

***Listening Between
The Babbles***

Holly Schlaack
Child Advocate/Author
www.invisiblekidsthebook.com

Our Youngest Victims

- October 2005-September 2006 91,278 babies were victims, 29,881 suffered physical abuse or neglect within the first week of life.
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008)
- 25% of all new admissions to foster care are infants under age 1.
(Zero To Three, 2011)

Infants and Toddlers in Foster Care

- Babies less than one year old are at greatest risk of maltreatment.
- Once in foster care, infants and toddlers are more likely than are older children to be abused and neglected and to stay in foster care longer than a year.
(Wulczyn and Hislop, 2002)

After Foster Care

- One-third of the infants discharged from the child welfare system re-enter care. (Wulczyn and Hislop, 2000)
- 50% of children first placed as infants with a permanency plan of adoption took more than 39 months to be adopted. (Kemp and Bodonyi, 2000)



(Kemp and Bodonyi, 2000)



80% Of All Child Homicide Victims are Under the Age of Four

(US Dept of Health & Human Services, 2009)

Big Impact on Little Ones

- Infants and toddlers are extremely vulnerable to the effects of maltreatment.
- Its impact on their emotional, developmental and physical health can have lifelong implications if not properly addressed.



(Cohen & Youcha, 2004)

Big Impact on Little Ones

- When infants or toddlers are abused or neglected, their progress toward meeting developmental milestones is disrupted.
- More than half have developmental delays.

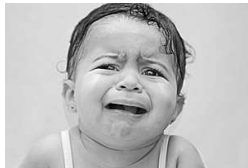
(Dicker and Gordon, 2002)



Big Impact on Little Ones

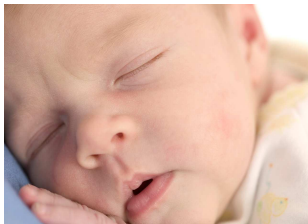
- 80% of foster children have at least one chronic health condition and 25% have 3 or more chronic problems- three to seven times the rate found among other children living in poverty

(Dicker and Gordon, 2002)



Big Impact on Little Ones

- Domestic violence rates are highest among women age 16-24.
- Exposure to domestic violence has a toxic affect on a young child's developing brain.

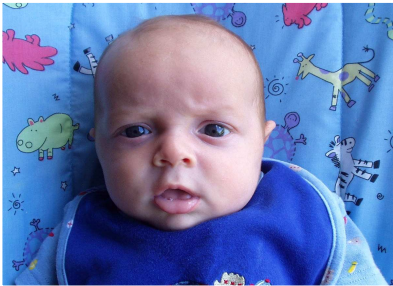


Child Maltreatment and Adult Health

A growing body of evidence suggests that early traumatic experiences are associated with health problems throughout the lifespan.

(Shonkoff, Boyce, and McEwen, 2009)

A picture is worth a thousand words...



...but sometimes it isn't.



Making Children Visible

- Create a timeline of child's life
- Take and share pictures when appropriate
- Build cohesive teams around young children
- Help others understand what children need
- Know your facts



Ensuring Quality Medical Care

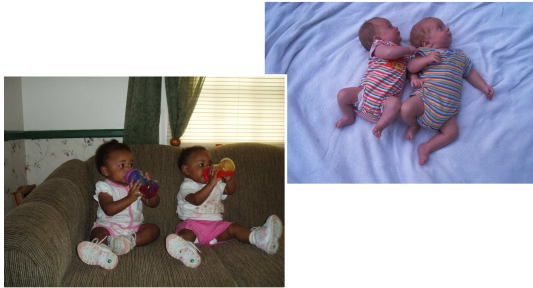
- Ensure medical care and a medical home
- Keep dental care on your radar
- Refer for developmental assessments
- Share information with other team members, particularly medical information or progress notes

Visitation and Transitions

Thoughtful consideration is crucial when it comes making decisions about visitation and moving a child from one placement to another.



Twins: Two Times the Visitation?



Quality Advocacy Lasts a Lifetime



The Good News

- Young children are amazingly resilient and have great capacity for recovery.

(Youcha)

- Research on the developing brain suggests continuing opportunity for change into adulthood and provides no evidence that there is some age beyond which intervention will fail to make a difference.

(Hawley, 2000)

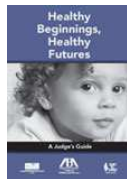
References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Nonfatal Maltreatment of Infants-United States, October 2005-September 2006." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 57(13), 336-339, April 2008.
- Cohen, Julie & Youcha, Victoria. (2004). Zero To Three: Critical issues for the juvenile and family court. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, 55 (2), 15.
- Dicker, S. and Gordon, E. (2002). The story of healthy development checklist for children in foster care. *Zero To Three Journal*, 22 (5), 28.
- Hawley, Theresa, PhD. (2000). Starting Smart.
- Kemp, S.P. & Bodonyi. "Infants Who Stay in Foster Care: Child Characteristics and Permanency Outcomes of Legally Free Children First Placed as Infants." *Child and Family Social Work* 5, 2000, 101.
- Shonkoff, J.P., Boyce, W.T., & McEwen, B.S. (2009). Neuroscience, molecular biology and the childhood roots of health disparities: Building a new framework for health promotion and disease prevention. *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association*, 301, 2252-2259.
- Wulczyn, F. & K.B Hislop. *The Placement of Infants in Foster Care*. Chicago: Chaplin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, 2000.
- Youcha, Victoria. Research Summary: Children exposed to violence. *Zero To Three Journal*.



www.zerotothree.org

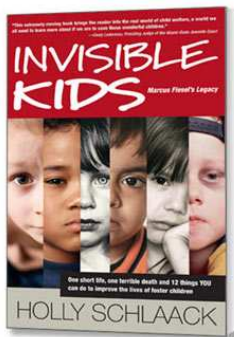
Free Resource



<http://www.abanet.org/child/baby-health/healthybeginnings.html>



QUESTIONS?



One short life, one terrible death & 12 things you can do to improve the lives of foster children
