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"Children, the Innocent Victims"

A Thesis

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
The Defining and History of Child Abuse	4
Different Types of Child Abuse	6
Causes and Effects of Child Abuse	13
Punishment Alternatives	16
Prevention of Child Abuse	19
Comparing Robeson County to the Nation	24
Famous Supreme Court Cases on Child Abuse	31
Conclusion	36
Bibliography	37

Introduction

The future of America's children is in the hands of their parents. Are these parents aware that an estimated two million cases of child abuse occur each year? The objectives of this thesis are to inform parents of potential child abuse of their children when it is least expected and also to suggest preventive methods to ensure that their child does not encounter these terrifying experiences.

There are many forms of child abuse. Some are physical abuse, but there is also emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse, as well as outright neglect. Diana Baumrind, in *The Social Context of Child Maltreatment*, wrote that child abuse is a response to stress and a display of power. One factor that makes child abuse so common is the fact that our younger citizens are so vulnerable. Children, unlike adults, are confined to specific areas and do not have the freedom of mobility. They are dependent on others and have no means of supporting themselves as do adults. Often children do not understand the abuse they endure or are too scared to seek help. Most children are abused by someone they know, trust, or care about.

Other than the fact that children are extremely vulnerable, what makes adults abuse children? Quite often, adults were abused when they were children and feel that it is perfectly okay because they had to go through it. Statistics show that many abused children come from impoverished homes and homes that are not fit for a child. A child learns from those that he/she is dependent upon and those that he/she looks to for support and guidance. If this so called role model is abusive then the child grows up feeling that abuse is the answer to many problems. *The American*

Psychologist states, "A proposition that has been established across various types of victimization is that a history of such victimization increases the likelihood that someone will become a perpetrator of crime, violence, or abuse" ("Victimization of Children", Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman, p173). In other words, abused children are more prone to commit violent acts or abusive acts toward others when they become adults.

Children can be abused by other children mentally and sometimes physically. It is very important for a child to feel accepted by others. When he/she is denied that acceptance, it can be very emotionally stressful for that child. Due to their nature, children can not actually accuse other children of emotional abuse. Therefore, it is important to teach children how to be sociable with others. In the same manner, parents should be aware of the dangers of child abuse and how to recognize it. The first step for parents is to understand the term "child abuse" and what its elements consist of.

The Defining and History of Child Abuse

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended and reauthorized in October 1996 (Public Law 104-235, Section 111; 42 U.S.C. 5106), defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum, any recent act or failure to act:

- Resulting in imminent risk of serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation
- Of a child (a person under the age of 18 , unless the child protection law of the State in which the child resides specifies a younger age for cases not involving sexual abuse)
- By a parent or caretaker (including any employee of a residential facility or any staff person providing out-of-home care who is responsible for the child's welfare

Along with the different types of child abuse, (to be discussed later), three occurrences of maltreatment are recognized. The first occurrence would happen in the home, where parents or parent guardians commit abusive acts towards the child of that household. Seldom does this go beyond closed doors unless death is a factor. Also, the public is usually unaware of the situation. The second occurrence is in an institutional setting, such as day care centers, schools, social service agencies, and correctional institutions. This occurrence of abuse usually draws public attention and news-breaking stories such as the *Little Rascals Case*. The third occurrence of abuse is when the parent is unable to meet the minimal needs of their children. This is more of a political issue than child abuse and neglect.

For many years child abuse was kept at a low profile. There were two main beliefs that people had. One of these beliefs was that children “belong” to their parents, who have considerable control in deciding how to treat the children. Children were considered property and could be sold and bought as slaves and wives. This belief was recorded “as early as 380 BC when Aristotle noted ‘a son or slave is property, and there can be no injustice to one’s own property’“ (Schneider, p186). The other belief was that government intervention into the lives of families was to be kept at a minimum or also described as “Parental right of authority”. This concept was a part of European tradition. Parents would use quotes from the Bible to justify their actions such as whippings and floggings. The famous saying to go along with these beliefs was “Spare the rod and Spoil the child”. This latter belief is strong today in many parts of the country as part of the “Parents’ Rights” movement. These beliefs eventually led to the four main types of child abuse which are currently inhabiting the homes of many families.

Different Types of Child Abuse

Although child abuse can be present in many forms, there are four main types of child maltreatment including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and child neglect. A child could be exposed to one of these or perhaps all of them. By observing a child's behavior and actions, a person can often tell if a child has been mistreated. In each case, a child's distinct behavior depends on the type of child abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can be described as the infliction of physical injury on a child by beating, punching, biting, kicking, slapping, shaking, or any other form of physical harm to a child. Abuse of a child does not always have to be intentionally inflicted or involve malice. Adults can unintentionally harm children in ways such as over-disciplining or harsh punishment of a child. In most cases children are unable to defend themselves which makes them very vulnerable.

Parents who physically abuse children usually have some of the same traits in common. They often have a very low self-esteem, do not think very highly of themselves because of failure and frustration, and have poor control of their emotions. Parents with these problems turn to physical abuse for relief. Or perhaps it is family tradition that just because they were abused when they were young, they feel their children should have to go through the same thing. The following signs of child abuse were developed by Child Abuse Protection(CAP) in Raleigh, NC:

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

-bruises that occur in unusual patterns, places, and occur

- repeatedly
- burns such as immersion burns, rope burns, and cigarette burns
- cuts on the face, genitals, or other body parts
- broken bones; spiral fractures and old fractures
- head injuries; bald spots, retinal hemorrhage, brain damage
- internal injuries; injures to intestines or vital organs

Child fatalities, as the result of physical abuse, are among the most devastating statistics. Records show that, "In 1995, States reported that 996 children were known by child protective services agencies to have died as a result of maltreatment" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997). Fatal injuries from physical abuse result from many different acts. Some of these acts include: severe head trauma, Shaken Baby Syndrome, trauma to the abdomen and/or thorax, scalding, drowning, suffocation, and poisoning. Parents do not just kill their child for no apparent reason. No reason justifies killing a child. Killing a child usually occurs as a result of an infant's inconsolable crying or feeding difficulties, a toddler's failed toilet training, or exaggerated parental perception of acts of disobedience.

Emotional Abuse

When people witness what seems to be physical child abuse, they are alarmed. What these individuals do not realize is that abused children are around them every day. The reason why adults are unaware of emotional abuse is because it is not very noticeable. Unlike other abuses, emotional abuse can last a lifetime without anyone ever knowing. In actual defining terms, "Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's

emotional development and sense of self-worth. Emotional abuse includes excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity" (Kraizer). Many parents abuse their children and don't even realize it. For example, when parents criticize, insult, belittle, reject or tease their children they are inflicting emotional abuse. Parents who fail to provide their children with psychological support to grow and develop emotionally and do not give the love and guidance children need are also guilty of this offense. Parents may abuse their children because the parents fail to realize that children's maturity levels and ability to think and comprehend have not developed to the full potential. The Child Abuse Prevention Center provided other examples of emotional abuse which included yelling or screaming at the child, lacking interest in the child, threatening to harm the child, blaming the child for situations not within his or her control, negatively comparing the child with other children, embarrassing the child in public, frequently making the child feel ashamed or guilty, lying to the child, failing to empathize with the child's point of view, believing that the child should take care of you, showing no respect for the child, not respecting the need for privacy, and failing to discipline the child fairly. The following signs of emotional abuse were provided by Coalition for Children Inc., Krazier, and ANT.

Observed Signs of Emotional Abuse

- child rocks, sucks, or bites itself
- inappropriately aggressive
- destructive to others
- suffers from sleep or speech disorders
- restricts play activities or experiences
- demonstrates compulsions, obsessions, phobias, or hysterical outbursts

Behavioral signs of Emotional Abuse

- negative statements about self
- shy, passive, compliant
- lags in physical, mental and emotional development
- self-destructive behavior
- highly aggressive
- cruel to others
- overly demanding

Family or Parental Indicators

- blames or puts down child
- is cold and rejecting
- indifferent to child's problems or welfare
- withholds affection
- shows preferential treatment when there is more than one child in the family

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse is probably the most devastating type of abuse. All children are vulnerable to sexual abuse. Parents must understand that there is always a chance of sexual abuse, especially if their child attends a preschool or nursery. Statistics have shown that one in every four children is sexually abused. This abuse can happen to very young children as well as teenagers. In almost all cases these children will be abused by someone that they are close too: a relative, baby-sitter, family friend, or even parents. Sexual abuse is "forced, tricked, or coerced sexual behavior between a young person and an older person. Sexual abuse may consist of any one of the following acts: nudity, disrobing, genital exposure, observation of the child, kissing, fondling, masturbation, oral genital

contact, child pornography, digital penetration, and vaginal or anal intercourse” (Thoringer, Drivackska, Laue-McDonough, Jarrison, Vincent, Hedlund). Most often, sexual abuse does not involve physical abuse because children are trusting and dependent. The last thing a child would think of is that someone is trying to hurt them. Children strive for attention, approval of adults, and love. Sexual abusers know this and persuade children to play games with them. Children are so vulnerable because they are taught not to question authority and that adults are always right.

For instance, the following scenario is common in many families. The parent takes the child to a daycare center and tells the child to listen, behave and to do whatever the adult in charge tells them to do. The child obeys the parent and listens to everything the caretaker says, including playing sexual games where the child is told he/she is playing a game of “doctor”. The caretaker tells the child to keep the game a secret and not to tell anyone, not even his or her parents. The caretaker may even threaten to harm the child if he or she tells. For a child, that could be a very frightening experience.

The abuser usually tries to control the victim by coercing, using power of authority, manipulating the child into playing fun games which result in unwanted physical contact, and bribing the child with favors or gifts. Sexual abuse can occur anywhere, including familiar places such as the home or parks and unfamiliar places such as campgrounds or wooded areas.

When children are sexually abused, there are many signs of behavioral changes. Many of these changes include: complaints of pain

while urinating, genital discomfort, fear or dislike of certain people or places, sleep disturbances, headaches, school problems, return to younger more babyish behavior, depression, anxiety, discipline problems, passive or overly-pleasing behavior, low self-esteem, hostility or aggression, bed-wetting, age-inappropriate knowledge about sex, and sexual acting out. Some additional actions that parents should look for are copying adult sexual behavior and persistent sexual play with other children or themselves.

Children often do not tell anyone about their experiences of abuse for many reasons. Children are sometimes too young to put what happened into words. They feel confused by the attention and feelings accompanying the abuse. Children are afraid that no one will believe them and blame themselves, or believe that the abuse is punishment for being "bad". They are too ashamed or embarrassed and worry about getting into trouble if they tell anyone.

Child Neglect

Child neglect is basically defined as the failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. Neglect can usually fall under three conditions: physical neglect, educational neglect, and emotional neglect.

Physical neglect involves matters such as failing to provide a child with needed medical attention, throwing a child out of the home, not allowing a runaway child to return home, and leaving a child alone or inadequately supervised for a long period of time. If one lives in a city or an urban community, young children or adolescents are often seen riding their bicycles or running around the community unsupervised at all hours

of the night. This type of child neglect has influenced most criminal activity involving juveniles.

The second condition of child neglect involves educational neglect. Parents are required by law to enroll children of mandatory school age in school; therefore, attendance is not a crucial area of neglect. An area that often goes unrecognized is lack of parental involvement. Parents need to spend adequate time helping their children develop appropriate study skills and homework habits. They should exhibit an interest in their child's daily school routine in a positive way. Parents frequently neglect to be involved in the events and activities of the school. Finally, parents often neglect to support the school in a positive manner and children are affected by their attitude.

The final condition of child neglect is emotional neglect. All children need some type of love and affection. Giving children the attention they need is important in helping to control a child's behavior. Communicating and giving children psychological care also helps the child to build social skills.

Causes and Effects of Child Abuse

Having discussed the four types of maltreatment, the next step is to consider the causes and effects resulting from child abuse. What actually causes parents and others to abuse children? What effect does abuse have on children as they get older? The answer to these questions can only lie within the minds and actions of those abusing or being abused. On the other hand, researchers have found many logical answers to each of these questions. One theory of the effects of child abuse that is supported by a wide variety of methodologies states, "In addition to general mental health impairments, a proposition that has been established across various types of victimization is that a history of such victimization increases the likelihood that someone will become a perpetrator of crime, violence, or abuse" (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman). Parents who were abused as children have the attitude "my parents abused me as a child and I made it through without any problems, so why should it be any different with my children". What these parents' have failed to remember is how scared and confused they were when their parents abused them. They don't realize that they do not have to follow in their parents' footsteps and be abusers as their parents were. Often times, teenagers who have problems with alcohol have parents with alcohol problems. The same goes for teenagers with drug addictions and high arrest rates. These teenagers have learned from the best, their parents.

Prior child abuse is not the only reason parents abuse and neglect their children. Stress is a major factor that can push even the stongest person to his or her emotional limit. First, financial problems cause great stress on the family. Parents see their child's needs as a reminder of their

failure. They also feel that the child is causing financial problems because of his or her excessive wants. Also, a child who is constantly sick and requires medical attention is financially demanding. Secondly, parents may have a problem with social isolation. Parents who do not have the support of friends and relatives to relieve them of the pressures of day-to-day living also feel stressed. Having no time to spend away from children to relax and relieve themselves of responsibility causes accumulated tension to turn into abuse. Third, marital problems that occur between the husband and wife can result in child abuse. The child may get caught between parents arguing about who gets custody. More importantly, through all the confusion and frustration, the child has to cope with the fact that his or her parents are separating and that things will never be the same.

To become a victim of child abuse is one of the most devastating things a child will ever have to endure. But the saddest part is that effects of abuse tend to last a lifetime. Physical abuse can lead to a permanent disability or retardation, and emotional abuse can traumatize an individual well into his/her adults years. Children depend on adults for security and the comfort of someone they can trust. When children are abused they begin to have mixed and confused feelings about their abuse. Following is a list of feelings abused children have that was developed by the Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Knoxville, TN:

Fear

- of the person who is abusing them
- of causing trouble
- of losing adults important to them
- of being taken away from home
- of being different

Anger

- at the person abusing them
- at other adults around them who did not protect them
- at themselves (feeling as if they caused the problem)

Isolation

- because "something is wrong with me"
- because they feel alone in their experience
- because they have trouble talking about the abuse

Sadness

- about having something taken from them
- about losing a part of themselves
- about growing up too fast
- about being betrayed by someone they trusted

Guilt

- for not being able to stop the abuse
- for believing they "consented" to the abuse
- for "telling", if they told
- for keeping the secret-if they did not tell

Shame

- about being involved in the experience
- about their bodies' response to the abuse

Confusion

- because they may still love the abuser
- because their feelings change all the time

Every time that a child is abused, these feelings linger within his/her mind. The only way to prevent a child from having these feelings is to prevent the abuse.

Punishment Alternatives

Often child abuse could be avoided if parents or caretakers could learn to control their tempers and act like adults. For example, if most parents were told they could not use corporal punishment on their children, including striking any body part of a child, how many would panic or just give up disciplining all together? Consider the statement, "Numerous studies have revealed that if we were raised with corporal punishment we will most likely raise our children the same way. What we know about being parents generally comes from the parents that raised us"(Web Page, Deciding... Rod). Children are exposed to their parents' ideas and values. Therefore the children often exhibit the same characteristics when they reach parenthood.

Many people feel that a little spanking on the bottom is quite OK. What they don't realize is that in most cases at the time of punishment they are in a state of anger. The given punishment is usually a release of their anger and results in hitting harder than they had intended. Sometimes corporal punishment can get out of hand and the potential danger of abusing children becomes greater. Children also associate corporal punishment with anger. So in a child's view, spanking or hitting someone is a way to deal with anger and it is better to communicate with your hands than with your mouth when you are angry. Avoiding corporal punishment is the best thing to do. Parents should consider some of the following alternatives, that were suggested by the webpage *Deciding to Spare the Rod*, when punishment is needed.

First, parents should take time-out and allow themselves to cool down. When parents find their child has destroyed something that was

very valuable, they can suddenly feel a rage go through their body telling them to react now. This is the last thing parents should do. They should go and find something constructive to do, clearing their mind, and allowing themselves ample time to calm down. The parent should deal with their anger and not take it out on their children. After dealing with their emotions, parents are more capable of handling the situation in a reasonable manner.

Second, the parents should give their children time-out as well. How often do children throw temper tantrums by crying, kicking, and screaming? This happens in most cases where children are told "No". When children start doing this, either at home or in public, parents will usually scold the children, verbally or physically, right then. That is more or less what children want, just a little attention. Well here is a solution. Designate a certain place for the each time a child begins a tantrum. Take the child there, sit down and do something like read a book, not giving the child any attention but keeping an eye on him or her so the child will not hurt himself. When the child has calmed down, then award him or her with a small treat. Also when going places, give the child some incentive for good behavior.

Another way to deal with children's behavior is to give them additional chores to do. Perhaps they have broken something or made a big mess. Parents should start by having the children to help them clean up the mess they have made. Then give them other household chores to do such as washing dishes or folding clothes. This makes children feel they are a part of the house and gives them the attention they need while helping the parent.

Communicating verbally with children is probably the most effective tool for discipline. Sitting down and talking with children can often solve a lot of problems. For example, a child eats a dozen chocolate chip cookies after the parent told him not to. As a result of eating all those cookies the child gets a stomachache. The parent should let the child know he got a stomachache because he disobeyed them and that next time he should listen. Parents should always follow through with their discipline because children learn from it and will think before doing it again.

Prevention of Child Abuse

The objective of most prevention activities is to deter predictable problems, protect existing states of health, and promote desired life objectives(Bloom, 1996). Most often there are factors that influence child abuse and neglect. Some of these factors include substance abuse programs, children with disabilities, and families affected by domestic violence.

There are three major levels at which child abuse and neglect prevention usually occur. These levels are stated below.

- Primary prevention activities are directed at the general population with the goal of stopping the occurrence of maltreatment before it starts.
- Secondary prevention activities target families at high risk of maltreatment to alleviate conditions associated with the problem.
- Tertiary prevention directs services to families where maltreatment has occurred to reduce the negative consequences of the maltreatment and to prevent its recurrence (NCCANI, webpage).

The primary prevention levels usually concentrate on the general public. Some activities may involve making announcements over the radio or television encouraging parents to use forms of discipline that are nonviolent. One example would be eliminating corporal punishment as a form of discipline. Another activity would be to provide the parents with educational programs that teach various child raising techniques, such as age-appropriate tasks or skills. A third activity includes campaigns to inform citizens where to report cases of suspected child maltreatment.

Next is the secondary prevention level which directs its attention to families that are at higher risks than others. This often involves families who live in communities with high incident rates. These communities are usually flooded with substance abuse, teenage pregnancies, poverty, developmental disabilities, and violent offenders. Programs that have been designed to help families with these problems include: "education programs in high schools for teen mothers, substance abuse programs for mothers and families with young children, services for families who have children with special needs, and family resource centers offering information and referral services to families living in low-income neighborhoods"(NCCANI, webpage).

The third prevention level is tertiary prevention which concentrates on homes where child abuse has already occurred. The main objective is to prevent child maltreatment from reoccurring in these homes. Some services at this level include trained mental health counseling available 24 hours a day for a short period of time, parent role-model programs for children with social problems, and education for families that have been affected by abuse to improve communication.

Parent education plays a key role in child abuse prevention. In parent programs, adults learn the best way to discipline their children and other techniques besides corporal punishment. Another important element in parent education is age-appropriate child development learning. Parent expectations of children are often too high and lead to abuse. A child's age and rate at which he or she learns determines what should be expected of him or her. Also parents should spend time with their children in a "play

interaction environment” which builds social skills and a stonger child-parent relationship.

Parents should prepare their children to recognize all types of abuse. Preparing your child for situations like sexual abuse, for example, is the best defense. The following lists pertaining to prevention of sexual abuse are provided by the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information:

Protecting Children

In order to protect children, teach them:

- to feel good about themselves and know they are loved, valued and deserve to be safe
- the difference between safe and unsafe touches
- the proper names for all body parts, so they will be able to communicate clearly
- that safety rules apply to all adults, not just strangers
- that their bodies' belong to them and nobody has the right to touch them or hurt them
- that they can say “no” to requests that make them feel uncomfortable even from a close relative or family friend
- to report to you if any adult asks them to keep a secret
- that some adults have problems
- that they can rely on you to believe and protect them if they tell you about abuse
- that they are not bad or to blame for sexual abuse
- to tell a trusted adult about abuse even if they are afraid of what may happen

Listening to Children

The following suggestions help you to provide positive support.

Do:

- Keep Calm.* It is important to remember that you are not angry with the child, but what happened. Children can mistakenly interpret anger or disgust as directed towards them.
- Believe the child.* In most circumstances children do not lie about sexual abuse.
- Give positive messages* such as "I know you couldn't help it," or "I'm proud of you for telling."
- Explain* to the child that he or she is not to blame for what happened
- Listen to and answer* the child's questions honestly
- Respect* the child's privacy. Be careful not to discuss the abuse in front of people who do not need to know what happen.
- Be Responsible.* Report the incident to the Department of Human Services. They can help protect the child's safety and provide resources.
- Arrange a medical exam.* It can reassure you that there has been no permanent physical damage and may verify important evidence.
- Get Help.* Get competent professional counseling, even if it's only for a short time.

Don't:

- Panic or overreact* when the child talks about the experience. Children need help and support to make it through this difficult time.
- Pressure the child* to talk or avoid talking about the abuse. Allow the child to talk at her or his own pace. Forcing

information can be harmful. Silencing the child will not help her or him to forget.

-*Confront the offender* in the child's presence. The stress may be harmful. This is a job for the authorities.

-*Blame* the child. SEXUAL ABUSE IS NEVER THE CHILD'S FAULT!

Some of the same techniques used to prevent sexual abuse can also be taught to children to prevent physical and emotional abuse. Parents should teach children to be open about what happens outside of the home and not to keep secrets or be afraid to tell if someone has been hurting them. All of the above techniques can save children from abuse and perhaps save their lives.

Comparing Robeson County to the Nation

Although many prevention programs are in effect, child maltreatment is continually a known problem throughout the nation. The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System personnel have done studies to determine how large the problem actually is. In 1995, Child Protective Services(CPS) recorded an investigation on approximately 2 million cases that involved about 3 million children. Of these cases, just over one million were substantiated. "The term 'substantiated' means that an allegation of maltreatment was confirmed according to the level of evidence required by State law or State policy"(NCANDS). According to CPS agencies, about 15 children per 1,000 in the general population were abused in 1995. Robeson County Department of Social Services(DSS) reported that 6 children per 1,000 were abused in 1995. Other studies, such as National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect(NIS) stated that as many as 42 children per 1000 were harmed or endangered in 1993. A 1993 report from NIS estimated that there was 149 percent increase since 1980.

Robeson County uses a Central Registry to record its reports. In 1996-97 a total of 1,785 instances of child maltreatment were reported. Of these reports, 611 were substantiated which is about 34 percent of the total reports. The nation's substantiation percentage is just over 50 percent according to CPS agencies. In the reports, a total of 3,359 children were reported abused and 1,157 were substantiated. Both girls and boys experienced maltreatment in these cases. In national statistics 52 percent of the victims were female and 47 percent male. However, County statistics showed the victims were both at 50 percent with males being a few cases ahead.

Neglect is the most common maltreatment, both nationally and county-wide. Approximately 52 percent of all the victims, nationally, endure some type of neglect, but Robeson County reports that 92 percent of its victims have suffered some type of neglect. Due to the fact that a large percentage of Robeson County's population is Indian, the percentage of maltreatment among Indians is much greater than that of the nation. CPS agencies reported that 2% were Indian, 54% White, 24% Black, and 19% of some other race. Robeson County reported that 53% were Indian, 14% White, 27% Black, and 6% of some other race. Statistics show that the majority of these children (approximately 78%) were abused by their birth parents and were under the age of seven.

The following are frequently asked questions that the National Clearinghouse of Child Abuse and Neglect have answered:

Are victims of child abuse more likely to engage in criminality later in life?

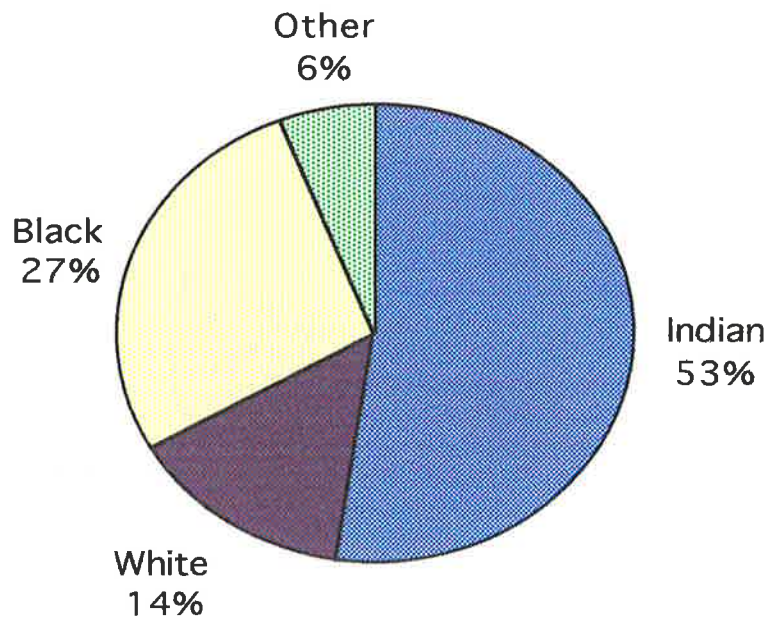
According to a 1992 study sponsored by the National Institute of Justice(NIJ), maltreatment in childhood increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53 percent, as an adult by 38 percent, and for a violent crime by 38 percent. Being abused or neglected in childhood increases the likelihood of arrest for females by 77 percent. Physically abused children are more likely than child victims of other types of maltreatment to be arrested for a violent crime. A related 1994 NU study indicated that children who are sexually abused were 28 times more likely than a matching control group of non-abused children to be arrested for prostitution as an adult(NCCANI).

Is there any evidence linking alcohol or other drug use to child maltreatment?

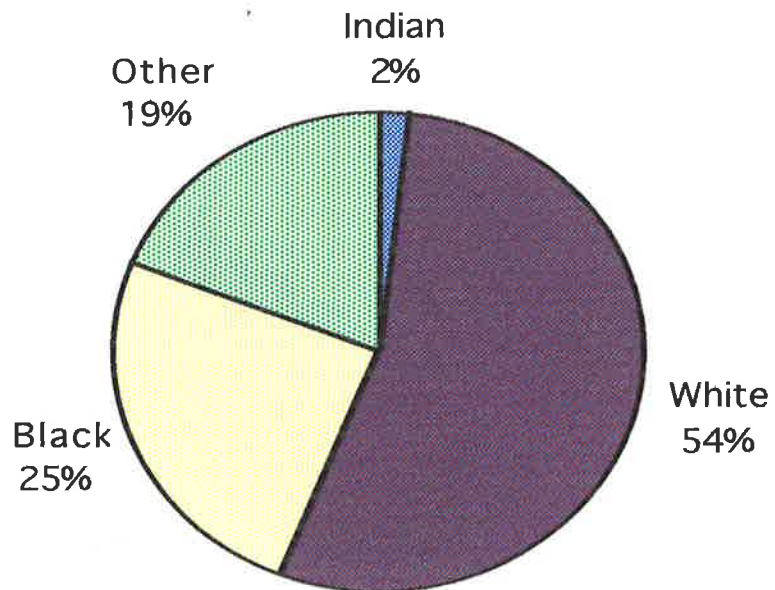
A 1993 study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that children in alcohol-abusing families were nearly 4 times more likely to be maltreated overall, almost 5 times more likely to be physically neglected than children in non-alcohol abusing families. Estimates suggest that 50 to 80 percent of all child abuse cases substantiated by CPS involve some degree of substance abuse by the child's parents(NCCANI).

According to local juvenile officers and social service agencies, statistics such as these are also true in Robeson County. Adults that were abused as children are three to four times more likely to abuse their children. Also, the assistant Director of Social Services stated, "approximately 85 percent of all abuse cases in Robeson County involve some type of substance abuse".

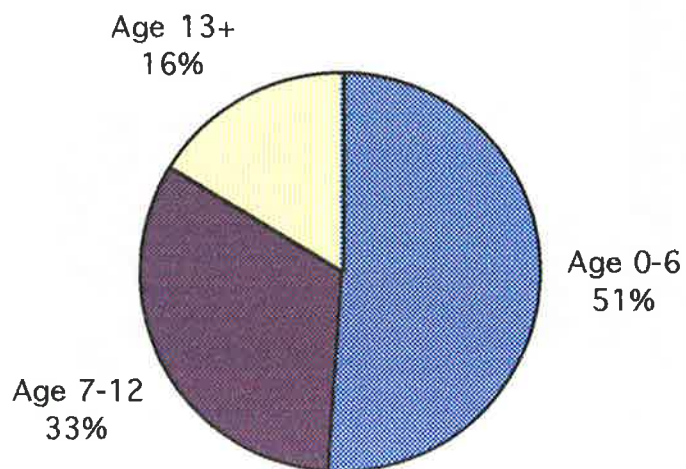
Race Related Child Abuse Cases that were Substantiated in Robeson County in 1997



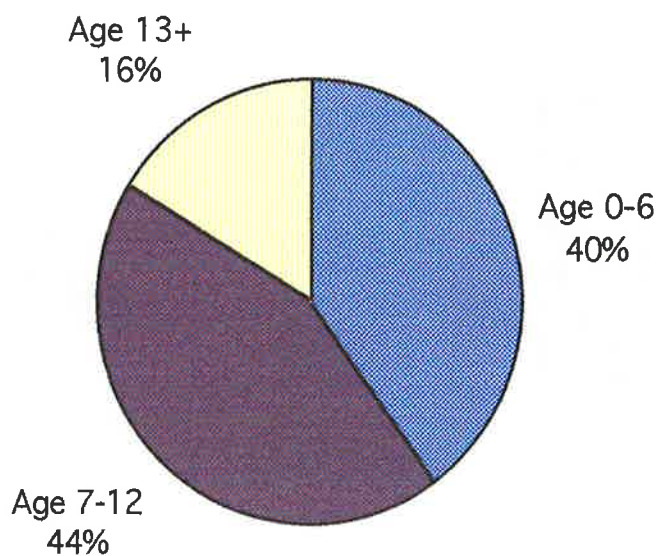
Race Related Child Abuse Cases that were Substantiated Nationally in 1997



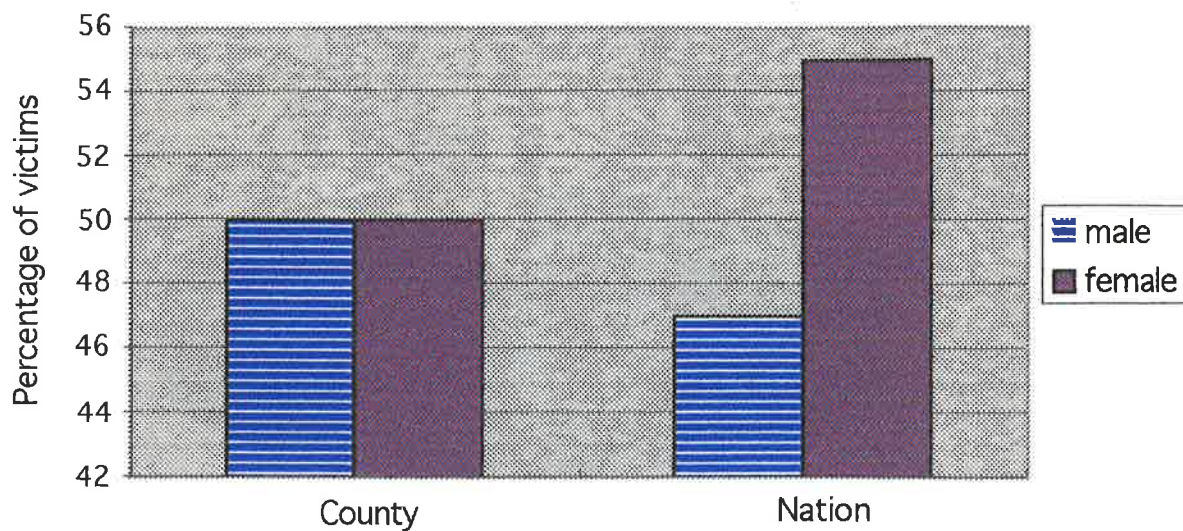
Age Comparison of Abused Children in Robeson County



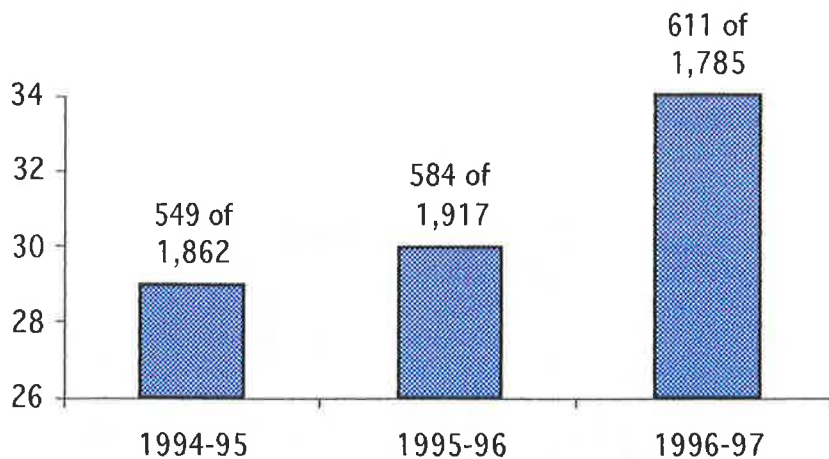
Age Comparison of Abuse Children in the Nation



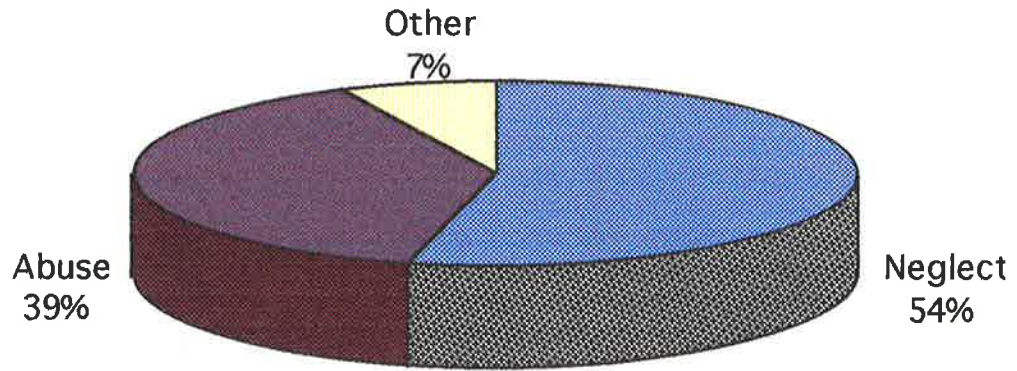
Sex of Victims Abused



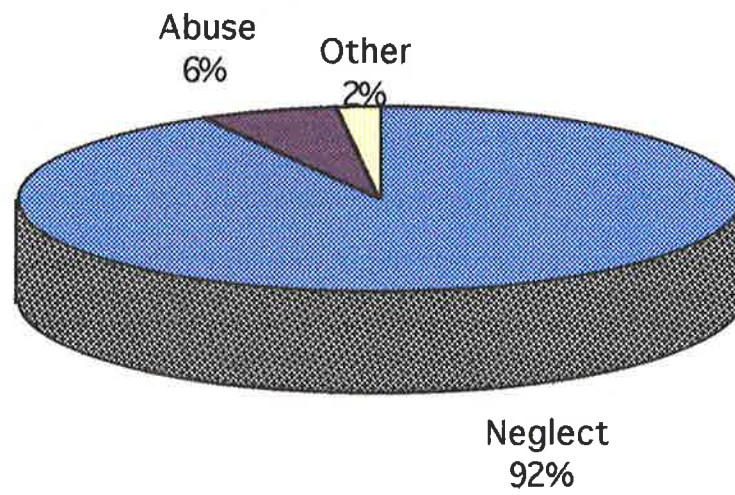
Number of Cases Substantiated in Robeson County



National Percentage of Maltreatment



County Percentage of Maltreatment



Famous Supreme Court Cases on Child Abuse

The National and County statistics proved that child maltreatment is problem, but many of the cases are not publicly acknowledged. Although the following two cases were not so lucky. In fact, the *Little Rascals Day Care Case* is considered the most expensive case ever in the state of North Carolina.

“Little Rascals Day Care Case”

Edenton, North Carolina is a small, rural town where Betsy Kelly was born and raised. Her father Warren Twiddy was a successful businessman who took pride in providing everything that his two daughters needed. In 1988 he bought and renovated an old bottling plant for Betsy and her husband, Robert (Bob) Kelly, so they could relocate their business, the Little Rascals day care center. Betsy and Bob had been running the day care out of a rundown house that had become too small. Betsy, Bob, the employees and the children moved in soon after. Just months after the new day care had opened, Audrey Stever told local police investigator Brenda Toppin that she was concerned with her child in the day care center. Stever told Toppin that about a month ago while giving her three year old son, Kyle, a bath he told her to “Stick your finger in my butt mommy”. Around the same time, she had discovered him masturbating. She asked him why he did that and Kyle stated that he “Played Doctor” with an older neighborhood boy. According to Kyle, sticking your finger in your butt was playing doctor. Stever also stated that Kyle didn’t really like to be left at the day care center.

After talking to police, Stever questioned her son again, but this time Kyle told her that Mr. Bob "Played Doctor" with him and some older kids. From this point investigator Toppin and Social Services began questioning Kyle and other children at the daycare. About four days after the new day care had opened, one of Betsy Kelly's best friends, Jane Mabry, also complained that her son said he was slapped by Mr. Bob. When Bob Kelly was asked he did not deny it but said that it was an accident. Betsy claimed to have apologized but Mabry pulled her son out of the day care.

In January of 1989, the police went to Bob Kelly and told him that someone had complained of him sexually abusing children. The next morning Bob met all the parents at the door and informed them of the allegations. The parents were shocked and in disbelief. At first all the parents were thinking who could do such a thing. The Kellys were such "good people" and would never do anything like that. People even sent food and flowers to the Kellys and were defending them. Slowly things began to change. Two or three other sets of parents were becoming suspicious that their children were being abused by Mr. Bob. Bob hired a lawyer (Chris Bean) who had a child of his own in the day care. Bean actually believed that Bob was innocent, until his child's name was mentioned several times by other children. Mr. Bean withdrew from defending Bob. Being the prestigious and respected lawyer that he was, people began to wonder if these allegations really were true.

Bob Kelly was arrested in April 1989 and put under a 1.5 million dollar bond. The day care closed down a few weeks later and children began to flood into therapy. In September, Betsy was arrested and put under a one million dollar bond. Other names of employees began to come

up and children were telling how they were involved. Children were beginning to tell more and more.

Problems began to rise with the children's interviews. Some children were being interviewed over twenty times and according to prosecutors were being coached on what to say. During the trial children made reference to things such as children were dying at the day care and children were being taken out onto the water and thrown into the water with sharks. Many of the children's stories were inconsistent and defense attorneys were arguing the children's competency level was too low to be testifying in court. Another problem was the initial interviews that were given by investigator Toppin. Toppin supposedly lost the paperwork and video tapes of the children's first interviews.

This was the most expensive case in North Carolina history. Eventually all the participants' cases were dropped, dismissed, or the defendant pled no contest.

"Au Pair Louise Woodward Case"

(Shaken Baby Syndrome)

Louise Woodward, the daughter of Gary and Susan Woodward and the oldest of thirteen grandchildren, comes from a rural English village. Louise decided to become an Au Pair in March 1996 because she was undecided on what she wanted to study in college. Miss Woodward had also heard and seen on television wonderful things about the states and wanted to explore them on her own.

Woodward arrived in New York in June, 1996. After some training in child care and American Culture, the EF Au Pair Agency assigned her to the Komishanes family. She left the Komishanes in November because she said it was quieter than she thought and she felt isolated. Then she was transferred to the Newton home of Drs. Deborah and Sunil Eappen. The Eappens paid Woodward \$115 a month plus room and board.

At first Woodward and the Eappens were having problems because the Eappens wanted to give Louise a curfew and not allow her to stay out all hours of the night. They finally agreed that she be home at midnight during the week. During the day, Louise had to get into the routine of taking care of two young children, Matthew, 9 months, and two year old Brendan.

On Feb. 3, 1996, Louise was awakened by Matthew's crying. Mrs. Eappen told Louise that the child was constipated and asked Louise to give him fluid and prune juice. On Feb. 4th, Matthew continued to cry and refused to eat anything. That morning, Woodward stated that she gave the child a bath and laid him down to sleep. Matthew took an unusually long nap. She allowed him to sleep because she thought he was just tired. About 3:45pm, she looked in Matthew's crib after his second afternoon nap and noticed his eyes were half closed and he wasn't focusing. She picked him up and he started vomiting. She thought that he was choking and attempted to give him CPR. She said his chest rose and she heard gurgling.

After Doctors examined the child, they concluded that "this is a classic pattern of hemorrhage for shaken impact trauma to the brain"(Dr. Patrick D. Barnes). With images from a computerized tomography, Barnes

stated how a fractured skull and blood clot left 9-month-old Matthew neurologically devastated. Prosecutors accused Woodward of inflicting the baby's fatal injuries by shaking him and hitting his head on a hard surface. Prosecutors felt the baby's head fracture probably came from slamming the baby on the bathroom tile floor when preparing him for a bath because of frustration from the baby crying.

The defense stated that the child's death was due to previous injury that could have predisposed the baby to a fatal brain hemorrhage caused by very trivial contact. Also the defense stated "By throwing away (portions of) both the left and right (sides of the brain), they have severely undercut our case and deprived us of evidence that could raise reasonable doubt" (Attorney Barry Scheck). During an autopsy, examiners undoubtedly throw away important evidence to show that the brain was damaged. Mrs. Woodward sentence has not yet been made.

Conclusion

Child abuse will never be a "thing of the past" but will continue to exist in many families. Eliminating child abuse from society is very unlikely. But, reducing the occurrence of child abuse is a goal that society as a whole should work towards. By taking into consideration each of the topics that have been discussed in this thesis, an individual can make a strong contribution to help achieve this goal.

Parents and child-care workers should be aware of the dangers of child abuse. The first step for a parent involves knowing the meaning of child abuse and how to recognize children who are victims. Parents and child-care workers should be able to identify the different signs of abuse. Second, parents and child-care workers must understand that sometimes they too are the cause of abuse and must be able to recognize their own faults. Not being able to control their temper is usually one of the biggest faults of a parent or child-care worker. Finally, ignoring child abuse could be dangerous and perhaps fatal to children.

National statistics are very similar to those of Robeson County when it comes to child abuse. Approximately the same percentage of cases are substantiated each year. Robeson County, should try to improve these statistics and work toward a more effective program for preventing child abuse.

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