



## Saving Lives and Protecting People: Preventing Violence Against Children & Youth

Violence against children and youth is all too common. We've all heard stories about people whose lives have been shaped by these experiences: A child seriously injured at the hands of a parent. A teenager involved in an abusive dating relationship. A youth shot and killed after an argument with another teenager.

The toll and nature of deaths due to violence against children and youth is staggering. In 2008:

- More than 1,700 children ages 0 to 17 died from child abuse and neglect—80% of deaths occurred among children younger than age 4.<sup>1</sup>
- Nearly 5,500 young people ages 10 to 24 were murdered—an average of 15 each day—making youth violence the second leading cause of death for this age group.<sup>2</sup>

Child abuse and neglect (also called child maltreatment), youth violence, sexual violence, and teen dating violence pose serious threats to the health, well-being, and safety of our nation's young people. In addition to the physical and emotional toll, violence against young people exacts a substantial financial burden. For child maltreatment alone, the total lifetime costs—health care, child welfare, criminal justice, and the value of lost future productivity and earnings—are \$124 billion each year.<sup>3</sup>

### Putting Science into Action to Prevent Violence Against Children and Youth

CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (Injury Center) is committed to saving lives and protecting our nation from injuries and violence.

Preventing violence against children and youth is one of the Center's focus areas. The Injury Center works with diverse partners to develop and promote science-based initiatives that foster safe and healthy children and youth who can reach their full potential as connected and contributing members of violence-free families, schools, and communities.

Here are just a few examples of the Injury Center's efforts in this focus area:

#### Collecting and Sharing Data to Understand the Problem

- Through its National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), the Injury Center gathers, shares, and links state-level data on violent deaths. The system's comprehensive, accurate data allow policy makers and community leaders to make informed decisions about violence prevention initiatives.

### IN THE UNITED STATES



An average of **15 young people** between the ages of 10 to 24 are murdered every day.<sup>2</sup>



More than **740,000 children and youth** are treated in hospital emergency departments as a result of violence each year—that's more than 84 every hour.<sup>4</sup>



The total lifetime cost of child maltreatment is **\$124 billion** each year.<sup>3</sup>



More than **3 million reports of child maltreatment** are received by state and local agencies each year—that's nearly 6 reports every minute.<sup>5</sup>

- Through the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), launched in 2011, the Injury Center gathers data to describe the prevalence and health consequences of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence. These data can be used to inform policies and programs; establish priorities at the national, state, and local level; and over time, track progress in preventing these forms of violence.

### Promoting Safe, Stable, and Nurturing Relationships for Children

- As an overall strategy for child maltreatment prevention, the Injury Center promotes safe, stable, and nurturing relationships (SSNRs) between children and their caregivers. SSNRs are fundamental to healthy growth, learning, and development. The Injury Center is strengthening the role of state public health agencies to promote SSNRs and prevent child maltreatment through an effort called the Public Health Leadership Initiative.
- The Injury Center's *Essentials for Childhood* is an action guide for anyone committed to the positive development of children and families. It lays out four goals for creating SSNRs for children and detailed actions to move toward these goals: 1) building awareness and momentum; 2) using data to inform actions; 3) changing norms and creating programs that foster healthy children and families; and 4) identifying evidence-based policies to promote SSNRs.

### Promoting Safe and Healthy Youth

- The Injury Center promotes strategies to prevent youth violence that are based on the best available evidence. These strategies are aimed at providing youth with skills, safe environments, supportive relationships, and opportunities for success. The Injury Center provides leadership to the field and funds critical public health programs through the following initiatives:
  - Academic Centers for Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention—which work with high-risk communities to carry out and evaluate a multifaceted, science-based approach for reducing youth violence
  - UNITY—Urban Networks to Increase Thriving Youth—which works intensively with some of the nation's largest cities to encourage adoption of effective strategies
  - STRYVE—Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere—which provides communities with information, training, and tools to put effective strategies into practice to stop violence before it occurs



### Promoting Healthy, Respectful Relationships Among Youth

- The Injury Center's *Dating Matters™: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships*, is a comprehensive teen dating violence prevention initiative for 11- to 14-year-olds in high-risk, urban communities. It promotes preventive strategies for teens, their peers, families, schools, and neighborhoods.
- The Injury Center's Rape Prevention Education and DELTA Programs also implement a variety of evidence-informed and culturally relevant prevention strategies in schools and communities that work with youth to prevent sexual violence and dating violence before it starts.

### Preventing Sexual Violence Against Girls Across the Globe

- As part of Together for Girls, the Injury Center works with national and global partners to document the magnitude and effect of sexual violence against girls. These efforts also support tailored interventions, draw public attention to the problem, and motivate changes in norms and behaviors. Together for Girls brings hope to girls worldwide for safer and healthier lives free from violence, exploitation, and abuse.

## IMPROVING THE COMMUNITY REDUCES YOUTH VIOLENCE



A RAND Corporation analysis of official crime reports found that business improvement district (BID) areas had a 44% greater drop in the average incidence of total reported crimes and a 45% greater drop in the average incidence of arrests compared with non-BID areas.<sup>5</sup> CDC funded the RAND analysis to evaluate the impact of BIDs—which change community factors linked with crime and violence—on youth violence and violent crime in Los Angeles communities.

### CDC's Commitment to Prevention

The Injury Center is the only U.S. federal agency that deals exclusively with injury and violence prevention in non-occupational settings. It leads a coordinated public health approach to tackling this critical health and safety issue.

The Injury Center is committed to continuing its work to prevent violence against children and youth. Prevention is the most effective, common-sense way to improve health and lower societal costs for medical care and other negative effects related to this public health problem. Our priority is to equip states, communities, youth-serving organizations, parents, and others with the best science, tools, and resources so that they can take effective action to promote the health and safety of children and youth.

**Join us in making injury and violence prevention the premiere public health achievement of the next decade!**

**For more information about violence against children and youth, and the tools listed in this fact sheet, visit [www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury).**