



SAFE START CENTER

Children's Exposure to Violence

"We cannot expect children to overcome danger on their own. There is no magic here. Resilient children have been protected by the actions of adults, good nurturing, by their assets, and by their opportunities to succeed."

~Anne Masten

Every year, millions of children and adolescents in the United States are exposed to violence in their homes, schools, and communities.

Exposure to violence can seriously impact a child's functioning, compromising his or her ability to grow, feel secure, and learn. However, research has found that early identification, intervention and continued follow-up are valuable strategies to prevent or decrease the impact of exposure to violence.

Families, teachers, policemen, judges, pediatricians, mental health professionals, child protection workers, and many other professionals who interact with children have a responsibility in creating environments, both physical and psychological, that decrease or prevent the negative impacts of exposure to violence.

The Safe Start Center

The Safe Start Center is a national resource center designed to support the Safe Start Initiative on a national level. The goals of the Center are:

- To broaden the scope of knowledge and resources on hand for responding to the needs of children exposed to violence and their families
- To provide and disseminate information about the Safe Start Initiative and emerging practices and research concerning children exposed to violence
- To raise national awareness about issues concerning children exposed to violence

Safe Start Initiative

The Safe Start Initiative is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The goal of the Safe Start Initiative is to broaden the knowledge of and promote community investment in evidence-based strategies for reducing the impact of children's exposure to violence.

Eleven demonstration grantees were funded from 2000 to 2006 to create a comprehensive service delivery system to improve the accessibility, delivery, and quality of services for children exposed to violence and their families at any point of entry. A process evaluation broadened our understanding of how communities can successfully implement policy and practice interventions to minimize the negative consequences of exposure to violence.

Fifteen Promising Practices Pilot Sites, funded in 2005, are focusing on implementing and measuring developmentally appropriate services for children exposed to violence within the context of the systems that serve them. A process and outcome evaluation of these grantees will broaden our understanding of the impact of specific intervention strategies on outcomes for children and families.

The Center works with national partners and a multidisciplinary group of experts to provide training and technical assistance to the 15 Promising Practices Pilot Sites, including:

- Individualized and multi-site consultation
- National conference calls to address issues of concern
- An up-to-date national database of consultants with specific technical and content expertise
- Active recruitment of expert consultants, as well as matching services and effectiveness assessments

The Center also works to develop publications about the Safe Start initiative and innovations in the field of children's exposure to violence, including:

- A bi-monthly e-newsletter to raise awareness of available resources and make information readily available to Safe Start grantees and partners
- A quarterly topical bulletin to provide information promoting an improved understanding of children's exposure to violence and better access to quality care for children and their families
- Policy and practice briefs that provide practical clinical, administrative, training, and collaboration information
- Manuals and guidelines targeted to both specific systems and broad audiences
- A media kit to raise public awareness of the scope and impact of children's exposure to violence

In addition, the Center convenes national and regional Safe Start meetings to foster a learning community and ensure the efficient sharing of knowledge and skills among grantees, national partners, and the general field. A regularly updated website provides information, resources, and notifications about new products.

**Contact
Information**

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