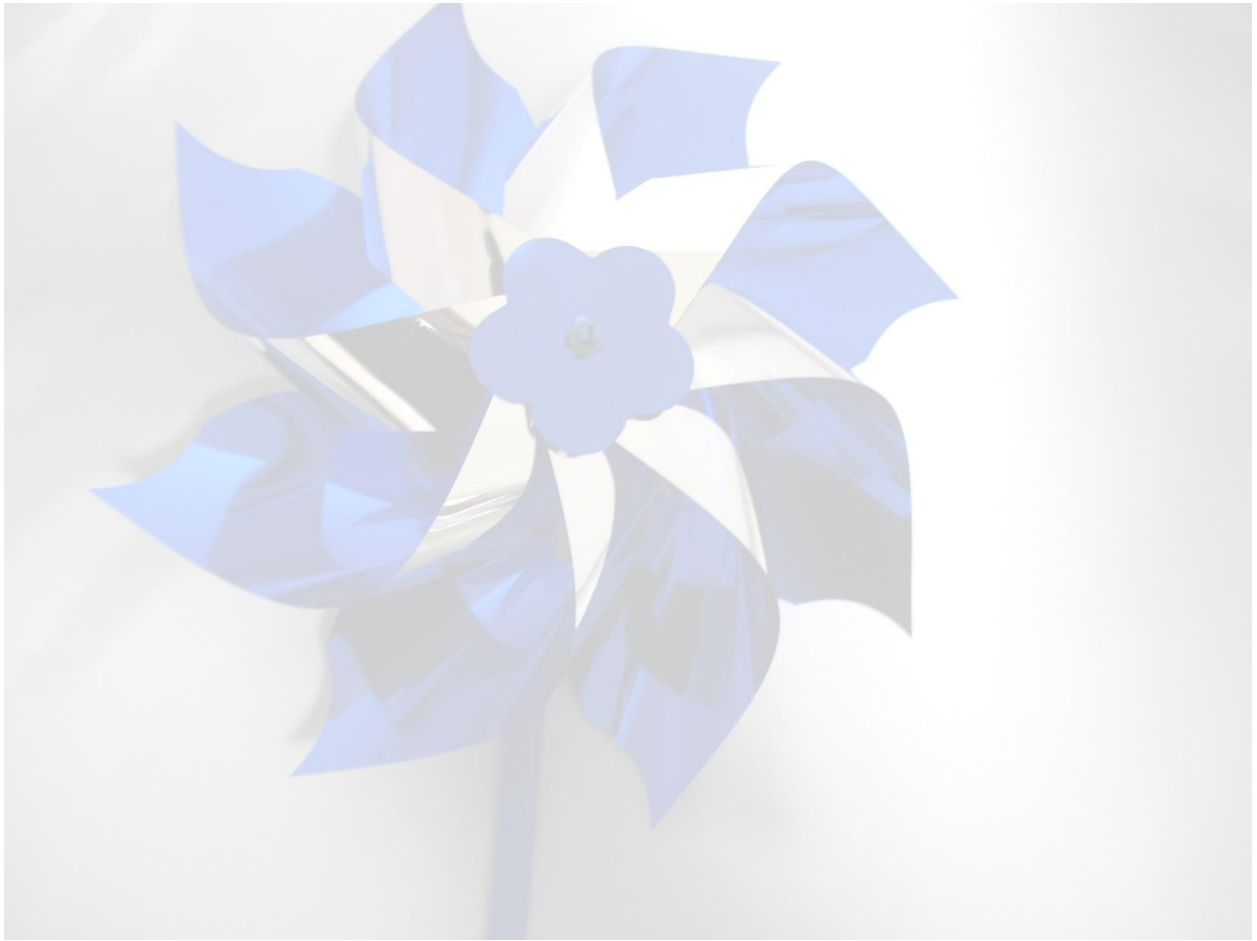


Estimated
Annual Cost of
Child Abuse and Neglect
April 2012

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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How can we help the public better understand the total cost?

- Breaking the numbers down into smaller figures can be helpful, such as:
 - 1) cost per child (\$63,871),
 - 2) cost per day (\$219,891,537),
 - 3) cost per hour (\$9,162,147),
 - 4) cost per taxpayer (\$370 annually, based on 216,885,347 taxpayers in 2008).
- Another method is comparing the cost to prevention services, such as home visits, shaken baby prevention efforts, public awareness campaigns, child sexual abuse prevention programs, etc. Use real costs for services in your state to calculate the amount of prevention that could be provided for \$80 billion (how many families reached, how many service hours, etc).

How is this report different from the study recently published by CDC authors? ¹

- The Gelles and Perlman report takes a fundamentally different approach, known as a prevalence-based approach, in which the costs are estimated for all current and previous victims for a single year. Fang and colleagues use an incidence-based approach, which estimates the lifetime costs of all victims identified in the current year. Because of this difference, the total costs estimated in the two reports are not comparable.

Why is the cost in 2012 lower than in 2007?

- The primary reason for the decrease from \$104 billion in 2007 to \$80 billion in 2012 is due to improvements in how costs are calculated, based on a critique of the 2007 report.² These changes include the use of cost-to-charge ratios, marginal costs, and most importantly, reducing lifetime costs to annual costs for lost worker productivity. Cost-to-charge ratios refer to the difference between what hospitals charge vs. the actual cost of the service, which is lower. Marginal costs reflect the differences between the rate at which maltreated children experience a problem vs. the general population rate, and counts only the portion of children in excess of the general population rate. A re-calculation of the 2007 estimate using these improved

¹ Fang, X., Brown, D.S., Florence, C.S., & Mercy, J.A. (2012). The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 36(2), 156-165.

² Corso, P.S., & Fertig, AR. (2010). The economic impact of child maltreatment in the United States: Are the estimates credible? *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 34(5), 296-304.

strategies was published in 2010², indicating an annual cost of \$65.1 billion. This offers a somewhat more similar point of comparison, however, there are several other changes in the 2012 report.

- Although the National Incidence Study showed a sizeable drop in the number of maltreated children from the Third National Incidence Study (NIS3) to the Fourth National Incidence Study (NIS4³), the impact of this reduction on cost cannot be determined based on this report.

What is the National Incidence Study (NIS) and how is it different from *Child Maltreatment 2010 (CM2010)*?

- These two reports use very different types of data to determine the total number of maltreated children. *Child Maltreatment 2010* compiles data on officially reported and substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in each state. Only the cases known to Child Protective Services (CPS) are included in CM2010. In contrast, the NIS goes beyond official CPS cases. Information is collected from CPS as well as “sentinels” (professionals with regular contact with children such as teachers and pediatricians) in a nationally-representative sample of counties throughout the U.S. In this way, the NIS total for child maltreatment is closer to the true number of child abuse and neglect. The NIS total for child maltreatment is estimated by multiplying the percent of maltreated children in the study sample by the total child population in the U.S.

Why does the report use the number of maltreated children from the *Fourth National Incidence Study (NIS4)* rather than more recent statistics from *Child Maltreatment 2010*?

- There are two important reasons why we use the NIS4 as our estimate of the number of maltreated children. First, child maltreatment is often undetected or unreported. *Child Maltreatment 2010* includes only the official counts of substantiated or indicated maltreatment, while NIS4 has data from both Child Protective Services and “sentinels” (professionals with regular contact with children such as teachers and pediatricians) to detect and count cases of child maltreatment, whether reported to officials or not.
- Second, NIS4 provides a uniform definition of child maltreatment which is more precise for measurement. *Child Maltreatment 2010* uses data reported by each state, and state definitions of maltreatment vary.

³ Sedlak, A.J., Mettenburg, J., Basena, M., Petta, I., McPherson, K., Greene, A., and Li, S. (2010). *Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Where can I get the report?

- The report by Gelles and Perlman is available at www.preventchildabuse.org/.

What resources are available on state-level costs of child maltreatment?

- Information on state cost of child maltreatment is available from the Children's Safety Network at www.childrenssafetynetwork.org. On the menu at the top of the page, click on "State Information", select your state, then click on "State Cost Data" on the right of the page (you may need to scroll down).

Why is this report important?

- This report shows that child maltreatment affects us all, through a variety of ways including crime and homelessness in our communities, and certainly financially. But all of the costs, in dollars and human suffering, are preventable. Child abuse and neglect are *preventable*. Investments in prevention reduce the number of maltreated children, and the financial cost to our nation in turn. Healthy families mean healthy children, healthy communities, and ultimately a thriving economy and strong nation. Prevent Child Abuse America is leading the movement to change the way we think about children and families. Our hope is to awaken the nation to the change we can make. Together we can prevent the abuse and neglect of all our nation's children.

