

Questions for the Record
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Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
“Protecting Our Children – The Importance of Training Child Protection Professionals”
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Questions Posed by Senator Grassley

1. In your prepared testimony, you stated that despite OJJDP’s efforts to publicize evidence based prevention programs, many juvenile justice professionals continue to use ineffective approaches to the problem. What are some of the most commonly used prevention techniques that we can say for certain are a waste of time and money and what are more effective alternatives?

As I stated in my testimony, we are working to educate practitioners on the value of evidence-based programs. Replicating programs that have been shown to work and that fit a community’s needs has the potential to save time and resources as compared to implementing untested programs that may or may not address the same problems as effectively. With over 200 programs in both our Model Programs Guide database and the CrimeSolutions.gov website, we have made significant progress in promoting the value of evidence-based programs to the field.

Even so, there are those who continue to rely on programs that simply do not work. Examples of this include the “Scared Straight” type program and similar deterrence programs. Research has shown these types of programs to be ineffective and harmful to children. A study by the Vanderbilt Institute of Public Policy found that students in these types of program were more likely to recidivate than those in the control group.² Similarly, Project D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), a popular program widely used in many public schools, is also considered ineffective. In 1998, the University of Maryland issued a report funded by the National Institute of Justice at the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), which concluded that “D.A.R.E. does not work to reduce substance use”³ although CrimeSolutions.gov has rated the new D.A.R.E. Plus program as “promising.”

¹ Prior to March 2013, Ms. Hanes served as the Acting Administrator of OJJDP.

² Lipsey, M.W. 1992. Juvenile Delinquency Treatment: A Meta-Analytic Inquiry into the Variability of Effects. In *Meta-Analysis for Explanation: A Casebook*, edited by T.D. Cook, H. Cooper, D.S. Cordray, H. Hartmann, L.V. Hedges, R.J. Light, T.A. Louis, and F. Mosteller. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

³ Sherman, Lawrence, W., Gottfredson, Denise, Doris MacKenzie, John Eck, Peter Reuter, and Shawn Bushway - *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn’t, What’s Promising*. Report for the National Institute of Justice. Chapter 5. School-based Crime Prevention 1998

We want to address why certain programs that may be considered ineffective continue to receive DOJ funding. OJJDP can prohibit the use of discretionary grant funds for specific programs, however, the OJJDP Administrator has no authority to do so for statutory formula programs (such as Title II, Part B, and Juvenile Accountability Block Grants), which may fund ineffective programs. Formula grants are noncompetitive awards to states based on a predetermined formula. The distribution of formula grants is often governed by statute; so long as a state has met the conditions established by law, it has a legal right to the formula funds. OJJDP cannot restrict the use of formula funds for a specific program if they are in compliance with established statutory requirements.

On the other hand, the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) Program, funded under the Victims of Child Abuse Act (VOCA) is considered to be an effective multidisciplinary model. Independent research indicates that CACs are an effective evidence-based model, in that they serve to: increase prosecutions of child abuse, shorten the length of time to disposition, increase access to mental health and medical services for victims, and improve the satisfaction on rates of non-offending caregivers and abused children when compared with communities that do not have CACs.

2. In your testimony, you mentioned that the Department administers the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. This task force has helped law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies across the country respond to allegations of child sex abuse. I'd like to know what, if anything, is being done to extend this training to other professionals. Do you have suggestions on how we can improve efforts in this area?

OJJDP currently funds a number of organizations which provide training and technical assistance to the task force and its affiliate agencies including Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC), the National White Collar Crime Center, SEARCH, the National Forensic Science Technology Center, the Innocent Justice Foundation, and the Girls Educational and Mentoring Services.

Although much of the training and technical assistance is geared towards law enforcement and prosecutors, some of the material is used by probation and parole staff. In addition, there is training and technical assistance that specifically focuses on awareness, exposure and education efforts. This training is open to civilian employees including forensic analysts, aides, assistants, and interns, judges, court personnel, probation/parole personnel, Child Protective Services professionals, Victim Witness Advocates, social workers, mental health professionals, nurses, doctors, other medical personnel and internet service provider employees.

In an effort to reach a broader audience and increase access, we support webinars and distance learning for both Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force members and non-members. Webinars are an important low cost resource addressing relevant ICAC related issues in real-time. The online education tool increases learning, decreases costs, and extends the reach and longevity of content. In addition to improving learning outcomes, distance learning programs have helped federal programs reduce travel, hotel and administrative costs, expand training to underserved populations who cannot participate in face-to-face programs and extend the longevity of educational content.

We also provide speakers for child exploitation conferences conducted by other OJJDP-approved organizations such as the annual National Law Enforcement Training on Child Exploitation training. This training event is offered to more than two thousand law enforcement investigators, forensic examiners, prosecutors, probation and parole officers and tribal partners, and both ICAC Task Force members and non-members. Social service workers are now also permitted to participate in this event.

The Department is working with ICAC Task Force agencies to increase access to, and encourage participation in, training for other child protection professionals offered through the ICAC Program by increasing outreach efforts, expanding training opportunities, developing additional resources, and increasing conference attendance.

3. Can you please explain in detail what type of cooperation is currently taking place between your office, the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services when it comes to training child protection professionals? Can you provide details about any interagency meetings, groups, or initiatives that discuss ways to improve child abuse prevention and intervention efforts?

DOJ and HHS Collaboration on Training Child Protection Professionals

The National Children's Alliance (NCA) (funded by OJJDP) partnered with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) (funded by Health and Human Services (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)) on a number of activities. The NCA serves on NCTSN's Advisory Board and participated in the Child Sexual Abuse Workgroup, which produced a series of fact sheets about child sexual abuse. The NCA also partnered with NCTSN grantees to bring evidence-supported mental health treatment to CACs. The agencies worked together to co-author the CAC Director's Guide to Mental Health Services and NCTSN is providing a training track at the NCA conference to improve mental health services in CAC.

The Office of Justice Programs' Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) partnered with the Administration for Children and Families and the American Psychological Association to adapt a training curriculum on evidence-based treatments for children exposed to violence. The goal is to tailor the original curriculum, designed for mental health professionals, into a training targeted to the child protective services field. The curriculum will provide knowledge and skills that will enable the child welfare workforce to advocate for effective evidence-based treatments for children who are impacted by abuse and neglect. The final product will be available to child welfare programs and allied professionals nationwide.

Also, OVC has partnered with key federal agencies to develop a new public awareness resource, a video series on child victimization and exposure to violence. To date, Phase I of the project has been completed and includes four six-minute videos. These videos include the following: Through Our Eyes: Children, Violence, and Trauma (public awareness video); Children, Violence and Trauma: Treatments That Work; Children, Violence and Trauma: The Child Advocacy Center Model; and Children, Violence and Trauma: Community-Based Approaches. Members of the Federal Interagency Workgroup on Child Abuse and Neglect (FEDIAWG),

chaired by HHS' Children's Bureau, played a key role in reviewing the draft materials. The federal partners, including the FEDIAWG, will be involved in Phase II of this project—the development of four additional videos.

Interagency Meetings and Initiatives

The Department has a long history of close collaboration with HHS. Since 1996, HHS' Office on Child Abuse and Neglect within ACF has continued to lead and coordinate the FEDIAWG. Over 40 federal agencies are represented, including representatives from OJP.

The overall goals of the FEDIAWG are to provide a forum through which staff from relevant federal agencies can communicate and exchange ideas and information about child maltreatment related programs and activities, and to provide a basis for collective action through which funding and resources can be maximized.

HHS, OJJDP, and the Office on Violence Against Women meet quarterly to discuss ways to better coordinate Children's Exposure to Violence (CEV) initiatives across federal agencies. The current collaboration includes participation by Defending Childhood sites and HHS grantees in webinars on CEV.

The Department has also worked with other federal agencies to improve child abuse prevention and intervention efforts.

The Justice Issues Work Group, led by OJJDP, has moved swiftly with the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (ICCFASD), and other partners to raise awareness about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) among legal and judicial professionals and to begin developing strategies that more effectively meet the needs of FASD-affected individuals.

OJJDP has been a member of the National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism sponsored ICCFASD since the late 1990s and leads the Justice Issues Work Group, one component of the ICCFASD. Created in 1996, ICCFASD seeks to improve communication and collaboration among agencies to address pressing issues related to FASD, including health, education, developmental disability, research, justice, and social services.