


# Scientific Review of Community- Level Interventions to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect: Preliminary Findings

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# Community-Level Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

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- ◆ Main research question: How can we build collective behaviors that protect children in our communities from child abuse and neglect?

# Background

- ◆ In 1990 the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect declared the child protection system in the U.S. to be “in a state of national emergency” and a “disaster in all of its parts”

# Background

- ◆ U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect proposed a neighborhood-based strategy for child protection in 1993: *Neighbors Helping Neighbors: A New National Strategy for the Protection of Children*

# Background

- ◆ U.S. Advisory Board recognized:
  - Problems of neighborhood decline are “usually tractable”
  - We have a *moral obligation* to see that children in declining neighborhoods have just as much protection as their peers in neighborhoods with more resources

# Background

- ◆ *Prevention Zones* were suggested
  - Comprehensive efforts to improve social and physical environments in neighborhoods with high rates of child maltreatment
  - Trials should be conducted with rigorous evaluations
  - Neighborhoods should be diverse in geography, density, ethnicity
  - Effort should be large-scale and replicated nationally within five years

From Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence. World Health Organization/ ISPCAN 2006

**Table 3.1 Strategies for preventing child maltreatment by developmental stage and level of influence**

Level of intervention	Developmental Stage			
	Infanthood (<3 years of age)	Childhood (3–11 years of age)	Adolescence (12–17 years of age)	Adulthood (≥18 years of age)
<b>Societal and community</b>	<p><b>Implementing legal reform and human rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translating the Convention on the Rights of the Child into national laws</li> <li>• Strengthening police and judicial systems</li> <li>• Promoting social, economic and cultural rights</li> </ul> <p><b>Introducing beneficial social and economic policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing early childhood education and care</li> <li>• Ensuring universal primary and secondary education</li> <li>• Taking measures to reduce unemployment and mitigate its adverse consequences</li> <li>• Investing in good social protection systems</li> </ul> <p><b>Changing cultural and social norms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing cultural and social norms that support violence against children and adults</li> </ul> <p><b>Reducing economic inequalities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling poverty</li> <li>• Reducing income and gender inequalities</li> </ul> <p><b>Environmental risk factor reduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing the availability of alcohol</li> <li>• Monitoring levels of lead and removing environmental toxins</li> </ul>			
				<p>Shelters and crisis centres for battered women and their children</p> <p>Training health care professionals to identify and refer adult survivors of child maltreatment</p>
<b>Relationship</b>	<p>Home visitation programmes</p> <p>Training in parenting</p>	<p>Training in parenting</p>		
<b>Individual</b>	<p>Reducing unintended pregnancies</p> <p>Increasing access to prenatal and postnatal services</p>	<p>Training children to recognize and avoid potentially abusive situations</p>		

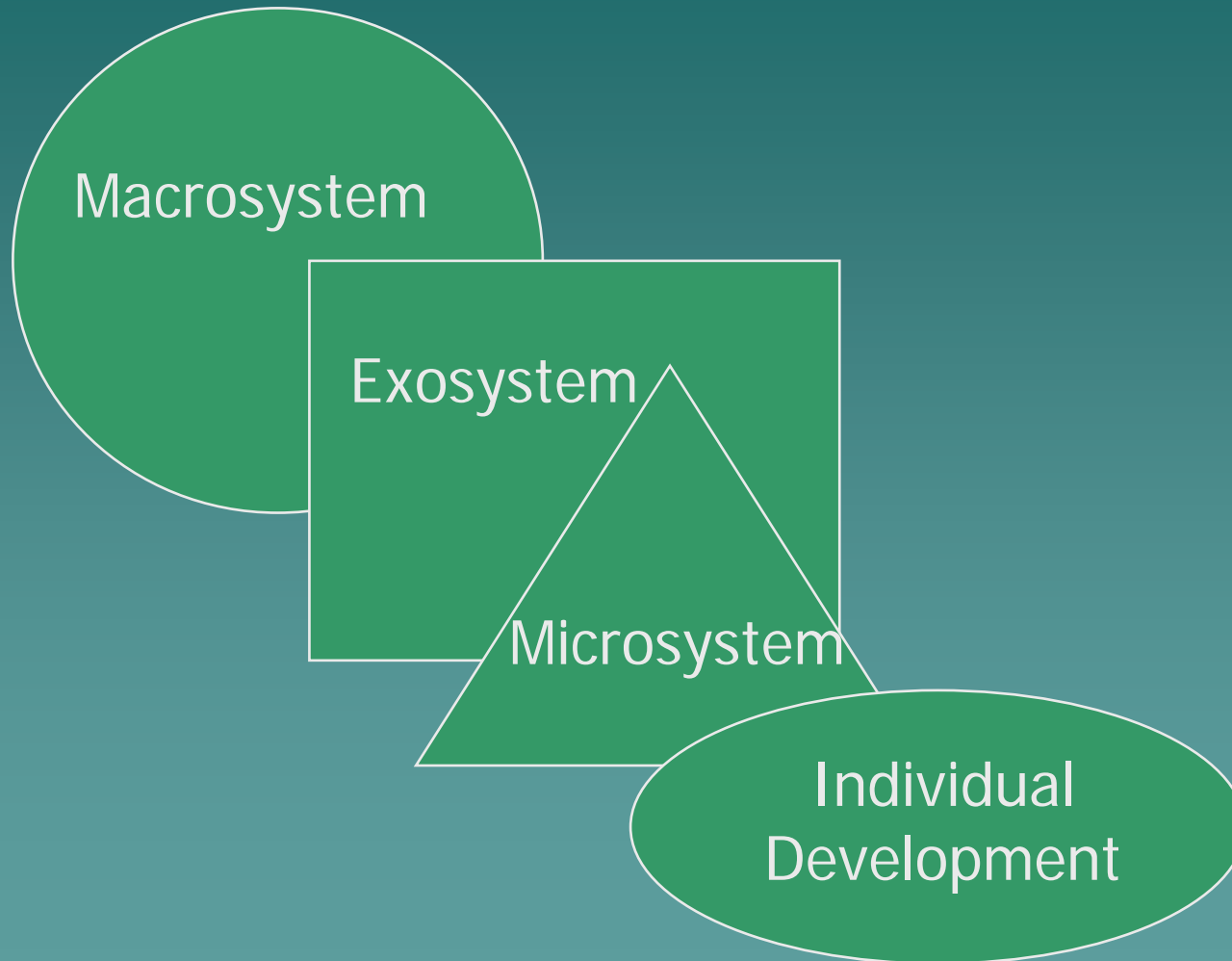
# What does a “Healthy Community” look like? (Aspen Institute, 1996)

Healthy	Unhealthy
optimism	cynicism
focus on unification	focus on division
“we’re in this together.”	“not in my backyard!”
solving problems	solution wars
reconciliation	hold grudges
consensus building	polarization
broad public interests	narrow interests
interdependence	parochialism
collaboration	confrontation
win-win solutions	win-lose solutions
tolerance and respect	mean-spiritedness
trust	questioning motives
patience	frustration

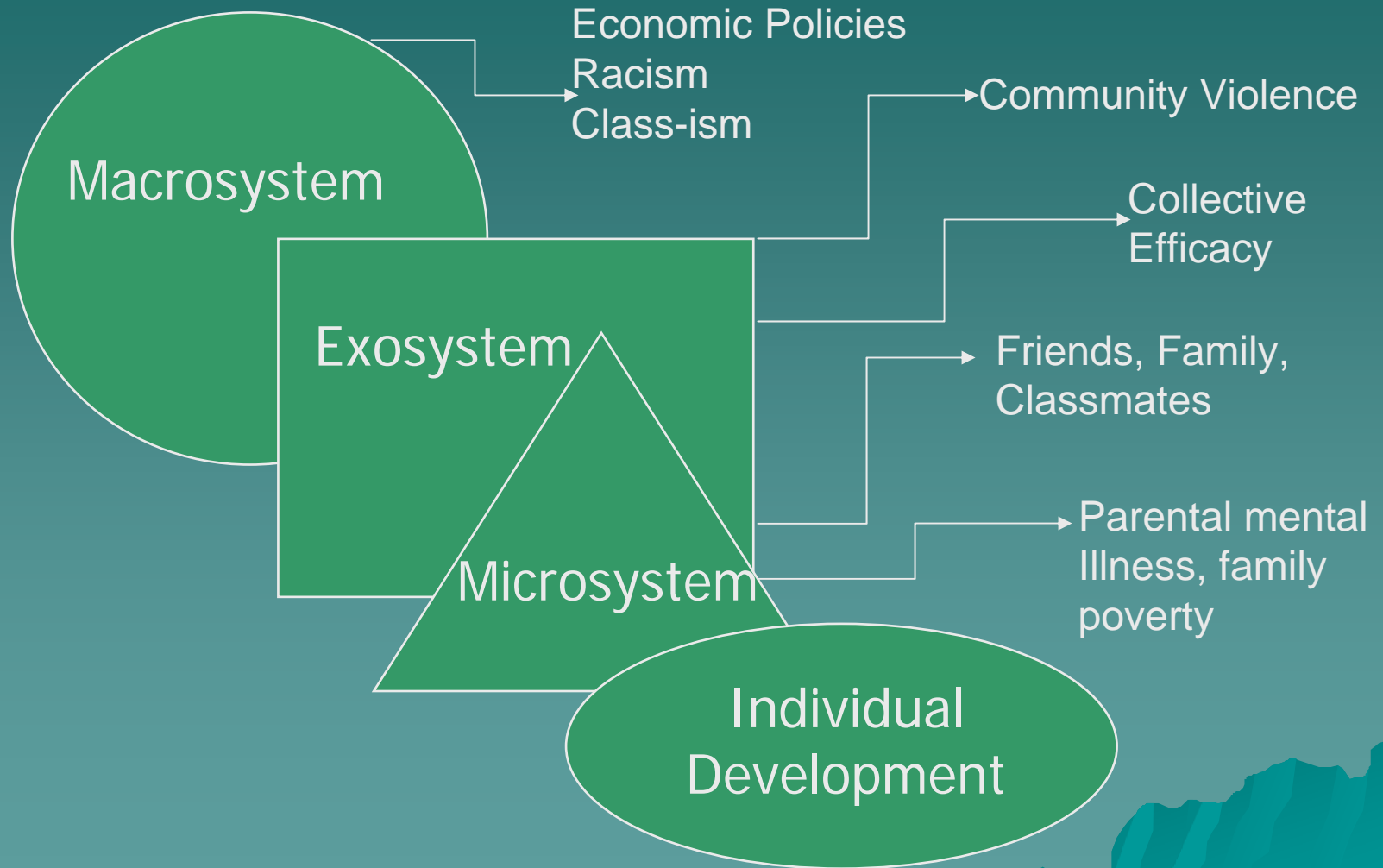


<b>Healthy</b>	<b>Unhealthy</b>
politics of substance	politics of personality
empowered citizens	apathetic citizens
diversity	exclusion
citizenship	selfishness
challenge ideas	challenge people
problem-solvers	blockers & blamers
individual responsibility	me-first
listening	attacking
healers	dividers
community discussions	zinger one-liners
focus on future	re-debate the past
sharing power	hoarding power
renewal	gridlock
"we can do it!"	"nothing works"

# Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner)



# Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner)

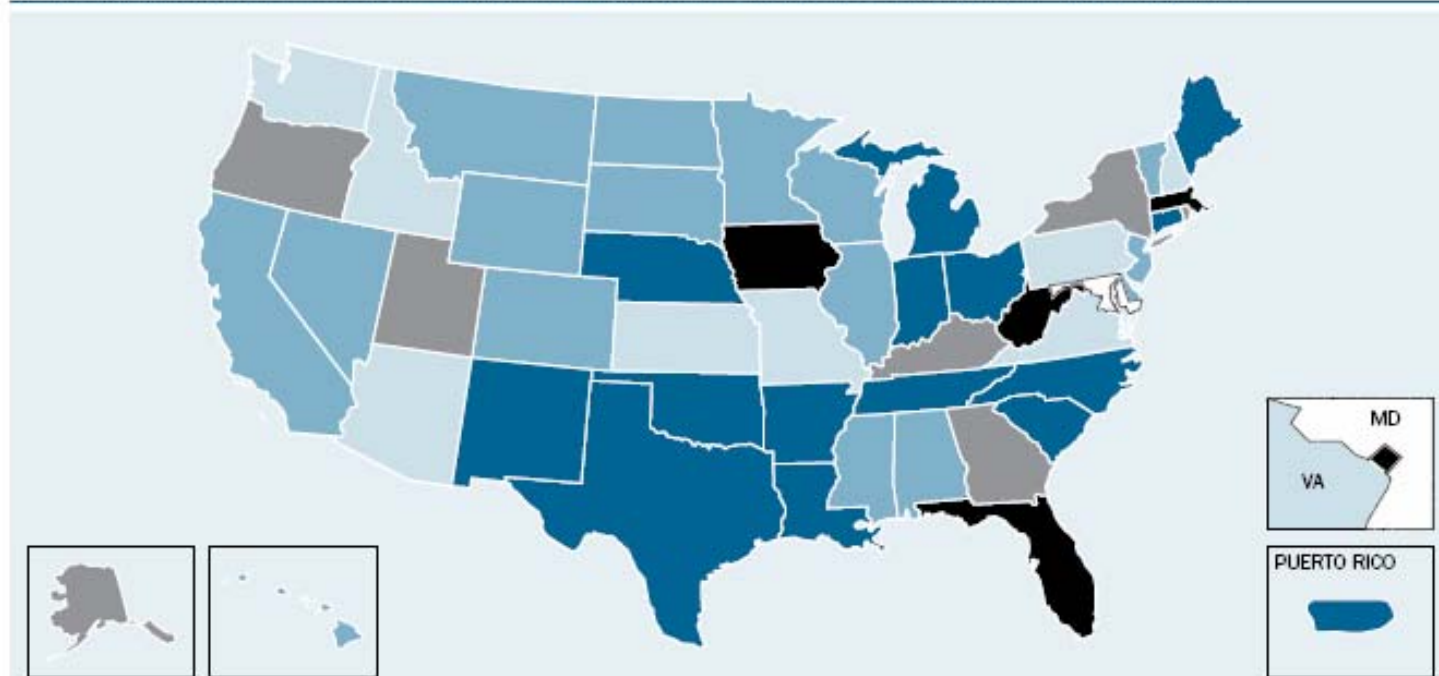


# Child Abuse & Neglect in the U.S.

## State Variation in Reports to Government Agencies

Figure 3-2 Map of Victimization Rates, 2006

VICTIMS PER 1,000 CHILDREN 0.0 to 5.0 5.1 to 10.0 10.1 to 15.0 15.1 to 20.0 20.1 and greater data not available



Based on data from table 3-3.

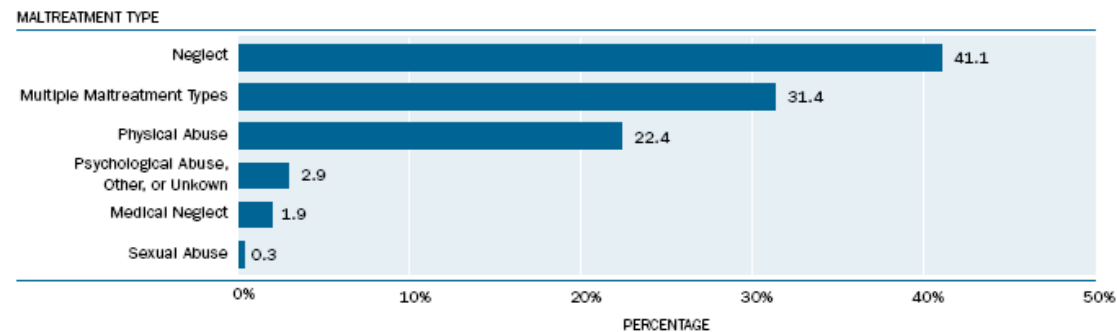
# Child Abuse & Neglect Reports to Government Agencies

**Table 4–6 Maltreatment Types of  
Child Fatalities, 2006**

MALTREATMENT TYPE	CHILD FATALITIES	
	NUMBER	%
Neglect	466	41.1
Multiple Maltreatment Types	356	31.4
Physical Abuse	254	22.4
Other, or Unknown	33	2.9
Medical Neglect	22	1.9
Sexual Abuse	3	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,134</b>	
<b>Percent</b>		<b>100.0</b>

*Based on data from 39 States.*

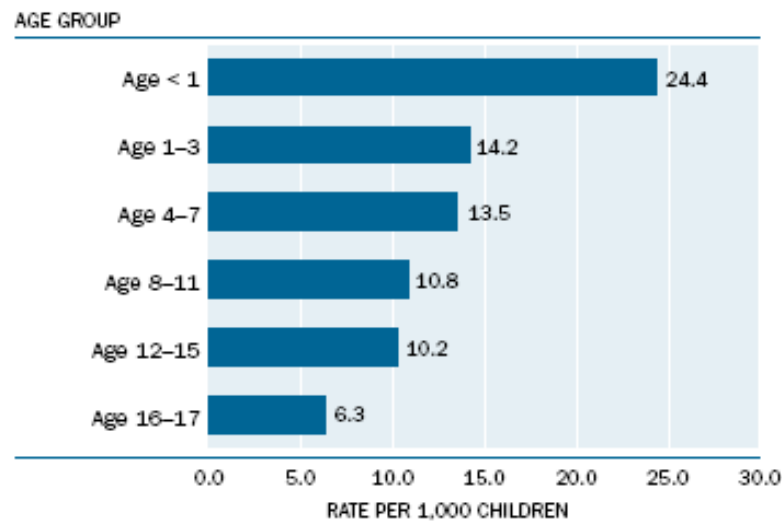
**Figure 4–3 Maltreatment Types of Child Fatalities, 2006**



*Based on data in table 4–6.*

# Child Abuse & Neglect Reports to Government Agencies

**Figure 3-3 Victimization Rates  
by Age Group, 2006**



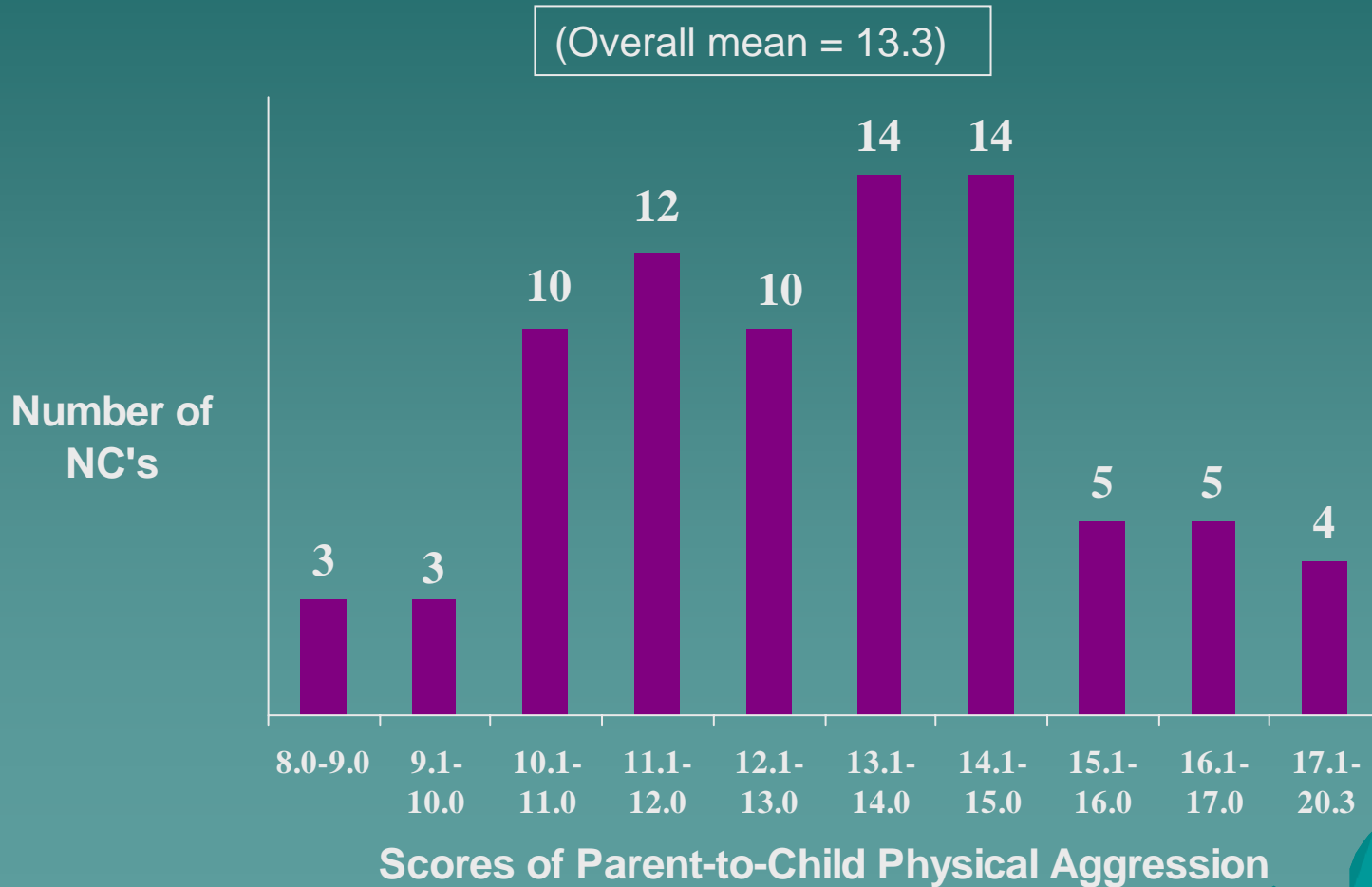
*Based on data from table 3-9.*

# A Multilevel Study of Neighborhoods and Parent-to-Child Physical Aggression

- ◆ Parent-to-Child Physical Aggression (PCPA) is a scale combining the minor and severe physical violence items from the Conflict Tactics Scales
- ◆ Results were the same when the two scales were modeled separately

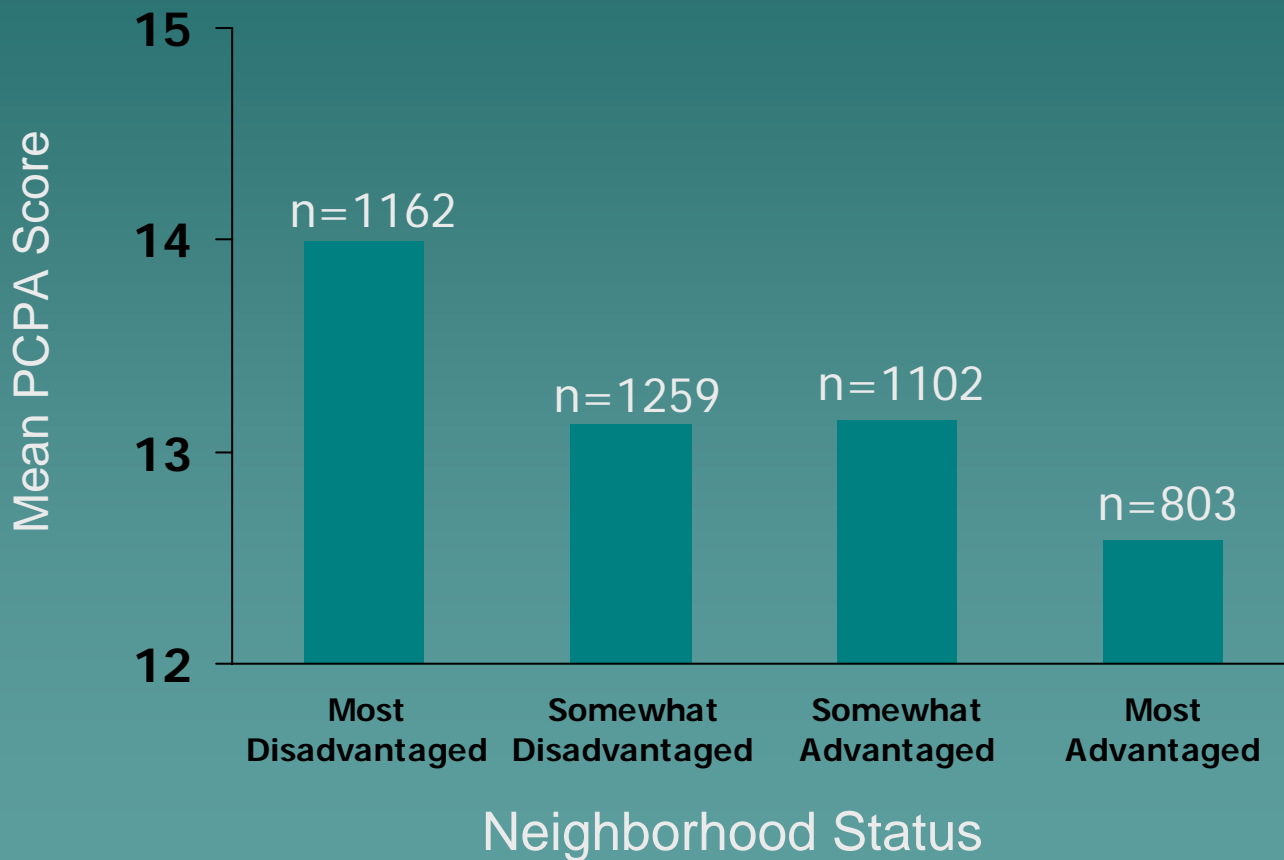
Molnar BE, Buka SL, Brennan RT, Holton JK, Earls F. A multilevel study of neighborhoods and parent-to-child physical aggression: Results from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods. *Child Maltreatment* 2003; 8 (2): 84-97.

# Distribution of Mean Scores of Parent-to-Child Physical Aggression (PCPA) Among 80 Neighborhood Clusters

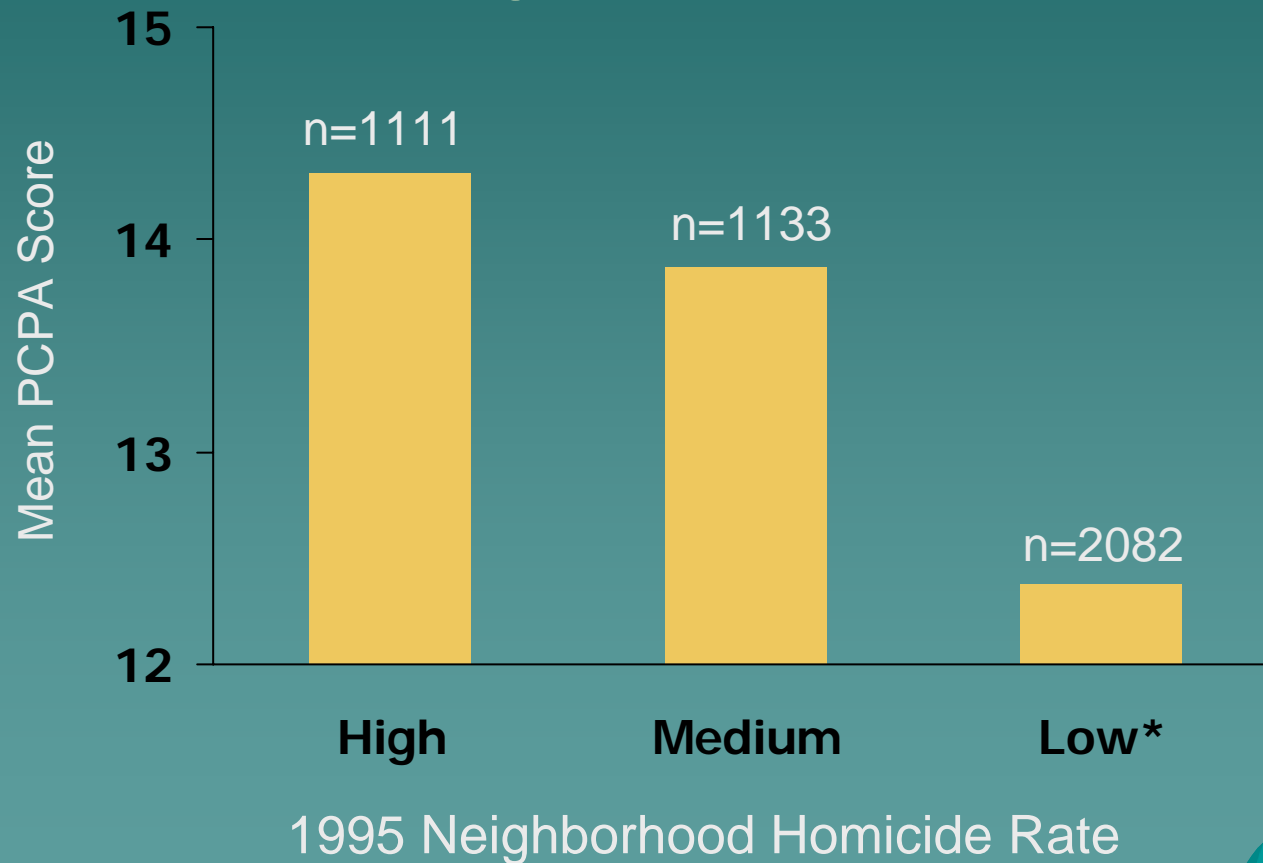




# Mean Scores of Parent-to-Child Physical Aggression by Concentrated Disadvantage of Neighborhood



# Mean Scores of Parent-to-Child Physical Aggression by 1995 Homicide Rate of Neighborhood Cluster



\*Representing 40 neighborhoods that had zero homicides in 1995

# Multi-Level Neighborhood Finding

- ◆ Living in a neighborhood where other families have lots of neighborhood ties, Hispanic families were less likely to use PCPA, no matter what amount of social support they received themselves from their families

# Qualitative Study of Best Practices of Community-Level Interventions



# Methods

## ◆ Purposive Sampling

- ◆ Sampling Frame: Surgeon General's meeting on child abuse & neglect
- ◆ Searched literature and online resources to identify those working with communities
- ◆ Snowball sampling – if resources permit


## ◆ Sampled 56 experts

- ◆ Expect approximately 40 to be completed
- ◆ Preliminary results from 10 interviews


## ◆ Transcribed, will be analyzed using grounded theory methods and NVivo software

- ◆ Definitions of “community-level intervention” vary widely – across just 10 subjects

# Themes identified in Defining “Community-Level Intervention” – 10 interviews

1. Building social fabric / Community-building
  2. Infrastructure development
  3. Changing social norms
  4. Provision of services
  5. Connecting families to services
  6. More broad definitions
- 

Example of a  
Community-Level  
Approach to  
Prevention of  
Child Abuse and  
Neglect

A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in a darker shade of teal, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.





# *Strong Communities for Children*

*Gary Melton, PhD et al*

- ◆ Doris Duke Foundation funding - 10 years
- ◆ Located in diverse communities in upstate South Carolina, incl. comparison communities
- ◆ Theoretical framework: social capital related to children's safety at home, in communities
- ◆ Expansion and utilization of social capital: primary strategy for preventing child maltreatment

See whole issue of *Family & Community Health*, Vol. 31(2) 2008.

# Two main components

- ◆ Community mobilization
- ◆ *Strong Families* – direct service


“People Shouldn’t have to ask!”



# Four Phases


1. Spreading the word
2. Mobilizing the community
3. Increasing resources
4. Institutionalizing the provision of resources (sustainability)

# Phase 1: Spreading the Word

- ◆ “Keep Kids Safe”
  - ◆ Changing norms
  - ◆ Door knocking
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- A decorative graphic at the bottom right of the slide, consisting of a silhouette of a mountain range in a teal color, matching the background.

# Phase 1: Spreading the Word

## Outreach Workers:

- ◆ Established relationships
  - ◆ Identified concerns
  - ◆ Identified assets and strengths
  - ◆ Developed team of volunteers
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- A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in shades of teal, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

# Phase 2: Mobilizing the Community

- ◆ Outreach workers promote increased community action:
  - volunteerism
  - parent involvement
  - community organization involvement
  - community events (e.g. festivals, block parties, health fairs, baby fairs)
  - campaigns

- ◆ [Link to pledge card](#)



# Phase 3: Increasing Resources

- ◆ Using the relationships created in the first two phases to increase resources for families

## Phase 4: Institutionalizing the Provision of Resources - Sustainability

- ◆ Transform norms and structures so neighbors will “naturally” notice and respond to needs of parents & children
- ◆ Building permanent structures in organizations to sustain *Strong Communities*

# Findings thus far

- ◆ 5 ½ years: estimated 5,000 volunteers with >50,000 hours of service
- ◆ Takes time: building networks of support has taken 1-2 years
- ◆ One outreach worker is sufficient for population area of 100,000

# Goal of Qualitative Study

- ◆ Document best practices for achieving effective community-level prevention of child abuse and neglect and its associated risk factors
  - Successful community-based participatory research strategies
  - Evaluation
  - Replication
  - Widespread Dissemination

