



**Preserving Programs that Prevent
Child Abuse and Neglect
During a Time of Economic Crisis:**

A Research & Policy Conference

November 13, 2009

8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University
Robertson Hall (corner of Washington and Prospect Streets)**

In 2007, 720,000 children in the United States were identified by state child protective service agencies as having been abused or neglected, most often by one of their parents. Of these maltreated children, more than 1,500 died. Tens of thousands more suffered profound adverse effects on their health and development, up to and including permanent physical and mental impairments. The staggering toll that maltreatment took on children was matched by the costs it imposed on taxpayers. Nationwide, funding for child protective services—investigating and adjudicating maltreatment and providing services to families—totaled some \$25 billion. The costs for the hospitalization, mental health care, and law enforcement that stem directly from maltreatment pushed the total to \$33 billion.

Acknowledging the need to reduce both the human and fiscal costs of child maltreatment, social science researchers have begun focusing on strategies designed **to prevent** child abuse and neglect. This conference, which is based on the findings of the latest volume of *The Future of Children*, explores the rationale and means for implementing a prevention strategy, and looks at a range of specific prevention-oriented policies and programs: parenting programs, home-visiting programs, and ways for child protective service agencies to ramp up prevention efforts.

8:00 a.m.

Registration & Breakfast

8:45 a.m.

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Richard F. Keevey
Director
Policy Research Institute for the Region
Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs
Princeton University

9:00 a.m.

Overview of Future of Children, Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

Christina Paxson
Dean, Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs
Princeton University
Senior Editor, *The Future of Children*
Professor of Economics and Public Affairs, Princeton University

9:30 a.m.

Why Prevention is Critical and the Role of Community

While no one would argue that preventing the recurrence of maltreatment is unimportant, some are now calling for a new framework – one in which prevention efforts focus on investments in children, families, and communities. Our panelists will discuss how to realize the promise of primary prevention – addressing which prevention approaches are most effective and—because budgets are tight—helping us understand how best to reach the children and families at risk of maltreatment.

Research Overview:

Matthew W. Stagner
Executive Director, Chapin Hall
Senior Lecturer, Irving B. Harris School of Public Policy Studies,
University of Chicago

Policy/Practitioner Overview:

Reverend Darrell L. Armstrong
Shiloh Baptist Church

Moderator: Elisabeth Donahue

Executive Director
The Future of Children

10:30 a.m.

Prevention Programs for Families: Parenting Programs

Parenting programs come in many forms: residential programs for parents struggling with substance abuse and mental illness, programs designed to reduce child conduct problems (which may place children at risk of maltreatment), parent support groups, parent-child interactive therapy, and home-visiting programs. Because parenting programs take so many forms, it is important to identify the elements that make some programs more effective than others. Our panel will address the characteristics of successful programs and the most promising ways that parents can access services.

Research Overview

Richard P. Barth
Dean and Professor
School of Social Work
University of Maryland

Policy/Practitioner Overview

Maureen Braun-Scalera
Director, Family Intervention Services
Center for Family Success

Elizabeth Escobar
Program Coordinator
Family Intervention Services
Center for Family Success

Anthony Welch
Senior Consultant
Newark Now

Moderator:
Francie Zimmerman
Program Officer, Child Abuse Prevention
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

11:45-12:15

Lunch Served

12:15 pm

Lunchtime Keynote
Kimberly Ricketts
Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Introduction: Christina Paxson

1:00 p.m.

**Prevention Programs for Families: Strengthening Families
through Early Care and Home Visiting Programs**

Two popular strategies for delivering a range of family services are home visiting and early child care programs. While most child care and home-visiting programs do not focus exclusively on preventing abuse and neglect, such programs often offer services, such as social support, referrals to community resources, parenting “coaching,” health information, and educational materials, that may help prevent maltreatment. Our panelists will discuss the effectiveness of using early care and home visiting programs to not only prevent child maltreatment, but also to improve factors that may lead to less abuse and neglect: improved parenting skills, healthy child development, and economic self-sufficiency.

Research Overview:
Jeanne Brooks-Gunn
Virginia and Leonard Marx Professor of Child Development,
Teachers College and the College of Physicians and Surgeons,
Columbia University

Policy/Practitioner Overview:
Judy Langford
Fellow, Center for the Study of Social Policy
Project Director, Strengthening Families

Sunday Gustin
Home Visitation Program Manager
NJ Dept of Children and Families
Division of Prevention & Community Partnerships

Moderator:
Elisabeth Donahue

2:15 p.m.

The Role of the Child Protection System in Delivering Prevention Services

The child protection system's traditional focus on investigating reports and dealing with substantiated cases of maltreatment has been broadened in recent years to include prevention for families whose cases have been substantiated for abuse or neglect. Some argue that CPS agencies could further expand their role in prevention through services to families whose cases are unsubstantiated. Our panel will discuss whether these services are effective for families in the system and how delivery of such services could be improved for those in and outside CPS.

Research Overview:

Mark Courtney

Professor, School of Social Work

Executive Director, Partners for Our Children

Ballmer Endowed Chair for Child Well-Being

University of Washington

Policy/Practitioner Overview:

Cecilia Zalkind

Executive Director

Association for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ)

Moderator:

Mary Coogan

Assistant Director

Association for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ)

3:15 p.m

Closing Remarks:

Richard F. Keevey, Director

Policy Research Institute for the Region

Please register at, <http://www.princeton.edu/prior/events/conferences/preserving-child-maltreat/index.xml>