

**The Children's Defense Fund  
Cradle to Prison Pipeline®  
Campaign**

*America's Cradle to Prison  
Pipeline<sup>SM</sup>*

**A Report of the  
Children's Defense Fund**

# High risks for males of color

- A Black boy born in 2001 has a 1 in 3 lifetime risk of going to prison;
- A Latino boy born in 2001 has a 1 in 6 lifetime risk of going to prison; and
- A White boy born in 2001 has a 1 in 17 lifetime risk of going to prison.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974-2001" (August 2003).

# ...and for Black females

- A Black girl born in 2001 has a 1 in 17 lifetime risk of going to prison;
- A Latino girl born in 2001 has a 1 in 45 lifetime risk of going to prison; and
- A White girl born in 2001 has a 1 in 111 lifetime risk of going to prison.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974-2001" (August 2003).

**In 2003 almost 15,000 girls were incarcerated, 1 Of every 7 juveniles in residential placement.**

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and National Center for Juvenile Justice, Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook, at <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/cjrp/> .

One thing is clear:

The only thing our nation  
will guarantee every child is  
a detention or prison cell  
*after* they get into trouble.

# What Fuels the Pipeline

- Pervasive Poverty
- Inadequate Access to Health Care
- Gaps In Early Childhood Development
- Disparate Educational Opportunities
- Intolerable Abuse and Neglect
- Unmet Mental Health Needs
- Rampant Substance Abuse
- Overburdened and Ineffective Juvenile Justice Systems

**The most dangerous place  
for a child to grow up in  
America is at the intersection  
of poverty and race.**



# Pervasive Poverty

Approximately 13 million children (one in six) live in poverty. About 5.5 million of those children live in extreme poverty with incomes for a family of four of about \$10,000 per year – or less than half the poverty level.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, “POV01. Age and Sex of All People, Family Members and Unrelated Individuals Iterated by Income-to-Poverty Ratio and Race,” at [http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032997/pov/new01\\_000.htm](http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032997/pov/new01_000.htm) .

# Pervasive Poverty

- 33.4 percent of Black children, 26.9 percent of Latino children and 10.0 percent of White, non-Latino children live in poverty.
- Today there are 1.2 million more children living in poverty than there were in 2000, an increase of 11 percent.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006," *Current Population Reports*, P60-233 (August 2007, Table B-2).

# Pervasive Poverty

Child poverty in America is costly:

- Every year that 13 million children live in poverty costs the nation \$500 billion in lost productivity, poor health and increased crime.
- Child poverty could be eliminated for \$55 billion a year and could be paid for by the tax cuts currently received by the top one percent of tax payers.

# Inadequate Access to Health Care

- There are 9.4 million uninsured children in America.
- Latino children are three times as likely and Black children are almost twice as likely to be uninsured as White children.
- The U.S. ranks 25<sup>th</sup> among industrialized nations in infant mortality and 22<sup>nd</sup> in low birthweight.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2007; and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *The State of the World's Children 2008* (December 2007), Tables 1 and 2. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

# Gaps In Early Childhood Development

Studies have shown that children who do not get the early intervention and support they need are more likely to act out and fail in school and beyond.

# Disparate Educational Opportunities

Poor children tend to be in schools with little resources. States spend on average nearly three times as much per prisoner as per public school student.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2005* (July 2006), Table 166; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *State Government Finances: 2003*, at <<http://www.census.gov/govs/www/state.html>>, extracted May 2006; and U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2003* (May 2004), NCJ 203947, Table 2. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

# Our schools are failing too many children....

Percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> graders who cannot read at grade level:

- Black - 86 percent;
- Latino - 83 percent;
- American Indian - 80 percent;
- White - 58 percent; and
- Asian - 55 percent.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Education Progress, *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2007* (2007), Tables A-8 and A-9. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

- Only 11 percent of Black, 15 percent of Latino, and 41 percent of White 8<sup>th</sup> graders can do math at grade level.
- Black children are almost twice as likely as White children to be retained a grade.
- The suspension rate among Black public school students is three times that for White students.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Education Progress, *The Nation's Report Card: Math 2007* (2007), Tables A-8 and A-9; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Status and Trends in the Education of Blacks* (September 2003), Supplemental Table 3.2; and U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2004 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey, unpublished tabulations. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.



# High school graduation is essential....

According to a Harvard Civil Rights Project and Urban Institute report, only 50 percent of Black, 53 percent of Latino, and 75 percent of White students graduated from high school on time with a regular diploma in 2001.

Source: Gary Orfield, *Dropouts in America: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis* (Harvard Education Press, 2004).

**A high school diploma is the single  
most effective preventive strategy  
against adult poverty.**

# Intolerable Abuse and Neglect

- A child is abused or neglected every 36 seconds  
– almost 900,000 in total each year.
- Four in ten of the children who are abused or neglected get no help after the initial investigation.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, *Child Maltreatment 2005* (2007), Tables 3-3 and 3-6 and p. xv. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

# Intolerable Abuse and Neglect

**Black children are at particularly high risk of being in foster care. Although they comprise only 16 percent of all children, Black children represent 32 percent of the foster care population.**

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2007* (2006), Table 14; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, AFCARS Report 13, *Preliminary FY 2005 Estimates as of September 2006* (October 2006), at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats\\_research/afcars/tar/report13.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/tar/report13.pdf).  
Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

# Unmet Mental Health Needs

- A Congressional study found 15,000 children in juvenile detention facilities, some as young as 7 years old, solely because community mental health services were unavailable.
- Studies have reported that about two-thirds of incarcerated youths have mental health disorders and about 1 in 4 has a severe disorder.

Sources: U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform, Minority Staff Special Investigations Division, *Incarceration of Youth Who Are Waiting for Community Mental Health Services in the United States* (July 2004), at <http://oversight.house.gov/documents/20040817121901-25170.pdf> ; and Kathleen Skowrya and Joseph J. Cocozza, *A Blueprint for Change: Improving the System Response to Youth with Mental Health Needs Involved with the Juvenile Justice System*, National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (June 2006), at [http://www.ncmhjj.com/Blueprint/pdfs/ProgramBrief\\_06\\_06.pdf](http://www.ncmhjj.com/Blueprint/pdfs/ProgramBrief_06_06.pdf).

# Rampant Substance Abuse

Drugs, tobacco and alcohol lead many children down the wrong path.

Unfortunately, alcohol and other substance abuse treatment for youth and parents and adults is in too short supply.

# A punishment focused justice system...

In 2006, the United States' inmate population of 2,312,414 exceeded China's, the total population of which is four times as large.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2006" (June 2007). Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

# Ineffective Juvenile Justice Systems

- Black juveniles are about four times as likely as their White peers to be incarcerated.
- Black youths are almost five times as likely and Latino youths about twice as likely as White youth to be incarcerated for drug offenses.

Sources: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and National Center for Juvenile Justice, Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook, at <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/cjrp/> .



# Ineffective Juvenile Justice Systems

Of the 1.5 million children with an incarcerated parent in 1999, Black children were nearly nine times as likely and Latino children were three times as likely as White children to have an incarcerated parent.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children" (August 2000).

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**The Children's Defense Fund  
Cradle to Prison Pipeline®  
Campaign is a call to action  
to end adult hypocrisy,  
neglect and abandonment of  
children.**

# Action Steps to Protect and Rescue Children from the Pipeline

# Call to Action

Work together to dismantle the Pipeline by recognizing that children are profoundly affected by the norms, priorities, policies and values of our nation and culture.

# Call to Action

Commit to helping the richest nation on earth end the child and family poverty that drives so much of the Pipeline and the social and economic disparities faced by Black, Latino and American Indian children who are disproportionately poor.

# Call to Action

Call and work for a fundamental paradigm shift in policy and practice for juvenile offenders from the too frequent first choice of punishment and incarceration to early intervention and prevention and sustained investment to keep them out of the Pipeline.

According to research by Mark A. Cohen,  
in dollars alone, the nation will save  
between \$2.0 and \$2.7 million for every  
child who is diverted from the criminal  
justice system.

Source: Mark A. Cohen, *The Costs of Crime and Justice* (Routledge, 2005), p. 104.



# Call to Action

Ensure every child and pregnant woman access to affordable, seamless, comprehensive health and mental health coverage.

# Call to Action

Ensure quality Early Head Start, Head Start, child care and preschool to get every child ready for school and beyond.

# Call to Action

Link every child to a permanent, caring family member or adult mentor who can keep them on track and get them back on track if and when they stray.

# Call to Action

Ensure every child can read at grade level by 4<sup>th</sup> grade and guarantee quality education through high school with all graduating and able to succeed at work and in life.

# Call to Action

Create an ethic of achievement and high expectations for every child in every home, congregation, community and school and in our culture and public policies and practices.

# Call to Action

**Dramatically decrease the number of children who enter the child welfare system and juvenile and criminal justice systems. Stop detaining children in adult jails and reduce the racial disparities in child serving systems.**

# Call to Action

**Stress more nonviolent values and  
conflict resolution in all aspects of  
American life.**

# Discussion

**What can you do to dismantle  
the Pipeline?**