

Home Visiting in Oregon: A Critical Crime Prevention Strategy

Summary

Every year, slightly more than 10,400 children in Oregon experience abuse or neglect, most often by a parent or guardian. These traumatic experiences have immediate repercussions for children, as well as long-term impacts on Oregon's criminal justice system.

The good news is that families, community leaders and policymakers have banded together around a solution that's proven to make a difference: an evidence-based service called voluntary home visiting. State leaders have an outstanding opportunity to ensure that this effort continues, which would be a huge step toward reducing child abuse and neglect, not to mention overall crime in the years to come.

Child abuse and neglect affects more than 10,400 in Oregon

In 2015, 10,400 children in Oregon were abused or neglected. That's enough children to completely fill Gill Coliseum at Oregon State University in Corvallis. The actual numbers are likely much higher due to underreporting.

Young children are most at-risk: nationally, one-third of child abuse and neglect



More than 10,400 children in Oregon were abused or neglected in 2015. That's enough children to completely fill Gill Coliseum at Oregon State University in Corvallis.

Acknowledgments

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Oregon is a bi-partisan anti-crime organization of nearly 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, state attorneys general, other law enforcement leaders and violence survivors nationwide. Our members believe that the best way to prevent crime is to help parents and our communities give kids the right start in life.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Oregon is supported by tax-deductible contributions from foundations, individuals, and corporations.

*Major funding for **Fight Crime: Invest in Kids** is provided by:* Alliance for Early Success • Annie E. Casey Foundation • Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation • The William T. Grant Foundation • The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation • Robert Wood Johnson Foundation • W.K. Kellogg Foundation • The Kresge Foundation • The David and Lucile Packard Foundation • The W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation

Report author: Kara Billings, Sara Hutton, and Martha Brooks

Design by Evan Potler

Fall 2016

©2016 Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. All Rights Reserved.

victims are under age four, and they are far more likely to be abused or neglected by a parent or guardian than any other person in their lives.¹

What is voluntary home visiting?

Many child abuse and neglect cases are preventable. Guidance and support provided by trusted advisors to parents during pregnancy through the first few years of a child's life can help prevent child abuse and neglect.

Parenting is the biggest challenge many people will face. For single and teen parents, this challenge is amplified. Voluntary parent coaching programs give young, at-risk parents (often single mothers) counseling, coaching, and support on a range of crucial parenting skills from utero to age two or three.

During a home visit, a nurse or trained educator helps parents learn about the early physical and emotional development of the child. They also provide families with tools to manage stress and anxiety, resources for ensuring the child's safety, and techniques to effectively guide a toddler away from problem behaviors.

Voluntary parent coaching can cut abuse and neglect in half and reduce crime

In a long-term randomized controlled trial conducted over nearly two decades, the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), a voluntary home visiting program, cut child abuse and neglect by 48 percent among participating families.⁷

Research also showed that by age 15, children in families not in the program had twice as many arrests, and by age 19, they had more than twice as many convictions.



Child abuse or neglect increases the risk of future crime

Research has shown that approximately half of adolescents arrested for delinquency have experienced abuse or neglect earlier in their lives.² One study compared abused and/or neglected children to children with no record of abuse or neglect and found that those who were abused and/or neglected were twice as likely to have committed a crime by age 19 (1.4 percent vs. 2.8 percent).³ That equates to almost 300 children a year in Oregon who grow up to become criminals as a result of child abuse and neglect.⁴

Unfortunately, abuse can also pass from one generation to the next. One study found that roughly a third of children with a history of abuse maltreat their own children.⁵ In addition, children who were abused and/or neglected are also at greater risk of unemployment, divorce, suicide and a range of health problems from heart disease to depression.⁶

2x

Children who were abused and/or neglected are twice as likely to have committed a crime by age 19.³

300

Children per year in Oregon who were abused and/or neglected are likely to have committed a crime by age 19.⁴

These results were concentrated among young women in the program. Those not receiving NFP services averaged nine times more convictions than the young women who received NFP.⁸

The Nurse Family Partnership program also achieved:

- improved prenatal health,
- reduced childhood injuries, and
- increased school readiness.

Other programs show similar outcomes. For example, children who participated in Oregon’s primary parent coaching program, Healthy Families Oregon (HFO)—an evidence-based practice—were more likely to have had a well-child exam within the past 12 months than in Oregon overall (92 percent vs. 80 percent).⁹

The savings add up. A cost-benefit analysis shows that NFP achieves average savings of almost \$17,000 for each family served.¹⁰

Voluntary home visiting can even save lives

One study found that infants who received either NFP or Healthy Families America services had 60 percent lower mortality rates than the comparison group. Meanwhile, a randomized trial of NFP found that by the age of 20, 1.6 percent of children in the control group had died of preventable causes (such as unintentional injury or homicide) while none of the NFP children died from these causes.

Similarly, two decades after the program began, mothers who did not participate

Home Visiting Programs in Oregon

Program	Number of Families Participating
Healthy Families Oregon (HFO)	2,549 children (federal and state funding)
Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)	297 families (federal funding)
Early Head Start (2015-2016)	2,339 children (federal and state funding)

Source: Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Education

were three times more likely to have died of any cause than the mothers who participated in NFP and eight times more likely to have died from “external causes—including unintentional injuries, suicide, drug overdose and homicide”.¹¹

Oregon policymakers should support voluntary home visiting as a crime prevention strategy

Our nation cannot turn a blind eye to the fiscal, public safety and human costs of child abuse and neglect. Most cases of abuse and neglect are preventable if we take a proactive approach that utilizes proven, evidence-based practices. State and federal policymakers must act decisively to support the continuum of these proven parent coaching programs to meet the needs of both rural and urban Oregon. Doing so will dramatically reduce the number of children who are abused and/or neglected in our state, and ultimately prevent involvement in the criminal justice system.

Endnotes

- 1 Children's Bureau. (2016). *Child Maltreatment 2014*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2014>
- 2 Zingraff, M.T., Leiter, J., Johnsen, M.C., & Myers, K.A. (1994). The mediating effect of good school performance on the maltreatment-delinquency relationship. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 31(1), 62-91.
- 3 Currie, J., & Tekin, E. (2012). Understanding the cycle childhood maltreatment and future crime. *Journal of Human Resources*, 47(2), 509-549
- 4 Currie, J., & Tekin, E. (2012). Understanding the cycle childhood maltreatment and future crime. *Journal of Human Resources*, 47(2), 509-549 2.8 percent of the abused or neglected youngsters went on to be arrested for a violent crime as juveniles or as adults, compared to 1.4 percent of similar individuals who shared the same other advantages and disadvantages as these children but who had not been abused or neglected as children. Applying the two percentage point increase in criminality to the confirmed Oregon cases of abuse and neglect in 2015 produces a figure of 291.2 additional individuals who will be arrested for at least one crime beyond the number of those who would have been arrested had the abuse or neglect never occurred.
- 5 Kaufman, J., & Zigler, E. (1987). Do abused children become abusive parents. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 57, 186-192. There is disagreement about the accuracy of retrospective studies of intergenerational transmission due to methodological issues, but this is a frequently cited figure.
- 6 Karr-Morse, R., & Wiley, M.S. (2012). *Scared sick: The role of childhood trauma in adult disease*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- 7 Olds, D.L., Eckenrode, J., Henderson, C.R., Kitzman, J.H., Powers, J., Cole, R., et al. (1997). Long-term effects of home visitation on maternal life course and child abuse and neglect: Fifteen-year follow-up of a randomized trial. *JAMA*, 278(8), 637-643; Eckenrode, J., Campa, M., Luckey, D.W., Henderson, C.R., Cole, R., et al. (2010). Long-term effects of prenatal and infancy nurse home visitation on the life course of youths: 19-year follow-up of a randomized trial. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 164(1), 9-15.
- 8 Eckenrode, J., Campa, M., Luckey, D.W., Henderson, C.R., Cole, R., et al. (2010). Long-term effects of prenatal and infancy nurse home visitation on the life course of youths: 19-year follow-up of a randomized trial. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 164(1), 9-15
- 9 Green, B. & Tarte, J. (2016, February). Key Outcomes for the Healthy Families Oregon Program 2014-2015. NPC Research: Portland, OR. Retrieved from: <http://npcresearch.com/publication/key-outcomes-for-the-healthy-families-oregon-program-2014-2015/>
- 10 Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2013, October). Benefit-Cost Results: Child Welfare. Retrieved on February 24, 2014 from: http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Pdf/3/WSIPP_BenefitCost_Child-Welfare
- 11 3.7 percent vs. 1.3 percent and 1.7 percent vs. 0.2 percent respectively. Olds, D.L., Kitzman, H., Knudtson, M.D., Anson, E., Smith, J.A., & Cole, R. (2014) Effect of home visiting by nurses on maternal and child mortality: results of a two-decade follow-up of a randomized, clinical trial. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 168, 800-806; Nurse-Family Partnership (2014, July). Nurse-Family Partnership is the First Early Intervention to Find Reductions in Maternal and Child Mortality. Retrieved on October 16, 2014 from <http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/assets/PDF/Fact-sheets/Memphis-factsheet.aspx>; Donovan, E.F., Ammerman, R.T., Besl, J., Atherton, H., Khoury, J.C., Altate, M., et al. (2007). Intensive home visiting associated with decreased risk of infant death. *Pediatrics*, 119, 1145-1151; Nurse-Family Partnership. (2012). *Proven results*. Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/proven-results>



www.FightCrime.org

Oregon Office

17675 SW Farmington Road,
PMB# 336
Beaverton, OR 97007
P (503) 649-2068
F (503) 649-2743



@FightCrime



[Facebook.com/FightCrimeInvest](https://www.facebook.com/FightCrimeInvest)