

The Growing Crisis in Child Protection

a sampling of news stories from across America



Nearly five children die in America every day from abuse or neglect. In fact, according to federal data, 10,440 children are known to have died from abuse and neglect between 2001 and 2007, but experts say the real number may be as many as 5,000 higher. A weak economy and resulting state budget cuts are putting even more children at risk, as evidenced by the multitude of recent newspaper stories from across America that suggest an increase in child abuse due to the worsening recession.

This document, which we've entitled, *The Growing Crisis in Child Protection*, is a compendium of such stories, and is part of our campaign to help stop child abuse and neglect deaths. The Every Child Matters Education Fund and its partners—the National Association of Social Workers, the National Children's Alliance, and the National District Attorneys Association—are urging Congress to hold hearings and provide emergency funds to stop state cuts in child protective services.

During the Summit on Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths that followed the release of the **We Can Do Better** report on child fatalities last October, more than 100 experts on child welfare from across the country met to discuss strategies and tactics for combating child abuse and neglect, and for shoring up a child protection system that is stretched too thin. The following are some of the recommendations resulting from those discussions.

1. Building upon the best of current child protection systems, the federal government should take the lead in developing a national strategy for stopping maltreatment deaths. It should include public health and social services aimed at strengthening families and preventing maltreatment in the first place, along with state of the art assessment tools to identify and properly assess those at risk.
2. Current levels of federal spending are far below the level needed to protect all children at imminent risk of harm. Three billion to five billion dollars in additional funds are required, for example, to allow child protective workers and other frontline personnel to have smaller caseloads and better training not only so that they will be better prepared to immediately protect children, but so that they will consider having lifelong careers in child protection, bringing needed maturity and experience to the system. Funds are also needed to provide a wide array of public health and social services to help at-risk kids, including comprehensive in-home services for children already in the system.
3. In consideration of expanded federal spending, states should be required to adopt national standards drawn from existing best practices and policy for protecting children.

A national strategy for combating maltreatment deaths and stopping abuse and neglect in the first place is imperative. We know a great deal about preventing abuse and neglect and related fatalities. When provided with support services and appropriate supervision, the vast majority of potentially abusive and neglectful parents can learn to safely care for their children. Many abused children will develop the resilience to overcome the abuse they've sustained, but for others, these patterns of abuse will continue into the next generation.

The newspaper headlines compiled in this document show that the problem of child abuse is prevalent throughout the country, and seems to be increasing as a result of the recession.

Child Welfare in the News

Alabama

[Alabama launches plan in Jefferson County to reduce child deaths](#)

The Birmingham News

January 7, 2010

Alaska

[Foster Home Shortage Prompts State To Recruit Foster Parents](#)

KTUU Anchorage

December 6, 2009

Arizona

[Arizona Child Abuse Rises as Recession Deepens](#)

Public News Service

May 26, 2009

[Valley Group Says Child Abuse Up, Begins Awareness Campaign](#)

ABC 15 News

December 3, 2009

Arkansas

[Reports Of Child Abuse Rise](#)

KHBS/KHOG

July 28, 2009

[Better Child-Safety Practices Urged On Ark. DHS](#)

KHBS - KHOG Fort Smith – Fayetteville

August 10, 2009

[Review spurs sweeping changes in child welfare system](#)

Arkansas News

August 16, 2009

[Lost in the child welfare system](#)

Arkansas Times

December 31, 2009

California

[Rising Child Abuse Deaths Blamed on Economy](#)

ABC News 10 Online

June 3, 2009

[L.A. County Children's Services Office Moves To Improve Oversight](#)

Los Angeles Times

June 11, 2009

[As L.A. County Spun Its Wheels, Children Died](#)

Los Angeles Times

June 14, 2009

[Tulare Co. Cutting 55 Child Welfare Jobs](#)

Fresno Bee

August 13, 2009

[Child's Death Shows Weaknesses Of LA County's Child Welfare System](#)

Los Angeles Times

August 18, 2009

[Many Cases Of Child Abuse Go Unreported](#)

Victorville Daily Press

August 23, 2009

[LA County Child Welfare Workers Have Higher Caseload Than Other Areas](#)

89.3 KPCC (Southern California Public Radio)

August 26, 2009

[Tulare County Child Welfare Services Workers Protest Layoffs](#)

Visalia Times-Delta

August 26, 2009

[Recession Increases Already Heavy CPS Caseload](#)

KGET 17

September 1, 2009

[Child Welfare Backers Protest Cuts To Social Services Funding](#)

Monterey Herald

September 11, 2009

[Flawed County System Lets Children Die Invisibly](#)

Los Angeles Times

October 11, 2009

[*Changes urged for Fresno Co. social services*](#)

Fresno Bee
October 11, 2009

[*Why Do The Children Keep Dying?*](#)

Los Angeles Times
October 16, 2009

[*Child Deaths In Kern County*](#)

KGET 17 Bakersfield
November 19, 2009

Colorado

[*El Paso County sued in death of foster child*](#)

KJCT8.com
October 13, 2009

[*Child Welfare In Colorado Found Lacking*](#)

The Associated Press
December 5, 2009

Connecticut

[*Social Service Groups Face Layoffs If Budget Isn't Passed: Officials Warn Of Dire Consequences Amid Budget Fight*](#)

Connecticut Post
August 4, 2009

[*Report: Recession Taking Toll On Children*](#)

Connecticut Post
September 27, 2009

[*Bridgeport Child Advocacy Group Says Recession Taking Toll On Children*](#)

The Advocate
September 28, 2009

[*Group Seeks To Block Conn. Cuts To Children's Aid*](#)

Associated Press
December 9, 2009

District of Columbia

[*Summer Is No Vacation for Abused Kids*](#)

Washington Post
August 25, 2009

[*2 Years After 4 Deaths, DC Welfare System Remains Under Scrutiny*](#)

New York Times
October 21, 2009

Florida

[*Florida Project To Track Abused Or Neglected Kids Stalls*](#)

Orlando Sentinel
June 3, 2009

[*Child's Death Exposes A Big Problem In Foster-Care Reform*](#)

South Florida Sun Sentinel
June 25, 2009

[*Report: Fla. Child Welfare Lacks Accountability*](#)

Miami Herald
August 13, 2009

[*Abuse, Neglect Claims Were Not Reported*](#)

Miami Herald
September 22, 2009

[*Florida Child Abuse Deaths Rise in Bad Economy*](#)

Foxnews.com
December 29, 2009

[*Report: Florida child-abuse deaths up 21% in 2008*](#)

Orlando Sentinel
January 6, 2010

Georgia

[*Social Services Workers Face Furloughs*](#)

Associated Press
August 28, 2009

[*Judge Claims Division Of Family And Children Services Very Understaffed*](#)

Gainesville Times
September 25, 2009

Hawaii

[Funding For Hawaii Child Abuse Prevention Program Being Cut](#)

Honolulu Advertiser
July 15, 2009

[Budget Cuts Increase Fears For Child Safety](#)

Honolulu Star-Bulletin
July 27, 2009

[Hawaii kids worse off than report says](#)

Honolulu Star-Bulletin
July 30, 2009

[West Hawaii Child Welfare Services hit hard by layoffs](#)

Honolulu Advertiser
November 20, 2009

Illinois

[Ill. Child-Welfare Agency Slow To Review Deaths](#)

Chicago Tribune
June 25, 2009

[Illinois Budget Cuts To Impact Local Social Service Agencies](#)

KWQC 6
August 3, 2009

Indiana

[State To Shut Down Child Abuse Agency](#)

WRTV Indianapolis
September 18, 2009

[Indiana child-welfare agencies fight cuts](#)

Fort Wayne Journal Gazette
December 15, 2009

Iowa

[Budget-driven policy may shortchange Iowa's most vulnerable](#)

Iowa Independent
January 6, 2010

Kansas

[Former SRS investigator: Boy's death was preventable](#)

The Wichita Eagle
November 1, 2009

Kentucky

[Transparency Needed On Child Abuse Deaths](#)

Kentucky.com
October 25, 2009

[Child Abuse Cases Are Increasing](#)

WYMT News
December 16, 2009

[Social service workers lobby lawmakers to improve child welfare system](#)

Courier Journal
January 5, 2010

Louisiana

[DSS predicts loss of 270 positions](#)

Advocate Capitol News Bureau
October 7, 2009

[Social Services To Cut \\$14.1M From Budget](#)

Shreveport Times
December 30, 2009

Maine

[Funding Cuts Could Shutter Child Abuse Program](#)

WMTW Portland
September 30, 2009

[Social Services Officials Look On In Concern](#)

Morning Sentinel,
December 20, 2009

Maryland

Neglect, abuse cases increase as recession continues

Gazette.net
June 17, 2009

[*Md. Policy On Children 'Not Working,' Conway Says*](#)

Baltimore Sun
September 30, 2009

[*State Social Services Falter, Just When State Residents Need Them Most*](#)

Baltimore City Paper
November 4, 2009

[*Advisory Board: Frederick County Social Services Understaffed*](#)

WTOP
December 13, 2009

Massachusetts

[*Reserve Aims To Fight Abuse*](#)

The Republican
November 01, 2009

[*Delayed Action Is Child Abuse*](#)

Boston Herald
December 19, 2009

Michigan

[*Department Of Human Services Offices Fear Overload: Some Applicants Resort To Violence, Threats*](#)

Battle Creek Enquirer
November 15, 2009

[*Child Abuse, Neglect Stats Worry Educators*](#)

Holland Sentinel
December 20, 2009

Minnesota

[*Troubled kids kept waiting*](#)

Duluth News Tribune
November 22, 2009

Mississippi

[*Insurance: Abuse Victims Are Denied*](#)

Clarion Ledger
October 29, 2009

Missouri

[Infant Death Case Causes Analysis](#)

News-Press & Gazette

October 15, 2009

[Missouri Officials Search For More Victims, Clues In Child-Abuse Case](#)

CNN

November 12, 2009

[Sixth Man Arrested In Child Abuse Case](#)

Blue Springs Examiner

November 13, 2009

Nebraska

[Neb. officials emphasize need for adoptive parents](#)

Associated Press State & Local Wire

November 3, 2009

[Neb. Board Urges Oversight Of Foster-Care Reform](#)

Sioux City Journal

December 15, 2009

Nevada

[Clark County Seeing Surge In Child Abuse](#)

Fox5 KVVU

July 27, 2009

[Child Abuse Escalates With Money Woes](#)

Las Vegas Sun

June 26, 2009

New Hampshire

[Hard times ahead for human services: Need \(and budget shortfall\) growing](#)

Concord Monitor

December 13, 2009

New Jersey

[NJ To Limit Reports On Child Welfare Deaths](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer
July 27, 2009

[N.J. Study Of Child Abuse Says Welfare Workers Overlook Family Problems](#)

Statehouse Bureau
August 24, 2009

[Statistics Bleak For Children In Foster Care](#)

Vineland Daily Journal
June 27, 2009

New Mexico

[Children Need Aid of Whole Village](#)

Albuquerque Journal
September 3, 2009

New York

[With Donations And Grants Down, Social Service Agencies Feel The Pinch](#)

New York Times
August 21, 2009

[NYC Report Shows Mixed Results in Child Abuse Cases](#)

WNYC
September 30, 2009

[Report Finds Thousands Of Kids Stuck In Overburdened Foster Care System](#)

WNYC
November 10, 2009

North Carolina

[Number Of Foster Children Climbs As Economy Dips](#)

Mooresville Tribune
June 6, 2009

[Pending Budget Cuts Could Impact Foster Home Care For Some Children](#)

Burlington Times-News
June 28, 2009

[*Child Abuse Prevention Agency May Have To Close*](#)

Charlotte Observer
August 30, 2009

[*State To Review Cumberland DSS In Wake Of Shaniya Davis' Death*](#)

Winston-Salem Journal
November 24, 2009

North Dakota

[*GF County averages 120 youths in foster care per month*](#)

Grand Forks Herald
November 8, 2009

Demand up for licensed social workers

Grand Forks Herald
November 15, 2009

Ohio

[*County Investigators Battle Child Abuse With Dwindling Resources*](#)

Sandusky Register
August 3, 2009

[*Doctors: Economy May Be Behind Increase In Child Abuse Cases*](#)

NBC4i.com
September 10, 2009

[*Child Abuse Cases Alarmingly High And More Severe, Officials Say*](#)

Dayton Daily News
October 4, 2009

[*Children Services Operating Under Budget Cuts*](#)

The People's Defender
October 7, 2009

Oklahoma

[*Budget Cuts To Affect Vulnerable Oklahomans*](#)

The Associated Press
November 12, 2009

Oregon

[Lawsuit Faults State For Failing To Detect Abuse Of Foster Child](#)

The Register-Guard
October 23, 2009

[Washington County Child Welfare Ranks Last In State Performance Measurements](#)

The Oregonian
November 16, 2009

South Carolina

[Child Abuse Cases Rise In Upstate](#)

Greenville News
October 11, 2009

[SC Family Of 6-Week-Old Blames DSS For Ignoring Child Abuse](#)

Examiner.com
October 13, 2009

South Dakota

[Abuse/neglect cases are a problem here](#)

Mobridge Tribune
October 5, 2009

Texas

[Groups Square Off Over Child Abuse Bill](#)

Marshall News Messenger
June 11, 2009

[Deaths Prompt Review of Texas Abuse Investigations](#)

The Houston Chronicle
September 5, 2009

[CPS Plan To Save Kids Loses Momentum](#)

Houston Chronicle
October 12, 2009

[Texas Plan To Hire Abuse Investigators Struggles](#)

Associated Press
October 13, 2009

[CPS Probed Many Abuse Deaths](#)

Houston Chronicle
October 22, 2009

[Protecting Texas Children: Abuse 'Huge Problem': Numbers Cause For Concern, Action](#)

Amarillo.com
November 2, 2009

[Fort Worth CPS Worker Who Failed To Disclose Arrests Exposes Flaws Of Self-Reporting Policy](#)

Dallas Morning News
November 19, 2009

[Child Protective Services Workers 'Taking Short Cuts,' Review Shows](#)

Dallas Morning News
December 15, 2009

Utah

[Cuts Would Hit Child Welfare Hard](#)

Deseret News
November 17, 2009

Vermont

[Prevent Child Abuse Short on Cash](#)

WCAX.com
August 5, 2009

Washington

[Spokane Catholic Diocese gets more abuse reports](#)

Mynorthwest.com
November 3, 2009

West Virginia

W.Va. should avoid cuts, advocates say

Charleston Daily Mail
May 12, 2009

WV legislature considering child abuse watchdog

WHSV.com
December 8, 2009

Wisconsin

Deadly mistakes doom children

Journal Sentinel

October 4, 2009

Wisconsin Child Abuse Bill Meets Roadblock

Northland's News Center

November 18, 2009

Foster Care Workers Feel Overworked, Unsupported, Study Finds

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

December 16, 2009