stamps and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). In addition to the aforementioned public assistance programs, most public assistance recipients qualify for Medicaid assistance a major expense in New York State exceeding \$38 billion, including federal aid.

Child abuse prevention programs could prove cost-effective to New York State by holding down public assistance reliance by parents who are unable to work due to being caught in the legal system or child protective system as well as the reliance by adult child abuse victims still suffering from the effects of the abuse.

CONCLUSION

The costs of child abuse and neglect are borne not only by the abused children, but by society as well. Like most states, New York spends a considerable amount of fiscal and human resources to treat the numerous consequences of child abuse and maltreatment. Generally, State level implementation of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) has emphasized treatment over prevention. The costs of operating foster care, police protection, medical attention, incarceration and drug and alcohol abuse treatment could be greatly reduced by taking steps to prevent the abuse and maltreatment of children.

We cannot afford to fail to prevent children's maltreatment. We cannot afford it in terms of human suffering and we cannot afford it in terms of the financial cost to our state and country. Prevent Child Abuse New York calls upon the great institutions in New York State government and philanthropy to significantly increase their investment in prevention and halt the epidemic of child abuse.

Aside from the economic costs associated with child abuse and neglect, it is impossible to overstate the tragic consequences endured by the children themselves. Each year, more than three million children are reported as abused or neglected in the United States. And three children die each day from abuse and neglect in this country.¹ The costs of the human suffering some children experience at the hands of those responsible for protecting them is incalculable.

While it is impossible to determine exactly what percentage of New York State expenditures are directly attributable to child abuse, Table 1 provides detail on some of the expenditures made by New York State for specific related purposes. Funds from these agencies are used to treat the direct and indirect consequences of child abuse and neglect. Table 2 demonstrates the lack of investment in child abuse prevention when compared to other health epidemics and Tables 3 and 4 make estimates of some of the costs to New York State due to the effects of child abuse and maltreatment. As the tables indicate, the estimated costs of child abuse and neglect to New York State exceeds **\$2.4 Billion** annually.

Effective prevention programs that promote the safety and well-being of children and families can reduce the suffering of children, assist parents in developing better parenting skills and reduce the economic costs to society. The total financial costs of child abuse and neglect are quite high. But the benefits or savings from investing in prevention programs also are quite high.^{lxv}

Many prevention programs address not only child abuse prevention but other aspects of family dynamics that threaten child and family well-being. These threats include preventable health conditions such as low birthweight, infant mortality, drug-addicted babies and more. In addition, these threats are often elements associated with child abuse and neglect.^{lxvi} These programs often provide referrals, education, expertise, and most importantly stability for at-risk families.

The two primary prevention programs in New York State are the *WBH Children and Family Trust Fund* and the *Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program (HFNY)*. The Trust Fund was established in 1984 to provide funding for the prevention and treatment of family violence. It is funded through an annual appropriation in the State Budget. The majority of children served by *Trust Fund* dollars are the State's youngest and most vulnerable to child abuse (under 5 years of age). Funds are awarded on a competitive basis across the state, with consideration given to the geographic areas with the greatest need. In 2000, Trust Fund prevention programs targeted 38 counties, including four New York City boroughs. Unfortunately, State Appropriations have dropped by \$381,400 from year 2000 to 2002, making it impossible to expand programs to the many families in need. According to Governor Pataki, "*The Hoyt Memorial Trust Fund grants are tremendous assets in our efforts to end child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse so that no child, spouse or elderly New Yorker has to fear their own family members.*"^{lxvii}

The *Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program* is a voluntary program provided by public and private community organizations that promote positive growth and development to give families a healthy start. HFNY promotes positive parenting skills and parent-child interaction, thereby preventing child abuse and neglect and reducing out-of-home placement. New York's effort is part of a nationwide program entitled Healthy Families America (HFA), a program of Prevent Child Abuse America. Families who have been participated in the HFNY Program have revealed numerous positive outcomes including: less emergency room visits; more timely child immunizations; better parent-child relationships; and better infant care by parents. A study of the nurse home visiting program in Elmira, New York found that child abuse and neglect reports declined for families participating in the program. A cost-effective analysis component of the study demonstrated that program costs for operating the program were significantly lower than the State expenditures to similar at-risk families not participating in the program. Unfortunately, due to insufficient funding, HFNY is only available to a fraction of children and families in need Statewide.

The *WBHM Children and Family Trust Fund* and the *Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program* are two programs that have worked to reduce the incidence of child abuse, while lessening the fiscal burden on New York State. Greater availability of these services and support for other promising child abuse prevention programs would ensure the safety of many more children in New York, build stronger families and work towards saving New York government from making unnecessary expenditures in crime, health care, public assistance and more.

TABLE 1
2000-01 New York State Budget Appropriations for Services to
Treat the Outcomes of Child Abuse and Neglect*

(Percentage directly attributable to child maltreatment is not reflected here.
Refer to Tables 3 and 4 for estimates)

Crime	
Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives	\$90,959,300
Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence	\$2,519,000
Capital Defender Office	\$15,197,500
Commission on Corrections	\$2,327,000
Department of Correctional Services	\$2,168,096,400
Crime Victims Board	\$55,794,300
Division of Criminal Justice Services	\$217,098,950
Division of State Police	\$378,224,400
Division of Parole	\$192,864,500
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$3,123,081,350</i>
Health	
Early Intervention Services (0-3 year-olds)	\$135,000,000
HIV/AIDS	\$113,997,200
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$248,997,200</i>
Mental Health	
Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse	\$498,976,000
Office of Mental Health	\$1,973,409,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$2,472,385,000</i>
Education	
Preschool Special Education	\$552,000,000
Public Excess Cost Aid (Students w/disabilities)	\$1,808,760,000
Private Excess Cost Aid (Students w/disabilities)	\$151,170,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$2,511,930,000</i>
Family Assistance	
** Children and Family services	\$2,095,502,700
Total Appropriated	\$10,451,896,250
One Percent to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect	\$104.5 million
<p>* may include some federal funds ** does not include the WBHM Children & Family Trust Fund (\$1 million) or Healthy Families New York Home Visiting (\$16.4 million) since these are preventive measures. After-school program funding also is excluded. Note: Additional costs to society for preventing child abuse including public assistance, hospitalizations, Medicaid, teen pregnancy, lost labor and productivity and court expenses are not included here.</p>	

TABLE 2

Public Health Issue	Estimated Number of Americans Affected	FY 2000 Federal Spending on Research	Spending Per Affected American
HIV/AIDS	393,045	\$1.8 billion	\$4,665
Cancer	757,600	\$3.3 billion	\$4,398
Alcohol Abuse	3,100,000	\$293 billion	\$95
Drug Abuse	13,000,000	\$689 million	\$453
Heart Disease	59,700,000	\$2 billion	\$34
Child Abuse	3,154,000	\$30 million	\$10

Source: Prevent Child Abuse America: Voices of Three Million Abused and Neglected Children So Far Unheard in 2000 Election Season. October 16, 2000.

TABLE 3	
DIRECT COSTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT	*ESTIMATED ANNUAL COSTS
<p>Hospitalization/Medical Examinations 4,532 children received injuries in 2000 as a result of abuse. According to Department of Health figures, the average cost of treatment for a traumatic injury to a child in 1999 was \$4,022.30. Generally, abused and maltreated children are examined by a physician upon the discovery of abuse. A conservative estimate would be assuming that of the substantiated cases in New York, those not being treated for injuries above would require at least an examination at a minimal cost of \$100.</p>	\$22,670,964
<p>Chronic Health Problems 30% of maltreated children suffer chronic medical problems.¹ The cost of treating a child per incident (for a common problem like asthma) in the hospital is \$6,410.</p>	\$135,286,896
<p>Mental Health Care One of the costs to the mental health care system is counseling. Estimated cost per family for counseling in \$2,860.² About one in five abused children receives these services.</p>	\$40,241,344
<p>Child Protection Includes abuse investigations, protective services, and operation of the SCR: (NYS Budget, Ch.53, 2000)</p>	\$174,357,265
<p>Foster Care/Adoption 57.3% of children in foster care in New York in 1999 were there as a result of child protective services or prevention services.³</p>	\$686,812,956 ⁴
<p>Judicial System Approximately 16% of child abuse victims have court action on their behalf.⁵</p>	\$15,443,671
Total Direct Costs	\$1,074,813,096

¹ Hammerle (1992) as cited in Myles, K.T. (2001) Disabilities Caused by Child Maltreatment: Incidence, Prevalence and Financial Data.

² Daro, D. Confronting Child Abuse (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1988). In New York State, 44,419 children were found to have been abused or maltreated in 1999.

³ New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Government Relations Office.

⁴ NYS Budget, Department of Family Assistance (Ch.53, 2000)

⁵ Dallas Commission on Children and Youth (1988) concluded that the average cost per court action was \$1,372.34.

TABLE 4	
INDIRECT COSTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT	*Estimated Annual Cost
Special Education More than 22% of abused children have a learning disorder that requires special education services. ⁶ The additional instructional cost associated with educating such a child is an additional \$7,108 per pupil per year in New York State. This does not include transportation and other additional costs.	\$110,013,644
Juvenile Delinquency Studies have indicated that about 50% of juvenile delinquents have substantiated histories of being abused. ⁷	\$84,498,102 ⁸
Adult Criminality Numerous studies have demonstrated a cause and effect relationship between abuse as a child and adult criminal behavior in later life. A conservative estimate is that 10% of all crime can be linked to child maltreatment and abuse.	\$312,056,235 ⁹
Alcohol and Substance Abuse About 66% of people in treatment for substance abuse report they were abused as children. ¹⁰	\$329,324,160 ¹¹
Domestic Violence About 33% of family abusers were themselves abused as children. ¹²	\$15,928,762 ¹³
Public Assistance Based on an estimate that 10% of the costs of public assistance costs are attributable to child abuse and maltreatment.	\$497,673,806 ¹⁴
Total Indirect Costs	\$1,349,494,709

Notes:

Figures in tables use an estimate of 16 children per thousand are victims of abuse in New York State. The figure is based on statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services using New York State data. Based on population figures, there are at least 70,352 children that are victims of child abuse each year.

*The cost estimates are based on scientific studies and the use of conservative estimates when exact statistics are unavailable. In all likelihood, the financial costs to New York far exceeds the total direct and indirect costs in these tables since certain costs such as Medicaid (where New York State spends in excess of \$38 billion each year including federal and local money), lost productivity, police costs for abuse allegations/investigations, other health costs and adolescent pregnancy are not included. Additionally, many local and federal fiscal costs as well as personal expenses are not included here as well.

⁶ Hammerle (1992) as cited in Myles, K.T. (2001) Disabilities Caused by Child Maltreatment: Incidence, Prevalence and Financial Data.

⁷ Famularo, R. Child Maltreatment Histories Among Runaway and Delinquent Children. *Clinical Pediatrics*, December 1990.

⁸ NYS Budget, Department of Family Assistance, juvenile detention services, delinquency prevention, runaway youth, institutional placements and youth facilities (50%) (Ch.53, 2000)

⁹ Based on 10% of crime-related expenditures in the New York State Budget (Ch.53, 2000)

¹⁰ National Institute on Drug Abuse. Exploring the Role of Child Abuse in Later Drug Abuse. 2000.

¹¹ NYS Budget, OASAS, 66% (Ch.53, 2000)

¹² Smith, S. M.; Caplan, H. *Some Aspects of Violence in Families*. *International Journal of Family Psychiatry* 1(2):153-166. 1980.

¹³ NYS Budget, Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Department of Family Assistance, 33% (Ch.53, 2000)

¹⁴ Based on a total NYS expenditure for public assistance as reported as reported in the 2000 New York State Statistical Yearbook.

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