



## Applying CYFERNet Resources to Evaluate Children Outcomes

### **Educate and Empower Children Against Child Abuse**

Child abuse is a societal problem that has a long and sad history. Abuse of children occurs in every country, within every ethnic, racial and cultural group and within families of every economic level. Some child abuse becomes a public matter, but most abuse remains unreported.

In 1997, more than three million cases of possible child abuse were reported to child protection agencies throughout the United States. Of these, 1,054,000 children were confirmed by Child Protective Services as victims of abuse. This was a 1.7% increase over the number reported in 1996 and an overall 41% increase since 1988 (Wang & Daro, 1998). Another way to think about this is that 15 out of every 1000 US children were victims of child abuse. The most current data states that 1,185 children died in the United States as a direct result of abuse. This means that in the US, more than 3 children die each day as a result of child abuse or neglect (Wang & Daro, 1998).

CPS workers, child specialists and law enforcement officials believe education is needed to help reduce incidences of child abuse. In addition to the educational efforts already focused on parents **and** adults, **new programs are needed that will empower children to protect themselves and others.**

### **Case Study of a Community Based Program: Child Abuse Awareness Program**

A neighborhood minister received several disturbing calls from members of her congregation concerning possible child abuse within a parishioner's family. Until then, child abuse seemed to be something that only happened outside of this church. Child Protective Services was called, the child was removed from the home, and the family entered into a treatment program. The stunned minister and congregation began to explore ways that this situation and others like it could be prevented. After several meetings with child therapists, CPS, educators, and community police, the Child Abuse Awareness Program (CAAP) was started. CAAP is an eight-week course that teaches children about child abuse through role-playing, art activities, games, videos and some instruction.



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CYFERNet is supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture through the Children, Youth and Families At Risk Initiative.

## Program Goals and Objectives

- Goal 1: To educate children about the different types of abuse.
- Goal 2: To empower children to be aware of their feelings and how to appropriately express them.
- Goal 3: To teach children how to ask for help if they have been abused or know someone who is or has been abused.
- Goal 4: To see a decline in all instances of child abuse.

### Objectives:

- Start a neighborhood “child empowerment” program for children ages four to twelve.
- Continue the initial collaboration started by the neighborhood minister, child therapists, CPS, educators, and community police.
- Invite parents and other adults to join the collaboration.
- Teach children what child abuse is through the use of age appropriate activities.
- Provide activities that promote positive self concept and self respect.
- Provide activities that reinforce children’s ownership of their bodies.
- Teach children what is appropriate/inappropriate affection.
- Teach children how to get help for themselves or someone else.
- Increase awareness in the community of the enormity of the problem of child abuse.

## Description of Program Intervention

CAAP (Child Abuse Awareness Program) is an eight-week program that meets every Tuesday evening from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the community center at the Church of the Neighborhood. The program is intended for children ages four to twelve and their parents. The classes are facilitated by a team of professionals from Cooperative Extension, Child Protective Services, and community police. The initial program served 28 children and 36 parent/caregivers, and two future sessions are already full. The weekly schedule included role-playing, art and musical activities, games, videos and classroom instruction. A light dinner was also provided.

## Comments from Program Participants...

“We weren’t sure how the children would respond to a program centered on preventing child abuse, but the children seemed to learn a lot and had fun too.” Minister of the Church of the Neighborhood

“I learned that no one has the right to touch me in ways that I don’t like.” 12-year-old participant

“I feel we made a small, yet good start in dealing with this very big problem.” Police Captain

## Evaluation Plan

To evaluate the effectiveness of the CAAP, the local Cooperative Extension accessed information from the [CYFERNet Website](#). We went to the section on [Children](#) under the National Outcomes, then to the section Responsibility and Independence. We found the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Scale and adapted it for a larger age range. This instrument assesses children's feelings concerning their perceived control over academic successes and failures rather than the effects of external forces. The child is given 34 items which describe either a positive or negative achievement. The child then chooses one of two responses: one that says the child caused it and one that states the event happened because of someone else's action. The scale is scored by adding all the positive events for which the child takes credit and all negative events for which the child takes the blame. We used our adapted version as a pre- and post-test. All the children also made individual portfolios that included their own artwork, writings, photos, handouts, certificate of participation and copies of other activities.

## Key Evaluation Results

By the end of the eight-week program, there was a marked increase in the level of awareness of child abuse information. This was demonstrated by comparing completed activities that the children did each week as well as documented comments. There was a 24% increase in positive self concept as revealed in the Responsibility Scale pre- and post-tests. Parents and caregivers also found the program very helpful, and many said that they would like to see future expanded programs started.

## Reporting Evaluation Results

The evaluation results were reported in brochure form and shared with the parents of the participants, teachers and administrators from local schools, community church congregations, local businesses, and local and state governments. As a result, seven more churches have offered their community centers for upcoming classes in their neighborhoods, and several businesses have donated funds and supplies. We have received requests to present our program and evaluation results at several state and national conventions.

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## About the NOWG website and other resources

The [Children National Outcome Workgroup](#) focuses on indicators for children from birth to age 11. The Children's Workgroup adapted a model developed by the National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO) to identify primary outcome domains for children's programming including: Physical Health, Responsibility and Independence, Contribution and Citizenship, Academic and Functional Literacy, Personal and Social Adjustment, Satisfaction, Presence and Participation, and Family Involvement/Accommodation and Adaptation.

The NOWG website includes the following information for each outcome domain: relevant literature, a list of outcome components, a list of suggested indicators or a way to know that you have achieved results, suggested measures or instruments, links to additional sources of information and an annotated bibliography.

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This material is based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arizona under special project number #2000-00486.

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