FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE™

*Formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund*

# The Facts on Preventing Violence Against Women and Children

**Violence Against Women and Children is Pervasive**

- From 25 to 31 percent of American women report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives,[i, ii] and from 3 million to 10 million children witness that abuse each year.[iii]

- Drawing on recent survey data, the National Research Council reports that one in every six U.S. women has at some time experienced an attempted or completed rape. Annually, more than 300,000 women are forcibly raped and more than 4 million are assaulted.[iv]

- 16-24 year old women are consistently reported as the group most at risk of abuse.[v]

- A study of 8th and 9th grade male and female students found that 25 percent had been victims of nonsexual dating violence and 8 percent had been victims of sexual dating violence.[vi]

- In a nationally representative sample of Head Start programs serving low-income children ages 3-5, researchers found that 17 percent of the children studied had been exposed to domestic violence.[vii]

**Harms from Victimization or Exposure Can be Severe, Chronic and Costly**

- Women victimized by abuse are more likely to be diagnosed with serious health problems including depression, panic attacks, high risk behaviors such as tobacco and substance abuse and sexual risk taking, as well as migraines, chronic pain, arthritis, high blood pressure, gastrointestinal problems, inconsistent use of birth control, and delayed entry into prenatal care.[viii]

- Pregnant women are frequent targets of abuse and, as a result, are placed at risk for low birth weight babies, pre-term labor -- pregnant and parenting teens are especially vulnerable.[ix]

- Abused children and those exposed to adult violence in their homes may have short and long term physical, emotional and learning problems, including: increased aggression, decreased responsiveness to adults, failure to thrive, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, hyper vigilance and hyperactivity, eating and sleeping problems, and developmental delays.[x]

- A recent study of low-income pre-school children in Michigan found that nearly half (46.7 percent) of the children in the study had been exposed to at least one incident of mild or severe violence in the family. Children who had been exposed to violence suffered symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, such as bed-wetting or nightmares, and were at greater risk than their peers of having allergies, asthma, gastrointestinal problems, headaches and flu.[xi]

**Crime and Incarceration of Youth are Often Associated with a History of Child Abuse and Exposure to Domestic Violence**

- A study of young adolescents in the Cleveland area found that "recent exposure to violence at home…was one of the most significant predictors of a teen's use of subsequent violence at school or in the community." [xii]

- Approximately 457,000 14-24 year olds leave the juvenile justice system, federal and state prisons or local jails annually, and a high percentage of them have experienced or witnessed violence at home.[xiii]

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