

# Working Together for Child Safety & Child-Centered Careers



## MODULE 7

## OBJECTIVES

1. Students will examine the complimentary roles of parents, schools, and community organizations in keeping children safe and healthy.
2. Students will explore prevalence and causes of child maltreatment.
3. Students will explore the hardships children face around the world.
4. Students will consider the issue of children's rights.
5. Students will explore careers that involve working with children.

## VOCABULARY

Advanced Practice Nurse

Child abuse

Child Psychiatrist

Child Psychologist

children's rights

Daycare/Preschool Director

Kindergarten and Elementary School Teachers

Licensed Practical Nurse

Mental Health Counselor

Occupational Therapist

Pediatrician

Physical Therapist

Preschool Teacher

Registered Nurse

Social Worker

Special Education Teacher

Speech Therapist

Teacher Assistants

Trafficking of children

Trauma

UNICEF

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

## PRE-TEST

True or False?

- \_\_\_\_\_ It is legal for 12 year olds to work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It takes a village to raise a child?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Preschool is beneficial for children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parents shape their children's personalities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children who witness violence may be traumatized.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Everyone agrees about measures to reduce violence in our communities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child abuse is not a problem in the United States.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child trafficking is only a problem in Asia.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The United States is a leader in children's rights around the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Many careers involve working with children.



## How are children influenced by the culture and family in which they live?

The care that parents and other caregivers provide during the first early years of a child's life can greatly influence the child's health, wellbeing, and preparation for school and life. Children thrive when they are kept safe and free from trauma, and provided with a rich and stimulating environment. In previous modules we discussed the role of genetics and environment in growth at each developmental stage through age five. There are some other social issues that may be of interest to the advanced student because they also impact development.

### **Education**

Do children get a better start if they begin their education at an early age? Research shows that children who attend a high quality pre-school (with smaller class groups and better trained educators) and children from disadvantaged homes gain the most benefit from pre-school. In high quality pre-schools children learn to engage in classroom activities, follow and give directions, play and work in groups, relate to nonfamily adults, and to organize toys and materials. This learning prepares a child for kindergarten. As a parent you will decide what type of early education your children receive. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's annual Kids Count report from 2012 shows that 53 percent of U.S. children who were 3 and 4-year-olds did not participate in preschool in the three years spanning 2008-2010.

In the United States all children are required by law to have access to a free public education beginning at age 5 or 6, with school provided through high school. However, in the world there are over 100 million impoverished children who will not be able to go to school at all. <http://ethemes.missouri.edu/themes/1809> . The right to an education is considered a basic right of all children, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **Community Resources**

In the 2008 Presidential campaign Hillary Clinton, the ex-president's wife and future Secretary of State wrote a controversial book claiming "It takes a village to raise a child." For some this notion highlighted the role that families working together play in raising a child, while others felt this idea detracted from the central role that a family plays in raising a child. You can research this controversy on-line. Regardless of the focus taken, it is clear that children benefit from access to public libraries, and from stimulation from community sports and recreation activities, church and community sponsored religious and cultural experiences, and almost any experience that broadens a child's horizons. Your role as a parent will be to provide your child with access to these experiences.

### **Community Safety**

As a parent you will have opportunity to select where you live, and be part of community efforts to keep children safe where you live. When children see violence or know someone hurt by violence (such as shootings, gang violence, theft, sexual assault or harassment, bullying) they may suffer from the painful memories of these experiences. Parents work together with schools, police, and government on violence prevention

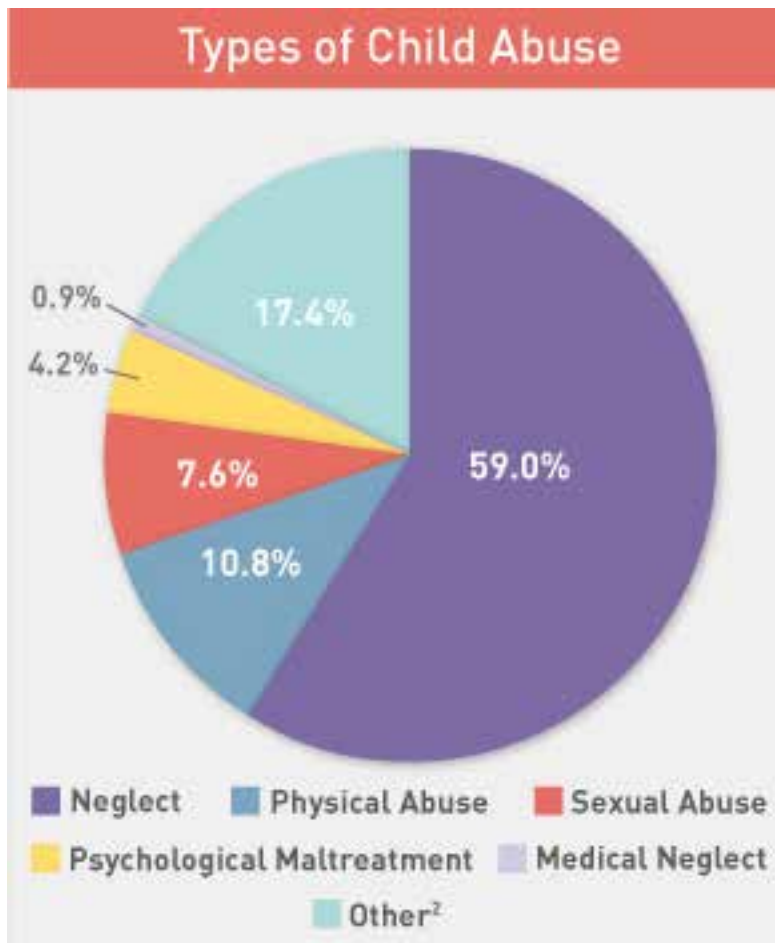
activities, to prevent violence from happening. These may include teaching children how to solve problems peacefully, prevent bullying and later gang involvement, or to prevent activities that most commonly involve violence, such as drug use and sales, and related use of weapons.

## 20 Children Shot in a Connecticut Elementary School

Just before Christmas of 2012, on a peaceful morning in the quiet, rural town of Newton, Connecticut, a gunman entered an elementary school and murdered 20 five and six year old children, along with himself and six adult teaching staff. The gunman used high powered rifles and assault weapons with bullets designed to explode and kill. Though statistics show that schools are still probably the safest places children can be, this tragedy has led to various ideas regarding how best to insure our children's safety. The ideas being debated includes prevention measures ranging from parents' limiting children's exposure to extremely violent video games and media, to limiting access to assault weaponry, to better addressing mental health in our communities, to having more security in schools. Parents are among the most vocal participants in this debate as they want to protect their children from exposure to violence.

## Child abuse in the United States

In the United States over 3 million reports of child abuse are made every year. In 2009, approximately 3.3 million child abuse reports and allegations were made involving an estimated 6 million children.



Child abuse occurs at every socioeconomic level, across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions and at all levels of education. Child abuse results in trauma that may hamper development.

Child abuse can include neglect, physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Neglect is the most common form of abuse. Here are some consequences of child abuse:

31% percent of women in prison in the United States were abused as children.

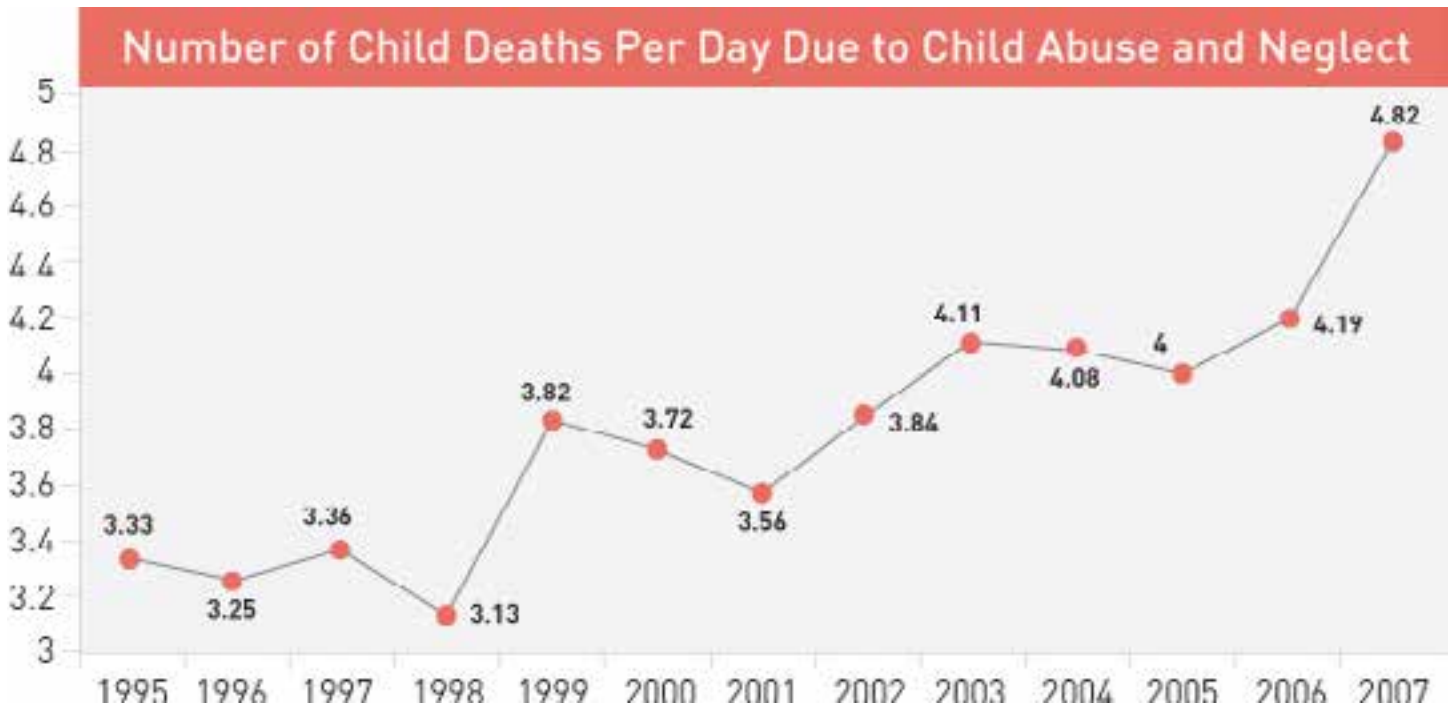
Over 60% of people in drug rehabilitation centers report being abused or neglected as a child.

About 30% of abused and neglected children will later abuse their own children, continuing the horrible cycle of abuse.

About 80% of 21 year old that were abused as children met criteria for at least one psychological disorder.

The estimated annual cost of child abuse and neglect in the United States for 2007 is \$104 billion. Abused children are 25% more likely to experience teen pregnancy.

Abused teens are 3 times less likely to practice safe sex, putting them at greater risk for STDs.



Deaths from child abuse have been increasing.

### Trafficking of children

It makes sense that if children are well cared for, they will have the best chance to thrive, and will have the best chance to become happy, well educated, productive citizens. Unfortunately, throughout the world as well as in our own country, scores of children live in poverty, receive poor medical care and education, and are abducted or otherwise forced into slavery. They may be required to serve as soldiers, laborers or prostitutes.

In the U.S. we pride ourselves on leading the way toward equal rights for all citizens. We have seen the establishment of laws banishing slavery, and movements to ban discrimination and establish equality in voting, housing, employment, and other areas of life. Over the years rights, have been extended to women, minority racial groups, and individuals with same sex orientation. For children, child labor laws were also established to prevent children from being used as low cost workers; while at the same time children were given access a free public education. Surprisingly there is still controversy regarding child labor. For example, current federal laws require that while children in most sectors must be 12 to be employed and cannot work more than 3 hours on a school day, in agriculture children can work at age 12 for unlimited hours before and after school. They could also work two to three jobs depending on their age. In the U.S., we also face continuing problems with child abuse, child abduction, and the trafficking of children. Each year thousands children are brought into the U.S. for the purpose of sexual and labor exploitation. There continue to be over three million reports of child abuse each year, with five children dying each day as a result of abuse.

Consider the following statistics from United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking:

- An estimated 2.5 million people are in forced labor (including sexual exploitation) at any given time as a result of trafficking, of these:
  - 1.4 million – 56% - are in Asia and the Pacific o 250,000 – 10% - are in Latin America and the Caribbean o 230,000 – 9.2% - are in the Middle East and Northern Africa o 130,000 – 5.2% - are in sub-Saharan countries o 270,000 – 10.8% - are in industrialized countries o 200,000 – 8% - are in countries in transition
- 161 countries are reported to be affected by human trafficking by being a source, transit or destination count
- People are reported to be trafficked from 127 countries to be exploited in 137 countries, affecting every continent and every type of economy

### **The Victims**

- The majority of trafficking victims are between 18 and 24 years of age
- An estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked each year
- 95% of victims experienced physical or sexual violence during trafficking (based on data from selected European countries)
- 43% of victims are used for forced commercial sexual exploitation, of whom 98 per cent are women and girls
- 32% of victims are used for forced economic exploitation, of whom 56 per cent are women and girls
- Many trafficking victims have at least middle-level education



How are children, teens and young adults forced to become prostitutes or slaves? Children may be sold by parents, through threats or financial need, or abducted. They may be shipped to a foreign country, far away from their parents and past lives. They are completely vulnerable and at the mercy of their captures. Threatened and beaten if they do not cooperate, they are forced by their captures to work in the illegal sex trade. Young adults are sometimes lured to another country by paying fees up front with the promise or getting work and potential citizenship (for example in the U.S.). But when they arrive they find this is not the case and they are forced to pay additional fees through work which becomes prostitution. They then are trapped as victims in a cycle of abuse and threats to self, or their family members back in their homeland, to continue to be sexually or otherwise victimized.

## What is UNICEF?

UNICEF is the United Nations Children's Fund. UNICEF's mission is to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

UNICEF was created in 1946, to help the children of war-torn Europe, China and the Middle East, the acronym stood for "United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund."

By 1953 UNICEF's mandate was extended to address the needs of children in the developing world. At that point, the words "international" and "emergency" were dropped from the organization's name, making it simply the United Nations Children's Fund.

UNICEF has saved more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization.

## Children's Rights

*Children are young human beings. Some children are very young human beings. As human beings children evidently have a certain moral status. There are things that should not be done to them for the simple reason that they are human. At the same time children are different from adult human beings and it seems reasonable to think that there are things children may not do that adults are permitted to do. In the majority of jurisdictions, for instance, children are not allowed to vote, to marry, to buy alcohol, to have sex, or to engage in paid employment. What makes children a special case for philosophical consideration is this combination of their humanity and their youth, or, more exactly, what is thought to be associated with their youth.*

*One very obvious way in which the question of what children are entitled to do or to be or to have is raised is by asking, Do children have rights? If so, do they have all the rights that adults have and do they have rights that adults do not have? If they do not have rights how do we ensure that they are treated in the morally right way? Most jurisdictions accord children legal rights. Most countries—though not the United States of America—have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which was first adopted in 1989. (Quote from Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)*

Children's rights refers to the rights of children as human beings, especially regarding the care they need from parents and social or public institutions providing for their health, education, safety, and well-being. The topic of children's rights has been relatively neglected in our country. The future will always depend on what we do now to improve the welfare of generations to come. By studying child development, you will become knowledgeable about what children need to grow and thrive, and what can happen if they are not well cared for or are abused.

There is international agreement that children have rights that should be formally recognized by governments. World leaders got together and decided on a list of rights children should have. This agreement is called United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a kind of “Bill of Rights” like the one in our Constitution. It was patterned after many different legal systems and cultural traditions, the “Convention is a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations. These basic standards—also called human rights—set minimum entitlements and freedoms that should be respected by governments. They are founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability and therefore apply to every human being everywhere.”

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. It was created in 1989, when world leaders decided that children needed a special convention just for them because people under 18 years old often need special care and protection that adults do not. The leaders also wanted to make sure that the world recognized that children have human rights too.

The Convention sets out these rights in 54 articles and two Optional Protocols. It spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have:

- the right to survival;
- to develop to the fullest;
- to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation;
- and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

The four core principles of the Convention are:

- 1) non-discrimination;
- 2) devotion to the best interests of the child;
- 3) the right to life, survival and development;
- 4) and respect for the views of the child.

The Convention protects children’s rights by setting standards in health care; education; and legal, civil and social services.

Officials from the administration of President Ronald Reagan helped write the Convention; it was signed February 23, 1995 by United Nation’s Ambassador Madeleine Albright on behalf of President William “Bill” Clinton. The Convention has not been officially agreed to (ratified) by Congress. The United States is the only country in the world with a functioning government that has not officially adopted the convention. Since many countries have accepted the Convention but still do not grant children rights in practice, there is more to children’s rights than signing the UN Convention.

### **Why hasn’t the United States ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?**

There are many complications to the arguments that children should have rights. In our country, we still do not agree about these complicated arguments and that is why we haven’t adopted the Convention. It is important for you to understand BOTH sides of the arguments about children’s rights—for and against. If you understand the arguments, you can participate in discussions and make up your own mind.

Those that are against adopting the Convention object to several parts of it. The Convention says that parents should not use corporal (physical) punishment against their children and that governments

should not sentence youth under the age of 18 to life in prison. The United States also opposes the language of the Convention calling on government to ensure a basic level of economic, social, and cultural well-being for children. From the LA Times,

*In opposing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Foreign Relations Committee is in sync with the views of several conservative organizations, including the Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, the Christian Coalition and the Eagle Forum.*

*“The convention basically states that children are autonomous, and it takes away the right of a parent to be involved in crucial decisions in people’s lives. It essentially makes the government the parent,” said Denesha Reid, director of public policy at Concerned Women for America in Washington.*

*“It gives children unlimited rights, such as freedom of expression,” Reid continued. “It’s also against abuse of children and, while we’re opposed to abuse, what is abuse? Does that include spanking a child? A family should be able to discipline a child as it sees fit.”*

*... The text of the treaty stipulates that “no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” It specifically prohibits capital punishment and life imprisonment without possibility of release for offenses committed by children under 18. Both forms of punishment are permitted for minors in the United States.*

*Another disputed clause says that “no child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honor and reputation.”*

[Link to The Family Research Council Website arguments against the Convention](#)

[Link to Concerned Women for America arguments against the Convention](#)

[Article by University of Minnesota Law Professor David Weissbrodt](#)

## Careers Serving Children

Perhaps your participation in this course has you considering a career working with children. If so you have a lot of choices. Here is a list of questions to guide your thinking:

### 1. Are you interested in child health?

Many professionals work in the field of child health including pediatricians, nurses, and occupational and physical therapists. Professionals working in the field of child mental health include psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors and social workers.

Occupation	Job Definition	Education and Training
Pediatrician	Physician specializing in the care of children	4 year college degree 4 year medical college degree 3 or more years of training in pediatrics
Advanced Practice Nurse	Work with pediatricians to make diagnoses, prescribe medication and manage care	4 year college degree 2 year graduate nursing degree Work experience
Registered Nurse	Provide care in various settings including schools, clinics and hospitals	4 year college degree in nursing
Licensed Practical Nurse	Provide care under direction of registered nurses	2 year college degree in nursing
Physical Therapist	Help children with physical impairments to reduce pain and restore mobility	4 year college degree and 2-4 years of graduate school
Occupational Therapist	Help children with injuries, illnesses, or disabilities through the therapeutic use of everyday activities.	4 year college degree and 2-4 years of graduate school
Speech Therapist	Assess, diagnose, treat, and help to prevent communication and swallowing disorders in children.	4 year college degree and 2-4 years of graduate school

JOBS in Children's Mental Health		
Occupation	Job Definition	Education and Training
Child Psychiatrist	Physician specializing in the mental health care of children	4 year college degree 4 year medical college degree 4 or more years of training in psychiatry
Child Psychologist	Practitioner specializing in child mental health	4 year college degree 4 or more years graduate school leading to Ph.D or Psy.D. Internship and other training required for license
Social Worker	Provide mental health care in various settings including schools, clinics and hospitals	4 year college degree Master's degree in Social Work Internship and other training required for license
Mental Health Counselor	Provide mental health care in various settings including schools, clinics and hospitals	4 year college degree Master's degree in Counseling Internship and other training required for license

## 2. Are you interested in child education?

Many professionals work in the field of child education including daycare providers, nursery/ preschool teachers, primary school teachers and paraeducators. Professionals also direct or administrate child care centers, preschools and elementary schools. Early childhood education encompasses the years from birth to age 8

Occupation	Job Definition	Education and Training
Daycare/Preschool Director	Preschool and childcare center directors are responsible for all aspects of their program. They direct and lead staff, oversee daily activities, and prepare plans and budgets.	2 or 4 year college degree Certificate in Administration
Preschool Teacher	Preschool teachers educate and care for children, usually ages 3 to 5, who have not yet entered kindergarten. They are trained to teach reading, writing, science, and other subjects to young children.	2 or 4 year college degree Graduate degree in Early Childhood Education
Kindergarten and Elementary School Teachers	Kindergarten and elementary school teachers prepare younger students for future schooling by teaching them the basics of subjects such as math and reading.	4 year college degree Graduate degree in Education
Instructional Coordinator	Instructional coordinators oversee school districts' curriculums and teaching standards. They work with teachers and school administrators to implement new teaching techniques to improve the quality of education.	4 year college degree Graduate degree in Education Technology
Teacher Assistants	Teacher assistants work under a teacher's supervision to give students additional attention and instruction.	High School
Special Education Teacher	Special education teachers work with students who have a wide range of learning, mental, emotional and physical disabilities. With students who have mild or moderate disabilities, they ensure that lessons and teaching strategies are modified to meet the students' needs. With students who have severe disabilities, they teach the students independent living skills and basic literacy, communication, and math.	4 year college degree Graduate degree in Special Education

# ACTIVITIES FOR MODULE 7

## SECTION 1

Investigate the controversy surrounding Hillary Clinton's book, "It take a village to raise a child." Debate this idea in your class.

Find out if your community has a "Head Start" preschool and seek permission to visit the program.

Take a look at web-based information on the Sichuan School Scandal in China, in 2008. In this "scandal", Chinese parents outraged at the loss of children due to faulty school protested more openly than usual about faulty construction techniques used in schools, resulting in the loss of and injury of thousands of school children. The voices of parents were heard for a brief time, but were subsequently suppressed by the authorities. In what ways could this example suggest that children's rights could be a unifying force for social and humanitarian progress here and around the world? Interview the mother of a preschooler. Ask about the child's sense of self and gender identity. If the mother is willing, take photographs and make a slide show or make a video of the child demonstrating behavior that is typical for this age.

## SECTION 2

Investigate the factors that contribute to child abuse and neglect.

See 10 ways to prevent child abuse

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month make a poster informing people of the problem of child abuse.

## SECTION 3

Read more about fighting human trafficking.

Read more about UNICEF.

## SECTION 4

Follow the links provided to read more about th UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## SECTION 5

[Visit the Bureau of Labor Statistics to learn more about careers in children's health.](#)

[Visit the Bureau of Labor Statistics to learn more about careers in education.](#)