

FACTS

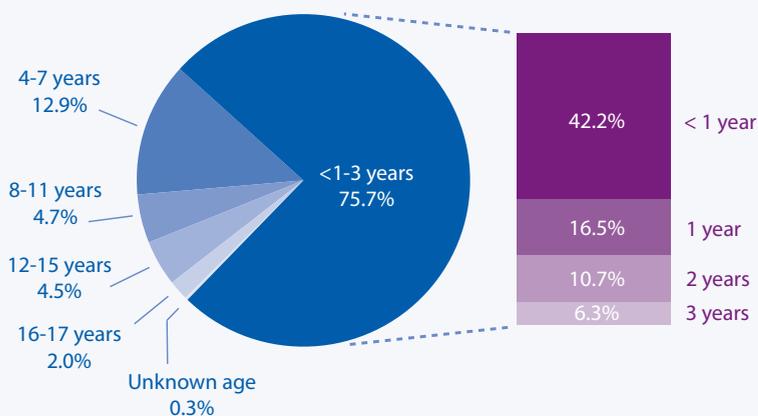
preventing child maltreatment

THE REALITY

- > Child maltreatment includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect.
- > In 2007, more than 1,700 children died because of abuse or neglect in the United States.
- > It is reported that more than 1 in 8 children between the ages of 2 and 17 in the United States are victims of maltreatment. However, most cases are not reported to police or social services.
- > Children of all ages can be victims of maltreatment. However, children younger than 4 years of age are at greatest risk of death from child maltreatment, with infants under age 1 accounting for 42%.



CHILD MALTREATMENT DEATHS (2007)



Note: % ages are based on data from 48 reporting states.
Source: National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and Administration for Children & Families (ACF).

LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

- > Child maltreatment has a negative effect on physical health. Short-term injuries include cuts, bruises, burns, and broken bones. Abuse can also lead to permanent disabilities including visual, motor, and cognitive impairments.
- > Prolonged maltreatment causes extreme or “toxic” stress that can disrupt early brain development. Extreme stress can harm the development of the nervous and immune systems, leaving children vulnerable to chronic diseases later in life. Maltreatment, for example, has been associated with heart, lung, and liver disease in adulthood.
- > Child maltreatment is also linked to negative health behaviors later in life. Victims may smoke, abuse alcohol, use illicit drugs, and engage in risky sexual behavior. Maltreatment has also been associated with unintentional pregnancy.
- > Not all injuries are visible. Child maltreatment can have a lasting emotional impact as well. Victims may suffer from anxiety or depression. They may be wary, distrustful of others, and have difficulty establishing relationships. Some even think about or attempt suicide.
- > Abused and neglected children may suffer low academic achievement and be more likely to drop out prior to high school graduation.

FACT FACT

Early childhood home visitation can prevent child maltreatment in high-risk families. A systematic review of published studies found that home visitations resulted in a 40% reduction in child maltreatment episodes. Home visitation programs have also been shown to have an average return on investment of \$3 to \$6 for every dollar spent on programming.



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PROGRAMS IN ACTION

The “Triple P—Positive Parenting Program” is a scientifically supported system of parenting interventions in graduated levels of intensity, from broad media-based information to more intensive programming. Triple P, which has been shown in many studies to effectively promote positive parenting and reduce child behavioral and emotional problems, lends itself to the large-scale prevention of child maltreatment. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in partnership with the University of South Carolina, has implemented Triple P in nine counties in South Carolina. Since 2003, more than 800 providers have been trained to implement Triple P.

One of the primary goals of Triple P is to make parenting and family support accessible to parents in various settings to suit parental preferences. Parents set the goals for their own participation in Triple P and take responsibility for choosing parenting strategies that best fit their families. In practice this translates into parents choosing how, where, and when they draw on parenting information and consultation, in ways that are acceptable to them.

The results from a recent study evaluating the nine counties in South Carolina show lower rates of substantiated abuse cases, child out-of-home placements, and reductions in hospitalizations and emergency room visits for child injuries. Researchers estimate for an area containing 100,000 children under age eight that the results found in the study could translate annually into 688 fewer cases of child maltreatment, 240 fewer out-of-home placements, and 60 fewer children with injuries requiring hospitalization or emergency room treatment.

FACT FACT

Approximately 64% of confirmed cases of child maltreatment are categorized as child neglect, 7% as emotional abuse, 9% as sexual abuse, and 16% as physical abuse. Child maltreatment categories are not mutually exclusive.



RESEARCH AND PROMISING PRACTICES

- > Through the *Nurturing Parenting Program*, a research-based curriculum, Colorado has worked to prevent child maltreatment throughout the state. Over the past three years, the curriculum has reached over 2,000 families to teach them how to parent in a more nurturing manner (i.e., developing appropriate expectations, empathy, and parent/child roles, devaluing corporal punishment, etc.). Evaluation results indicate that the program has significantly improved parental attitudes across the state.
- > CDC has partnered with the CDC Foundation and the Doris Duke Foundation to support research examining how technology can be used to enhance parenting programs. The effort funds three projects to examine the effects of adding information and communication technologies (e.g., cell phones, Internet, web cameras, etc.) to existing parenting programs. Evaluations of these projects will examine parent enrollment and attrition rates, child maltreatment rates, and cost-effectiveness of the program.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Although much has been accomplished to understand the problem of child maltreatment and develop effective prevention strategies, gaps exist that need to be addressed including:

- > Improving data collection systems for child maltreatment to guide program development and evaluation and to support the measurement and monitoring of risk and protective factors.
- > Conducting additional research to examine the value and cost-effectiveness of prevention strategies for child maltreatment.
- > Building support for state and community adoption and ongoing evaluation of programs to improve the widespread dissemination and to support delivery and maintenance of effective strategies.
- > Increasing resources available for programs and research that will reduce child maltreatment injuries and deaths.



CONTACT CDC
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)
Call: 1.800.CDC-INFO (232-4636) | TTY: 1.888.232.6348

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND DATA SOURCES
www.cdc.gov/injury



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