



Primary Prevention and Child Abuse: Fostering Supportive Environments for Families

By Larry Cohen and Jessica Gould, Prevention Institute

This is a time when the knowledge about the causes of violence and how to prevent it is greater than ever. While violence is part of daily life in far too many homes and communities in the United States, there is an opportunity to make significant strides in preventing it. Primary prevention means taking action to build resilience and prevent problems before they occur. In the context of child abuse, primary prevention is defined as any intervention designed for the purpose of preventing child abuse *before* it occurs. Such an approach minimizes the suffering and costs associated with child abuse and promotes positive development.

A growing body of evidence shows that:

- Protecting young children from experiencing violence is an essential part of ensuring their healthy development.
- Early childhood is a critical time during which essential intellectual and emotional abilities form. Violence affects young children, resulting in a 're-wiring' of the child's brain in which survival skills are preferentially developed at the expense of learning and other social skills.

Child abuse is preventable. One resource is *First Steps: Taking Action Early to Prevent Violence*, which synthesizes current research, presents best practices, and offers a comprehensive strategy to inform violence prevention efforts targeted at the 0-5 population, including child abuse prevention. The report includes 15 specific recommendations, along with case studies and suggested activities at the individual, family, community, organizational and policy level. The report identifies a number of activities to prevent child abuse, including:

1. Ensure that organizations involved in child abuse prevention and child and family health develop strategies that address the underlying factors associated with child abuse.
2. Screen, treat, and support new parents, especially postpartum mothers, suffering from depression.
3. Ensure that caregivers have access to quality mental health and substance abuse services and incorporate them into services such as well-baby and home health visits, childcare centers, and family support centers.
4. Provide caregivers with information about child development and teach them stress management, problem solving and boundary-setting skills, and positive communication and discipline techniques.
5. Provide parents with respite care and support groups to help reduce parenting related anxiety and stress.
6. Train all professionals who work with or come in contact with young children to identify children who have experienced abuse and to refer affected children to developmentally and culturally appropriate care and support.

This information was excerpted from *First Steps: Taking Action Early to Prevent Violence* by Prevention Institute, Action Alliance for Children, and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California, with funding from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation. A complete report and policy guide is available at www.preventioninstitute.org. The Prevention Institute is a national center dedicated to improving community health and well-being by building momentum for effective primary prevention. The Institute's work is characterized by a commitment to community participation and promotion of equitable health outcomes among all social and economic groups.

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The Mandated Child Abuse Reporter Training Project

The Mandated Child Abuse Reporter Training Project has developed a standardized curriculum and training available for the estimated three million Californians who are mandated to report child abuse so that they may carry out their responsibilities properly.

The training is divided into six modules. The first three modules address such topics as an overview of the California Child Abuse Reporting Law, reporters' responsibilities and protections, and indicators of child abuse and neglect. Currently, there are also three profession-specific modules: one for childcare providers, one for clergy and one for educators.

The curriculum is designed to be used as a self-paced, online training or as a face-to-face format. The Board of Behavioral Science has approved both trainings for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers and

Registered Nurses. The online training was launched in March 2003, and over 300 people have completed the course. It is free, easy to navigate, and has a facilitated discussion forum. It is available at www.cattacenter.org/mandated/.

Face-to-face pilot trainings were conducted in El Dorado and Riverside counties. Participants went away from the trainings more educated and informed in their role as mandated reporters. Additional regional trainings will be held throughout California beginning July, 2003. For more information, or to express an interest in hosting a local training, contact Barbara Thorsen at (707) 664-3325 or barbara.thorsen@sonoma.edu.

The Mandated Child Abuse Reporter Training Project is funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) and produced by the California Institute on Human Services, Sonoma State University.

About the California Professional Society on the Abuse of Children

By Jayme Jones, Ph.D., President, CAPSAC Board

The California Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (CAPSAC) is the largest state chapter of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), a national professional organization dedicated to the social and psychological exploration of child abuse and the dissemination of accurate scientific information regarding the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of child abuse. CAPSAC is a multi-disciplinary organization representing the needs of abused children and the professionals who work with them in California. CAPSAC's primary focus is offering tools to child abuse service providers to enhance their ability to serve the child abuse community. Its statewide membership includes professionals from the fields of mental health, social work, general education, religious education, law enforcement, law, and medicine. It includes representatives from child abuse and evaluation and treatment centers, psychotherapists in private practice, attorneys from the district attorney's office, panel attorneys representing children in dependency court, judges, law enforcement officers and social workers.

CAPSAC provides training throughout California for its members and others in the child abuse community. Recent trainings have been held in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, San Diego, Orange County, and San Luis Obispo on a variety of child abuse related topics. To better serve the child abuse community, CAPSAC has partnered with several organizations, such as the Child Abuse Training and Technical

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Northern California Child Abuse Training & Technical Assistance (CATA) Center

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Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP)
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Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 445-2877 phone
http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/ChildAbuse_188.htm

Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Planning
1130 K Street, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 324-9197 phone
<http://www.ocjp.ca.gov/>

Farewell to Kris Schell Murphey

With this issue of the CATA newsletter, we bid farewell to Kris Schell Murphey. Kris has served as one of several talented CATA Project Coordinators. We will miss her vast knowledge, her calm demeanor, her passionate spirit and her generous heart. In wishing Kris the best of luck, we share with our readers the following notes of gratitude and Kris's farewell message to all.

I have been extremely fortunate to work with Kris Schell-Murphey over the years. Kris' unending support and technical assistance for MDIC/T's throughout the state from struggling teams, statewide Consortium efforts to enhancements for fully working Centers have positively impacted so many and will not be forgotten. While I am losing a tremendous colleague, I know that I have gained a friend. Good luck, Kris, in all your new endeavors.
—Fiona Tuttle, MDIC Coordinator, Placer County

I can hardly imagine the MDIC business without Kris. Having witnessed her work both as a participant and a trainer in events she managed, I couldn't ask for anyone with more competence, or more patience and tact. Work aside, we will miss her – her kindness and humor and willingness to help anyone with anything. I feel better when she's around. She will be missed.

—Kerry Locklear, LCSW, Redwood Children's Center

I can hardly believe it's been more than four years since I found myself coordinating my first CATA training, a Child Forensic Interview Training (CFIT) in Napa. Now, a handful of years later, the CFIT trainers have grown into valued colleagues, as have the others with whom I have had the pleasure to work these past few years—Child Abuse Prevention Council Coordinators, prosecutors, advocates, social workers, therapists, law enforcement professionals, and all the other people who make up the network of child abuse professionals in California.

In this job, I've traveled the state, trying each time to assess the county's conditions, bring helpful training, and provide technical assistance that makes a difference to those working on child abuse. While I did so, it was my pleasure to represent an outstanding and hard-working group of people back at the office who keep the ship afloat. Over the years the evaluations from participants and our experiences on the road have helped us to fine-tune the CATA machine, and the work has just become richer and more rewarding over the years.



Now, developments in my personal life are leading me to a new life in another state. I have a lot to look forward to, but I am regretful that the move will mean resigning my current staff position with CATA. I will really miss the personal and professional relationships that I have developed over the years with all of you, and the trainings and program development we did together. My long-term plan is to return to California within a couple of years. Meanwhile I am very excited to be able to continue some consultant work on specific CATA publications from New Mexico, and in that way stay connected.

Many thanks to all of you for your efforts on behalf of children—and thank you for making my experience at CATA both meaningful and enjoyable. It has really been fabulous to be able to be part of all the great work you all do.

—Kris Schell Murphey, Project Coordinator, CIHS

CATA Center Training Calendar

To register for CATA trainings and to view updated training calendar, see www.CATTACenter.org.

Understanding and Communicating with the Adolescent Victim
Orange July 18

Childhood Trauma: Consequences, Symptoms, Intervention and Treatment
Emeryville July 28

CFIT for Child Forensic Interview Specialists
Santa Barbara August

CFIT for Child Forensic Interview Specialists
Santa Rosa TBA

Other Events

Family Strengths Conference
Sacramento October 27-28

California Consortium Summit
San Francisco October 29

For more information regarding upcoming events or to request technical assistance, please call: Rebecca Foldvik (707) 664-3160 or Sonia Sandoval Edinger (805) 383-6273.

Announcing the Regional Resource Consortiums Project

The CATA Centers are pleased to announce the Regional Resource Consortiums project! Currently, eighty-six Child Abuse Prevention Councils exist across the state. California counties are mandated by the Welfare and Institutions Code (Section 18983) to support these councils in coordinating their efforts to prevent child abuse. Child Abuse Prevention Councils, or CAPCs, provide a variety of services to the community, some of which include promoting public awareness of available abuse and neglect resources; encouraging and facilitating training of professionals in prevention, intervention and treatment of abuse and neglect; recommending improvements in services to victims as well as families; and providing opportunity for interagency cooperation and coordination in all aspects of child abuse cases. Models for CAPCs vary from their funding streams to their main functions. Many CAPCs have come to realize that working together to share resources and ideas makes them more effective organizations. The CATA Centers are excited to be a part of helping to support these relationships within regions.

The CATA Centers have contracted with a consultant in each of eight regions in California in an effort to help build collaboration between the CAPCs within each region. Each consultant will be coordinating monthly meetings and helping the CAPCs to identify common goals and training needs. In addition, the consultant will work to help promote child abuse prevention and parent education goals in the local media. Many regions have been working together already and find the benefits of the relationships rewarding. By meeting with

fellow CAPCs, organizations are able to collaborate on training events, to pool resources for bulk discounts, and to network to solve issues that individual councils face. Those counties who have not yet had the opportunity to create a coalition are excited by the chance to talk to others in their area and discuss their strengths and weaknesses.

Each of the Regional Resource Consultants has conducted an initial meeting in their region in May and June. The consultants for each region are:

Los Angeles Regional Resource Consultant:

Marjorie Gins (626) 287-4086 gins@pacbell.net

Central Coast Regional Resource Consultant:

Ellen Gaynor (805) 640-8786

Central Regional Resource Consultant:

Robin Leppo (559) 226-2237 fccap@cvip.fresno.com

Sierra/Sacramento Regional Resource Consultant:

Brooke Allison (916) 652-4887 brookie@pacbell.net

Far Southern Regional Resource Consultant:

Bob Brunson (909) 778-0327 wrobertbrunson@msn.com

Bay Area Regional Resource Consultant:

Cyndy Doherty (415) 507-0181 cyndy@marinadvocates.org

North Coast Regional Resource Consultant:

Becky Atigedewe (707) 443-7935 batigedewe@hotmail.com

North East Regional Resource Consultant:

Betty Futrell (530) 241-5816 preventchildabuse@yahoo.com

We are looking forward to supporting these coalitions and have great expectations for their success.

About CAPSAC, Cont'd

Assistance (CATA) Centers. CAPSAC works collaboratively with the Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute (FVSAI) in their yearly International Family Violence Conference and provides scholarships as well as trainers for this Conference. CAPSAC has also sponsored and participated in the International Conference on Abuse and Disability.

CAPSAC has several active committees including a Clergy Coordinating Committee, a Research Award Committee, and an Amicus Committee. The Clergy Coordinating Committee is a multi-denominational committee that provides training, assistance and consultation throughout the state on religious and faith issues as they relate to child abuse. The Amicus Committee reviews legislation and provides input to amicus briefs related to child abuse cases. The Research Award Committee reviews submissions for two yearly \$500 awards for individuals conducting postgraduate research in the area of child abuse. There are also Northern and Southern California

committees that meet regularly to promote networking opportunities as well as planning local trainings.

Membership in CAPSAC has many benefits, such as discounts at CAPSAC-sponsored trainings and a subscription to the quarterly newsletter, *The Consultant*. *The Consultant* contains articles of interest to the child abuse community as well as information on upcoming conferences. Members are also welcome to attend meetings of the Board of Directors. Membership to CAPSAC can be accomplished by joining APSAC, which automatically provides membership to both organizations, or by joining CAPSAC as an affiliate member. Affiliate members receive *The Consultant* and training discounts, but are not entitled to voting privileges. For information about CAPSAC, contact Jayme Jones, Ph.D., Board President, by phone at (310) 704-8780 or e-mail at jjones13@csulb.edu. Written correspondence can also be sent to CAPSAC at P.O. Box 3639, Santa Monica, CA 90408.

Legislative Update

AB 111

AB 111, sponsored by Assembly Member Ellen Corbett of the 18th District, recognizing the extreme psychological and social problems which emotional abuse can cause, expands existing definitions of child abuse to include mental suffering and emotional abuse.

The bill text reads, in part: “Existing law makes it either a misdemeanor or a felony, punishable as specified, to willfully cause or permit any child to suffer, or to inflict thereon unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering, or having the care or custody of a child, willfully cause or permit the person or health of that child to be injured, or willfully cause or permit that child to be placed in a situation where his or her person or health is endangered, under circumstances or conditions likely to produce great bodily harm or death.

“This bill would further provide that willfully causing or permitting a child to suffer, or inflicting unjustifiable mental suffering on a child, constitutes a violation of this provision regardless of whether the act or acts causing the mental suffering also cause physical injury or harm to the child. The bill would also provide that evidence that a person has willfully caused, permitted, or inflicted mental suffering may include evidence of an injury to the intellectual or psychological capacity or the emotional condition of a child as specified.”

Included in acts which constitute infliction of mental suffering is “causing a child to witness domestic violence.” This amendment recognizes the devastating trauma that being witness to acts of domestic violence can create in the life of a child. This bill also provides that infliction of mental suffering be taken into consideration during custody proceedings.

This bill is currently under consideration in committee.

AB 930

AB 930, regarding child sexual abuse, was sponsored by Assembly Member Dennis Mountjoy. According to a press release on his website, “AB 930 applies to all licensed medical personnel, including physicians, surgeons, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, pharmacists and their assistants. They will be required to report within 24 hours their knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a minor is pregnant or has a sexually transmitted disease. This report may be made to police or sheriff’s department, the district attorney’s office, county child protective services, the California Highway Patrol or the California Attorney General’s offices.

“AB 930 provides that the appropriate investigating agency will investigate and prepare a report within one week. If

evidence of sexual abuse is found, the agency must move immediately to protect the child and prosecute the abuser.

“Failure to comply with reporting requirements will be a misdemeanor and constitute grave unprofessional conduct for licensed medical personnel. A third failure to comply will be a felony.”

Source: <http://republican.assembly.ca.gov/members/index.asp?Dist#59&Lang#1&Body#PressReleases&RefID#1019>

Date: June 3, 2003

This bill also makes it possible for victims and the families of victims to sue mandated reporters who fail to report signs of sexual abuse as required by law.

Currently, the bill is being held in committee, and the most recently scheduled hearing was canceled by request of the author. The future of this bill is uncertain.

SB 139

This bill, sponsored by State Senator James Brulte, slightly amends the Safely Surrendered Newborns law. The text of the bill reads:

“Existing law requires the person designated pursuant to these provisions to take physical custody of the child in accordance with certain requirements if the parent or other person having lawful custody of the child voluntarily surrenders physical custody to that person.

“This bill would eliminate the requirement that the child be surrendered to a designated employee on duty in the emergency room of a hospital or location designated by the board of supervisors. The bill would instead allow the surrender of the child to a safe-surrender site, as defined, at a hospital or location designated for this purpose by a county board of supervisors. The bill would also provide that certain information pertaining to the individual surrendering the child is confidential and would require safe-surrender sites to post signs, as prescribed by the State Department of Health Services.”

This bill is currently under review in committee.



Upcoming Family Strengths Conference

By Roberta Badal, Office of Child Abuse Prevention

The two-day 10th Annual Family Strengths Training Institute, sponsored by the California Department of Social Services and hosted by the Office of Child Abuse Prevention, will be held on October 27-28, 2003 at the Sacramento Downtown Convention Center and the Sheraton Grand Hotel. The registration fee for this two-day training is \$155 and includes two continental breakfasts, two luncheons, a hospitality reception Monday evening, admission to all general sessions and workshops, and materials. New this year will be a special one-day Family Violence Response Teams Institute which will take place October 29, 2003 at the Sheraton Grand Hotel. The \$70 registration fee for this additional event includes a continental breakfast, lunch, refreshment breaks, admission to the Institute and training materials.

There will be FREE Continuing Education Credits or Units for psychologists, nurses, and MFTs and/or LCSWs.

NEW THIS YEAR! Online registration at www.cce.csus.edu/conferences. Look for the 10th Annual Family Strengths Training Institute for registration information and updates on this year's Training Institute.

Recommended Reading and Browsing

Comprehensive Responses to Youth at Risk: Interim Findings from the SafeFutures Initiative

<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/183841.pdf>

Summary of the first three years of the SafeFutures Initiative.

Promising Practices: Drug-Free Communities Support Program

<http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/fs200111.pdf>

Overview of programs established with the Drug-Free Communities Support program grant.

Emerging Practices in Child Abuse and Neglect

www.calib.com/nccanch/prevention/emerging

Publication promoting greater visibility for prevention activities.

Preble, John and Broth, A. Nicholas. Male Victims of Same-Sex Abuse: Addressing Their Sexual Response. Overview of a framework for working with male victims of sexual abuse.