

# Preventing Child Abuse & Neglect in the United States



## HOW CDC'S RESEARCH ON HEALTHY PARENTING PROTECTS OUR FUTURE

Child abuse and neglect are complex problems rooted in unhealthy relationships and environments. Safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families can prevent abuse and help all children reach their full potential. Effective programs are needed to prevent child abuse and neglect and CDC's Division of Violence Prevention finds, evaluates, and disseminates evidence-based programs for parents that work.

### UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- At least 1 in 7 children experienced child abuse and/or neglect in the last year.
- Child abuse and neglect are costly—\$124 billion each year in total lifetime burden.
- Research identified proven strategies that prevent child abuse and neglect and have broad impact on the health and well-being of children and the adults they become.
- Preventing child abuse and neglect is a smart investment because it can lower the risk for health problems in adulthood that are costly for education, business, and health systems.



**Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention**  
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CDC's [Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Technical Package](#) highlights supporting families, providing early quality care and education and identifying risks early to prevent harm as well as several other strategies that are based on the best available evidence.

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## IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE PREVENTION STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

- **CDC research shows programs that provide practical parenting knowledge and skills can protect children from abuse.** The [Adults and Children Together \(ACT\) Against Violence Parents Raising Safe Kids](#) program evaluation resulted in significant positive impacts on effective parenting skills, such as proper affection and appropriate discipline, and a reduction in the use of harsh verbal and physical discipline.
- **CDC research shows that visits to the pediatrician can help support healthy parenting and reduce child abuse and neglect.** [Safe Environment for Every Kid \(SEEK\)](#) is an enhanced pediatric primary care program that addresses common risk factors for child abuse and neglect such as parental depression, substance abuse, and intimate partner violence. CDC's evaluation of *SEEK* showed it reduced emotional abuse and minor physical assaults by the mothers. *SEEK* may also enhance children's health, development, and safety.

## CDC'S CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO PREVENTION RESEARCH

- **CDC is addressing prevention gaps by investigating promising practices to prevent child abuse and neglect.** CDC is working with partners to evaluate:

- *Early Head Start* to determine if it is specifically effective at preventing child abuse and neglect.
- [Parent education programs, such as Triple P and Play Nicely](#), for families receiving Women, Infants, and Children services to reduce parenting behaviors linked with child physical abuse.
- [Child Abuse Prevention Problem Solving \(CAPPS\)](#) a targeted intervention to prevent neglect of children with special health care needs and increase healthy parenting.

## LOOKING AHEAD

- **CDC's Child Abuse and Neglect Research Priorities Addressing Gaps to Promote Healthy Parenting and Families:**
  - Conducting a cost-benefit analysis of various policies such as cash transfers or subsidies, livable wages, and paid parental leave that provide families economic support.
  - Investigating the community conditions such as access to quality education, jobs, and safe neighborhoods that can increase risk for abuse or promote healthy relationships and environments.
  - Evaluating the effectiveness and economic efficiency of approaches such as using new media and communication technology that can simultaneously reduce multiple forms of abuse and neglect since most focus on a single type such as physical abuse and less focus on psychological and sexual abuse.

Learn more about how CDC's future research can identify solutions to emerging violence issues: <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/researchpriorities/>.