



Preventing Child Abuse

Each year about 700,000 children in the U.S. are confirmed as victims of child maltreatment, which includes both abuse and neglect. About 1600 of those cases are fatal. A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates the longterm cost to society for just one year of confirmed cases to be approximately \$124 billion. But no dollar amount can reflect the personal cost to the children who suffer such pain at the hands of adults. Here are four things you should know about abuse and how to prevent it:

I. Most child abuse is perpetrated by parents or other familiar adults

Although many people may think of “stranger danger” when they hear the phrase “child abuse,” about 80% of perpetrators are parents of the child victim. Another 6% are other relatives and about 4% are nonmarital partners of the victim’s parent.

II. Neglect is the most common form of maltreatment

About 78% of maltreatment cases involve child neglect, about 18% physical abuse and about 9% sexual abuse. But longterm research, including groundbreaking studies at the University of Minnesota, demonstrates that the psychological consequences of neglect are at least as significant as those of abuse.

III. Abuse often is passed on from one generation to the next, but it doesn’t have to be

Appropriate support and treatment for child victims can prevent them from growing up to repeat the patten. And recent research shows that, for parents who were abused or neglected by their parents, how you have come to think about the way you were parented can help you find a better way with your own children.

IV. Connecting children and their families to supportive resources is key

If you are concerned about abuse in your family or if you want to know what you can do to help prevent child abuse in your community, find links to both national and local resources at www.MomEnough.com.