

Dollars that Make Sense: *Investing in Prevention*

In 2001, Prevent Child Abuse America published a report that estimated the national cost of child abuse and neglect at over \$94 billion per year. In 2005, the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund presented a preliminary report based on Prevent Child Abuse America's cost formula at the 2005 Prevention Summit: *Better Together: Building Communities to Keep Children Safe and Families Strong*. This estimate does not take into account state legal fees or police time dedicated to child abuse and neglect cases. In total, this conservative report estimates the cost of child abuse and neglect in New Hampshire at over \$155 million annually. In 2002, there were 962 substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in New Hampshire, costing the Granite State over \$161,000 per child for treatment. Although these numbers are shocking, they only account for the monetary consequences of child maltreatment.

Research reports that children who suffer from abuse and neglect are more likely to suffer long-term psychological and behavioral effects that may include mental retardation, intellectual and social deficiencies, difficulty in school, delinquency, and violent criminal behavior. Abused and neglected children are also more likely to suffer from depression, alcoholism, drug abuse and severe obesity. One social science researcher, Cathy Spatz Widom, reports that child abuse victims are 53% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile and 38% more likely to be arrested as an adult than non-victims.

Prevention programs are essential to build strong families and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. Programs that increase parent education, link families with community supports, and help in the development of supportive relationships provide protection against child maltreatment and the adverse consequences that follow from it. In a 1998 study (Olds et al.) of a home visitation program for high-risk families, the annual cost of visitation for each family totaled \$1,582, and families that received services were less likely to have verified instances of child abuse and neglect. The cost of this program for one year was estimated at less than 1% of the annual cost of treatment for a New Hampshire child who has suffered abuse or neglect.

In July of 2005, an important piece of prevention legislation was introduced to support the well being of children and families. The Education Begins at Home Act (H.R. 3628) proposes that \$500 million should be spent over three years to provide funding for home visitation to families at the state and local level across the nation. Fund allocation will be based on the number of children birth to age five that live in each state, and \$100 million of those funds will be directed to families that speak English as a second language and military families. The proposed funding for three years will cost less than 1% of the national cost of treating child abuse and neglect in one year.

At the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund, we believe that the best way to prevent child abuse and neglect is to build strong families and safe communities. That is why we provide funding and technical assistance to community-based child abuse prevention programs. It is everyone's responsibility to protect children from abuse and neglect. Invest in prevention. It saves money and it saves lives.



Total Annual Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the State of New Hampshire

Direct Costs	Estimated Annual Cost
<p>Hospitalization <i>Rationale:</i> Of the 962 New Hampshire children abused and neglected in 2002, 206 were reported as the victims of physical abuse.¹ One of the less severe injuries from abuse is a broken or fractured bone. Cost of treating a fracture or dislocation of the radius or ulna per incident is \$10,983.² <i>Calculation:</i> 206 x \$10,983</p>	\$2,262,498
<p>Chronic Health Problems <i>Rationale:</i> 30% of maltreated children suffer chronic medical problems.³ The cost of treating a child with asthma per incident in the hospital is \$6,410. <i>Calculation:</i> 0.30 x 962 = 289; 289 x \$6,410</p>	\$1,852,490
<p>Mental Health Care System <i>Rationale:</i> 410 children were abused in 2002.⁴ For purposes of obtaining a conservative estimate, neglected children were not included. One of the costs to the mental health care system is counseling. Estimated cost per family for counseling is \$2,860.⁵ One in five abused children is estimated to receive these services. <i>Calculation:</i> 410/5 = 82; 82 x \$2,860</p>	\$234,520
<p>Child Welfare System <i>Rationale:</i> The Urban Institute published a paper in 1999 reporting on the results of a study it conducted estimated child welfare costs associated with child abuse and neglect. Budget for the NH Division for Children, Youth and Families in SFY 2002 was \$25,000,000.⁶</p>	\$25,000,000
<p>Law Enforcement <i>Rationale:</i> The National Institute of Justice estimates the following costs of police services for each of the following interventions: child sexual abuse (\$56); physical abuse (\$20); emotional abuse (\$20) and child educational neglect (\$2)⁷. Cross referenced against NH DCYF statistics on number of each incident occurring in 2002.⁸ <i>Calculation:</i> Sexual Abuse - \$56 x 202 = \$11,312; Physical Abuse - \$20 x 205 = \$4,100; Emotional Abuse - \$20 x 18 = \$360; Education Neglect is unknown at this time.</p>	\$15,772
<p>Judicial System <i>Rationale:</i> The Dallas Commission on Children and Youth determined the cost per initiated court action for each case of child maltreatment was \$1,372.34.⁹ Approximately 53%¹⁰ of child abuse and neglect victims in New Hampshire have court action taken on their behalf. <i>Calculation:</i> 962 child abuse/neglect victims x 0.53 = 510; 510 x \$1,372.34</p>	\$699,893
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	\$30,065,517

¹ US DHHS, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. (2002). Child Maltreatment 2002. Available: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cm02.pdf.

² HCUPnet. (2000). Available: www.ahrq.gov/data/hcupnet.htm.

³ Hammerle (1992) as cited in Myles (2001). Disabilities Caused by Child Maltreatment: Incidence, Prevalence and Financial Data. As cited in Fromm, S. (2001). Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States. Chicago, IL: Prevent Child Abuse America.

⁴ US DHHS, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. (2002). Child Maltreatment 2002. Available: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cm02.pdf.

⁵ Daro, D. (1988). Confronting Child Abuse. New York, NY: The Free Press. As cited in Fromm, S. (2001). Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States. Chicago, IL: Prevent Child Abuse America.

⁶ Source: NH Division for Children, Youth and Families: DCYF SFY 2002 Expenses. (All federal dollars, prevention dollars, juvenile justice dollars, child development dollars, and department of education dollars have been excluded)

⁷ Miller, Cohen & Wiersema. (1996). Victims' Cost and Consequences: A New Look. The National Institute of Justice. Available: www.nij.com.

⁸ Rollins, N. (April 2004). Prevalence/Trends of Child Abuse and Neglect in New Hampshire. PowerPoint presentation.

⁹ Dallas Commission on Children and Youth (1988). A Step Towards a Business Plan for Children in Dallas County: Technical Report Child Abuse and Neglect. Available: www.ccgd.org.

¹⁰ US DHHS, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. (2002). Child Maltreatment 2002. Available: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cm02.pdf.

Total Annual Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the State of New Hampshire

Indirect Costs	Estimated Annual Cost
<p>Special Education <i>Rationale:</i> More than 22% of abused children have a learning disorder requiring special education.¹¹ Total cost per child for learning disorders is \$655. <i>Calculation:</i> 962 x 0.22 = 212; 212 x \$655</p>	\$138,860
<p>Mental Health and Health Care <i>Rationale:</i> The health care cost per woman related to child abuse and neglect is \$50.¹² If costs were similar for men, we could estimate that 926,224¹³ adults in New Hampshire cost the State \$46,311,200. However, the costs for men are likely to be very different and thus a more conservative estimate would only include women. <i>Calculation:</i> \$50 x 477,190¹⁴</p>	\$23,859,500
<p>Juvenile Delinquency <i>Rationale:</i> 26% of children who are abused or neglected become delinquents, compared to 17% of children as a whole,¹⁵ for a difference of 9%. The cost per year for a child placed at the Youth Development Center in 2002 was \$94,535 (\$259/day).¹⁶ Average length of stay for a first commitment to YDC is eight to twelve months.¹⁷ Average length in “placement” for all NH juvenile delinquents in SFY 2003 was 1.2 years.¹⁸ <i>Calculation:</i> 0.09 x 962 = 87; 87 x \$62,160 (eight months x \$259/day)</p>	\$5,407,920
<p>Lost Productivity to Society <i>Rationale:</i> Abused and neglected children grow up to be disproportionately affected by unemployment and underemployment. One source estimates that “future earnings/school” costs child abuse/neglect victims \$4,300,000.¹⁹</p>	\$4,300,000
<p>Adult Criminality <i>Rationale:</i> One source estimated the costs of violent crime (murder, rape, assault and robbery) in New Hampshire in 1995 at \$706,723,000.²⁰ According to the National Institute of Justice, 13% of all violence can be linked to earlier child maltreatment.²¹ <i>Calculation:</i> \$706,723,000 x 0.13</p>	\$91,873,990
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS	\$125,580,270
TOTAL COSTS (Direct and Indirect)	\$155,645,787

¹¹ Hammerle (1992), as cited in Daro (1988), as cited in Fromm, S. (2001). Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States. Chicago, IL: Prevent Child Abuse America.

¹² Walker, E., Unutzer, J., Rutter, C., Gelfand, A., Saunders, K., VonKorff, M., Koss, M. & Katon, W. (1997). Cost of Health Care Use by Women HMO Members with a History of Childhood Abuse and Neglect. *Arc General Psychiatry*, Vol 56, 609-613.

¹³ United States Census. (2000). NH Adults age 18+. Available: www.census.gov

¹⁴ United States Census. (2000). NH Females age 18+. Available: www.census.gov

¹⁵ Widom (2000). The Cycle of Violence. Available: US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. As cited in Fromm, S. (2001). Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States. Chicago, IL: Prevent Child Abuse America.

¹⁶ Source: 2004 Coos County Annual Report, p. 96.

¹⁷ Source: Children’s Alliance of New Hampshire. Kids Count New Hampshire 2003.

¹⁸ Easters Seals NH. (September, 2003). Administrative Case Review Annual Report: State Fiscal Year 2003.

¹⁹ Source: Children’s Safety Network Economics and Data Analysis Resource Center. Cost of Violent Crime and Impaired Driving in New Hampshire, 1996. Available: www.edarc.org

²⁰ Source: Children’s Safety Network Economics and Data Analysis Resource Center. Cost of Violent Crime and of Alcohol-Involved and Drug-Involved Violent Crime in New Hampshire, 1995. Available: www.edarc.org

²¹ Miller, Cohen & Wiersema. (1996). Victims Cost and Consequences: A New Look. The National Institute of Justice. Available: www.nij.com.