

What You May Not Know About Prevention

What is Prevention?

- Prevention is the act of impeding, or preventing, something from happening such as disease or a social condition.
- Many prevention programs are centered around ways to prevent illness, crime, terrorism, child abuse and neglect, and violence.

Primary Prevention

- Primary Prevention programs are also known as “Universal” programs.
- The target audience of Primary Prevention programs is the general population.
- The activities used in Primary Prevention are designed to stop maltreatment before it occurs.
- Programs and services in Primary Prevention promote the general welfare of children and families.
- Programs with a universal focus seek to raise awareness of issues for the general population, as well as decision makers and professionals.

Activities of Primary Prevention Programs

- Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
 - PSAs may be used to promote issues such as healthy parent/child relationships, the dangers of shaking a baby, or how to create a safe sleep environment.
 - PSAs may be one small component of a bigger awareness campaign.
- Public Awareness Campaigns
 - These campaigns may include a variety of activities such as brochures, presentations, posters, web sites, and other promotional activities.
 - The focus of a campaign could be where and how to report child abuse and neglect or how parents can best handle stress.
- Parent education programs and support groups
 - These programs may focus on age appropriate expectations, child development, and the roles and responsibilities of parenting. (*Child Welfare Information Gateway*)
- Family support and family strengthening programs
 - These programs enhance a family’s ability to find resources and access existing services.

Secondary Prevention

- Secondary Prevention programs are aimed at families or communities who are high risk for child abuse and neglect. Services may be targeted for certain populations.
- For example, a target audience may be parents who are struggling with one of the following: poverty, young parental age, substance abuse, or mental health concerns.

Activities of Secondary Prevention Programs

- Home Visiting Programs that provide support and education to new parents and expecting parents.
- Parent Support groups that help parents deal with stress and challenges.
- Parent education programs, such as programs for teen parents.
- Family resource centers that offer referral information and assistance to families.
- Respite care programs designed for families that have special needs.
(*Child Welfare Information Gateway*)

Tertiary Prevention

- Tertiary prevention programs are designed for families that have experienced child abuse and neglect.
- Services provided after the occurrence of child abuse and neglect are designed to prevent the recurrence of future abuse.

Activities of Tertiary Prevention Programs

- Mental health services for children and families affected by maltreatment in an effort to improve family functioning.
 - Parent support groups that help families transform negative parenting practices into positive parenting behaviors.
 - Parent mentor programs with non-abusive family members serving as role models and providing support to family members.
 - Intensive family preservation services with trained mental health counselors that are available to families 24 hours a day for a short period of time, such as six to eight weeks.
- Prevention efforts need to come from both communities and individuals in order for it to work.
- What can you do in your local community?

Resources

Children's Safety Network, <http://www.childrenssafetynetwork.org/MonthlyBulletins/2005/May05.asp>
Child Welfare Information Gateway, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/overview/framework.cfm>
Child Abuse.com, <http://www.childabuse.com/fs9.htm>
Idaho Children's Trust Fund, <http://idahochildrenstrustfund.state.id.us/prevention.asp>