



V L R S

R C C I P

L B C E A V

It has been argued that the greatest predictor of violence is a personal history of violence because a person’s level of aggression is remarkably consistent over one’s lifetime. So, those who are aggressive as children are more likely to be aggressive as adults. Violence is a learned behavior, it is not a natural state (The American Psychological Associations Commission on Youth and Violence 1994). Along with violence, substance abuse can cause harm in children. Children living in alcoholic families experience higher health care costs than children from non-alcoholic families. They are admitted to hospitals 24% more than other children, and they also have a 36% higher inpatient cost than children raised in non-alcoholic families (National Association for Children of Alcoholics 1999). Thus, not only would preventing domestic violence and substance abuse help prevent violent crimes, but it would also save the state money in health care.

Young people who are exposed to violence and substance abuse are worse off later in life than those who grow up in healthy living environments. Juveniles reporting exposure to abusive treatment during childhood have elevated risks of violent behavior, substance abuse, and mental health programs (Fergusson and Lynskey 1997). There is also strong evidence that there is a highly significant correlation between borderline psychopathology and experiences of repeated childhood trauma including sexual abuse, and domestic violence (Saunders and Arnold 1993). In addition to increasing mental problems, being abused or neglected as a child increases the likelihood of arrest for a violent crime as an adult by 38%, and increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53% (National Conference of State Legislatures 1999).

David Fergusson and Michael Lynskey in a 1997 study found that there are different effects of different types of abuse (Fergusson and Lynskey 1997). Children who are regularly and severely abused show greater problems with conduct disorder, anxiety disorder, major depression, suicide attempts, nicotine abuse, alcohol abuse, cannabis abuse, and are found to be more violent and commit more crimes against property, and they also are more likely to be the victims of violent crimes.

Extent of Physical Abuse

	1	2	3	4
	None	Seldom	Regular	Severe/Harsh
M H				
Conduct Disorder	5.4	3.5	14.1	10
Anxiety Disorder	11.7	16	24.4	40
Major Depression	26.1	19.1	32.1	50
Suicide Attempts	4.5	4.2	12.8	17.5

either the past month or any time, and committed significantly fewer violent crimes in the year following the end