

# WASHINGTON MEMORANDUM

## NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE COALITION --- *Update*

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### 1. INCIDENCE STUDY SHOWS DECREASE IN CHILD MALTREATMENT

The total number of maltreated children declined in the United States by 19% from 1993 to 2005, according to the [Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect](#) (NIS-4), released this month by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The decrease is especially dramatic since the rate of maltreatment between the second incidence study in 1986 and the third in 1993 had increased by 56%.

The national incidence study, periodically mandated by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), is meant to provide a perspective on the scope of the problem beyond the cases investigated by child protective service (CPS) agencies. The incidence study includes not only children known to CPS, it also obtains data on other children – identified by community professionals -- who were maltreated but not reported to CPS or who were screened out by CPS without investigation.

The NIS has consistently found that the majority of maltreated children identified by the incidence study do not receive an investigation by CPS, suggesting that the system remains strapped for adequate resources. According to the study's authors, "Children who do not receive a CPS investigation represent an enigma to the study."

News comments offer various reasons for the decline in incidence of child maltreatment:

- State and federal government investments in evidence-based prevention strategies, such as home visitation, parent support and parenting education.
- Increased public awareness and public intolerance around child maltreatment.
- Expanded use of medications enabling potential child abusers – especially sexual abusers -- to treat the conditions that otherwise might have led them to molest a child.

It was also noted that the NIS-4 study was conducted prior to the current economic recession which has prompted reports of increased domestic violence and child maltreatment in families hit hard by unemployment and financial distress. Given that the report finds children of unemployed parents had two times the rate of maltreatment overall, and that children living in households below \$15,000 were neglected seven times the rate of other children, the current situation puts more children at risk at a time when the prevention infrastructure is experiencing budget cuts.

The HHS-funded study uses two standards to identify the incidence of child maltreatment in the United States: an objective "harm standard" requiring demonstrable harm in order to be classified

as abuse or neglect; and a more inclusive “endangerment standard” counting children who were not yet harmed by abuse or neglect but endangered by maltreatment.

Using the more stringent harm standard definition, more than 1.25 million children experienced maltreatment during the NIS–4 study year (2005–2006). This corresponds to one child in every 58 in the United States. A large percentage (44%, or an estimated total of 553,300) were abused, while most (61%, or an estimated total of 771,700) were neglected.

Most of the abused children (58%) experienced physical abuse (an estimated total of 323,000). Slightly less than one-fourth were sexually abused (24%, an estimated 135,300), and slightly more than one-fourth were emotionally abused (27%, an estimated 148,500).

From 1993 to 2005-2006, the numbers of sexually abused children under the harm standard decreased by 38%; numbers of physically abused children decreased by 15%; and the number of emotionally abused children fell by 27%. The declines in sexual abuse and physical abuse are consistent with trends in CPS data gathered annually by HHS for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

The incidence of neglect under the harm standard showed no statistically reliable changes, neither overall nor in any neglect category -- physical, emotional, or educational neglect.

When looking at the severity of maltreatment – both abuse and neglect -- suffered by children measured by the harm standard, the decrease in incidence was significant at 57%.

The more inclusive endangerment standard revealed nearly 3 million children (an estimated 2,905,800) suffered maltreatment in 2005–2006 – one in every 25 children in the United States. The numbers of neglected children at 77% of the total were higher than under the harm standard. Of those children suffering neglect, more than half – 53% -- were physically neglected.

Under the endangerment standard of maltreatment, while decreases were recorded in the incidence of abuse and neglect, the study found a significant increase in the incidence of emotional neglect: the estimated number of emotionally neglected children more than doubled, rising from 584,100 in 1993 to 1,173,800 in 2005–2006 (a 101% increase in number).

Children in low socioeconomic status households were more than 3 times as likely to be abused and about 7 times more likely to be neglected than other children. The findings on strong correlations between socioeconomic status and all categories of maltreatment are consistent with earlier NIS findings on household income. Still, the report asserts that such “observations cannot be plausibly explained by the claim that lower socioeconomic families are simply more visible to the community professionals who provide most of the data. The NIS sentinels observe substantial numbers of children and families at the middle-and upper-income levels. Sentinels in schools alone recognized the majority of the maltreated children.”

Among other findings reported by NIS-4 are the following:

- For the first time, the National Incidence Study reported on the relationship between the incidence of maltreatment and a child’s disability. Children with confirmed disabilities had significantly lower rates of physical abuse and sexual abuse, but higher rates of emotional abuse and serious injury.
- The incidence of maltreatment and the severity of injury was higher for children whose parents were unemployed and lowest for those with parents in the workforce.
- Children living with their married biological parents universally had the lowest rate, whereas those living with a single parent who had a cohabiting partner in the household had more than 8 times the rate of maltreatment.

- The incidence rates were higher for children in the largest families (with 4 or more children), and lowest for children in families with two children.
- The majority of all children were maltreated by their biological parents. A physically abused child was more likely to sustain serious injury when the abuser was not a parent.
- A perpetrator's alcohol use and drug use each applied to 11% of the cases, while mental illness was a factor in the maltreatment of 7% of the children. Alcohol use was most involved in emotional abuse (22% of the children), while drug use was most involved in emotional neglect (21% of the children). The perpetrator's mental illness was most often cited as a factor in emotional abuse (17% of the children).

The professionals involved in the incidence survey, called "sentinels," work in agencies where they typically encounter children and families. The incidence study sentinels -- more than 10,700 sentinels in 122 counties across the country -- represent staff that have contact with children and families in police and sheriffs' departments, public schools, day care centers, hospitals, voluntary social service agencies, mental health agencies, the county juvenile probation and public health departments, public housing, and shelters for runaway and homeless youth and for victims of domestic violence.

The NIS-4 report recommends future analysis on several issues raised by the findings. For example, the increase in the rate of emotional neglect since 1993 could, in part, signify a real increase in the occurrence of maltreatment, but it might also reflect a change in policy and practice since a number of CPS systems increased their collaborations with agencies that serve domestic violence and alcohol and drug problems. The rise in the incidence of emotional neglect incidence might, the report suggests, "predominantly reflect the heightened CPS attention to these problems, which are involved in certain types of emotional neglect."

Further study is needed, also, in analyzing the interrelationships among the different factors associated with the incidence of maltreatment, such as parents' employment, household income, family size, and family structure and living arrangement. In addition, for the first time the NIS-4 found race differences in the incidence of maltreatment, with higher incidence rates for Black children, also demanding further analysis.

The NIS uses standard definitions of abuse and neglect, so its estimates of the numbers of maltreated children and the incidence rates have a standard meaning across multiple states and agencies. Children submitted by sentinels and those described by CPS were evaluated according to the standard definitions of abuse and neglect used in the NIS.

Several supplementary studies are included in NIS-4 to help understand the countable children who do not receive CPS attention, one on CPS structure and practice, one on CPS screening policies, and another on characteristics of the sentinels used by the incidence study.

## **2. OBAMA BUDGET: \$10 MILLION CAPTA GRANTS FOR PREVENTION**

On February 1, the Obama administration released its proposed budget for FY 2011, with most spending on child and family services frozen, as expected, at the current year's funding levels. In the [budget request for the Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\) Administration for Children and Families](#), the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) discretionary grant funding is among the few programs with an increase in the funding line.

The President's budget asks Congress for \$10 million in additional spending to establish a new competitive grant program for states to support the increased use of evidence-based and evidence-informed child maltreatment prevention programs. The new grants will focus on encouraging states to use existing funding streams to support community-based prevention

activities rooted in a strong evidence base. Funds also will be used to insure that child abuse and neglect prevention is integrated with other state systems for children.

**PRESIDENT'S BUDGET FY 2011 PROPOSED FUNDING:  
SELECTED CHILDREN AND FAMILY PROGRAMS  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

(in millions)	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011 Obama
<i>CAPTA State Grants</i>	\$ 26.535	\$ 26.535	\$ 26.535
<i>CAPTA Discretionary Grants</i>	\$ 41.757	\$ 29.020	\$ 39.020
<i>CAPTA Community-Based Prevention</i>	\$ 41.689	\$ 41.689	\$ 41.689
<i>Title XX, Social Services</i>	\$1,700.00	\$1,700.00	\$1,700.00
<i>Title IV-B(1), Child Welfare Services</i>	\$ 281.744	\$ 281.744	\$ 281.744
<i>Title IV-B(2), Safe &amp; Stable Families</i>	\$ 408.311	\$ 408.311	\$ 408.311
<i>Title IV-E, Foster Care Assistance</i>	\$4,705.000	\$4,604.000	\$4,539.000
<i>Head Start</i>	\$7,112.786	\$7,234.783	\$8,223.958
<i>Independent Living</i>	\$ 140.000	\$ 140.000	\$ 140.000
<i>Title IV-E, Adoption Assistance</i>	\$2,324.000	\$2,501.000	\$2,459.000
<i>Child Welfare Training &amp; Research</i>	\$ 7.207	\$ 27.207	\$ 27.207
<i>Child Care and Development Block Grant</i>	\$2,127.081	\$2,127.081	\$2,927.081
<i>Ind. Living Training Vouchers</i>	\$ 45.351	\$ 45.351	\$ 45.351
<i>Adoption Opportunities</i>	\$ 26.379	\$ 26.379	\$ 39.332
<i>Abandoned Infants</i>	\$ 11.628	\$ 11.628	\$ 11.628
<i>Runaway/Homeless Youth Program</i>	\$ 97.234	\$ 97.734	\$ 97.734
<i>Prevention Abuse of Runaways</i>	\$ 17.721	\$ 17.971	\$ 17.971
<i>Family Violence/Shelters</i>	\$ 127.776	\$ 130.052	\$ 140.00
<i>Maternal/Child Health Block Grant</i>	\$ 662.121	\$ 662.121	\$ 673.187
<i>Mentoring Children of Prisoners</i>	\$ 49.314	\$ 49.314	\$ 49.314
<i>Community Services Block Grant</i>	\$ 700.000	\$ 700.000	\$ 700.000
<i>Domestic Violence Hotline</i>	\$ 3.209	\$ 3.209	\$ 4.50
<i>CDC/Intentional Injury Prevention &amp; Control</i>	\$ 145.242	\$ 148.615	\$ 147.570
<i>Kinship Guardianship</i>	\$ 14.000	\$ 56.000	\$ 78.000

Missing from the 2011 budget request is any funding for the evidence-based home visitation initiative funded in FY08 and FY09 through CAPTA's discretionary grants. The \$13 million funding to 17 grantees and in support of a cross-site evaluation was dropped by Congress in the FY10 appropriations bill, with the conference report to the Labor/HHS appropriations noting that funds were not included for these activities in FY 2010 since mandatory funding was expected to be provided in health care reform legislation. Officials at HHS are continuing to develop an approach to extend the funding for these home visitation grantees beyond the current fiscal year.

Other CAPTA grant funds are frozen at 2010 levels in the Obama budget for 2011: basic state grants for improvement of state child protective services at \$26.535 million, and community-based child abuse prevention grants at \$41.689 million.

The Family Violence Prevention and Services program would increase by \$10 million, with \$4 million used to fund 12 new discretionary grants for promising practices to enhance services for children exposed to domestic violence. The grants would support expanding child advocacy staffing in shelters and non-residential domestic violence services, offering training and technical assistance, and outreach to child welfare agencies and schools to enhance their response to children's exposure to domestic violence. The remaining \$6 million will go to respond to the increased demand for emergency domestic violence shelter services, especially to provide specific services for children in shelter with their non-abusive parent.

The Obama budget includes the largest one-year increase in child care funding in over 20 years with \$1.6 billion above the FY 2010 level for a total of \$6.6 billion to serve 235,000 more children than could be served without the additional funds in 2011.

Funding for Head Start and Early Head Start, requested at \$8.2 billion in the President's FY 2011 budget, would also get a substantial increase – an additional \$989.175 million to sustain services to the approximately 64,000 additional children supported by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding in 2010, and to support a full 2 percent cost of living adjustment to offset inflationary costs. According to budget documents, the Office of Head Start plans to promote community efforts to integrate early childhood services.

At the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, the administration's 2011 budget would dedicate \$5 million to support the National Violent Death Review System (NVDRS), which gathers data from state and local agencies, medical examiners, coroners, police, crime labs, and death certificates to provide states with a more accurate and complete understanding of the violent deaths in their state. The NVDRS aims to fill the gaps in current data collection that does not always provide the information needed to assess accurately the facts of a violent death. For example, death certificates provide data on the victim but do not provide information on the perpetrator, information more commonly found in police reports.

CDC also plans to continue to support research to identify effective strategies to prevent child maltreatment, and to publicize and disseminate key findings.

The FY 2011 request for the Adoption Opportunities program represents an increase of \$12.953 million from 2010, due to the redirecting of "more narrowly targeted and duplicative Infant Adoption Awareness and Special Needs Adoption programs currently funded under the Children's Health Act".

### **3. SENATE CONFIRMS SAMUELS AS HHS COMMISSIONER**

On February 11, the Senate voted to confirm the nomination of Bryan Samuels as Commissioner of the HHS Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). Prior to being tapped for the position in the Obama administration, Samuels served as chief of staff for the Chicago Public School system. He also previously served as Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. As a youth, Samuels lived in a residential school for disadvantaged children for over eleven years, an experience he credits with strengthening his commitment to supporting programs that could make a difference in the lives of at-risk children.

The Senate also approved the nomination of Ellen Murray as Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources. She has served since 1999 as staff director for the Senate Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations, and previously served in the Office of General Counsel at HHS.

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