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A-G

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See also **Feminist Theories of Criminal Behavior; Gangs, Girl**

Chicago School *See Sociological Theories of Criminal Behavior*

Child Abuse: Extent and Correlates

Child abuse is not a new phenomenon; parents and other adults have mistreated children throughout history. Until the latter part of the 19th century little public information was available on the subject and little was done to protect child victims, however, because of the prevailing belief in the privacy of the family and the notion that children were essentially the "property" of their parents, especially their fathers. In the U.S., public authority to intervene was initially granted in 1874 in New York City, with the case of Mary Ellen Wilson, an illegitimate 8-year-old child who was repeatedly beaten and otherwise abused by her guardian. As there were no agencies charged with protecting children from abuse, a concerned church worker asked Henry Bergh, President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, to intervene. Mr. Bergh obtained an attorney to act on Mary Ellen's behalf, and the case was successfully prosecuted. Mary Ellen was removed from her guardian and placed in a home for children, and her guardian was sentenced to a year of labor in prison (Crosson-Tower, 1999). In 1875, Elbridge Gerry, the attorney who had defended Mary Ellen, founded the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC), and an organized effort to address the problem of child maltreatment began.

Other cities established chapters of the SPCC, which expanded its activities beyond intervention in cases of child abuse and neglect to also include advocacy for children in poverty and situations of family

violence. Officials in Cook County, Illinois, established a separate juvenile court in 1899, which assumed jurisdiction over child deprivation cases as well as cases of delinquency, and other counties followed suit. These agencies helped bring national attention to the plight of children, culminating in a White House Conference on Dependent Children in 1909. A federal Children's Bureau was established in 1912, and The Child Welfare League of America was established in 1915. The American Humane Association added children to its agenda soon afterward, and the Social Security Act of 1930 mandated "child welfare services for neglected dependent children and children in danger of becoming delinquent" (Williams, 1983). It was not until the late 1940s, however, when physicians began to speak openly about the problem of child abuse, that the issue was defined as a social problem and a concerted effort across disciplines was begun to find out more about the extent and correlates of child maltreatment.

John Caffrey, a radiologist, began to notice in the 1940s that X-ray findings of some child patients did not correspond to parents' versions of the child's injuries. Caffrey suspected that in some cases of child injuries, parents were the ones responsible. When his suspicions were made known to other physicians, they felt he might be correct. In 1962, Dr. C. Henry Kempe, chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado's School of Medicine, and his

colleagues published what is now known as a landmark article, entitled "The Battered-Child Syndrome," in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Kempe defined the syndrome as "a clinical condition in young children who have received severe physical abuse, generally from a parent or foster parent," and advised health care providers to look for a "marked discrepancy between clinical findings and historical data supplied by the parents" as an indicator (Kempe, 1962). Kempe and his associates began studies of the problem and an attempt to document cases. In 1962, the American Humane Association found 662 cases of child abuse that had been reported to the press (Parton, 1985).

The University of Colorado Medical Center provided funding to establish the National Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in 1972 to engage in research and provide training to professionals. In 1974, exactly 100 years after the case of Mary Ellen, the U.S. Congress passed the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which, among other things, established a National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The Center's functions were to engage in research, establish a clearinghouse, distribute training material, fund demonstration projects, and study the effectiveness of child abuse and neglect reporting laws and the proper role of the federal government in assisting state and local child abuse intervention efforts. In addition, the Act required states to adopt procedures to identify, treat, and prevent child abuse and to maintain data and report to the Department of Housing, Education and Welfare (HEW) on how well those procedures were working. State health and welfare agencies also were required to cooperate with one another to coordinate the treatment of child abuse and neglect cases. Failure to comply with these requirements would jeopardize states' eligibility for certain funds under the Social Security Act (Crosson-Tower, 1999).

Since the passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, all states have developed statutes addressing mandatory reporting requirements, public agency responsibilities, civil and criminal interventions, and record-keeping standards, although these may vary somewhat from state to state. The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect includes four main types of maltreatment in the definition of child abuse and neglect:

1. Physical Abuse: the infliction of physical injury as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking or otherwise harming a child;
2. Child Neglect: failure to provide for the child's basic needs, which can be physical, educational, or emotional;

3. Sexual Abuse: fondling a child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials; and
4. Emotional Abuse: acts or omissions by the parents or other caretakers that have caused or could cause serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders.

Although these types can occur separately, they more commonly occur in combination. In particular, emotional abuse is likely to be present when any of the other forms of maltreatment occur. In each state known or suspected cases of child abuse and neglect are reported to the local child protective services (CPS) agency. Workers investigate reports that meet designated criteria and screen out cases that cannot be substantiated. If a case of child abuse or neglect is confirmed, then the agency will actively intervene, offering a range of treatment options depending on the family's particular situation. If the case is serious enough, the perpetrator(s) may be prosecuted in criminal court.

The most recent data on child abuse and neglect at the national level are from 2001. These data are from states' reports to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting System (NCANDS) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2003). It is important to remember that all official data only represent those cases brought to the attention of public agencies. There is no way to know the true extent of child abuse among the population. It is also important to know that each state may have different criteria for screening cases "in" or "out," which may, to some extent, depend on internal agency policy and available resources. Thus, national data can only serve as indicators of the extent of the problem and cannot provide an accurate account. In 2001, approximately three million referrals of child abuse and neglect were received by local CPS agencies, involving approximately five million. A referral may include more than one child. Of these referrals, 33% were screened out, and 67% were opened for further investigation. Of those cases investigated, child abuse or neglect was confirmed in 28%. Thus, there were approximately 560,000 cases of confirmed child abuse and neglect in 2001, involving an estimated 903,000 victims, for a rate of 12.4 per 1000 children in the United States. The rate has continued to decrease each year since reaching a peak of 15.3 per 1000 in 1993. The largest category of maltreatment was neglect, accounting for 57% of victims. Another 19% of victims suffered physical abuse, whereas 10% were sexually abused, and 9% or fewer were victims of psychological abuse or medical neglect. Approximately 9% of children experienced a recurrence of

In summary, child abuse and neglect is a complex phenomenon. The causes and correlates of child maltreatment cross many domains, including individual, interpersonal, familial, social, and cultural factors. Further, the negative consequences affect not only the individuals involved, but also societies and the global community as a whole. Additional research needs to be conducted to determine effective interventions so that future generations of children around the world may be spared from physical, sexual, and psychological trauma.

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See also Child Abuse: Prevention and Treatment; Child Molestation

Child Abuse: Prevention and Treatment

Definitions and Types of Abuse

Child abuse is a malady found in all sectors of society. Males and females of all ages, races, family incomes, and from all different areas are possible victims of child abuse. Child abuse and neglect have been present in society throughout history. Infanticide, ritual killings, maiming, and cruel punishments have all been documented from the past. Historically in American society, children were viewed differently from how they are today and as a result they were often victims of abuse. Parents did not become as involved emotionally with their children and children were not given exclusive protection under American law. Another factor that influenced child abuse was religion. Punishments, such as beatings, were seen as an appropriate

technique of discipline, even though today this would be considered child abuse. The first efforts to oppose child abuse took place as early as 1655. By the early 1800s, public officials were legally sanctioned to take children from homes where parents were abusive or negligent.

Today, every state has put forth laws to ensure reports of child abuse. There are many definitions of child abuse, and state laws vary on what is considered in this crime. The following is a general definition taken from the Model Child Protective Services Act:

An "abused or neglected child" is one whose physical or mental health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm by acts of omission or commission on the part of his or her parent or other persons responsible for the child's welfare.