



## **New Report Shows Child Maltreatment Decreased in 2008** *Prevention efforts to be intensified*

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announced today that 2008 saw the lowest child victimization rate in five years. In addition, the number of children who suffered maltreatment decreased for the second year in a row. These findings are contained in "Child Maltreatment 2008," an annual report issued every April marking the start of National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The recent data show an estimated 772,000 children were victims of child abuse and neglect, a rate of 10.3 per 1,000 children. Data from the states continue to indicate that almost a third of the victims are younger than four years old. More than three million reports of suspected child abuse and neglect were received in 2008, involving six million children nationwide.

"Although we are encouraged by the decrease in child maltreatment, the results show too many children still suffer from abuse and neglect, and we have not yet experienced the full impact from the economic situation," said Carmen R. Nazario, HHS assistant secretary for children and families. "As our commitment, we will continue to strengthen prevention strategies that target critical resources for families and communities at risk."

One such strategy is in the recently-signed health care law. The act provides funding to states, territories and tribes, beginning with \$100 million in FY 2010 and increasing to \$400 million in FY 2014, for home visiting programs to improve children's health and well-being related outcomes, including the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Another strategy is a foster care initiative that began this fiscal year and is proposed at \$20 million per year over five years. It is designed to implement innovative approaches to reducing long-term foster care and finding a permanent placement for children who are victims of child abuse and neglect.

One of ACF's latest prevention efforts involves The National Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood (QIC-EC). This is a \$10 million dollar, five-year project launched in 2008 to address the nation's urgent need to find innovative, effective approaches for reducing the likelihood of abuse and neglect for children from birth through five years of age.

The QIC-EC recently awarded four new research and demonstration projects to test the impact of collaborations across sectors on promoting optimal child development, strengthening families and reducing the likelihood of maltreatment. The new projects will include partnerships with IDEA Part C early intervention services, substance abuse programs for pregnant women, legal services and family support within a primary health care setting, and a multi-faceted neighborhood mobilization, led by residents and including businesses, faith communities and human services. These grants were awarded to the Boston Medical Center (Boston, Mass.), Catholic Community Services (Salem, Ore.), the University of Colorado (Aurora, Colo.), and the University of South Carolina (Columbia, S.C.).

"These new grants reflect our conviction that stable communities with well-coordinated service systems are the best environments for preventing child maltreatment among the youngest children, while promoting the potential of all children. When we capitalize on the strengths within communities and families, we can create not only healthier homes, but also stronger, more vigorous neighborhoods where economic development can thrive," said Bryan Samuels, ACF commissioner of children, youth and families.

The full report, "Child Maltreatment 2008," is available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/>.

For more information about the QIC-EC, visit: [www.qic-ec.org](http://www.qic-ec.org).

Additional information on National Child Abuse Prevention Month and child abuse prevention in general is available at the Child Welfare Information Gateway: <http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing>.