

# CHILDREN'S NETWORK BULLETIN



**Children's Network is moving!**  
**As of July 1, our new address is:**  
**2320 Courage Drive**  
**Suite 107**  
**Fairfield, CA 94533**

**SPRING/SUMMER**  
**2000**

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## COMMUNITY EFFORTS TO ENHANCE THE HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES UNDERWAY

The Children's Network recently received a three year grant from The California Endowment for \$675,000. The grant will be used to create a Children's Budget and Report Card for Solano County. Monies will also be used to involve parents and the community in the planning process for improving children's services in the county. The overall goal is to change local children's services systems to better support the needs of children and families.

One of the strengths of this project is its highly collaborative nature. Partners in this common effort include Solano County Department of Health and Social Services, the Solano Coalition for Better Health, and the Family Resource Centers in each city of Solano County. The Children's Network was the agency designated by the collaborative to act as the lead in this project.

The Children's Budget portion of the grant will focus on identifying ways in which our community can reinvest and locate funds to maximize the amount of funding that can be drawn to support

child health and well being. The Children's Report Card will look at the status of the health and well being of children in Solano County. The Children's Budget and Report Card will be a series of reports developed for the use of policy makers to increase effectiveness and accountability for programs. The reports will also focus on educating the entire community on children's issues and on the importance of having parent and community involvement in shaping the support services structure to better meet the needs of families and children. Some of the objectives of the project include:

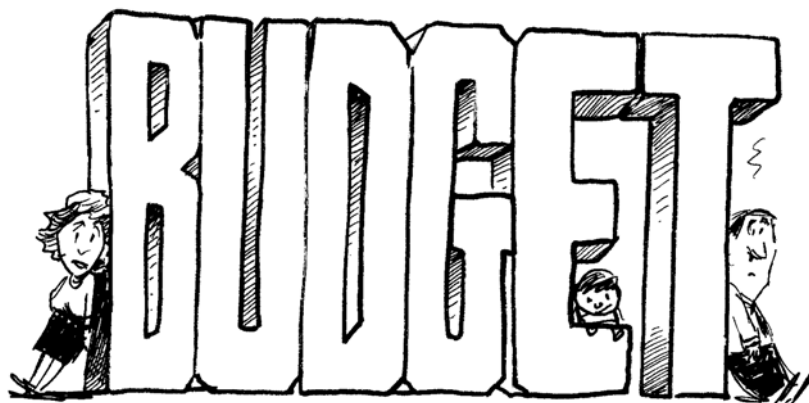
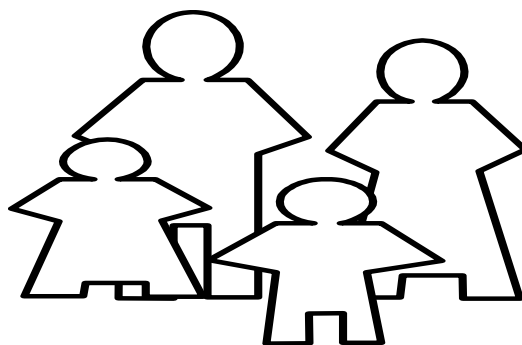
- increasing childhood immunization rates
- increasing parent participation in child development and parenting classes
- increasing child-care provider training
- increasing public awareness of the condition of local children
- increasing parent participation in planning for children's services available in the community.

**CHILDREN'S BUDGET AND REPORT CARD FOR SOLANO COUNTY** (continued)

A key element to insuring the success in reaching the goals of the grant is the Parent Voices Support Action Teams. The Solano Coalition for Better Health and The Children's Network are working with TEAMS (Transformation through Education and Mutual Support), in getting this parent and community-driven component underway. TEAMS, an Oakland based nonprofit organization, brings to the project a wealth of experience in providing training and support for parents to build their leadership skills and to become effective advocates for families and children in their communities. TEAMS is currently assisting in developing Parent Voices Support Action Teams (SATs) with parent representatives from five Solano County cities: Vallejo, Fairfield, Suisun, Dixon, and Vacaville. The goal of this group is to train the members to become facilitators of their own SATs so they can become the leaders in bringing the voices of parents to the forefront in their communities. They also work as a support group for one another sharing individual strengths to achieve personal and community wide goals.

One member of this group, Linda Alonzo of Vallejo, traveled to Washington D.C. on Mother's Day to join the multitude of mothers for the Million Moms March. Participants of the march took their concerns to the Capitol to demand stricter control of handguns and their users, as well as to advocate for other issues impacting families and children. As a representative of our community, Linda voiced her opinions, learned a lot, had a great experience and now shares this knowledge with the rest of the group. This and many other efforts underway are the beginning of building a healthier community for the families and children of Solano County.

If you are interested in finding more about Parent Voices Support Action Teams or would like to join their efforts, call Jenny Ocón, Community Programs Coordinator for The Children's Network, at (707) 421-7229.



## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION COUNCIL "EVERY CHILD LOVED—NO CHILD LOST: 2000" CONFERENCE A HUGE SUCCESS

On April 28, 2000, The Solano County Child Abuse Prevention Council held its second annual conference, "Every Child Loved — No Child Lost: 2000" at Solano Community College. The conference was once again, a great success, with 95% of the participants scoring the event very positively. Attendees specifically looked at the connection between drug and alcohol abuse and child abuse.

Major speakers at this year's conference included Kathryn Hall, Executive Director of the Birthing Project in Sacramento; Sue Webber-Brown, a narcotics investigator with the Butte County District Attorney's Office; Dr. Ricardo Carrillo, a private professional consultant and trainer; Sgt. Scott Paulin of the Vacaville Police Department, Family Investigative Response & Service Team; and Rev. Carieta Cain Grizzell, M.Div., Pastor of St. Paul AME Church in Vallejo and Program Coordinator at the Elihu Hutch Community Center in San Francisco.

In addition to the plenaries, three workshops were held: a mock dependency court hearing, a presentation on developing an effective long-term intervention system for families with substance abuse/child abuse problems, and a workshop on culturally sensitive treatment of substance/child abusing families. The day was capped with a play written and directed by the indefatigable Paul Crissey. His plays are truly a comical reflection on the difficult work undertaken by professionals involved in child abuse prevention.



## ANNOUNCEMENT

M/CAP, the Missing and Exploited Children Community Action Project, has finally completed a protocol that is patterned after Butte County's effective countywide response to the needs of drug-endangered children. Several trainings have been held in Solano County aimed at creating multidisciplinary DEC response teams. All but two of the law enforcement agencies in the county have signed off. Implementation will begin shortly, with reviews periodically to make sure the protocol is working.

Mandated reporter training is in the works. Most of the trainings are scheduled for July and August. Flyers will be mailed by mid-June announcing the date, place and time of the sessions.

The student poster contest was a success. The Council received over 100 entries. Winners were presented with their awards at a ceremony at the Benicia Public Library on June 1, 2000. Representatives from local schools and Supervisor Silva's office attended. The winners are listed below:

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIVISION (Grades 0-4)

- 1st Place: **ROUSHELLE GONZALES**  
Wardlaw Elementary (Vallejo)
- 2nd Place: **PHILESHA VAUGHN**  
Wardlaw Elementary (Vallejo)
- 3rd Place: **ALEX ABINALES**  
Wardlaw Elementary (Vallejo)

### MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION (Grade 5-8)

- 1st Place: **REBEKKA PEREZ**  
Dan Mini Elementary (Vallejo)
- 2nd Place: **SARAH SEAVER**  
VacaPena Middle School (Vacaville)
- 3rd Place: **MEAGHAN MORRISON**  
Benicia Middle School (Benicia)

### HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION (Grades 9-12)

- 1st Place: **DENNIS DeBERNARDI**  
SANTIAGO BARRA (Fairfield HS)

The participants were presented with certificates of participation and checks for \$100, \$50, or \$25, depending on whether they won 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the competition.

For additional information about Council activities and upcoming training events, please call Rhoda Katz, Interim Child Abuse Council Coordinator at (707) 421-7229.

# CHILDREN'S NETWORK BULLETIN SPRING/SUMMER 2000

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## Child Care Update



Congratulations to the newly appointed (**listed in bold**) members of the Local Child Care Planning Council (LCCPC)! Now that the LCCPC has reorganized itself, we look forward to a strong focus on improving child care in Solano County!

**Local Child Care Planning Council Members:** Yvonne Apilado, Peter August, Catherine Cartwright, Michael Christensen, Lynette Gray, Seretha Jefferson, Leatrice Knox, Kathy Lago, Gail Lyon, Sonja New, Consuelo Patino, Valerie Powell, Karen Sanchez, Sabrina Summers, and Rose Taylor.

### Upcoming Meetings

Thursday, July 27, 2000 @ 320 Campus Lane, Suisun 2-4 P.M.

### Provider Appreciation Day:

Child care organizations nationwide joined together on May 12 to recognize Child Care Providers. Solano Family & Children's Services made carnations available at their office for parents to give to their providers and for any providers who dropped in. Although the national effort of this day is over, it is never too late to appreciate your provider! It takes a special person to work in this field and these individuals are often unrecognized and undervalued.

### Child Care Law Project:

The Children's Network, on behalf of the Local Child Care Planning Council, has continued to work with the Child Care Law Center, based in San Francisco, to redirect the appropriate share of State funds to our children, where they belong. A letter to the State Department of Education has been drafted and will soon be submitted. This letter explains the State's failure to fund appropriate vendors for Solano County's child care. Many eligible children are currently being denied much needed services.

The next step will be to allow the State a reasonable amount of time to respond.

### California Governor's May Revision-- Child Care

CalWORKs Child Care Caseload—The May Revision made no additional increases in allocations for CalWORKs child care. It included funding the estimated budget year cost of Stage 3 child care for those families that have reached the two-year limit on transitional benefits. Stage 2 caseload is reduced by \$85.5 million, reflecting an average monthly caseload decrease of approximately 20,000 for a budget year caseload averaging 97,400 per month. There are no increases in funding for non-CalWORKs child care despite the growing documentation supporting the need for an increase.

The May Revision also includes additional state operations resources to implement a monthly caseload and fiscal tracking system for both Stages 2 and 3, which should improve the department's ability to make timely allocations and appropriate allocations of funds to the local level.

Child Care Quality Improvement—The May Revision proposes over \$16 million in additional one-time funds for child care quality activities, including \$10 million to implement the first phase of the CalWORKs Center Based Pilot initiative, authorized in the current budget, which seeks to increase access to high quality care for CalWORKs families. Additionally, over \$6 million is proposed for technical assistance for child care providers to access facility financing, additional repair and renovation grants, and additional discretionary quality enhancements.

The Governor did not make all of the necessary changes to make stronger advancements to improve child care for families. The Governor proposed that school districts receive \$1.84 billion in unrestricted funding to make up for the deficit in cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) from the early 1990s. The State Department of Education had made a budget request to provide \$77 million for lost child care and development COLAs, but the Governor did not include any such funding in his proposed budget.

## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION UPDATE



The questions that advocates for children and families are most interested in when it comes to Solano County's Children and Families Commission (the Prop. 10 Commission), are: "What services are you going to fund?", "When do they start?", and "How do I apply?"

The answers are: "We haven't decided, for certain.", "We're not quite sure.", and "You can't... yet." These are probably not the answers most advocates want, but they reflect the need (and, in fact, the legal requirement) for the Children and

Families Commission to conduct a wide ranging, inclusive and thorough strategic planning process to determine the priorities for funding services for very young children and their families in Solano County.

The Commission appreciates the invitation of the Children's Network to include this insert in their agency's newsletter so we can provide information on Prop. 10 implementation activities.

### Background

Proposition 10, the brainchild of actor/director Rob Reiner, was passed by California voters in October of 1998. It established a \$.50 tax on sales of tobacco products, with revenues going to improve the lives of children from prenatal to 5 years of age and their families. Counties

were required to create local Commissions (5-9 people appointed by the Board of Supervisors, including 1 member of the Board) to oversee its implementation. These Commissions were required to develop detailed, outcome-oriented strategic

plans prior to funding programs and services. A State Commission was also created. In March of this year, Proposition 28, which would have repealed Proposition 10, was soundly rejected by California voters.

### Solano County Implementation

In October of 1999, after considerable deliberation by the Board of Supervisors, the Solano County Children and Families Commission was appointed. The 9 members spent many hours doing the basic organizing necessary for the Commission to be effective. By-laws were developed. Processes and procedures were hammered out. An agreement was reached with the County to provide support services to the Commission. A consulting firm was selected to assist in the development of the strategic plan. A job description was developed,

and in March of this year the Executive Director, Paul Crissey, was hired. An office was set up.

In order to hear from as many people as possible before selecting priorities for funding, a questionnaire was distributed to parents, child care providers and kindergarten teachers. Nearly 2,500 people responded. A total of 10 public hearings were held throughout the county, giving more people an

opportunity to express their priorities for meeting the needs of young children and their families. A Strategic Planning Committee of 23 people was selected from a list of applicants, and 3 Subcommittees in the areas of Health & Well-being, Child Care & Early Childhood Education, and Parent Support & Education were established. This strategic planning process is being conducted now, with the aim of producing a strategic plan draft by August 1.

## The money

Proposition 10 produces approximately \$700 million in tax revenues every year. The State Commission receives 20% of this money to fund statewide activities, including media campaigns and assistance to local Commissions. The rest goes to the counties. Solano County receives approximately \$5.5 million each year. Since very little of this money has been spent, the County will have accumulated around \$7.5

million by the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1. There may be some decreases in the annual allocation to Solano County if smoking cessation efforts are effective, but the rate of such a decrease is unknown (estimated by the State to be 1.5% for the next fiscal year). The Commission may choose to invest some of its money in order to assure ongoing funds for a longer period of time.

## Current Timetable (subject to revisions)

Once the strategic plan draft is approved (August 1 is the goal), it will be made available for review and input through public hearings, the Commission website (under construction), and by other means. Changes can be made, then the final plan will be approved, sometime in

September. A request for proposals or a letter of intent to provide services prioritized by the strategic plan will be made, hopefully by the end of September. Time will be given for providers to respond, the proposals will be evaluated, allocations announced and awarded

(after a period for appeals to be heard), and contracts will be developed. At the end of this process, services can begin. When will this be? We hope that it will be by November, but that depends on things running smoothly and on schedule.

## Confusion with Tobacco Settlement Money

A question often asked is, "If this money is meant for babies and young children, how come some counties are spending it to build jails and fix potholes?" The answer is that there is a second pot of money generated from the tobacco

industry through a settlement of a lawsuit. Solano County receives approximately \$3 million/year from this source. The County can spend it any way it wishes, with the decision being made by the Board of Supervisors (who

## How is this money different from any other pot of money?

Use of Prop. 10 funds is in the hands of the local Commission. Spending must be on services designed to improve the lives of children prenatal to 5 years old and their families. The specific services and priorities for funding is up to the Commission, based on its strategic plan. There are no restrictions on who can receive these funds... non-profits, for-profit agencies, churches, neighborhood groups, whatever. The Children and Families Commission's decisions on funding of services is not subject to the approval of the Board of Supervisors or any other governmental entity.



### Star Trek Wisdom

In an old episode of Star Trek Voyager, Nelix and Paris are on a distant planet and have just discovered a reptilian alien egg, which hatches. There are no alien parents around. Paris wants to leave (they are facing imminent death), but Nelix turns to him and says, "I don't know how things are where you come from, but in my part of the Quadrant, we don't abandon newborns!"

## Who can attend meetings of the Commission or any of the planning meetings?

Anyone is welcome to attend any meeting of the Commission or its committees. All meeting times and locations are posted, and anyone wishing to receive individual notifications of meeting schedules should contact us at (707) 435-2965. This number can be used for any questions.

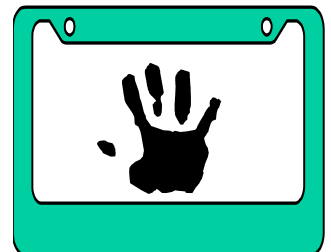
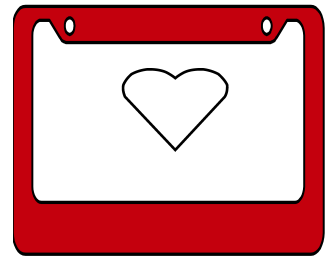
## LICENSED TO CARE!!!!

Each year, more than 2000 California children die from unintentional injuries and more than 100 die because of child abuse. The California Kids' Plate program was designed to create revenues for the Child Health and Safety Fund. If you personalize your license plates and incorporate one of

these four symbols (+, =, heart, hand) into your plate, part of your license fee will benefit child safety programs in the state.

To date the Kids' Plate Program has raised more than \$4 million for organizations representing the geographical and cultural diversity of the state. Programs

benefiting from Kids Plates address issues like bicycle safety, drowning prevention, fall prevention, firearm safety, sudden infant death syndrome, child abuse prevention, child care health and safety training. To obtain information to purchase personalized kids plate, call 1-800-HEY-KIDS.



## KIN-GAP PROGRAM TAKES EFFECT

The Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP) Program, authorized by SB1901 in 1998, became effective January 1, 2000. Under the program, a relative caregiver is eligible for a Kin-GAP grant if he or she assumes legal guardianship of a foster child. To qualify, the child must have been in foster care placement for over 12 months. Once enrolled in Kin-GAP, the guardian will receive a grant equal to or 100 percent of the basic foster care (foster family home) rate. The program is supported by the General Fund, federal TANF block grant funds and county funds.

Movement to Kin-GAP is not automatic. To occur, the court must terminate court dependency of the child and the caregiver must assume guardianship.

The Governor's budget proposes \$109 million (\$28 million General Fund) for the Kin-GAP Program in 2000-01. The budget also reflects a General Fund savings of \$24 million for foster care and child welfare services due to the termination of juvenile court dependency for children placed in the Kin-GAP Program.

Kin-GAP Program provides relative caregivers a grant equal to or 100 percent of the basic foster care rate if he or she assumes legal guardianship.



A MONTH OF FUN FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN Draw a picture with your children, play a sport together, sing songs, write a poem, make a necklace from beads, bake treats together, explore with a flashlight, find your city on a map, make dinner together, praise your children, read together, plant flowers indoors and outdoors, send a postcard to a friend, take pictures of your family, have a picnic, go to the zoo, collect leaves, take a walk, decorate a shoe box to store treasures, go to a museum, spend time at a playground, make funny faces, help a neighbor or friend, discuss your family history, display your children's artwork, talk about school, make masks out of paper bags, dance with your children, teach your children about traffic signs, notice how the moon changes each night, tell your children I love you every single night.

## Assembly and Senate Subcommittees' Deliberations – Child Care

A COLA Catch-up and Funds for Low-income Child Care—The biggest victories came in the Senate. The Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #1 (O'Connell, Chair) augmented the Senate's Budget proposal by \$77 million for a child development catch-up cost-of-living increase, and by \$100 million for new general child care slots. The former makes up for no COLAs in 1987-88, 1991-92, 1993-94, and 1994-95. The latter is a partial implementation of SB 1703 (Escutia) and is for a full year (not a half-year to be annualized in 2001-02).

The Assembly did not augment their Budget proposal for a catch-up COLA but did add \$50 million for full-day, full-year state preschool. Consequently, these both will be Conference items. Because these two items "build the base" for child development, it is assumed that Governor Davis will not be sympathetic.

Assembly and Senate Approvals—The Assembly, acting on the request of Assemblywoman Dion Aroner, funded her CARES bill, AB 212 with a \$6 million augmentation. Both the Assembly and the Senate approved these augmentations:

- ⇒ \$300,000 for a Child Care Facilities Development Intermediary to provide financing technical assistance. (AB 2778 - CDPI's bill).
- ⇒ \$10 million for CalWORKs Center-based pilot and \$1.7 million for facility renovation and repair (unspent funds from 1999-2000).
- ⇒ \$300,000 for consultant services to model the fiscal effects of child care reform options (Governor's Administrative Review).
- ⇒ \$25 million increase to Child Care Facilities Revolving Fund (unexpended 1999-2000 child care subsidy dollars).

Both houses approved May Revise language on the collection of data necessary for the Governor's Child Care Review. The Senate gave the CDE more time to produce the data and some staff to assist in collection. (NOTE: The R&R Network told the committee that parents are reluctant to share some of the information the Administration wished to collect.) The Consumer Affairs Agency is to report on its progress by December 1, 2000; a final report due, including detailed information on options being modeled and its recommendations, by January 10, 2001.

The Senate added:

- ⇒ \$850,000 to UCLA's business school to train child development administrators in business management. (CDPI's proposal) (From unspent 1999-2000 child care funds)
- ⇒ \$8 million expansion of Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youth (HIPPO). (From unspent 1999-2000 child care funds)

The Assembly added:—The Assembly approved new language permitting a licensed day care center to be paid either the regional market rate or the state contract rate, irrespective of the market rate, "provided no additional allocations are made by the state to the county." (Monterey County DSS request)

**Please advocate for an improved child care system to ensure that all children have a healthy environment throughout their childhood, especially in the first years of development. You can write or phone your local Legislators and Government Officials to make this change.**

Governor Gray Davis (916) 445-2841

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Additional information can be obtained at the May Revision website @ <http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/Budgt00-01/mayReviz00.pdf>.

## MILITARY CHILD CARE AS THE MODEL?

In May, the National Women's Law Center released a report highlighting the military's transformation of their failing child care system. The report, "Be All That We Can Be: Lessons From the Military for Improving Our Nation's Child Care System", describes the turnaround in military child care, how it was done, the quality and affordable system as it exists today, and the lessons that we can learn from their experiences and apply to our current troubled child care system.

The military improved their child care system by:

- Establishing uniform certification standards for all centers, determining whether the standards were being met, and enforcing sanctions for not meeting them.
- Establishing an accreditation system that requires centers to "meet a set of specific standards in addition to those required for certification, and to have compliance confirmed by an outside validator". The certification process is based on the military's own set of standards, while the accreditation process is based on the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards.
- Raising caregiver compensation and linking increased wages to training; developing comprehensive training program; and hiring training and curriculum specialists.
- Increasing parental involvement by requiring the establishment of a board in each center composed of parents of children who attend the program.
- Ensuring that "programs have sufficient resources to maintain high-quality care while remaining affordable" by appropriating sufficient funds and establishing a parental fee scale based on income.
- Expanding the availability of care by measuring need and meeting the need through facility development, adding slots, expanding the family child care program, using off-base care, and increasing the role of resource and referral agencies.

The report concludes that since the military child care system improved so drastically in a fairly short period of time, then using the lessons from the military's experiences, should make great improvements in America's failing child care system. At the press release of this report, Secretary of Defense William Cohen said, "This isn't a mere nicety; it's a military necessity...we simply can't afford to have our service members worry about the basic care of their family members".

To order this report, visit the National Women's Law Center website at [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org) or call (202)-588-5180.

## NEW REPORT SHOWS QUALITY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS REDUCE TEEN VIOLENCE AND SAVES TAXPAYERS MONEY

A new report recently released by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, "America's Child Care Crisis: A Crime Prevention Tragedy", shows that law enforcement officials agree that expanding at-risk families' access to quality educational child care would greatly reduce youth violence. In addition to the direct benefits for children, by investing in the early years the government can avoid spending more later on the cost of crime, remedial education, and welfare supports, as well as increased tax revenues resulting from a larger and more productive workforce. According to Sheriff Patrick Sullivan, "I'm a conservative Republican, but this is not a political issue...when failing to provide at-risk kids with quality educational child care can multiply five times our risk that those kids will become chronic lawbreakers, it's just common sense to expand Head Start, child care and early learning funds. Shortchanging these investments squanders lives and tax dollars."

Specifically, the report highlights a recent study by researcher Arthur Reynolds of the University of Wisconsin—Madison illustrating how children who attended one of Chicago's 24 Child Parent Centers (CPCs) received many expected and unexpected benefits when compared with other similar low-income children who did not attend CPCs. These children had a greater chance of completing high school, were less likely to be charged in Juvenile court and were less likely to repeat a grade. Boys were also found to benefit more than girls. Boys who attended the preschool were 40 % more likely to graduate from high school than other similar boys who did not attend. The CPCs are unusual because they provide a combination of parent and academic involvement. They also offer continuity of supports through their connection to schools by providing services through third grade, and by bringing parents into the schools where they offer them a resource center for learning to work with their children at home.

The study, which is the nation's largest longitudinal study of a government-funded preschool, also highlighted the amount of money that is saved from investing in children earlier instead of later as a youth violence prevention tool. The program, which cost \$6,900 a year per child, could produce a projected return of \$7.93 for every dollar invested and \$10.36 return for every dollar invested in boys alone.

This research gives us an additional tool to use when contacting our elected officials and emphasizing to them the importance of quality child care and early education. To obtain a copy of Fight Crime's report, visit [www.fightcrime.org](http://www.fightcrime.org) or send \$12 for postage and handling to Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, Child Care Report, 2000 P Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. For specific information about the Chicago study, visit <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/cls/index.html>