

TheChildren'sAgenda

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

Executive Summary of Actionable Evidence-Based Measures to Prevent Child Abuse & Neglect

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

A large study commissioned by Congress in 2016, “Within Our Reach: A National Strategy to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities” noted that early childhood home visitation services had the most promise in preventing fatalities, and have already been shown to reduce the incidence of childhood abuse and neglect.ⁱ

Nurse-Family Partnership: Only one evidence-based practice has been shown to reduce fatalities – Nurse-Family Partnership. Extensive and rigorous evaluations of the Nurse-Family Partnership demonstrated a significantly lower rate of substantiated reports among participating families when compared to a control group.

Parents as Teachers: A multisite analysis of the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model found fewer injuries and emergency room visits between the 1st and 2nd years of life among families participating in PAT, with the largest effect for low-income children.ⁱⁱ

Building Healthy Children: Recent outcomes demonstrate a reduction in maternal depression among mothers receiving the intervention, which then resulted in improved parent and child outcomes at age four.ⁱⁱⁱ Given that maternal depression is an important risk factor for child abuse and neglect, reductions in maternal depression are likely to improve child maltreatment outcomes and improve family functioning.

**“THE NURSE FAMILY PARTNERSHIP HAS BEEN
DEMONSTRATED TO SAVE LIVES.”**

WITHIN OUR REACH: A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO ELIMINATE CHILD ABUSE
AND NEGLECT FATALITIES, US CONGRESS, 2016

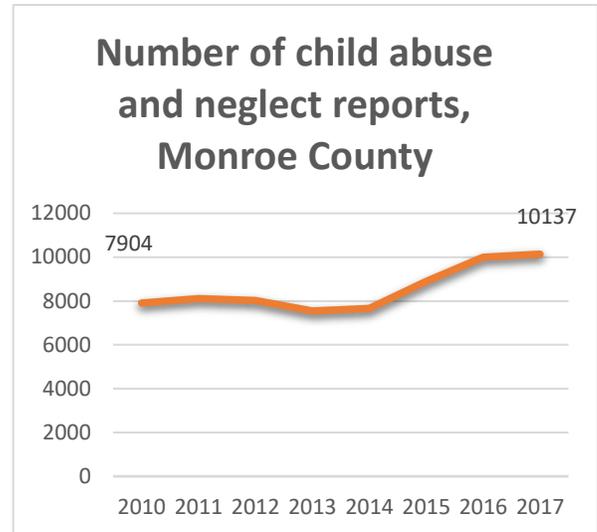
Recommendation:

Monroe County should bring the evidence-based home visiting Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and Building Healthy Children programs to scale to fully meet the need.

As a start, Monroe County should restore \$1.7 M in recent cuts to preventive programs, which help avoid child abuse and neglect before it occurs.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:

- There is little difference in long-term outcomes when comparing children involved in a substantiated report vs. a non-substantiated report. The American Public Health Association states: “Research shows that children with substantiated investigations are virtually indistinguishable from those who are unsubstantiated in a wide range of subsequent negative outcomes ranging from child maltreatment re-report to school achievement to mortality.”^{iv}
- Victims of child abuse and neglect have high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, aggressive behavior, truancy, running away, early alcohol use, binge drinking, and using a weapon in adolescence. Internalizing behaviors like depression and self-harm are also common. Into adulthood, victims experience higher rates of non-communicable diseases.^v
- A large amount of data shows that available, but underfunded, programs can reduce risk factors for child abuse such as parental stress, maternal depression, and food insecurity.^{vi}
- The Centers for Disease Control states: “Strengthening household financial security can reduce child abuse and neglect by improving parents’ ability to satisfy children’s basic needs (food, shelter, medical care).”^{vii}
- A broader approach would include targeting larger social issues that have been identified as risk factors for child maltreatment:
 - Improved access to safe, affordable child care and high quality early childhood education;
 - Income supports for low income families;
 - Paid family leave; and flexible, consistent schedules in the work place.

**CHILD MALTREATMENT REPORTS
MONROE COUNTY:**

- Monroe County Department of Human Services (DHS) projects that it will receive 10,137 reports of child abuse and maltreatment in 2017, averaging 27 reports per day.
- The number of reports has risen 32% since 2014.

ⁱ *Within our reach: A national strategy to eliminate child abuse and neglect fatalities.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office: 2016.

ⁱⁱ Wagner M, Spiker D, Hernandez F, Song J, Gerlach-Downie S. *Multisite parents as teachers evaluation: Experiences and outcomes for children and families.* Menlo Park, CA: SRI International; 2001.

ⁱⁱⁱ Strum RJ, Handley ED, Manly J, Toth S, Building health children: Reductions in maternal depression lead to improved child and mother outcomes. Presentation at 2017 meeting of The Society for Reach in Child Development; April 2017; Austin, Texas.

^{iv} <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303545>

^v Leeb RT, Lewis T, Zolotor AJ. A review of physical and mental health consequences of child abuse and neglect and implications for practice. *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine.* 2011; 5 (5): 1-15.

^{vi} Stith, SM, Liu T, Davies LC, Boykin EL, Alder MC, Harris J M, Dees, J. Risk factors in child maltreatment: A meta-analytic review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior,* 2009; 14(1), 13-29

^{vii} *Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities,* 2016, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention