

PREVENTING CHILD MALTREATMENT

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- Child maltreatment includes fatal and nonfatal physical abuse, neglect (physical, educational, emotional, or medical), sexual abuse, emotional abuse (psychological and verbal abuse or mental injury), abandonment, exploitation, and threats to harm the child.
- Every year, 900,000 to 1 million children experience nonfatal child maltreatment.
- Homicide is the fourth leading cause of death for U.S. children 1 to 9 years of age, the fifth leading cause of death for children 10 to 14 years of age, and the second leading cause of death for youth 15 to 24 years of age.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

CDC has funded five state health departments (CA, MN, MI, MO, and RI) for 3 years to examine the feasibility of collecting mortality and morbidity data for child maltreatment. The states are comparing alternative approaches to surveillance for fatal and nonfatal child maltreatment and are testing methods for measuring the extent of violence against children. This project will help determine how useful various data sources are in producing more accurate information about the scope and nature of the problem of child maltreatment.

CDC also funded a grant to the University of South Carolina to implement and evaluate a multilevel parenting program to prevent child maltreatment by improving positive parenting skills. The university will implement the *Triple-P: Positive Parenting Program* in communities throughout South Carolina. The results from this program will identify the effect that parental skills building can have on preventing child maltreatment.

CDC funded the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Collaboratives funded in three states (GA, MA, and MN), which focus on adult and community responsibility for preventing child sexual abuse. This perspective complements existing programs that focus on victim identification and services, thus building a comprehensive approach to child sexual abuse prevention. To date, all three states have conducted baseline statewide inventories of child sexual abuse prevention programs and random digit dial surveys to assess current knowledge and attitudes towards child sexual abuse prevention.

Example of Program in Action

CDC is developing standard definitions for child maltreatment to promote consistency in terminology and data collection. A consistent definition is necessary to monitor the incidence of and trends for child maltreatment, determine the scope of the problem, and compare the problem across jurisdictions. The standard definitions are being developed with the state health departments involved in the State Surveillance of Child Maltreatment project and a diverse group of child maltreatment experts in the fields of epidemiology, social sciences, public health, and medicine, as well as state and federal officials.

CDC is also funding research conducted by the Grady Health System and Emory University in low-income, African-American communities to examine individual, socioeconomic, and environmental factors and the link between partner violence and child maltreatment. This study will investigate factors that place youth at risk of child maltreatment or protect them from such violence.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC will continue to identify effective approaches and programs to prevent child maltreatment. Approaches will evaluate efforts to improve positive parenting skills and emphasize research priorities to ensure preventive measures.

For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/program

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