

## **The Devastating Problem of Child Abuse in America**

Each year, the instances of child abuse and neglect unfortunately seem to increase. Here are some sobering statistics about this epidemic that you may find startling.

### **United States Child Abuse Statistics**

Each year, an estimated 906,000 children become the victims of child abuse and neglect. Of every 1,000 children, an estimated 12.3 will become victims. Sadly, children aged 0-3 are the most likely to become a victim of abuse. Approximately 1 of every 50 infants born in the United States are victims of nonfatal child abuse and neglect each year. This is according to a study performed by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention in combination with The Federal Administration for Children and Families on that specific age group.

On average each year, 1500 children die from child abuse and neglect, which amounts to just over 4 fatalities each day. Of these 1500, 79% of the fatalities occur in children under 4 years of age. This is believed to be due to the facts that children of this age are vulnerable, smaller in size, and unable to defend themselves.

Who is responsible for these fatalities? In most cases, they are the people who are responsible for the supervision and care of the victims. In 2006, one or both parents were responsible for nearly 76% of fatalities caused by child abuse and neglect.

Numerous researchers and practitioners believe child abuse and neglect related fatalities are underreported.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States often lead to these consequences:**

Psychiatric disorders - 80% of young adults who were the victims of abuse as a child met the diagnostic criteria for various psychiatric disorders by the time they were 21. Some of these include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and eating disorders.

Juveniles are 59% more likely to be arrested if they were the victim of child abuse & neglect as a child. Adults are 28% more likely to be arrested, and 30% more apt to commit a violent crime.

Studies show that teen girls who were abused as children are 25% more likely to become pregnant.

Prison statistics demonstrate that 14.4% of all men and 36.7% of women imprisoned in the US were abused as children. All of these statistics make it very clear that being a victim of child abuse and neglect as a child has a significant impact on individuals when they reach adulthood.

**Here are some startling statistics concerning the relationship between child sexual abuse and alcohol and drug problems:**

Victims of child sexual abuse develop alcohol abuse problems at a 2.5 times higher rate than non-abused children.

Sexually abused children develop drug addictions at a rate that is 3.8 times higher than non-abused children.

Of people who enter a facility to obtain treatment for drug abuse, nearly 66% reported being the victims of abuse as a child.

Are you aware that statistics show that 33% of abused and neglected children will grow up to victimize their own children? This epidemic must be stopped.