

Science to Practice

February 27, 2012

Child Fatality Task Force

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Principal Investigator

Family Child Study



innovative
Science
sound
Policy
healthy
Families

Acknowledgements

Funded by a grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation to the Injury Prevention Research Center of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Elizabeth D. Knight, Principal Investigator

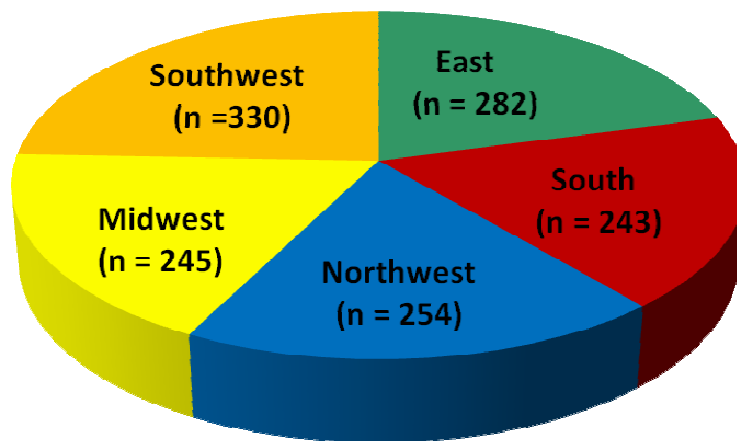
What is the Family Child Study?

- **Funded in 1985 by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, US Department of Health and Human Services**
- **788 mother-infant pairs born in North Carolina and selected for the High Priority Infant Program were recruited**
- **Infants and mothers were followed for three years**

What is LONGSCAN?

- LONGitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Planning grant funded in 1989 by OCAN/ACYF/ACF
- Research grant funded in 1991 to address antecedents and consequences of maltreatment
- Five distinct studies (East, South, Midwest, Northwest & Southwest)
- Consortium, common measures, common data collection protocols

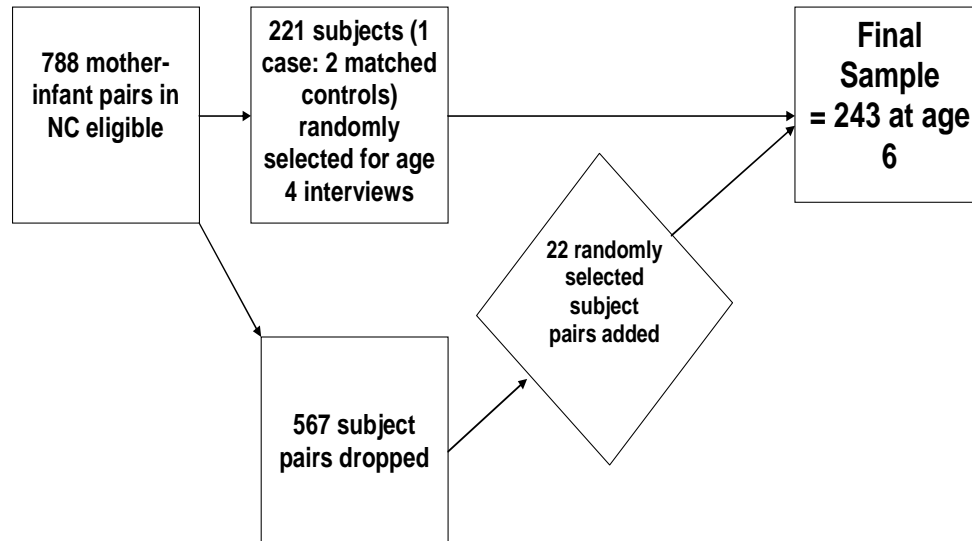
Baseline Sample by Site



Total N = 1354

- East: 282 'at risk' children from inner city pediatric clinics (e.g., possible FTT, drug exposed)
- South: 243 children from 'at risk' study - 1/3 reported
- Northwest: 254 children with CPS reports (moderate risk) before 4 yrs of age
- Midwest: 245 children, 2/3 maltreated, 1/3 from same neighborhoods
- Southwest: 330 children in foster care prior to age 4

NC Local Site Consort Diagram



Why is Doris Duke interested in us?

- Realized that researchers need help with how to share the results of our research with social service providers, policy makers, and the public
- Willing to support five local site meetings between researchers on the one hand and practitioners, policy makers and social services alumni on the other
- Will convene a national meeting in Washington to present and compare results in March 2013

Sept. 21-The NC Local Site Meeting

- **Researchers**
- **Social Service and Public Health professionals**
- **Policy-makers**
- **Alumni of the Family Child Study**
 - Consistent participants
 - Complete the age 18 interview
 - Previously told us they were interested
 - Live within a 1½ hour drive of Chapel Hill

What is Child Abuse and Neglect?

- When an adult who is supposed to be caring for a child does something to harm that child, that is child abuse.
- When an adult who is supposed to be caring for a child fails to protect that child from harm, that is neglect.

What Are We Most Concerned About?

- **Neglect**
 - More common than abuse
 - More important the younger the child
- **Abuse**
 - May be more important among older children
- **Witnessing violence between others**
 - In the home
 - In the neighborhood

Outcomes of abuse and neglect

- **Emotional problems**
 - Depression and Anxiety
 - Anger
 - Fear of social situations
- **Behavioral problems**
 - Violent behavior
 - Antisocial behavior
 - Poor school performance
- **Physical health**
 - Physical complaints
 - More visits to the doctor

Reporting to Social Services

- **North Carolina law says that anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect is supposed to report it to Social Services.**
- **We know that many cases of abuse and neglect are not reported.**

Abuse and Neglect May Not Be the Only Problems Growing Up

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as

- Low income
- Unsafe neighborhoods
- Adults who fight with each other
- Adults with serious health or mental health problems
- Adults with substance abuse problems
- Adults in trouble with the law

Multiple Problems

Children who are not abused or neglected but have more than one of these problems have the same outcomes that abused and neglected children have.

What Should We Do for Families Reported for Abuse or Neglect?

- **What can we do if abuse or neglect happened?**
 - Protect the child?
 - Help the family?
 - Both?
 - Neither?
- **What can we do if the abuse or neglect didn't happen, but the family has some of the other problems?**
 - Is the family under stress?
 - Does the family need support from friends, neighbors, relatives, agencies?

The Top Five Findings from the Child & Family Study

What we are going to talk about

1. We can identify children who are at risk for abuse and neglect from the moment they are born.



Recommendation 1.1

- **Need to identify highest risk infants prior to birth and at birth in order to prioritize services in the face of shrinking budgets. Consider cumulative risk as an indicator of need for services.**

Recommendation 1.2

- **Reinstate the High Priority Infant Program, taking into consideration biomedical AND social indicators of need for services.**

Recommendation 1.3

- **Use the Pregnancy Risk Screening (CCNC) to provide a continuum of care after birth, and expand those screening methods to those outside of Medicaid.**

2. A report of child abuse and neglect, whether substantiated or not, is a sign that families are under stress, probably from some combination of risks, and abuse and neglect may be just one of them.

Recommendation 2.1

- **It's not just about abuse and neglect. It is about the number of risks, cumulative risk, and the lack of protective factors.**

Recommendation 2.2

- **CPS finds a lot of psychological/emotional abuse, but it rarely meets the legal definition of substantiated abuse.**
 - See what other states have done to address evaluating psychological/emotional abuse
 - In practice, service plans for families where psychological/emotional abuse has been identified (even if not substantiated) should address that abuse.
 - Legally redefine emotional/psychological abuse

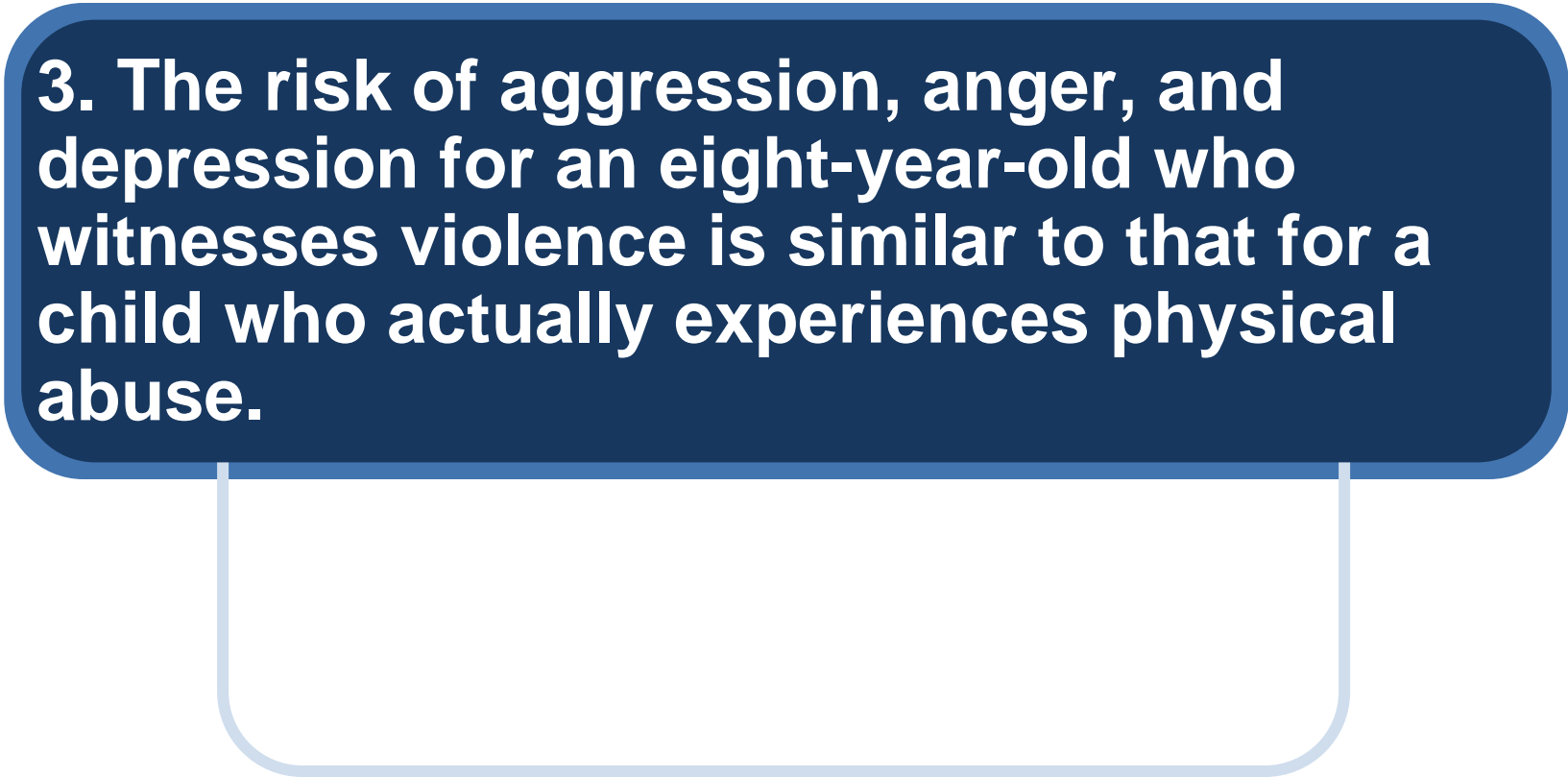
Recommendation 2.3

- **Parent support groups, evidence-based parenting education programs, and child support groups/interventions may aid in reducing psychological abuse and its effects.**

Recommendation 2.4

- **Engage support from agencies other than CPS**

3. The risk of aggression, anger, and depression for an eight-year-old who witnesses violence is similar to that for a child who actually experiences physical abuse.



Recommendation 3.1

- Verbal aggression between adults/parents is included in witnessed violence. Look at LONGSCAN data to assess the impact of verbal aggression or abuse between adults on children.

Recommendation 3.2

- Ask children about witnessing violence.

Recommendation 3.3

- **Emphasize the connection between domestic violence and child abuse and neglect.**

Recommendation 3.4

- **Interventions need to address child witnesses, not just child victims.**

4. Neglect is more difficult to document than physical abuse, yet in children four and under, reported neglect is more likely than reported physical abuse to lead to aggression in later childhood.

Recommendation 4.1

- **Bring this observation to the IOM “Social, Emotional, and Mental Wellbeing of Young Children and Families” Task Force (Pam Silverman and Berkley Yorkerley) and the ECAC (Deborah Nelson and Kelly Maxwell).**

Recommendation 4.2

- **Even a non-custodial parent can be neglectful by avoiding contact, interaction, and practical support of children.**

5. Caregiver social support reduces the risk and the consequences of abuse and neglect in children.



Recommendation 5.1

- **Support from Dads does not have to be exclusively financial.**
 - It is in the interest of the children to reduce fathers' barriers to involvement. Strategies could include:
 - Increased access to civil court (financial barriers removed or minimized)
 - Support groups for fathers
 - Reconciliation or mediation between parents to reduce the barrier that hostility creates
- **Fathers need parenting support and information**
 - Some fathers may feel intimidated or inadequate as providers of child care, and father support programs could address this to promote father involvement.

Recommendations 5.2-5.6

- **Extended family/fictive relatives need system support in order for them in turn to support parents and families.**
- **Social support interventions tend to be cost-effective and are deserving of continued support and evaluation.**
- **Prevention programs including a social support component are promising and should be expanded and evaluated.**
- **The importance of peer support for mothers/caregivers suggests that mentorship for children can be important too.**
- **Faith communities can play a significant role in providing and facilitating support.**

Recommendation 5.7 (for moms)

- Parent support groups, evidence-based parenting education programs, and child support groups/interventions may aid in reducing abuse/neglect and its effects.

(Same as 2.3)

Thank you for your help!

