



## DC Family Policy Seminar

*A community service project of Georgetown University*

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# **“Diverting our Children from Crime: Family-Centered, Community-Based Strategies for Prevention”**



## *BACKGROUND BRIEFING REPORT*

*The DC Family Policy Seminar provides District policy-makers with accurate, relevant, non-partisan, timely information and policy options concerning issues affecting children and families.*

*The DC Family Policy Seminar is part of the National Network of State Family Policy Seminars, a project of the Family Impact Seminars, a nonpartisan public policy institute in Washington, D.C.*

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*By*

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### **Abstract**

The traditional approach to addressing juvenile crime has focused largely on punitive measures imposed by the juvenile justice system and law enforcement. Critics argue that this approach is reactive, however, and fails to stem the tide of violence in the community. They believe, instead, that efforts should focus on prevention and should address the social, economic, and health issues affecting the child. While prevention experts do not recommend abandoning punitive intervention methods once a youth commits a crime, they do suggest supplementing these measures with a holistic approach that also addresses the environmental factors that lead to delinquent behavior. A key strategy is to address delinquency from a family-centered perspective, in which the goal is to bolster existing support systems by involving parents, siblings, and caregivers. As this family-based, holistic approach takes hold in the District of Columbia, we see a movement growing toward a coordinated response from every sector of the community, including mental health, public health, education, and criminal justice components.

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*This report provides a brief introduction to the issues addressed by the DC Family Policy Seminar on May 22, 1997. The authors thank the numerous individuals in the District of Columbia government and in local and national organizations for contributing their time and efforts to this seminar. Special thanks are given to Shelley Stark, Vince Hutchins, Donna Ruane Morrison, and the staff of the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health for hosting this seminar, and to Richard Murphy and the staff of the Academy for Educational Development for providing space and technical assistance.*

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# “Diverting our Children from Crime: Family-Centered, Community-Based Strategies for Prevention”

This seminar is the 16th in a series designed to bring a family focus to policymaking. The panel features the following speakers:

- **Dave Bass**, Education and Program Specialist, Center to Prevent Handgun Violence
- **Sgt. Barbara Hawkins**, Youth and Family Services Division, Metropolitan Police Department
- **Doris Howard**, Juvenile Justice Coordinator, D.C. Board of Parole
- **Brenda Jones**, Executive Director, Parklands Community Center

This seminar focuses on juvenile crime in the District of Columbia and aims to provide research and program information on different crime prevention strategies. The organizers of this seminar hope to encourage increased collaboration among nonprofit organizations, government agencies, community members, and families in order to curb juvenile crime rates in DC. This briefing report summarizes the essentials on several topics. It provides an overview of the problem of juvenile crime locally and nationally; presents research concerning the risk factors associated with juvenile crime; discusses innovative youth crime prevention models; and highlights current prevention programs in the District. The contents of this briefing report are as follows:

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## I. Introduction

Media attention given to recent criminal acts by youth in the District of Columbia has reinforced the community's fear of the increasing threat of violent juvenile crime. Between 1985 and 1993, the reported arrest rate for violent crimes among juveniles ages 10–17 in the District was 1,548 arrests (per 100,000), compared to a rate of 506 arrests per 100,000 juveniles nationally (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1996). According to figures released from The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the violent death rate among District teenagers increased 669 percent between 1985 and 1994 (*The Washington Post*, May 5, 1997). Between 1987 and 1993, the arrest rate for violent crime increased 62 percent nationally (National Center for Justice, 1996). Furthermore, the arrest rate for homicides committed by juveniles between 1984 and 1993 in the United States increased 169 percent (National Center for Justice, 1996). These statistics for youth, coupled with an overall crime rate in the District that is dramatically higher than in other U.S. cities, contribute to the growing climate of fear.

What makes the increase in the rate of juvenile arrests for violent crime particularly disturbing is that this rise is occurring against a backdrop of overall reductions in juvenile arrest rates. The arrest rate for juvenile crime nationally decreased 2.9 percent in 1995. Within the District of Columbia, juvenile arrest rates between 1991 and 1995 showed similar declines. In 1991, 4,918 juveniles were arrested; that number declined to 2,625 in 1995. This was due, in part, to a 6.5 percent decrease in the District's population of youth ages 17 and under between 1990 and 1994 (U.S. Census, 1992–94).

Although the youth population in the District may be dropping, other factors correlated with violence are on the rise. For one, the number of child neglect incidents reported, substantiated, and petitioned in court has increased (DC Action for

Children, 1997). Of the 5,612 abuse and neglect cases reported in 1994, 39 percent were substantiated, compared to the national rate of 31 percent (DC Action for Children, 1997). However, this total includes reports from social service agencies only and does not reflect cases of abuse reported directly to the police; thus, the total number of abuse cases may be underestimated. In addition to increased reports of neglect, the increased incidence of drug abuse by youth also underlines the relevance of social factors to delinquent behavior. Fifty-five percent of juveniles arrested in 1994 tested positive for drug use, surpassing adults for the first time since testing began in 1986 (DC Action for Children, 1997).

These underlying problems cannot be adequately addressed after crimes have been committed. In addition to dispensing swift and appropriate punishment to youth offenders, especially those responsible for violent crime, communities will need to consider preventive measures as well. As the available evidence suggests that violent behavior stems from multiple determinants, prevention programs will need to address the social conditions that give rise to youth delinquency.

## II. Factors Leading to Delinquency

To reduce juvenile crime, one needs first to understand the factors that put young people at risk for violence, as well as the protective factors that buffer the effects of exposure to risk (Hawkins, 1995). Precursors to violent behavior in adolescents and young adults are rooted in the individual, the family, the schools and peer groups, and the neighborhoods and communities (Hawkins, 1995).

### Individual Determinants

While most factors that influence children's involvement in criminal activities stem from their social and physical environment, it should be stated that some personal factors may influence a

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child's predilection to adopt inappropriate social behaviors. Biological and physiological factors, such as lack of impulse control, sensation seeking, and low harm-avoidance, appear to increase a young person's risk of behavior problems (Hawkins, 1995). Children born with fetal alcohol syndrome often experience hyperactivity, exhibit low intelligence, and develop speech disorders—factors that are associated with later manifestation of antisocial behavior (Hawkins, 1996). Some researchers have also noted a connection between having a disabling condition and subsequent development of delinquency (Dryfoos, 1990). However, researchers also admit the difficulty, when searching for the root cause of delinquency, in distinguishing these biological and physiological conditions from the effects of the social environment.

## Family Environment

Numerous studies have shown that the home environment and family dynamics play major roles in the development of a child. Significant changes in the economic stability and structure of families during the past 20 years, however, have weakened families' ability to provide the nurturing web of support needed to prevent children from developing antisocial behaviors (National Research Council, 1993). The continuing decline in median incomes for poor families and the rise in single-parent households only exacerbate the demise of a social system that once provided the foundation for nurturing youth (National Research Council, 1993). As Dryfoos (1990) has noted, however, "family structure...is not as significant in predicting social deviance as the quality of the parenting relationship."

Specific risk factors for youth violence arising in the family include: (1) family poverty; (2) poor family management practices; and (3) parental attitudes that favor violent behavior or parental involvement in such behavior (Hawkins, 1995).

**Poverty:** Family poverty fosters parental stress concerning finances and the ability (or lack thereof) to support the family, and contributes to destabilization of the family structure (National Research Council, 1993). According to several research studies, this unbalanced and emotionally unsettling environment has debilitating consequences for children. Adolescents who grow up in low-income families are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors, become sexually active earlier, perform worse in school, and drop out of school at higher rates than those who live in middle- or upper-income families (National Research Council, 1993).

**Poor family management:** Limited parental guidance and nurturing can often contribute to development of delinquent behavior in youth (Dryfoos, 1990). Without clear expectations and standards for behavior, a developing child will lack guidelines for determining what is socially acceptable behavior (Hawkins, 1995). On the other hand, excessively severe or inconsistent punishment encourages development of delinquent behavior because the parents are not appropriately responsive to the child, and either condone violence or ignore it (National Research Council, 1993; Dryfoos, 1990). Parental failure to monitor children's activities, whereabouts, or friends can also weaken children's capacity to pattern socially appropriate models of behavior. Peer influences may even undermine parental guidance (National Research Council, 1993).

**Family conflict and violence:** Family conflict and violence, either between parents or between parents and children, can enhance the risk for problem behaviors associated with violent behavior and criminal activity such as drug use, truancy, and other illegal acts (Hawkins, 1995). Parental attitudes that favor violent behavior or parental involvement in such behavior increases the risk that children who witness such displays will themselves become violent (Hawkins, 1995).

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Youths who are victims of violence at home are more likely to commit violent acts than those who are not subjected to abuse (National Research Council, 1993). Furthermore, youths who are sexually abused as children exhibit a host of emotional problems including fearfulness, immaturity, increased aggression, and other neuroses (National Research Council, 1993).

## Peer Group Factors

Particularly during adolescence, peer influence can have a substantial effect on decision making (Dryfoos, 1990). It follows, then, that youth who associate with peers who engage in problem behaviors are at increased risk for imitating those behaviors. In 1991, 25 percent of all serious violent crimes involved a juvenile offender; more than half of those crimes involved a group of offenders (Snyder and Sickmund, 1995). Early involvement in criminal activities also increases the likelihood of exhibiting prolonged, serious, and chronic behavior problems. Moreover, in the absence of family or community support systems to offset peer pressure, a child's chances of avoiding involvement in violent or other criminal activity are diminished.

## School Risk Factors

Schools traditionally have been viewed by parents as safe havens for their children. Within these institutions of learning, however, the high rates of violence are intolerable—and increasing. A 1993 national survey on the opinions and experiences of public school teachers and students showed that 23 percent reported being victims of violence in or around their school (The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher: Violence in America's Public Schools, as cited in Children's Safety Network Adolescent Violence Prevention Resource Center, 1995). School-level risk indicators for youth include demonstrated behaviors, especially aggressiveness, withdrawal, hyperactivity, and lack of attention. Other indicators include antisocial behaviors, such as fighting or skipping school,

which increase the risk of violent or delinquent behavior.

Truancy has also contributed largely to future delinquent and criminal activity. A report produced by the Los Angeles County Office of Education on factors contributing to juvenile delinquency concluded that chronic absenteeism is the most powerful predictor of delinquent behavior (Shuster, 1995). One significant cause of truancy is parental neglect: many parents of truant students place little or no value on education, and do not ensure that their children routinely attend school. Departments across the nation report that daytime crime rates are rising in part because students are committing crimes instead of going to class (Garry, 1996).

## Community

Within the community framework, five risk factors are known to increase the probability that a young person will engage in violence: (1) availability of guns, (2) community laws/norms favorable to crime, (3) media portrayal and exploitation of violence, (4) low neighborhood attachment/disorganization, and (5) extreme economic deprivation (Hawkins, 1995).

**Availability of guns:** According to a survey of inner-city high school students in the United States, 35 percent carried firearms regularly or occasionally. Additionally, 3 percent of students reported carrying a gun to school "all of the time" or "most of the time," and an additional 6 percent did so "now and then" (U.S. Department of Justice, 1993). Given the lethal nature of firearms, the increased likelihood of conflict escalating into homicide when guns are present, and the strong association between availability of firearms and homicide rates, a teenager who has ready access to firearms through family, friends, or a source on the street is at increased risk for becoming involved in violent activity. (Hawkins, 1995).

**Community laws/norms favorable to crime:** Community norms, expressed through laws,

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written policies, informal social practices, and adult expectations of young people, may sometimes send conflicting messages to juveniles (Hawkins, 1995). For example, schools and parents may advocate against alcohol use, yet it is a socially accepted community behavior. Studies also suggest that community norms that do not include proactive monitoring or enforcement of firearm regulations, and the availability of firearms from jurisdictions having no prohibitions on sales or illegal access, contribute to the problem (Hawkins, 1995). Despite District laws mandating that handgun possession under age 21 is illegal, neighboring states such as Virginia have reduced the age limit to 18, thus increasing accessibility.

**Media portrayal of violence:** Research over the past three decades demonstrates a clear correlation between depictions of violence and the development of aggressive and violent behavior (Hawkins, 1995). Whether transmitted through the television, video games, the Internet, or music, children's access to media violence has increased—a disturbing trend, considering the link between violence and aggressive behavior in children. Media violence increases children's fear of becoming victims, desensitizes them to violence, and increases their appetite for violence in real life (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1996). Furthermore, media violence often fails to show the consequences of violent behavior, thus altering children's attitudes and sensitivity to violence. Children tend to mimic behavior they learn from media outlets and often misperceive these behaviors as socially acceptable.

**Low neighborhood attachment/community disorganization:** Low neighborhood attachment is often characterized by community indifference to cleanliness and orderliness, high rates of vandalism, limited surveillance of public places by neighborhood residents, absence of parental involvement in schools, and low voter participation (Hawkins, 1995). It becomes increasingly difficult to establish a community identity and goals,

as individuals become disconnected from their communities. As a result, youth do not feel a sense of belonging or attachment in their community. Without this sense of attachment, youth are less likely to respect the property and well-being of community residents.

**Extreme economic deprivation:** Children from neighborhoods characterized by extreme poverty are generally more likely to develop problems with delinquency, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school, and violence (Hawkins, 1995). This is due, in part, to the lack of resources and opportunities available to poverty-stricken communities. Additionally, since poverty rates are disproportionately higher for African-American, Native American, or Latino children than for white children, risks for involvement in violence may increase, depending on the youth's racial or cultural background.

## Protective Factors

To fully understand the dynamics of juvenile crime, it is equally important to identify the protective factors often in place to counterbalance the sources of risk. Protective factors diminish the impact of negative risk factors by providing positive or alternative ways for an individual to respond to these risks (Hawkins, 1995). Three categories of protective factors have been identified: (1) individual characteristics—a resilient temperament and positive social orientation; (2) bonding—positive relationships with family members, teachers, or other adults; and (3) healthy beliefs and clear standards—adults' confidence in children's competence to succeed in school and avoid drugs and crime, coupled with establishment of clear expectations and rules governing children's behavior (Hawkins, 1995). Creating a positive environment is essential for healthy child development.

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### III. Strategies for Preventing Juvenile Crime

It is clear that early intervention is critical in reaching children before they become involved in criminal activities. A child's development is initially influenced by the home environment; therefore, prevention efforts should focus primarily on the family. Family-based approaches target the root of the problem of youth violence to end the cycles of violence and deviant behavior and to re-establish support systems to maintain a safe and nurturing home environment. Focusing on family supports is the first step toward strengthening community response to youth crime.

#### Parental Training

Programs designed to improve parenting skills can improve interaction between parent and child. Improving the relationship between the child and the parent can significantly reduce the risk of childhood behavior problems and antisocial behavior. Programs targeting parents might address the following: the psychological needs of the parents, especially their sense of being competent parents; the parental behaviors that influence the physical and social development of their children; and the stresses and social supports that can either help or hinder the parents' ability to adapt to their children's needs (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 1993).

Substantiating the need for family-focused policies, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice, implemented a parenting initiative, *Effective Parenting Strategies for Families of High Risk Youth*. The initiative focuses on "family strengthening programs," defined as "any intervention that works with either a parent or caretaker of a child or some members of a family with the goal of reducing risk or increasing protective factors for problem behavior" (Cantelon, 1994). The parenting initiative aims to strengthen the ability of families to raise children and involve the

entire family. These programs are designed for the specific needs of the community to address the concerns of both dysfunctional families and well-functioning families.

Parenting programs that equip parents with skills to improve the parent/child relationship can bring about significant reductions in problem behaviors. Teaching parents how to respond with appropriate rewards and behaviors and how to establish clear rules about privileges and responsibilities creates a healthy environment for child development and strengthens the bond between parent and child.

#### Neighborhood Initiatives

Communities nationwide are providing avenues for greater community input in the fight against crime. Prevention and intervention programs are emerging in various settings and are looked at as supplementary measures to the current juvenile justice structure. These innovative approaches are emerging nationally and are increasingly being incorporated into policies governing the juvenile justice system.

#### *The Safe Neighborhood Initiative*

The Safe Neighborhood Initiative (SNI), an intervention approach adopted by the City of Boston, increases communication among police officers, judges, school principals, probation officers, and the community, and is increasingly involved in the design and evaluation of public and private programs. The initiative incorporates several public safety programs, including the "Ten Point Coalition." This innovative approach assists the community in rebuilding and recovering from the effects of violence; the coalition comprises a group of clergy and lay leaders who work to mobilize the religious community around issues affecting urban youth.

The Ten Point Coalition facilitates collaboration with the religious community by establishing church-sponsored "Adopt-a-Gang" programs, in

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which inner-city churches serve as drop-in centers providing sanctuary for troubled youth, initiate and support neighborhood crime-watch programs within local church neighborhoods, establish working relationships between local churches and community-based health centers to provide counseling for families, establish rape crisis drop-in centers and services for battered women in churches, and offer counseling programs for abusive men, particularly teenagers and young adults (National Center for Justice, 1996). Volunteers are encouraged to develop relationships with at-risk youth in their local areas.

The combination of programs implemented by the City of Boston resulted in an 80-percent decrease in its juvenile homicide rate between 1990 and 1995. Furthermore, its violent crime arrest rate for aggravated assault and battery with a deadly weapon dropped 65 percent between 1993 and 1995, and its violent crime rate in the public schools fell more than 20 percent during the 1995–96 school year, compared with the previous year (National Center for Justice, 1996).

### ***The Serious Habitual Offender/Drug Involved Program (SHOCAP)***

Another program adopted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency was the Serious Habitual Offender/Drug-Involved Program (SHOCAP). The program was developed in response to findings indicating that only a small proportion of offenders commit the most serious and violent juvenile crime. SHOCAP seeks to improve public safety by involving those who work in law enforcement, prosecution, education, probation, corrections, and social services in a cooperative process to share information and manage juvenile justice cases. The program identifies a community's most dangerous juvenile offenders and focuses community resources on immediate intervention or detention when they re-offend.

SHOCAP was later expanded to include a comprehensive strategy recognizing that the family and the community, supported by social institutions, have primary responsibility for meeting the fundamental needs of children (Medaris, 1996). The program seeks to prevent delinquent behavior by focusing on at-risk youth and strengthening the juvenile justice system's response to delinquent offenders through a system of graduated sanctions that provides a continuum of treatment alternatives (Medaris, 1996).

### ***Communities that Care***

The Communities that Care model aims to reduce adolescent problem behaviors by increasing the protective factors that promote family and community bonding. The process recognizes that when bonding occurs in the absence of healthy beliefs and clear standards, it is difficult for prevention efforts to be successful (Hawkins, 1995). The approach consists of a four-step process. First, key leaders of the community (those who control many of the resources) are engaged to develop a vision of common goals for the community, to commit to a risk-focused prevention strategy, and to decide who should sit on the community prevention task force or board. Second, a board is created to reflect the diverse groups and areas in the community, and the board provides an opportunity for team-building through a series of training events. Third, a risk assessment is conducted by the community to assess adolescent behavior problems, data are collected on existing efforts to address these risks, and prevention strategies are identified. Fourth, after training, the community creates a risk-focused action plan and establishes appropriate program evaluation methods (Hawkins, 1995). The strategy behind this model is to reinvent the community as a protective environment by promoting the Communities that Care model to ensure that all children are bonded securely to family, to school, and to community (Hawkins, 1995).

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## ***Community Policing***

Community policing, or community-oriented policing, places officers in face-to-face contact with the community to encourage interaction with residents. Officers are concerned primarily with controlling crime, but they also establish relationships with community members and exchange information on community priorities as well as provide vital neighborhood crime information. Community members, for example, are given the opportunity to discuss their concerns about the lack of adequate street lighting in their neighborhood. Community policing also provides a visible crime deterrent and provides a means for residents to actively reclaim their neighborhoods. It instills a sense of pride and confidence in the residents and provides them with a true sense of community.

## **National Integrated Prevention and Incarceration Measures**

Intervention strategies are increasingly directed toward integration of prevention programs and incarceration measures. Emphasis is not placed on one method over the other, but rather on integrating each to optimize results. Through the Department of Justice, funding that targets youth violence has nearly doubled from fiscal year 1997 to 1998, reaching \$390 million (Children's Defense Fund, e-mail citation). Most of these funds (\$233 million) are directed toward prosecution and law enforcement to "crack down" on violent youth and youth gangs: \$100 million for prosecutorial initiatives, \$50 million for violent youth courts, and \$8 million for residential services for delinquent youth (Children's Defense Fund, e-mail citation). Several federally funded programs have been developed to address this mission.

## ***Balanced Restorative Model***

The Balanced and Restorative Justice Project is a developing model system for community supervision of juvenile offenders. It is based on a balanced approach mission, which incorporates dif-

ferent segments of the community (Maloney, Romig, and Armstrong, 1988; Bazemore, 1992) and a restorative justice philosophy as defined below (Umbreit, 1989; Van Ness, 1990; Zehr, 1990). The model focuses on developing balanced, community-based systems to meet the challenge of using restorative sanctions and processes (such as community service, victim involvement, mediation, and restitution) to restore a sense of safety and serve as catalysts for change in the juvenile justice system (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). The balanced approach improves the capacity of juvenile justice systems and agencies to protect the community and ensure accountability of the offender and the system. Offenders are further enabled to increase their competence and productivity as citizens.

Restorative justice promotes maximum involvement of the victim, the offender, and the community in the justice process and presents a clear alternative to sanctions and intervention based on retributive or traditional treatment assumptions (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). Within this framework, crimes are considered acts against another person or the community, and communities act as facilitators in the restorative process. The approach provides for direct involvement by participants, and offenders are held accountable to their victims by assuming responsibility and taking action to repair the harm.

The balanced and restorative justice model provides the basis for reconciling the interests of victims, offenders, and the community through common programs and supervision practices that meet mutual needs (Bazemore, G. and Umbreit, 1994). Juvenile systems become more responsive to the needs of victims, offenders, and the community.

### **The model employs three basic approaches:**

**Accountability:** When a crime occurs, a debt is incurred. Justice requires that every effort be made by offenders to restore losses suffered by victims.

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**Competency development:** The objective is for offenders to leave the juvenile justice system more capable of productive participation in conventional society than when they entered.

**Community protection:** Believing that the public has a right to a safe and secure community, juvenile justice systems develop a progressive response approach to monitor control of offenders in the community and develop new ways to ensure public safety and respond to community concerns (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994).

The Balanced and Restorative model defines new roles for juvenile justice professionals, offenders, and members of the community by specifying intended outcomes. The model maximizes the victims' involvement in the juvenile justice process and sends a message that the juvenile justice system cannot function alone.

### ***Multi-Systemic Therapy***

The Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) Program, based at the University of South Carolina, has had tremendous success in reducing recidivism as well as the severity of committed offenses. MST places juveniles in a four-month, intensive nonresidential program. The program provides an alternative to incarceration by intervening in a young person's life in relation to his/her individual needs. MST works extensively with families and the support systems in the child's environment by building strength in the family. Parents are taught how to support their child within the school system, the juvenile justice system, and the health system by obtaining the skills to maintain an environment that is conducive to law-abiding, positive behavior by the child (Bezdekian and Merianos, 1996). Parents also learn skills to effectively deal with crises involving the child in different settings.

### ***Trying Kids as Adults***

A small percentage of juveniles who comprise the offender population may be beyond the reach

of the juvenile system. These individuals commit heinous crimes, and for public safety reasons, may not belong in the juvenile justice systems. The severity of the crimes they commit might necessitate movement of these youth offenders into the adult criminal system. The state of Virginia, for example, enacted a law in 1996, making it easier for prosecutors to try minors as adults in criminal courts for specified felonies. In the District, prosecutors can choose to charge juveniles 16 or older as adults when they are accused of murder, rape, armed robbery, or first degree burglary, or when they accused of attempting any of those crimes (Finn, 1996). Furthermore, if prosecutors convince judges that 15-year-old criminals are beyond rehabilitation, these offenders can be tried as adults in the District. Critics claim that the legislation does not include enough safeguards to minimize prosecutorial discretion. Yet, despite the fears of critics, the legislation has done little to increase the number of juveniles prosecuted in adult criminal court.

### ***Operation Weed and Seed***

The Weed and Seed program, a component of the Department of Justice's antiviolence division, incorporates community policing and law enforcement to "weed out" violent crime, gang activity, drug trafficking and drug use, and "seed in" neighborhood revitalization to prevent, intervene in, and treat crime. The program links federal, state, and local law enforcement and criminal justice efforts with social services as well as with private and community efforts by providing \$25.1 million to create safer environments in 79 communities. In fiscal year 1996, the District of Columbia received funding of \$300,000 for a demonstration program (described below).

## **IV. District Response**

The District of Columbia is implementing prevention and intervention models within its infra-

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structure, similar to programs administered throughout the nation. Innovative approaches are being explored, with an emphasis on increasing agency, police, and community collaboration.

Severe reductions in funding in the District, however, create extensive problems in implementing programs to reduce juvenile crime rates. Realizing the numerous causes of youth delinquency and violence, the District is taking a comprehensive approach by including schools, police departments, courts, recreation centers, and youth services in its plan to prevent and eliminate youth delinquency and crime.

### ***Washington, DC, Weed and Seed Demonstration***

The Washington, DC, Weed and Seed demonstration project targets a 30-block neighborhood in the northeast quadrant of the District, largely comprising two housing areas—Langston Dwellings and Carver Terrace. The demonstration coordinates law enforcement efforts among the following: the local police department; the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; the Drug Enforcement Agency; and the U.S. Marshal's office. In its first year of program implementation, major sweeps resulted in 30 arrests for narcotics violations. Community policing in the area was also established at a mini-station in the neighborhood, with community police officers assigned to foot and scooter patrol within the target area.

Through the program's prevention, intervention, and treatment component, the Boys and Girls Club and other organizations provide Youth Entrepreneur programs and basketball and performing arts camps and coordinate a Youth Summit. The Refuge of Hope Outreach Center in Langston also provides counseling, job and computer tutoring, and antidrug and sex education programs to area residents as part of the Weed and Seed initiative. Neighborhood restoration efforts

are provided through collaboration among the DC Housing Authority, the Urban League, and the Washington, DC, Chamber of Commerce to refurbish the Langston playground and landscape schools and adjacent areas in the neighborhood.

### ***Department of Recreation and Parks***

The Youth Violence Prevention initiative, a program developed through the Department of Recreation and Parks, addresses violence among adolescents. The program provides supervision and behavior modification activities for youths routinely left unattended. Due to fiscal constraints, the budget for the program was reduced by \$5 million for fiscal year 1997. According to the mayor's budget (February 1, 1997), the decrease will have the most adverse effects on youth who live east of the Anacostia River and in portions of Ward 5, communities with a "history of ongoing youth violence" (Government of the District of Columbia, 1997).

### ***Youth Services Administration***

The Youth Services Administration (YSA), part of the Department of Human Services, provides for the detention and rehabilitation of juveniles ages 10–21 who are involved in the juvenile justice system. YSA also works to prevent involvement of youth in the juvenile justice system by diverting perpetrators of nonserious offenses to programs where they can perform community service and restitution and have their cases dropped (DC Action for Children, 1997). Three court-related populations receive YSA services: (1) youth detained prior to trial, (2) youth committed after plea or trial, and (3) runaways, truants, or youth who cannot be controlled by parents/guardians.

### ***Consortium for Youth Alternatives***

The Consortium for Youth Alternatives (CYA) is a program of the Sasha Bruce Youthwork Inc., and includes the following participating agencies:

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the Center for Youth Services, the Southeast Vicariate Cluster, and the Latin American Youth Center. The CYA functions as a diversion program for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to serve youth who are charged with an offense or crime. CYA provides an alternative for youth to solve their problems and clear their record in the juvenile justice system by participating in the program and avoiding incarceration. Some of the services CYA provides through case management include individual, family, and group counseling; emergency shelter; employment services; parent education and support groups; home visiting and outreach services; and housing assistance referrals. The program attempts to avoid youth stigmatization and enhances the family's ability to deal with current situations.

### Local Legislative Efforts

Prevention and intervention approaches are also appearing in District legislative efforts. The DC City Council recently passed two legislative initiatives focusing on family-based strategies to improve the quality of life for children: DC Law 10-159, the "Police Truancy Enforcement Act," and DC Law 10-227, the "Parental Responsibility Act." These legislative initiatives are intended to hold parents responsible for the actions or circumstances of their children, assist some parents with obtaining or enhancing parenting skills necessary to improve their children's lives by referrals to parenting classes, and prevent the need for further government intervention in the life of the family or child (DC Family Policy Seminar, 1996). The premise behind the truancy and the parental responsibility laws is that parenting classes strengthen the parents' ability to nurture and care for their child and provide a necessary support system. The laws provide for parenting classes as an option for courts to impose upon parents.

### Local Police Efforts

The increasing activity between service agencies, courts, and legislative efforts is also seen in

local police efforts. Realizing the need for increased coordination and community input, the Metropolitan Police Department is taking steps to increase its presence in District neighborhoods. The Metropolitan Police Department has implemented several programs to address juvenile crime by improving efficiency and reducing costs. These programs involve various sectors of the community in reducing crime rates. Despite the department's long-standing (since 1989) philosophy of incorporating a community empowerment policing model, it has not yet developed a comprehensive community-oriented strategy (Metropolitan Police Department, 1996).

Currently, the Metropolitan Police Department is taking steps to institutionalize this philosophy through strategy development and community input. Following are some of the programs developed by the department:

**Motivating Youth Against Drugs:** The Metropolitan Police Department was awarded a grant of \$268,000 to develop a comprehensive drug elimination program geared toward motivating youth against drugs. The program focuses on prevention/intervention methods to educate youth about the dangers of drugs and to improve police/youth relations. The program also engages in covert operations to eliminate drug use within specifically designated areas.

**Operation Chill:** This joint project between the Southland Corporation and the Metropolitan Police Department rewards city youth for good deeds by providing the department with 7-Eleven Slurpee coupons to be distributed by police officers to youth who are observed doing good deeds. The goal of the program is to enhance relationships between police and youth in the District.

**District Jail:** Despite efforts to prevent youth crime and delinquency, youth are often referred for incarceration to detention centers, or, in some cases, to adult criminal systems. The juvenile detention center in the District continues to struggle with overcrowding. Oak Hill is the lone

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detention center in the District, with a capacity of 188 youth. Since 1993, the District has also added 500 slots in community-based programs such as residential group homes (Nguyen, 1997). Plans are further being considered to build additional facilities. However, critics claim that additional facilities are not needed and that funding should be allocated to programs that focus on alternative solutions.

## V. Policy Recommendations and Implications

Increases in violent crimes among youth contribute to a sense of crisis in the nation's communities, and this often creates a tension between the desire for "get tough" policies and the desire to stop delinquency and criminal behavior before it starts. The current debate in the juvenile justice system focuses on whether prevention programs are effective in curbing the potential for a juvenile crime explosion. Critics claim that programs should focus more on tougher sentencing guidelines and less on rehabilitation and prevention. Despite the dialogue in the juvenile justice arena emphasizing prevention, the question remains as to whether a true sustained emphasis has been applied in the country as a whole, or in individual neighborhoods and communities (Bezdikian and Merianos, 1996). Many argue that a sustained effort has not materialized, thus diminishing the impact that prevention programs could have.

Research conducted by the RAND Corporation compared the cost-benefits between early intervention programs and mandatory sentencing. The study found that early intervention programs, such as early childhood interventions with high-risk families, interventions for youth who are acting out or at risk, and early interventions for delinquent youth provided less costly ways of achieving reductions in serious crimes (Greenwood, 1997). The study further showed that the effects of the intervention programs are felt fairly soon after their delivery, with only 3 or 4 years' delay in the

case of early intervention, and 7–10 years in the case of parent training (Greenwood, 1997). However, the cost-effectiveness of early childhood and broad school-based interventions, in comparison to mandatory sentencing, was less clear due to the need for greater assessment (Greenwood, 1997).

In 1996, Congress required the Attorney General to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of Department of Justice grants to assist state and local law enforcement and communities in preventing crime. This mandate called for special emphasis on "factors that relate to juvenile crime and the effect of these programs on youth violence," including "risk factors in the community, schools, and family environments that contribute to juvenile violence" (Sherman, 1997). The report, conducted through the National Institute of Justice, found that some prevention programs worked, some did not, some were promising, and some were not tested adequately (Sherman, 1997).

Further, the report found that the effectiveness of the Department of Justice funding depended heavily on whether it was directed to the urban neighborhoods where youth violence was highly concentrated (Sherman, 1997). The report also found that effective crime prevention in high-violence neighborhoods might require simultaneous interventions involving the family, the community, the school, business, police, and the criminal justice system. The report concluded that, despite the federal government's failure to provide effective guidance on why certain programs work and how they could be successfully adapted in other cities, the Department of Justice plays an important role in disseminating this knowledge to state and local governments.

Based on conclusions in the RAND study, investments in appropriate interventions for high-risk youth are several times more cost-effective in reducing serious crime than long mandatory sentences for repeat offenders (Greenwood, 1997). Further, these investments are likely to have addi-

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tional payoffs that do not result from increased use of imprisonment (Greenwood, 1997). Yet, despite these findings, Congress has invested Department of Justice funding most heavily in police and prisons, with very little support for other institutions (Sherman, 1997). The empirical and theoretical evidence shows that other settings for crime prevention are also important; thus, the statutory allocation of investments in the crime prevention “portfolio” is lopsided, and may be missing out on some major dividends (Sherman, 1997).

The question we must then ask is: Why isn’t the public demanding expansion of prevention and intervention programs? One answer is society’s current faith in the value of “toughness” as opposed to treatment- or prevention-oriented approaches (Greenwood, 1997). Another reason may be the public mistrust in government’s ability to run complicated prevention and intervention programs (Greenwood, 1997). Finally, the public may have more faith in imprisonment than in early prevention efforts because the crime reduction benefits of prevention are more difficult and

expensive to document (Greenwood, 1997). Thus, the difficulty in creating policy lies in reconciling public perception with empirical evidence.

## VI. Conclusion

Reducing juvenile crime in the District is a complex challenge. Although acts of criminal violence need an appropriate response from the police and judicial system, empirical evidence has shown that prevention efforts complement punitive measures. Communities throughout the nation have redefined the criminal justice system for youth by increasing the involvement of the family, the community, social services, and government agencies. Forming partnerships to address youth crime increases the level of communication between the various stakeholders—neighborhood residents, school administrators, community leaders, the police, clergy, families and youth—and increases each stakeholder’s sense of ownership in both the problem and the solutions. ■

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# Appendix A

## National Resources

### **Academy for Educational Development Center for Youth Development and Policy**

1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009-1202  
(202) 884-8000

Contact: Richard Murphy

The Academy for Educational Development (AED) is an independent, nonprofit organization that addresses human development needs throughout the world. In 1990, the Academy established the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research in response to a compelling need to define and promote national and community strategies for positive youth development. The center works to ensure the well-being of disadvantaged children and youth in the United States. It searches for new solutions to youth problems by strengthening national, state, local, and community leaders' capacities to develop policies, programs, and standards for practice that are supportive of young people. Publications include *Building Life Options: School-Community Collaborations for Pregnancy Prevention in the Middle Grades*; *A Stitch in Time: Helping Young Mothers Complete High School*; and *In School Together: School-Based Child Care Serving Student Mothers*.

### **Bureau of Justice Statistics**

633 Indiana Avenue, N.W.  
Indiana Building  
Washington, DC 20530  
(202) 307-0765

Contact: Maureen Henneberg, Chief, Planning, Management, and Budget

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), a component of the Department of Justice, is the nation's primary source for criminal justice statistics.

Activities include collecting, analyzing, publishing, and disseminating information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government. The data collected by the bureau are used by federal, state, and local policymakers in combating crime and ensuring that justice is both efficient and evenhanded. BJS provides consumers with referrals, publications, and reference information, and sponsors conferences. A catalog is available.

### **Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Institute of Behavioral Science**

University of Colorado at Boulder Campus  
Box 442  
Boulder, CO 80309-0442  
(303) 492-8465

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) was founded in 1992 with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to provide informed assistance to groups committed to understanding and preventing violence, particularly adolescent violence. CSPV works from a multidisciplinary platform on the subject of violence, and facilitates the building of bridges between the research community and the practitioner and policy community. CSPV has a threefold mission. First, the Information House, the nucleus of the Center, serves to collect, evaluate, store, and disseminate violence-related information. Second, CPSV offers technical assistance for the evaluation and development of violence prevention programs. Third, CPSV maintains a basic research component through data analysis and other projects on the causes of violence and the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs.

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**Center to Prevent Handgun Violence**

1225 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 1100

Washington, DC 20005

(202) 289-7319

Contact: Dave Bass

The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence (CPHV), established in 1983, is a nonprofit education and research organization that works to educate the public about the scope of handgun violence in the United States and the risks and responsibilities of handgun ownership. The center developed the nation's first K-12 curriculum on gun violence prevention, now used in several major school systems. CPHV publishes a newsletter and provides consumer publications, some of which are available in Spanish.

**Children's Safety Network****Adolescent Violence Prevention Resource Center  
Education Development Center, Inc.**

55 Chapel Street

Newton MA 02158-1060

(617) 969-7100

Contact: Rebecca Atnafou

The mission of the Children's Safety Network Adolescent Violence Prevention Resource Center (CSN-AVPRC) is to assist state maternal and child health agencies to develop new adolescent violence prevention programs and improve current prevention efforts by determining their specific violence prevention needs, creating action plans, implementing interventions, and conducting evaluations. CSN-AVPRC conducts site visits, workshop presentations, and provides consultants and speakers who assist in information sharing and technical assistance. CSN-AVPRC also maintains a database of statistics and research findings, existing prevention programs, and state-specific violence information. Publications include a newsletter, resource lists, annotated bibliographies, and data papers. A poster is available in Spanish.

**Children's Safety Network/CSR, Incorporated  
National Injury and Violence Prevention****Resource Center**

1400 Eye Street, NW, Suite 200

Washington, DC 20005

(202) 842-4450

Contact: Diane Doherty

The Children's Safety Network (CSN) National Injury and Violence Prevention Resource Center links state and local maternal and child health agencies to other local, state, and national injury and violence prevention programs. The center helps these agencies to develop and implement injury and violence prevention initiatives and integrate them into existing activities and programs. Its resource collection offers state injury reports, program materials and evaluations, multicultural injury prevention materials and video recordings, and other hard-to-find items. CSN provides technical assistance (by telephone, mail, or site visit) and makes presentations at conferences, training sessions, and other forums. A publications list is available.

**Civil Justice Foundation**

1050 31st Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20007

(202) 965-3500

Contact: Cindy L. Bennett, Coordinator

The Civil Justice Foundation works to prevent personal injury by supporting injured citizens' organizations as well as injury prevention research efforts. Among past grant recipients are the Association of Birth Defect Children, the Educational Fund to End Handgun Violence, Agent Orange Community Support, and the Iowa Head Injury Association. Grant decisions are made by a 19-member board of judges, consumer activists, and trial lawyers, or by the Executive Committee.

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**Coalition for Juvenile Justice**  
**1211 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 414**  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 467-0864

Coalition for Juvenile Justice was formerly known as the National Coalition of State Juvenile Justice Advisory Groups. Publications include a newsletter and an annual report. In addition, the organization provides reference information and sponsors conferences and training seminars.

**Creating Opportunities for Parent Empowerment**

810 Potomac Avenue, S.E.  
First Floor (Rear)  
Washington, DC 20003  
(202) 543-6482, (800) 515-COPE  
Contact: Ana Bonilla

Creating Opportunities for Parent Empowerment (COPE), a parent-run organization, enables parents of children with disabilities to make greater use of entitled services under existing federal, state, and local laws. The organization provides culturally sensitive information, referral, and training services that help parents identify and meet the special needs of their children as well as their own needs for support. Special attention is given to parents who have been unable to learn how to deal with service delivery systems that can be difficult to negotiate. COPE receives funding from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education.

**Family Research Council**  
700 13th Street, N.W., Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 393-2100

Contact: William Mattox

The Family Research Council (FRC) is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that analyzes issues affecting families, and works to ensure that the interests of families are considered and respected in the development of public policy. Publications include the bimonthly magazine

*Family Policy* and the monthly newsletter *Washington Watch*.

**Human Service Collaborative**  
2262 Hall Place, N.W., Suite 204  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 333-1892

Contact: Sheila Pires

The Human Service Collaborative (HSC) helps agencies and communities to develop policies and programs to achieve effective, individualized, comprehensive, family-centered, community-based, and culturally sensitive human services for children, youth, and families; collaboration and service integration across agencies and jurisdictions; and cohesive, flexible systems of care for children, youth, and families at risk. HSC specializes in the integration of child and family service systems (including health, mental health, child welfare, substance abuse, juvenile justice, and education) at the federal, state, and local levels.

**Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse**  
P.O. Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
(800) 638-8736

The Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC) is a component of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, which collects, synthesizes, and disseminates information on juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. The clearinghouse offers information on runaway, missing, and abducted children, sexual exploitation, the response of the criminal justice system to child abuse, and other topics related to child and adolescent maltreatment.

**National Center for Juvenile Justice**  
710 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3000  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
(412) 227-6950

The National Center for Juvenile Justice, founded in 1973, is a private nonprofit organization that seeks to prevent juvenile delinquency

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and child abuse and neglect through research and technical assistance. The center supports professionals in the struggle to preserve the balance between protecting children and protecting society against juvenile crime behavior. It is a repository of more than 10 million computerized juvenile justice records and provides research analyses on topics such as the number of youths charged with crimes and their adjudication, repeat offenders, and prevention of criminal law violations. The organization produces publications on juvenile court information systems, research on juvenile delinquency, juvenile and family facility design guidelines, juvenile probation services, and state-by-state legislative statutes. Publications include a newsletter, journal, and catalog.

#### **National Institute of Justice**

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Indiana Building  
633 Indiana Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20530  
(202) 307-2942; NCHRS (800) 851-3420, or  
<http://www.ncjrs.org>

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research and development agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, was established to prevent and reduce crime and to improve the criminal justice system. The institute supports research and development programs and special projects to improve and strengthen the criminal justice system and reduce or prevent crime; conducts national demonstration projects that employ innovative or promising approaches for improving criminal justice; evaluates the effectiveness of criminal justice programs and identifies programs that promise to be successful if continued or repeated; and develops new methods of crime prevention and reduction of crime and delinquency. Services include an electronic bulletin board, reference service, and information exchange, as well as research programs on gangs, human development

and criminal behavior, drug use forecasting, and data resources. Publications include a journal. The NIJ operates that National Criminal Justice Reference Service, a clearinghouse for criminal justice information and referral services

#### **National Institute for Violence Prevention**

P.O. Box 1035  
Sandwich, MA 02563  
(508) 833-0731

The National Institute for Violence Prevention works to develop expertise in violence prevention strategies among health, education, correctional, and human service personnel. The Institute offers training for individuals and organizations who work with youth in a wide variety of settings. All training programs and presentations are offered at the site of the requesting agency. The one- and two-day training programs involve in-depth training in an adolescent violence prevention curriculum and its application to the specific needs of the targeted youth population.

#### **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

U.S. Department of Justice  
633 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Suite 742  
Washington, DC 20531  
(202) 307-5911  
Contact: Marilyn Silver

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) was established through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974. The mission of the office is to provide national leadership, direction, coordination, and resources to prevent, treat, and control juvenile delinquency; improve the effectiveness and fairness of the juvenile justice system; and address the problem of missing and exploited children. OJJDP comprises the Research and Program Development Division, the Training and Technical Assistance Division, the Special Emphasis Division, the State Relations and Assistance Division, the Concentration of Federal Efforts Program, the

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Missing Children's Program, and the Information Dissemination Unit. Services to consumers include referrals, publications, and reference information. Materials are available in Spanish and French. OJJDP publishes a journal and sponsors conferences and training seminars.

### **Operation Weed and Seed**

U.S. Department of Justice/Office of Justice Programs

533 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Room 304-S  
Washington, DC 20531

Contact: Stephen Rickman, Director

In 1991, the U.S. Department of Justice initiated development of the Weed and Seed strategy. Operation Weed and Seed is a community-based, multiagency approach to combating crime in high-crime neighborhoods. Under the leadership of the U.S. Attorneys, communities are provided grant funding to implement comprehensive strategies to "weed out" violent crime and gang activity, and "seed" the community through economic revitalization and neighborhood restoration.

### **Vera Institute of Justice**

377 Broadway  
New York, NY 10013  
(212) 334-1300

Contact: David Minzer, Publications

The Vera Institute of Justice is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to making government policies fairer, more humane, and more efficient for all people. Working in collaboration with government and local communities, Vera designs and implements innovative projects that expand the practice of justice and improve the quality of urban life. Vera operates demonstration projects in partnership with government, conducts original research, and provides technical assistance to public officials in New York and throughout the world.

### **Women and the Economy Campaign**

1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 710  
Washington, DC, 20009  
(202) 387-6030

Contact: Anne Mosle, Director of Women's Policy and Programs

Women and the Economy Campaign, a project of the Center for Policy Alternatives, seeks to champion a women's economic agenda movement that unites women across race and class. The Campaign works to build an economic agenda from the bottom up, strengthen women's leadership and links across the country at the grassroots and state levels, and advance policy initiatives in key areas: better pay and advancement opportunities; flexible work schedules; capital and training to start and expand businesses; continuing education and skill development; business and telecommunications networks; and adequate community child and elder care.

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# Appendix B

## District Resources

*The following section presents a brief description of programs available within the District of Columbia for children and families. This list is based on information obtained through informal surveys with local organizations and advocates. It does not represent a comprehensive analysis of local resources. Descriptions are included for purposes of reference rather than recommendations.*

### **ASPIRA Association, Inc.**

1112 16th Street, N.W.  
Suite 340  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 835-3600

Contact: Julia Howell-Barros

ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence (APEX) reaches out to Latino parents who desire to become involved in their children's education but may not be sure how to start. The main goal of APEX is to train parents to improve education in their communities and to help them mobilize other parents to join in their efforts. The APEX Program is made up of two basic components—the APEX Workshop Series, and technical assistance on a one-to-one basis. The ASPIRA Association hopes that the APEX model of what parents do in their communities and schools will build a growing core group of parents who advocate for their children's education.

### **Before and After School Program**

D.C. Public Schools  
1230 Taylor Street, N.W., Room 202  
Washington, DC 20011  
(202) 576-7132

Contact: Carver King

The Before and After School Program provides structured activities on public school grounds

throughout the District for children ages 5–12, before and after school as well as during the summer months.

### **Big Brothers of the National Capital Area**

1320 Fenwick Lane, Suite 400  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
(301) 587-0021

Contact: Paul L. Bliss

Big Brothers assists boys from homes where the father is absent, by providing long-term, one-to-one mentoring relationships with dependable, caring men. Through professional casework services and quality volunteers, the program helps young boys gain trust in others, experience new opportunities, and develop strengthened self-worth as they grow to become responsible men.

### **Big Sisters of the Washington Area**

4000 Albemarle Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20016  
(202) 244-1012

Contact: Michelle Bussie

Big Sisters of the Washington Area provides one-to-one mentoring for girls ages 6–17 in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia area.

### **Center for Child Protection and Family Support, Inc.**

714 G Street, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20003  
(202) 544-3144

Contact: Felecia Holley

This community-based, family-centered, child-focused facility provides multidisciplinary prevention services to young families. The Family Support Center focuses on parenting and life management skills education, home visiting, client-

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planned social/recreation activities, and substance use and violence prevention activities for young children and their families—all in a culturally relevant atmosphere that draws on inherent family and cultural strengths.

**Center for Youth Services**

921 Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20003  
(202) 543-5707

The Center for Youth Services works with high-risk young people ages 14–21 to help them become productive adults. The center offers a multifaceted program that includes education, job counseling and training, health care, family planning, child care, and recreational activities.

**Concerned Black Men**

1511 K Street, N.W., Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 783-5414

Contact: Lafayette A. Barnes

Founded in 1982, the Washington, DC, Chapter of Concerned Black Men, Inc. (CBM) is a nonprofit organization of male volunteers. It provides positive male role models and builds stronger channels of communication between adults and children in the Washington metropolitan area. Adhering to the motto “Caring for Our Youth,” CBM sponsors a variety of programs and activities promoting educational, cultural, and social development.

**D.C. Community Prevention Partnership**

1612 K Street, N.W., Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 898-4700

Contact: Linda Fisher

The D.C. Community Prevention Partnership is a private/public initiative linking neighborhoods, government agencies, and the private sector in an effort to prevent and reduce drug and alcohol abuse and violence in the District. It sponsors ward-based Youth Action Teams for youth ages

13–18 in each ward of the city, and neighborhood-based teams at Edgewood Terrace (Ward 5), East Capitol Dwellings (Ward 7), and Barry Farms (Ward 8)—all public housing communities. These teams meet weekly and regularly participate in workshops on values, drugs, violence, AIDS, teen sexuality, and conflict resolution. The teams also enjoy recreational activities and weekend retreats. The Partnership also holds an annual PIPAFEST to make people more aware of the need to prevent the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. PIPAFEST also revitalizes recreation services in Ward 4 by promoting alternatives for young people and their families.

**D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks**

3149 16th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20010  
(202) 673-7660

Contact: Betty Jo Gaines

The D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks provides close-to-home recreation and leisure time opportunities to meet the needs of residents. Public recreation in the District encompasses a broad range of both indoor and outdoor physical, cultural, and social activities.

**DC Action for Children**

1616 P Street, N.W., Suite 110  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 234-9404

Contact: Diane Bernstein

DC Action for Children (DC Act) is an independent, nonprofit, multi-issue advocacy group dedicated to improving the lives of children and families in the District of Columbia. DC Act advocates for building communitywide support for preventive, comprehensive, and integrated services delivered at the neighborhood level. DC Act works with local providers, policymakers, and citizens on behalf of District children and families to ensure that their basic needs are met and their rights protected.

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**D.C. Commission on Social Services**

609 H Street, N.E.  
Fifth Floor  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 727-5930  
Contact: Pamela Johnson

The D.C. Commission works with community collaboratives of service providers, parents, and government representatives to articulate a continuum of services in support of children and families, to identify the services currently available, and to articulate and strategically plan the development of “missing pieces.”

**D.C. Public Schools**

Office of the Superintendent  
Center for Systemic Educational Change  
Parent Involvement Office  
North Dakota and Kansas Avenues, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20012  
(202) 541-5929  
Contact: Janice Melvin

The mission of the Parent Involvement office of the D.C. Public Schools is to strengthen the home-school ties that promote student success by providing information and technical assistance to parents and families. As a resource group of the Center for Systemic Educational Change, Parent Involvement offers many direct services, but also brokers the services of other groups that support student efficacy. Parent Involvement acts as an information clearinghouse and referral service for parents/families and community members; makes training available to parents, teachers, administrators, community members, and business representatives; and provides technical assistance to parent centers in schools and to individuals and community organizations.

**Edward C. Mazique Parent/Child Center of DC**

Parenting Education Program  
1719 13th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 462-3375  
Contact: Charlene Walker

The center is a private, nonprofit, community-based organization involved in early intervention, early education, and family support. The center offers 13 programs at 5 sites in the District, and serves 500 families in center-based and home-based care. One program provides pregnant and parenting teens with mentors to help them develop strong parenting skills; the program also tutors the teens so they can continue their education.

**Families Together**

65 I Street, S.W., Room 104  
Washington, DC 20024  
(202) 727-1835  
Contact: Toussaint Jones

Families Together is a program designed to preserve the family unit by providing short-term, intensive, home-based services to families in cases where the removal of a child is imminent due to physical abuse or neglect. Families Together works with families during a crisis period when they believe there is a significant opportunity for change. The program works to keep families together in a safe environment by providing intensive intervention focused on helping parents gain a level of functioning that will strengthen problem-solving skills and ultimately prevent separation.

**Family Health Program  
Center for Mental Health**

2041 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, S.E.  
Fourth Floor  
Washington, DC 20020  
(202) 889-5255  
Contact: Johanna Ferman

The Center for Mental Health’s Family Health Program, a national demonstration model, is a

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comprehensive family-centered program designed to meet the needs of substance-abusing women and men, and prepartum and postpartum women and their children. The program provides cost-effective treatment and rehabilitation by integrating mental health services, substance abuse services, and health-related services into the overall treatment recovery plan for the individual and/or family. These services include family therapy, parent psychotherapy group programs, and parent training programs.

**The Latin American Youth Center**

3045 15th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 483-1140  
Contact: Lori M. Kaplan

The Latin American Youth Center is a community-based, nonprofit, multicultural organization that promotes the individual, social, and economic development of Latinos and other minority groups. Located in the most culturally diverse area of the District of Columbia, the Center capitalizes on the synergy of its multicultural staff and clients. The Latin American Youth Center's mission is to identify unfulfilled community needs and to develop, implement, and/or advocate on behalf of solutions that have a lasting impact and offer multicultural youth and families options and hope for their future.

**Marshall Heights Community Development Corporation**

3917 Minnesota Avenue, N.E.  
Second Floor  
Washington, DC 20019  
(202) 396-1200  
Contact: William Peebles

Marshall Heights Community Development Corporation offers a number of youth-centered programs. Programs include: Northeast Performing Arts, Northeast Graphic Arts Programs, Fletcher Educational Program for Youth, and the Deanwood Youth Program. The Corporation also collaborates

with Boys and Girls Clubs, and currently works with the National Park Service to enhance recreation in communities. The organization also works with other community-based organizations to enhance "family fiber."

**Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs, D.C.**

4103 Benning Road, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20019  
(202) 397-CLUB

Executive Vice President: Robert Bowen  
Police Director: Lt. Linda Gilmore

The mission of the Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Club, D.C., has been to entice kids off the streets with recreational activities and to encourage responsible behavior through interaction with the club's police officers. The clubhouse proved to be so popular that the program now includes nine clubhouses and a summer camp, Camp Ernest W. Brown, serving over 12,000 boys and girls. Each clubhouse offers a choice of team sports including football, basketball, Little League baseball, and soccer. Some facilities also offer individual sports such as boxing, weightlifting, karate, cheerleading, and double-dutch jump roping. The clubhouses also offer a number of leisure activities such as board and ball games, jump roping, marbles, jacks, hopscotch, and ping-pong. Some clubhouses have pool, pinball, and computer games. In addition to sports and leisure programs, the clubhouses offer tutoring and education programs, life skills seminars, job and career counseling, and drug prevention programs. All are directed by a dedicated staff of police officers and civilians.

**New Community Family Place**

1312 Eighth Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 265-1942

Contact: Mark Robinson

New Community Family Place offers the Early Childhood STEP program to provide the information and practical skills needed to help children from the start. STEP, the Systematic Training for

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Effective Parenting, is a practical program that teaches helpful techniques to improve family communication and encourage cooperation, in addition to teaching effective discipline strategies that promote both self-esteem and respect.

**Office of Early Childhood Development**

D.C. Department of Human Services

717 14th Street, N.W., Suite 730

Washington, DC 20005

(202) 727-1839

Contact: Barbara Ferguson Kamara

The Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) facilitates citywide coordination of public and private efforts to expand and improve child development services to better meet the changing needs of the community. OECD activities include advocacy; collaboration and coordination; consumer education and public information; data development and analysis; early care and education service; financial assistance; policy, legislation, and regulation review and development; public/private partnership development; and training and technical assistance. Through OECD, the Department of Human Services contracts with the DC Hotline to provide PhoneFriend, a telephone support service for latchkey children. PhoneFriend is provided by the DC Hotline in cooperation with the D.C. Public School's Department of Guidance and Counseling. PhoneFriend staff also make presentations to schools and community groups on topics relating to school-age child care.

**Parklands Community Center**

3320 Stanton Road, S.E., B-Level

Washington, DC 20020

(202) 678-6500

Director: Brenda H. Jones

*See Addendum*

**Washington Child Development Council**

2121 Decatur Place, N.W.

Washington, DC 20008

(202) 387-0002

Contact: Bobbi Blok

The Washington Child Development Council (WCDC) is composed of concerned representatives from child development centers and family day care homes, as well as parents and other interested persons, focusing on the developmental needs of the children living in the District of Columbia. The council encourages the District government to establish policies promoting the nurturing of children so that all children may reach their full potential. The council is committed to working with teenage mothers and homeless families by serving as an advocate to promote much-needed child care services for the at-risk population.

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## About the DC Family Policy Seminars

The DC Family Policy Seminar (DC FPS) is a collaborative project of the Georgetown Public Policy Institute (GPPI)\* and its affiliate, the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health (NCEMCH). The mission of the DC FPS is to provide District policymakers with accurate, relevant, nonpartisan, timely information and policy options concerning issues affecting children and families.

The DC Family Policy Seminar is coordinated by Shelley Stark, Project Director, National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, 2000 15th Street North, Suite 701, Arlington, VA 22201. (703) 524-7802.

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\*In January 1997, the Graduate Public Policy Program became the Georgetown Public Policy Institute.

To receive additional information about the DC Family Policy Seminar, or to request copies of the following briefing reports or highlights, please contact Antoinette Laudencia at (703) 524-7802.

- *The Child Care Crisis in the District of Columbia: Can (or Should) Business Fill the Gap?* March, 1997.
- *Feeding our Families: Community Food Security in the District of Columbia.* November, 1996.
- *Keeping our Kids Safe: Preventing Injury in DC Schools.* September, 1996
- *Fundraising for Family-Centered Organizations in the District.* July, 1996.
- *Strengthening Families: Parenting Programs and Policies in the District.* April, 1996.
- *Transitioning from Welfare-to-Work in the District: A Family-Centered Perspective.* February, 1996.
- *Helping Families and Schools Get it Done: Mentoring Interventions in the District.* November, 1995.
- *Caring for our Children: Meeting the Needs of Low-Income, Working Families in the District.* September, 1995.
- *Families that Play Together: Recreation and Leisure in the District.* July, 1995.
- *HIV/AIDS: Helping Families Cope.* April, 1995.
- *Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Programs: A Family Approach.* February, 1995.
- *Family-Friendly Welfare Reform: Using Welfare Policies to Strengthen the Family.* November, 1994.
- *Preventing Family Violence.* September, 1994.
- *Preventing Adolescent Violence.* May, 1994.
- *Preventing Teen Pregnancies.* December, 1993.

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## DC Family Policy Seminar-Background Briefing Report Addendum

### **District Resources**

#### **Parklands Community Center**

3320 Stanton Road, S.E., B-level

Washington, D.C. 20020

(202) 678-6500 (Office)

(202) 889-0063 (fax)

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Contact: Brenda H. Jones

Parklands Community Center (PCC) is a non-profit, community-based organization founded in 1980 to provide a wide range of direct human and social services for youth and families primarily in Southeast Washington, D.C. PCC's mission is to enhance the quality of life for District residents, by encouraging self-sufficiency through viable programs, services, and activities designed to uplift the morale and pride of citizens through a comprehensive, holistic approach. The agency offers family and individual counseling; social services such as child-care, housing, food assistance, etc., and life-skills training. The Center's efforts have primarily focused on prevention in the areas of substance abuse and child neglect and abuse. PCC believes the solution to social problems begins at home and its staff will continue to focus on empowering parents to help themselves and their families in the name of "family preservation".