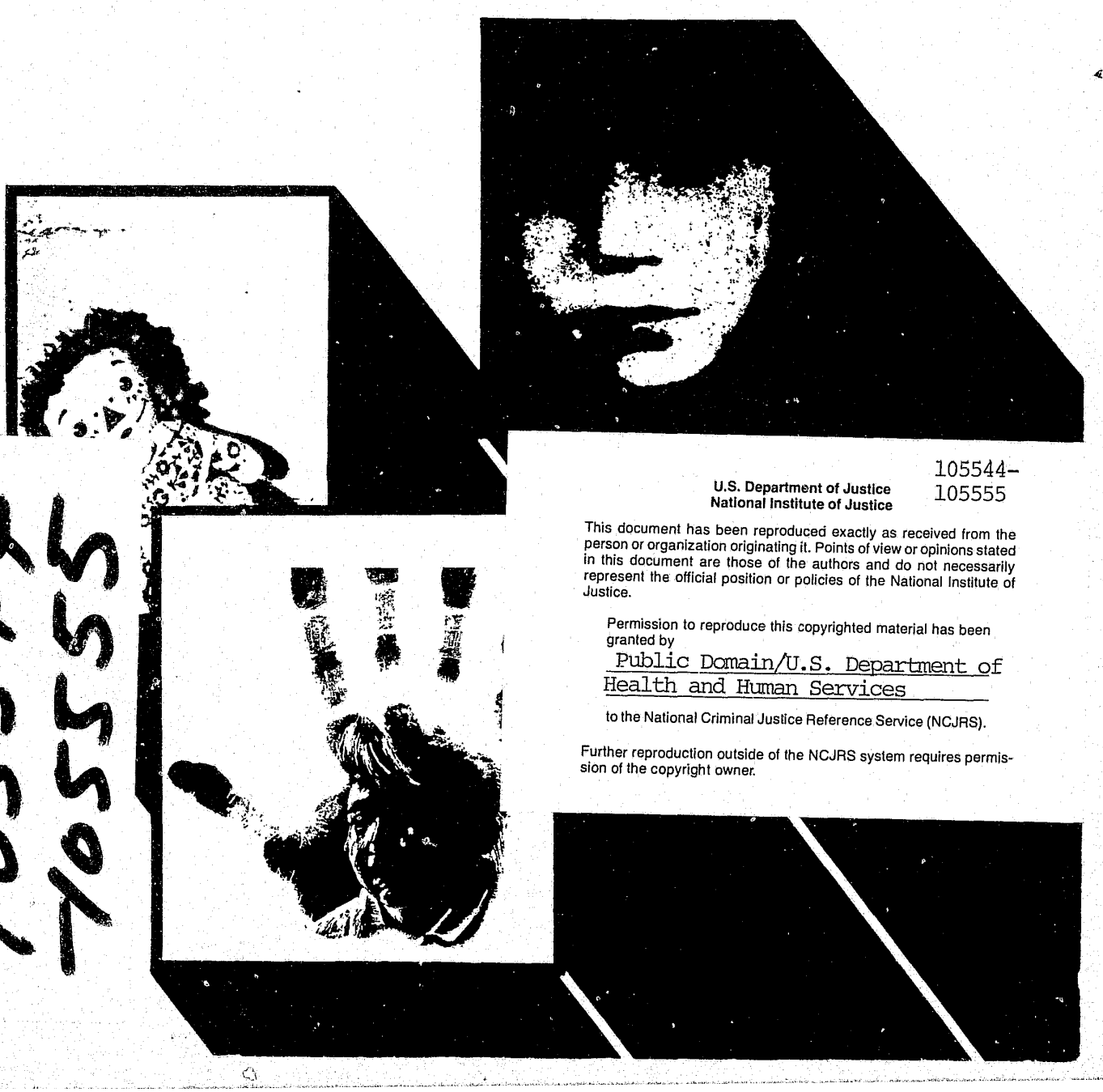
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Office of Human Development Services
Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau
National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect

FILM WITH EACH ARTICLE

hds human development services

Perspectives on Child Maltreatment in the Mid '80s

105544



105544
105555

Introduction

This is an important booklet — perhaps the most important booklet you will ever read. Theodore Roosevelt said, "To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

This booklet is about life — about children — about morals — and its purpose is to open doors, windows, *minds* to the problems of child abuse.

In 1982, we received almost one million reports of child maltreatment. Those reported cases represent a 9.2 percent increase over the 1981 total, and allow us to estimate that as many as *1.5 million American children* may be suffering abuse — physical, emotional, sexual.

Those statistics are startling. But they must do more than startle. They must stir all of us to action. The *prevention* — not correction but *prevention* — of child abuse has become critical. Our society is suffering, and will continue to suffer if we do nothing to stop this plague. We know that 90 percent of our juvenile delinquents have been, or currently are, abused children. Those wounded teenagers are headed for an adulthood of chaos and trauma. "Attention must be paid." Ours is not a responsible society unless we strengthen and broaden our educational efforts. Our action, or lack of it on child abuse prevention will affect tomorrow's generations.

The saddest statistics in the growing literature on child abuse are those which trace the "like father like son" — "like mother like daughter" syndrome. Generation after generation.

Our programs and the publication and distribution of this booklet, are efforts to break that cycle.

We welcome and will promote an ever increasing public dialogue on this national problem, so long closeted.

Margaret M. Heckler
Secretary HHS

FILM WITH EACH ARTICLE

Contents

4 **Combatting Child Abuse and Neglect**
Dorcas R. Hardy

6 **What Have We Learned About Child Maltreatment**
James Garbarino

8 **Stop Talking About Child Abuse**
Donna J. Stone and Anne H. Cohn

10 **Community Involvement in the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect** 105545
Peter Coolsen and Joseph Wechsler

15 **Child Neglect: An Overview** 105546
Aeolian Jackson

18 **How Widespread Is Child Sexual Abuse?**
David Finkelhor

20 **What We've Learned from Community Responses to Intrafamily Child Sexual Abuse** 105547
Martha M. Kendrick

24 **Emotional Abuse of Children** 105548
Dorothy Dean

28 **Overview: The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect** 105549

31 **Providing Child Protective Services to Culturally Diverse Families**
Roland H. Sneed

33 **Developmentally Disabled, Abused and Neglected Children**
Mark D. Souther

35 **The Revolution in Family Law: Confronting Child Abuse** 105550
Howard A. Davidson

39 **The Military's Response to Child Abuse and Neglect**
Suzanna Nash

Programs and Projects

41 **Working with Neglecting Families**
Marilyn Hall, Angelica DeLaCruz and Peggy Russell 105551

45 **The Family Support Center: Early Intervention for High-Risk Parents and Children** 105552
Yvonne L. Fraley

49 **Working Together to Treat Adolescent Abuse** 105553
Michael Baizerman, Nan Skelton and Shirley Pierce

54 **Special Child Advocates: A Volunteer Court Program** 105554
Michael Blady

58 **Child Abuse Prevention Starts Before Birth**
Pauline Moulder 105555

60 **Bubbylonian Encounter**

61 **Reporting Rights and Responsibilities**

67 **Resources**

Combatting Child

by Dorcas R. Hardy
Assistant Secretary for Human Development Services

April has been designated as "Child Abuse Prevention Month," and it gives me great pleasure to present this special collection of articles related to child abuse prevention.

We all have a vested interest in the well-being of children. As Abraham Lincoln said:

"A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting, and when you are gone, attend to those things which you think are important. You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they are carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your cities, states and nations. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities, and corporations ... the fate of humanity is in his hands."

We at the Federal level recognize that substantial progress has been made over the past decade in discovering, dealing with, and most important, in preventing the problems of child abuse in our society. The greater reality is how much more needs to be done. We are beginning to have a firmer grasp of the causative familial behavior which is the root of child maltreatment. In May of 1982 a study called "Familial Correlates of Selected Types of Child Abuse and Neglect" was published. It suggests that family circumstances may be predictive of different types of child abuse and neglect. Gaining a better understanding of the differences between functional and dysfunctional families will have an impact not only on prevention and intervention but treatment efforts as well.

Pinpointing and then working with the dysfunctional family should lead to the ultimate goal: the abolition of child abuse. It takes a total commitment on the part of all who toil in the field of child abuse prevention to achieve this goal.

In this collection are articles written by many of those who toil in the field, and those who have a total commitment to the field of child abuse prevention. The Reagan Administration, too, has a total commitment to child abuse prevention.

We are at a watershed in the field of child abuse prevention. Much has been accomplished and achieved over this past decade. Substantial Federal resources have been directed at researching problems related to child abuse, testing service models and demonstrating ways in which services can be improved.

Solving the problems related to child abuse nationally begins and ends at the community level. Child abuse is a national concern, but it is a community concern first and it must have a community answer. Child abuse will never be solely resolved from Washington.

This is not to imply that the Federal Government lacks a role in dealing with child abuse related problems. Indeed, the role of serving as leader, broker and catalyst remains clearly a tremendous challenge and goal.

Our Federal dollars should be directed toward states, localities and local organizations. We especially need to foster better working relationships and two-way communications with the states.

Additionally, the Federal Government has a responsibility to develop improved management and better, more efficient coordination among limited Federal resources. Our starting premise is that the well-being of the public is primarily a responsibility of individuals, families and the communities in which they live. When social services are needed, they are best defined and administered at the level closest to the problem—state and local governments, local community programs and private voluntary organizations. We cannot afford overlap, duplication and waste among programs; we have a significant stewardship responsibility which requires

intergrated, effective programs.

We must use limited Federal resources wisely. We need to have better coordination with other available resources at the Federal, state and local levels. That means leveraging federal dollars. It also means concentrating efforts more effectively on brokering and disseminating the most successful projects and programs.

Another leadership challenge for us on the Federal level is to identify new problems areas and uncharted paths that need attention and direction. Child fatalities are a good illustration of this charge. It is almost inconceivable to me that years after we have systematically collected reporting data, we still have a sketchy and incomplete sense of this most tragic form of child abuse nationally.

Another example of this charge relates to developing alternatives to our protection systems. We know, for example, that many families and children reported for known or suspected child abuse and neglect could be much better served by individuals and organizations outside the child protective services system. Likewise, we realize that many children in grave danger or at high risk who need protection do not get reported. It is time to create alternatives, and recognize that there may be better choices to child protective services in certain situations—not child protection.

Child abuse is not a new phenomenon nor is it endemic to one society or another. It is a problem that demands that each and every one of us think more about the value of our children. And just what is the value of a child? There is no price tag high enough, and no words quite adequate to answer this question. Suffice it to say, then, that our children are our past, our present, and most assuredly our future. It is to them that future generations will look for answers and solutions. If we were

to look toward the future through the eyes of a child, we would see only cotton candy, balloons and family outings. Through the eyes of an abused child we would see but gloom.

We, as individuals and as a society, owe it to our children, to ourselves and to the future of this country to prevent child maltreatment of any kind. And together we can strive to prevent child abuse from continuing to rear its ugly head.

With our capabilities, dreams, beliefs and dedication we can help to make everyone understand about kids: You really can't beat'em.

What Have We Learned About Child Maltreatment?

by James Garbarino

James Garbarino, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Human Development, The Pennsylvania State University.

In January 1981 I informally surveyed 13 nationally recognized research experts on child abuse and neglect[1] to seek some consensus on what we have learned about child maltreatment. That survey revealed that while we are making progress, major questions remain unanswered.[2] This is still true three years later as I update that earlier report. The empirical or clinical studies of child maltreatment now number in excess of one thousand, and each study contains numerous "findings." However, the number of established general "facts" remains relatively small. The panel of experts, together with my own findings, suggest the following as facts established by research evidence:

- Much of the confusion and uncertainty in studying, legislating against, treating and preventing child maltreatment derives from the variety and lack of precision in the definitions used in research, policy, law and practice. For example, estimates of the incidence of child maltreatment range from the tens of thousands, if only life threatening assault and total failure to offer care are used as criteria, to the millions, if we define maltreatment as any form of damaging treatment (emotional, sexual, educational or physical). Nonetheless, analysis based upon a comparison of officially reported cases (as compiled by the American Humane Association) and a broader survey of cases known to any community professional dealing with families (the National Incidence Study supported by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect) is reassuring in telling us that we *are* beginning to get reliable information about incidence and prevalence. Real progress has also been made in differentiating among physical, sexual and psychological maltreatment. Moreover, preliminary studies of adolescent victims of maltreatment (approximately 25 percent of the total number of reported cases) suggest that the causes, correlates and consequences probably are somewhat different from cases involving children, and that sex differences in victimization exist across the period from infancy to adolescence.

Even given the problem of definition, however, we do know something about the factors that contribute to child maltreatment:

- It is clear that both psychological and social factors play a role in producing child maltreatment, although debate continues about which is more important.
- Low income and other aspects of social stress are associated with higher rates of child maltreatment, and this was evident in increased rates of child maltreatment during the recent recession and its accompanying increase in unemployment. This relationship appears stronger with respect to infants and young children than with adolescents.
- Some cultures, societies and communities have more child maltreatment than others. Economic pressure, values concerning the role of the child in the family, attitudes about the use of physical punishment and the degree of social support for parents seem to account for these differences. Ethnic and cultural differences appear to exist in both overall incidence and in differences in the relative frequency of different forms of maltreatment—abuse vs. neglect, for example.
- Poor general coping and parenting skills (including those directly involved in discipline) play a significant role in child maltreatment. Social isolation is associated with a greater likelihood of child maltreatment, both because abuse-prone individuals isolate themselves and because they lack the means to participate in their communities.
- Personal characteristics of parents (such as untimely childbearing, physical illness and poor ability to empathize) and children (aversive crying and unresponsiveness, for example) can substantially increase the likelihood of child maltreatment, *particularly* when social stress and social isolation characterize the family. These find expression in relative lack of success in dealing non-violently with problematic behavior by children.
- A history of maltreatment in the parent's background increases the likelihood of child maltreatment, as does the contemporary presence of interspousal violence between spouses.
- Families involved in child maltreatment tend to exhibit a pattern of day-to-day interaction characterized by a low level of social exchange, low responsiveness to positive behavior and high responsiveness to negative behavior. This style may extend beyond the family to the workplace and to school.
- Although many abusive parents exhibit barely adequate personality characteristics, mental illness plays a very small overall role in child maltreatment.

Based on analyses of community responses to child maltreatment, we know that:

- It is very difficult if not impossible to identify reliably *before the fact*, families that will mistreat their children. However, predicting the degree of risk is possible, based upon the known correlates of maltreatment.
- Most community responses to specific cases of maltreatment have been ineffective.
  - ☐ To reduce risks to the youngster, protective services should hold as their foremost goal an adequate, permanent family placement for the child. This means preventing removal, if possible, by offering supportive and therapeutic services to the family sufficient to protect the child *and* improve family functioning. If removal is necessary, a realistic decision should be reached quickly regarding permanent placement of the child. If the goal is returning the child to the family, then the family should remain in contact with the child in foster care and rehabilitative services should be offered. If the child is to be permanently separated from the family, the child should be placed in a new *permanent* home as soon as possible.
  - ☐ Conventional casework approaches typically result in a 50 percent success rate (at best). Some intensive and resource-laden programs report very low recidivism rates with selected clientele, however.
  - ☐ Interdisciplinary teams for case management and development of community services are best. Paraprofessional and volunteer staff in conjunction with mutual help groups can provide effective social support and concrete aid in meeting day-to-day problems. Comprehensive implementation of high quality programs dependent upon heavy involvement of professional staff exceeds current and projected levels of fiscal resources devoted to protective services. Using paraprofessionals, volunteers and mutual help groups is highly cost-effective under most circumstances. Teaching parents skills for successfully handling the problem behavior of children in a non-violent manner is often useful.
  - ☐ Most current treatment addresses parents. Exclusive treatment of parents does not appear to reverse damage of children, however. Generally, children receive no treatment at all, and they may even be harmed by outside intervention that places them in foster or institutional care that is often traumatic in its own right. Even if the initial

placement is benign, the risk of repeated placements is high and a matter of great concern. The issues involved in serving adolescent victims differ somewhat from those involved in serving the needs of children. Resolving custody issues and dealing with negative behavior appear to be greater problems with adolescents.

- ☐ Prevention remains largely unexplored, but results of some studies document its potency and cost-effectiveness. One preventive intervention that has received consistent support is family-centered childbirth.

We know that child maltreatment and the family environments associated with it pose a clear and present developmental danger to the children involved:

- Specific acts of maltreatment produce acute and chronic medical problems that impair growth and development.
- Even if specific acts of abuse are not present, growing up in a family at high risk for maltreatment is associated with developmental damage.
- Children who experience maltreatment may be at substantially increased risk for later delinquency, psychiatric disorders, school failure, self destructive behavior, domestic violence and sexual dysfunction, depending upon the nature, age of onset, duration and family climate of the maltreatment. Existing research does not include sufficient large-scale, longitudinal and well-controlled studies to permit a definitive conclusion about the precise effects of maltreatment, however. Of particular concern are two issues: the role of sexual abuse in generating later sexually dysfunctional behavior and the dynamic links between child abuse and juvenile delinquency.

In short, we know that we are facing a complex problem that requires a wide range of strategies and techniques in the areas of research, public policy and social services. No simple analysis or response is sufficient.

[1]The experts surveyed were Jay Belsky, Robert Burgess (Pennsylvania State University); Anne Cohn (National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse); Elizabeth Elmer (Parental Stress Center); Robert Friedman (Florida Mental Health Institute); Richard Gelles (University of Rhode Island); Ray Helfer (Michigan State University); Roy Herrenkohl (Lehigh University); James Kent (The Children's Institute); Michael Lauderdale (The University of Texas); Harold Martin (University of Colorado Health Sciences Center); Eli Newberger (The Children's Hospital Medical Center); and Michael Wald (Stanford University Law School).

[2]J. Garbarino, "What We Know About Child Maltreatment," *Children and Youth Services Review, 5,* 1983.

Stop Talking

by Donna J. Stone and Anne H. Cohn

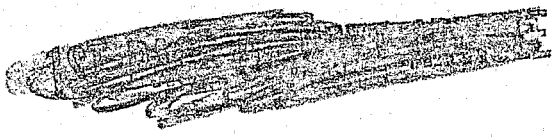
Donna J. Stone and Anne H. Cohn are Founder and Executive Director, respectively, of the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, Chicago.

It's time to stop talking about child abuse and start doing something to stop it. In the last decade, most of the public has been made aware of the physical and emotional aspects of child abuse and, more recently, of sexual abuse. In addition, professionals and volunteers have learned to work together.

Still, child abuse rates are increasing nationwide. According to a survey by the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA), 45 out of 50 states experienced an increase in child abuse in 1983. Thirty-eight indicated that the severity of cases had increased. The number of deaths due to abuse is also on the rise. And each day more stories like the following are told:

"Dear friend,
"I have problem that I don't understand, and I am seeking any help I can get to try and stop it. I have a 16-month-old son, and my husband and I fight in front of him quite often. The last fight we had my husband stormed out of the house, and I went after him leaving the baby alone. I came back later and saw that he had slammed his fingers in the sliding door and was crying. I put him in the playpen and shouted, Nobody gives a damn about you, so just stay there! Then I went out . . . ."

About Child Abuse



In her particular letter to the NCPCA the woman told of her volatile marriage, of the constant arguing, insults and angry blows, and of her tiny, frightened child who watched it all. She said that whenever her husband made her feel hurt or sad, she made her child feel the same way. "I feel so guilty afterwards," "she wrote, "but of course it's already too late then. There is something in my head that's not right and makes me do it."

Why is child abuse increasing? The reasons are multiple. Certainly, greater public awareness helps account for the rise in reported cases. But our society's neglected values about children and our tolerance of all kinds of violence seem to allow child abuse to occur and permit it to continue. Economic pressures on families can certainly take their toll.

But perhaps most important, as a nation we have been responding to the child abuse problem after the fact. We have focused too much on remedial attention and not dedicated ourselves to stopping the problem *before* it occurs.

It's time to reduce child abuse. Some prevention programs have begun to show success rates. Enough programs exist to prove that prevention can be a reality. And while prevention programs seem to have proliferated recently, more are needed.

We need to greatly increase the numbers of prevention programs that show promise. doing so, perhaps we could reduce child abuse by at least 20 percent by the end of this decade, rather than see it rise. We are personally committed to this goal.

NCPCA has organized a network of thousands of concerned citizens to provide the vehicle for bringing together volunteers in community-based efforts to prevent abuse. NCPA chapters throughout the country are based on the premise that actual prevention best takes place on a community level, and that to be effective, a strong prevention movement must mobilize efforts on three different levels—local, state and national—and from all sectors—corporate and lay.

We know that providing parenting education and support for new and young parents is a particularly important approach to prevention. Many successful prevention progrms use trained volunteers to offer ongoing parent support to new parents. Support or self-help groups, not only for those who have been abusive but also for those who have been victims of abuse, are also effective.

Our experience shows that young children benefit from programs that help them develop skills to protect themselves against abuse. Many of these programs use puppets, plays or movies, like the popular sexual abuse prevention play, "Bubbylonian Encounter," developed by our Kansas Chapter, and the program for latchkey children, "I'm In Charge." Both are being replicated by other chapters across the nation. A unique program to

"Take time out. Don't take it out on your kid."