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New Report Shows Home Visiting Programs Cut Crime and Boost the Economy

Law enforcement and business leaders highlight home visiting programs' value in reducing child abuse and neglect, which curbs crime, while positively impacting the economy.

(Washington, D.C.--) Today, [Council for a Strong America's](#) business and law enforcement leaders, [Fight Crime: Invest in Kids](#) and [ReadyNation](#), released a new report, *Parenting Works: The Public Safety and Economic Benefits of Home Visiting*. The report focuses on the power of voluntary home visiting in increasing public safety and positively impacting communities through an improved workforce and fiscal savings. The programs instill stability and independence by counseling parents on the skills needed to stimulate their child's development and avoid harmful practices that can result in abuse and neglect.

Each year, over 683,000 children nationwide experience abuse or neglect-- the equivalent of more than one child being abused every minute of every day. Research shows that children who experience abuse or neglect are twice as likely to commit a crime by age 19, compared to similar children who have not been abused or neglected.

Many abuse and neglect cases are preventable. Voluntary home visiting provides coaching for key skills to new parents by a trained professional from birth through the early years of the child's life. This guidance and counseling includes topics ranging from infant health and safety to education and employment goal-setting. The Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting program cut child abuse and neglect by 50 percent, as well as future criminal offenses among both children and mothers.

"One abused or neglected child is already one too many," said Sheriff Millard "Gus" Gustafson of Gage County in Nebraska . "Innovative programs like home visiting reduce abuse and neglect in our communities and this cuts crime. Parents gain confidence and stability in having a partner to guide them. The community and its public safety benefit immensely."

Home visiting advances not only individual families, but also communities. A cost-benefit analysis found that high-quality home visiting has net savings of up to \$6,000 over the lifetime of each child. The impact of fostering self-sustainability among families is reflected in welfare savings of \$1,200 per year and increased annual earnings of \$3,600. In addition, 85 percent of federally supported home visiting programs demonstrated improvements in family self-sufficiency last year. High-quality home visiting programs have also been shown to put children on a positive track in school, reducing special education needs and ultimately bettering the future workforce.

“As a child, my mom went back and forth from being too lax, to overly strict. If I got in trouble, my discipline was getting punched in the face. My friends aren’t good parents, either, and drugs have been a big part of that,” said Sharon, a Parents as Teachers home visiting program mom from Missouri. “My parent educator was the first positive influence in my life. I know she will come to the house every couple weeks and I am motivated to be a better parent because she has shown me how.”

The federal home visiting program, known as the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, reaches 145,500 parents and children in 50 states. MIECHV is an evidence-based program, with 75 percent of funding going to proven home visiting programs and up to 25 percent going to promising and innovative approaches undergoing rigorous evaluation.

“The long-term returns on investing in home visiting are remarkable,” said Dr. Candace Kendle, founder and former CEO of Kendle International. “Simple coaching yields sound development, stable homes, and community savings. A good start is invaluable to society.”

This fall MIECHV will be up for reauthorization. Congress will need to provide necessary funding for the program to not only be sustained for the parents and children currently enrolled, but expanded. As the report shows, the benefits of home visiting are far reaching and MIECHV must be reauthorized for the good of communities across the country.