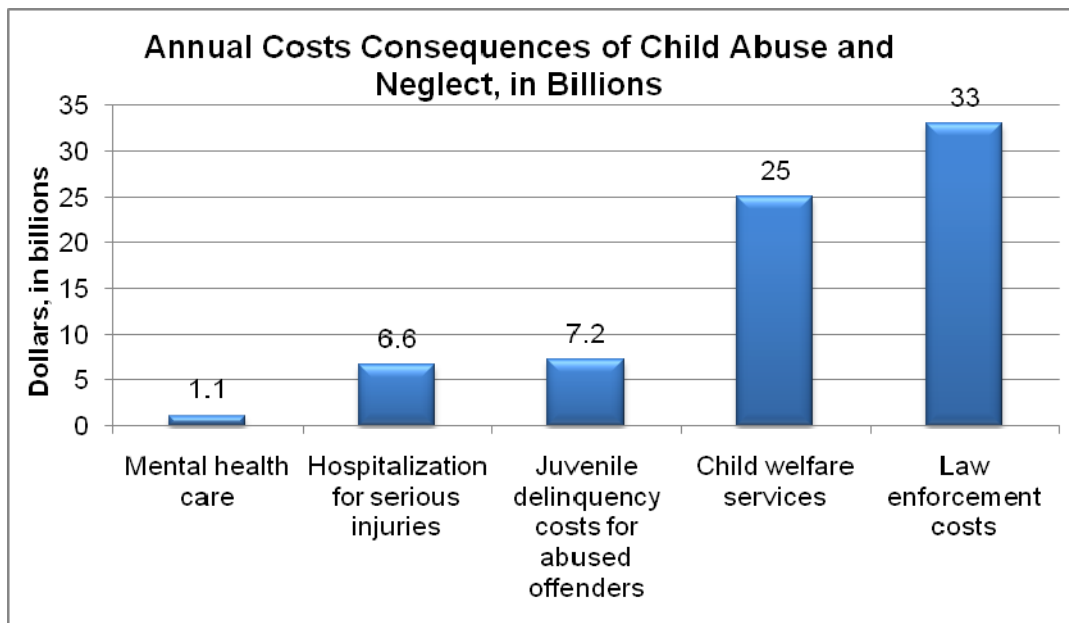




Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

Child abuse and neglect can be some of the most powerfully detrimental experiences during a child's development. This maltreatment occurs at every socioeconomic level, across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions, and at all levels of education. The effects on victims can be drastic, decreasing levels of self-esteem, potential lifetime earnings, and positive social functioning while simultaneously increasing the likelihood of substance abuse, teen pregnancy, mental health diagnosis, criminal behavior, and physical injuries.

Child abuse includes physical, psychological, sexual, and emotional abuse. **Child neglect** includes failure to provide for educational, medical/dental, and physical needs as well as adequate supervision.



Child Abuse and Neglect: the Consequences

Child abuse and neglect lead to poor family outcomes

- Abused children are 25% more likely to experience teenage pregnancy.
- 75% of all high school dropouts have a history of abuse in their families.
- Children who experience child abuse and neglect are more than twice as likely to be arrested as a juvenile.
- Over 60% of individuals in treatment for drug abuse reported being abused or neglected as a child.
- 45% of abused children become adult alcoholics.
- 14% of all men in prison report being abused as a child, and 36% of all women in prison report being abused as a child.
- **One-third of all individuals who were abused or neglected as children will subject their children to maltreatment.**



How We Can Prevent and Stop Child Abuse and Neglect

EARLY INTERVENTION

Research by Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) highlights the first 3 years of life as an important intervention period for influencing a child's trajectory and the nature of the parent-child relationship. Studies on early intervention efforts found improvements in education outcomes and adult earnings among children exposed to high-quality early intervention programs (Campbell, et al., 2002; McCormick, et al., 2006; Reynolds, et al., 2001; Schweinhard, 2004; Seitz, et al., 1985).

HOME VISITATION

Home visitation models show gains in parent-child attachment, access to preventative medical care, parental capacity and functioning, and early identification of developmental delays (Daro, 2000). Longitudinal studies of home visitation services have found positive effects on school performance and behaviors through 6th grade, lower high school dropout rates, and higher high school graduation rates (Bradley & Gilkey, 2002; Levenstein, et al., 1998).

PARENT EDUCATION

Parent knowledge of child development and parenting practices significantly increases when they participated in the ***Parents as Teachers program***. At the same time, children participating in the program are significantly more advanced than comparison children in language, social development, problem solving, and other cognitive abilities.

PROMOTE PREVENTION

Toddlers who have participated in prevention programs specifically designed to prepare them for school are entering kindergarten demonstrating three factors associated with academic success—social competency, parental involvement, and literacy skills (Levenstein, et al., 2002; Allen & Sethi, 2003; Pfanenstiel, et al., 2002).

Don't Wait—Report Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

If a child is in immediate danger the police should be called immediately.

- In all other cases, reports should be made to the DFCS office in the county where the child lives.
- People who call to report suspected abuse/neglect **do not have to be sure maltreatment has occurred**. They simply report what they have seen or heard. The authorities will investigate and confirm whether or not abuse/neglect has occurred.
- Reports are confidential, and those who call do not have to give their name. However, it is most helpful to the child in the long run if the reporter is willing to give his or her name and address and, if necessary, testify in court.

Learn more by visiting <http://dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov>