

Preventing Crime with Quality Child Care: A Critical Investment in Maine's Safety

A Research Brief by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is an anti-crime organization of over 2,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and victims of violence nationwide, including 45 members in Maine.

A Report from
Law Enforcement

Summary

The members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS believe in tough law enforcement. Dangerous criminals need to be behind bars. Law enforcement leaders also know from experience that intervening early in a child's life is the best way to prevent crime. Research shows that quality educational child care for preschool-age children and after-school programs for older kids lead to lower rates of crime, drug use and welfare dependence, and to higher rates of high school graduation as the children grow up.¹ Tragically, inadequate funding denies thousands of eligible children in Maine access to these programs.

Quality Programs Cut Crime

Research proves that quality child care, especially for at-risk children, cuts later crime. For example:

- Three- and four-year olds from low-income neighborhoods were 70 percent more likely to have been arrested for a violent crime by age 18 than similar children who attended the federally-funded Chicago Child-Parent Centers. This program will have prevented an estimated 33,000 crimes by the time the 100,000 children already served reach the age of 18.²
- Three- and four-year olds randomly assigned to a control group were five times more likely to have become chronic lawbreakers as adults than those assigned to attend Michigan's High/Scope Perry Preschool program.³
- Five housing projects without Boys & Girls clubs serving children and adolescents during after-school hours, were compared to five in which new clubs were established. At the beginning, drug activity and vandalism were the same. By the time the study ended, the projects without the programs had 50 percent more vandalism and scored 37 percent worse on drug activity.⁴

Children Denied Assistance

Although quality child care is shown to cut crime, many parents cannot afford quality programs. The median annual cost of child care in Maine is \$7,020 for an infant and \$6,032 for a preschooler⁵—more than the average cost of public university tuition.⁶ The median annual cost of school-age care at a center in Maine is \$3,364.⁷ This means services for two children can equal the approximate annual salary of a full-time, minimum-wage earner.⁸

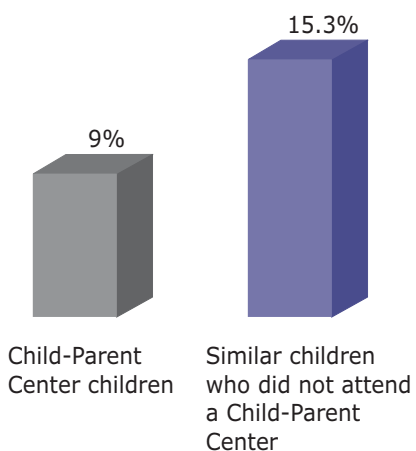
The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the principal source of federal funds for child care assistance to low-income families. Due to inadequate funding, however, only one in seven eligible children in Maine receives the federal subsidies.⁹ Federal CCDBG funds to Maine totaled \$16.9 million in 2002, and the state provided \$3 million in matching funds.¹⁰ Significant increases in funding are needed if more eligible children are to be served.

Child Care Investments Save Money

Not only does quality child care cut crime, but studies show denying these services to children results in higher costs to taxpayers. The High/Scope Perry Preschool program and the Chicago Child-Parent Centers cut crime, welfare and other costs so much that they saved more than \$7 for every \$1 invested.¹¹

At-Risk Children Without Quality Pre-kindergarten were 70% More Likely to Commit Violent Crimes

An Arrest for Violence by Age 18



Law Enforcement is United

Law enforcement leaders¹² and researchers agree: more of our nation's children, especially those most at-risk, must be given access to quality child care programs if later crime is to be prevented. Increases in CCDBG subsidies are needed to help kids avoid crime and prevent thousands of Mainers from becoming victims of violence.

Endnotes

- ¹ For lower rates of crime and welfare dependence, and higher rates of high school graduation, see: Schweinhart, L.J., Barnes, H.V., & Weikart, D.P. (1993). *Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press. For lower rates of crime and higher rates of high school graduation, see: Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Robertson, D. L., & Mann, E. A. (2001). Long-term effects of an early childhood intervention on educational achievement and juvenile arrest: A 15-year follow-up of low-income children in public schools. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(18), 2339-2346. For lower rates of drug use, see: Schinke, S.P., Orlandi, M.A., & Cole, K.C. (1992). Boys & Girls Clubs in public housing developments: Prevention services for youth at risk. *Journal of Community Psychology, OSAP Special Issue*, 118-128.
- ² Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Robertson, D. L., & Mann, E. A. (2001). Long-term effects of an early childhood intervention on educational achievement and juvenile arrest: A 15-year follow-up of low-income children in public schools. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(18), 2339-2346.
- ³ Schweinhart, L.J., Barnes, H.V., & Weikart, D.P. (1993). *Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.
- ⁴ Schinke, S.P., Orlandi, M.A., & Cole, K.C. (1992). Boys & Girls Clubs in public housing developments: Prevention services for youth at risk. *Journal of Community Psychology, OSAP Special Issue*, 118-128.
- ⁵ Maine Child Care Advisory Council. (2002). *The state of child care in Maine, 2002*. Retrieved from the Maine Department of Human Services Web site: http://www.state.me.us/dhs/state_of_child_care.pdf
- ⁶ American Association of State Colleges and Universities, & National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. (2003). *Student charges and financial aid: 2002-2003*. Retrieved from http://www.aascu.org/pdf/student_charges_03.pdf. The average cost of tuition and fees for a public four-year institution in Maine was \$4,925 for the 2002-2003 academic year.
- ⁷ Mills, L. C., Boston, S. N., Breindel, H. R., Goodman, I. F., & Mohrle, K. R. (2002). *Maine child care market rate and workforce study*. Retrieved from the Maine Department of Human Services Web site: <http://www.state.me.us/dhs/workforcereport.pdf>. The median annual cost of school-age care in Maine was computed as follows: [median weekly cost of school-age care before and after school (\$49) x 36 weeks of school] + [median weekly cost of school-age care during vacation weeks and summer (\$100) x 16 weeks].
- ⁸ U.S. Department of Labor. (2003). *Minimum wage laws in the states*. Retrieved from <http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/america.htm>. Minimum wage in Maine is \$6.25 per hour. An annual salary of \$13,000 was computed by multiplying: \$6.25 x 40 hours per week x 52 weeks per year.
- ⁹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2002). *Child Care and Development Block Grant/Child Care and Development Fund: Children served in fiscal year 1999 (average monthly)*. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/press/2000/cctable.htm>
- ¹⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2002). *State FY 2002 CCDF final allocations and earmarks*. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/policy1/current/im0201/im0201.pdf>
- ¹¹ For High/Scope Perry Preschool cost savings, see: Barnett, S.W. (1993). Cost benefit analysis. In L.J. Schweinhart, H. V. Barnes, & D. P. Weikart (Eds.), *Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27* (pp. 143-173). Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press. For Chicago Child-Parent Centers cost savings, see: Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Robertson, D. L., & Mann, E. A. (2002). Age 21 cost-benefit analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Centers. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(4), 267-303.
- ¹² In response to a Mason-Dixon Polling and Research survey, an overwhelming 71 percent of the nation's law enforcement leaders chose providing "more educational child care programs for preschool age children and after-school programs for school age youngsters" as the strategy with the greatest impact in reducing youth violence and crime. Mason-Dixon Polling and Research. (2002, August). *National law enforcement leadership survey*. Retrieved from the Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Web site: <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/nationalkidspoll2002.pdf>. Note: Many respondents favored adopting more than one strategy, and a majority ranked hiring more police officers as the second most effective approach.