

## FOCUS TOPIC:

# The Effects of Maltreatment on the Developing Brain

This paper describes the effects of maltreatment on the child's developing brain. Much more is now understood about brain development, including the fact that while the first three years of life are of great importance to the child's later development, continuing and new experiences in childhood and adolescence also influence brain development. There is, therefore, potential for change even after significant early disadvantage which should encourage us to intervene to protect the child from further harm. While this paper is concerned with maltreatment which occurs from birth onwards, it is important to remember that brain development is also strongly influenced by prenatal factors, including maternal alcohol and drug abuse, and significant maternal stress. There is no legal mandate currently available for protecting the vulnerable fetal brain from adverse circumstances. While the focus in this chapter is on the relationship between the primary caregiver(s) and the young child, this relationship is obviously nested within the family which is, in turn, significantly influenced by the social environment within which the family is located.

In light of our understanding of brain development, there are three different ways in which maltreatment can exert its harmful effects:

- Extreme deprivation
- Distorted experiences
- Stress

### Brain development

By birth, most of the brain's 100 billion neurons (nerve cells) are in their permanent position in the brain. Each neuron has branches or processes carrying signals to and from the nerve cell body. The branches from different neurons connect with each other at junctions called synapses. The signal is transmitted from one neuron to another across the synaptic gap by chemical neurotransmitters. Most post-natal brain growth occurs in the first 4 years, with the rate being highest in the first year. This post-natal growth is accounted for by a massive, sequential (over)production of new branches and synapses (synaptogenesis) in the brain. During early childhood, the number of synapses reaches nearly double the number ultimately found in adulthood. This new synapse growth requires structural support provided by proliferation of glial cells and nourishment by new blood capillaries. All this accounts for the growth in brain size.

The rate and timing of synaptogenesis varies between brain regions, which have different functions. Not all the synaptic connections survive, as many are subsequently 'pruned' due to lack of use. The overproduction of synapses is found especially in brain regions which have been genetically programmed to anticipate and respond to experiences which are part of the expected environment of the infant. These experiences include basic sensory input, the handling of young infants, responsive gaze by the parent, talking to the infant and responding sensitively to the infant's attachment needs. The absence of these inputs and interactions with the infant would be unusual for the majority of infants. This

aspect of brain development is called *experience-expectant*. For some children, absence or insufficient input at the appropriate time will lead to failure of development of particular functions.

When a neuronal pathway is activated by a stimulus, the synapses that have become engaged will store a chemical signal, and repetition of the same or similar stimuli will stabilise the neuronal connection, establishing a pattern which will become less susceptible to subsequent change. The stimuli which trigger the signals between neurons come largely from the baby and child's environment. They include sensory input (light, touch, smell, sound) and interactions between the primary carers and the baby. The nature of the day to day experiences, including interactions with the primary caregivers, determine which brain circuits are reinforced and retained in the baby's brain. This aspect of brain maturation has been termed *experience-dependent*. Although learning (e.g. emotional development, acquisition of languages) proceeds much more easily at the appropriate developmental stage early in life, it is clear that experience-dependent development continues into adulthood although its rate is greatest in early life. Experience-dependent processes can generate new synapses in response to new experiences.

The brain's ability to change its own structure in response to the environment and experience is termed plasticity. While neural plasticity enables change to continue to occur, it also implies that the child remains vulnerable to the effects of harmful experiences in shaping brain development. Learning continues throughout the lifespan, although the rate of acquisition slows with increasing maturity. Since brain maturation is an orderly process, learning is initially a sequential process which relies on the development of prior skills for the acquisition of new ones. Moreover, the *nature* of what has previously been learnt will either shape or interfere with subsequent learning.

### Implications of the process of brain development for child maltreatment

The importance of experiences in infancy and early childhood is clear but the mechanisms are complex. We need to consider both the effects of lack of provision of experiences (neglect), and the effects of particular undesirable, stressful or traumatic and neglectful experiences.

### Extreme neglect

Neglect and failure of environmental stimulation during sensitive periods of brain development may lead to permanent deficits in certain functions. In the domain of interpersonal development, there is now evidence from work with adoptees from very neglectful orphanages that some of these children will not develop stranger wariness and selective attachments. Rather, these children will remain socially disinhibited, expressed by a lack of differentiation between adults, a lack of checking back with the (adoptive) parent in anxiety-provoking situations, and a clear indication that the child would go off with a stranger.



Kimberly Svevo  
Executive Director

Dear ISPCAN Members and Partners!  
As ISPCAN's 30th Anniversary Year (7 July 2007 extending through our September 2008 XVIIth International Congress) begins – it is exciting to both reflect back on the past 12 years I have been with ISPCAN, and to also reflect on the exciting and important work and the impact of ISPCAN's work to prevent child abuse and neglect globally into the future.

I remember in July/August 1995, as I was introduced to ISPCAN, rethinking my then recent decision to redirect my energies from being a non-profit executive to becoming an international consultant and author. I was the mother of 4.5 year-old Rebekah and 2/3-month-old Jessica, and life was already challenging. However, I fell in love with ISPCAN's mission, its important work and the wonderful people from around the world who were leading and carrying out the organization's mission- directly working to protect children. I didn't think any other job could be as challenging, or as rewarding. I worked for ISPCAN as a volunteer, part-time consultant and manager from August 1995 through March 1998. In March 1998, the organization was able to afford a full-time Executive Director with one staff member, and I gladly accepted my new position as ISPCAN's new, full-time Executive Director. Since that time we have grown to an ISPCAN staff of 12 and have expanded our work and direction to influence the protection of tens of thousands more children.

Twelve years since my introduction to ISPCAN, I have worked closely with ISPCAN Presidents Kari Killen (Norway), Howard Levy (USA), M. Sham Kasim (Malaysia), Franklin Farinatti (Brazil), Marcellina Mian (Canada), Barbara Bonner (USA), and currently Danya Glaser (UK) and President-Elect Sanphasit Koompraphant (Thailand), along with the international Council members and all our members and volunteers from nearly every country in the

world. I treasure the opportunities I have received from all of you to personally and professionally learn and develop. My greatest appreciation, however, is the opportunity that was provided to me in this role as ISPCAN Executive Director – of contributing to an incredibly important goal. A goal we share. This goal is to prevent child abuse and neglect globally, to make the world a safer place for all children and to improve the lives of children at-risk so they will develop into happier and healthier adults to better care for the next generations of children and our global society.

ISPCAN is uniquely positioned to support the work of individual CAN professionals, government leaders, international agencies and NGOs, etc. to improve the effectiveness of their work directly with abused and at-risk children and their families – through interventions, treatment and longer-term prevention, as well as through more general public and professional awareness-raising, research and information, good practice/policy and experience exchange. With important recent contributions by the Oak Foundation (Geneva, Switzerland), ISPCAN has also undertaken an important Organizational Capacity Development initiative to strengthen our organization and programs into the future.

As a member and partner of ISPCAN, may we request of you a special contribution in ISPCAN's Anniversary Year of 2007-2008? May we request that your contribution to the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect this coming year include a financial gift? I have committed a significant donation – or I would not feel justified in also asking this of you. If you will be able to contribute a gift – of \$30 or more, and for those individuals and organizations able to, of \$3,000 or more, ISPCAN will be a stronger organization because of it. Collectively, we will all be more successful in our efforts to protect abused and at-risk children globally. Thank you in advance.

Warm regards,

Kimberly Svevo, ISPCAN Executive Director

## Message from ISPCAN President



ISPCAN President  
Danya Glaser

I would like to join Kimberly Svevo in ushering in this ISPCAN 30th anniversary year. I feel honored to follow my illustrious predecessors who have done so much in shaping the organization and, together with the growing staff and able fellow councilors, developing our Society to its current level.

At this time in ISPCAN's life, we are maintaining and developing our current activities which include providing a platform for direct and virtual communication and networking with and between our members, training of professionals in many countries and being regarded and used as an information resource on child maltreatment and its prevention. In addition, we are using the opportunity which an anniversary brings, to take a critical look at the organization with the aim of developing our capacity further and ensuring that we are constituted and work in the most efficacious way. We are very grateful to the Oak Foundation for supporting us in this endeavor.

Coincidentally, there has been a further clear recognition of the plight of children subjected to maltreatment including violence, in the UN Secretary General's world report on violence against children, to which ISPCAN contributed, as well as the publication of the WHO/ISPCAN book on preventing child maltreatment: *A guide to taking action and generating evidence*. These global initiatives have, in turn, led many countries to seek to initiate or develop their child protection systems and several have approached ISPCAN with requests for specific consultation and guidance in this process. As part of our own development, we are now pursuing this additional direction of offering technical advice and consultation on developing child protection systems.

Our work is your work, and we depend on our members' professional contribution to the global effort of preventing child maltreatment and reducing its impact. We look forward to continuing to work together.

Danya Glaser, ISPCAN President

## Vth African Regional Conference on Child Abuse – Uganda

The fifth African Conference was held at the end of March, 2007, in Kampala, Uganda, and was attended by African professionals and Ugandan and Ethiopian children.

The preliminary meeting of CPLs and funders held representatives from Nigeria, Malawi, Benin, and Cameroon. The huge need for training and ISPCAN's involvement was discussed at the meeting, in addition to methods of increasing the funding available and redirecting the responsibility of financing training to local NGOs and agencies. Renewing the Francophone Network to

attract other countries and avoiding language barriers was also discussed, along with the possibility of holding an African conference in a Francophone country.

This year's conference theme, "HIV/AIDS and Children: The Double Challenge of Care For and Protection of Children in Africa," consisted of scientific, political and legislation-related presentations, and how each related to children with HIV/AIDS. The conference was effectively organized and its content was of a high quality.

## Call for Nominations: 2008-2014 Executive Council

ISPCAN is now accepting nominations for the 2008 - 2014 Executive Council positions (seven vacancies). We encourage strong and motivated candidates, with proven leadership and international experience in the field of child abuse and neglect prevention.

All applications must include the following forms (available at [www.ispcan.org/election.htm](http://www.ispcan.org/election.htm))

- Two completed Nominator Forms for each nominee.
- One completed Nominee Form.
- A letter of commitment to responsibilities of holding a Council position described below.
- A 75-word biography from each nominee for inclusion on the ISPCAN Ballot Form.
- A 20-25-word statement of intent from each nominee for inclusion on the ISPCAN Ballot Form.

Each nominee must have been a member of ISPCAN in good standing (paid) for at least one year prior to closing of nominations (as of November 1, 2006).

**ISPCAN Executive Councilor Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Attending yearly ISPCAN Executive Council Meetings (3 to 5 days per year).
- Serving on one or more Board Committees (about 12-15 hours per month reviewing and commenting on policy and other Council and Committee related communications, as well as Committee project work).

- Attending the biennial ISPCAN Congresses, including the International Congress in Hong Kong (September 7-10, 2008). While airfare is paid by ISPCAN, accommodation and other expenses during the Congress are at the Councilors' expense.
- Promoting ISPCAN Membership and being active on the ISPCAN Member Listserv, Virtual Issues Discussions (VIDs) and Faculty programs.
- Providing fundraising contacts, ideas and actual involvement.

### DEADLINE

All nomination forms MUST BE postmarked or received by November 1, 2007 (no later than 11:59 CST). Attn: Nominations Committee, c/o ISPCAN Secretariat, 245 W Roosevelt Rd, Building 6, Suite 39, West Chicago, IL 60185, USA. Fax: 1.630.876.6917; Phone: 1.630.876.6913 or email: [ispcan@ispcan.org](mailto:ispcan@ispcan.org).

Only signed nominations will be accepted by mail, fax or email. Nominations submitted by email must include electronic signature.

For further information and to submit nominations, please feel free to contact the ISPCAN Secretariat office by e-mail at [ispcan@ispcan.org](mailto:ispcan@ispcan.org) or by phone at 1.630.876.6913.

Kind regards,

Sanphasit Koompraphant

President-Elect/Nominations Committee Chair  
Henry Plum, J.D., Parliamentarian/Legal Advisor

## Request for Briefs: World Perspectives on Child Abuse - Eighth Edition (2008)

Dear Colleagues! Efforts are now underway to develop the Eighth Edition of ISPCAN's *World Perspectives on Child Abuse: an International Resource Book* which will be released at the 2008 International Congress in Hong Kong. As in the past, this volume will include the results of our survey of child abuse professionals working in both developing and developed countries, an annotated bibliography summarizing key child abuse research and policy publications released over the past two years, and a set of research briefs and case studies highlighting the innovative efforts to address the issue of maltreatment at the country and regional levels.

For this issue, we are particularly interested in briefs that will address the challenges in effectively addressing child abuse and neglect among indigenous, minority or immigrant populations within your country. Topics might include research on the primary needs and underlying causes of maltreatment within these groups; the incidence of abuse or neglect within these populations; and the degree to which these groups are overrepresented in foster care populations or child welfare caseloads. We also are interested in innovative policies or programs that have been proven to be effective in reducing the incidence of maltreatment or enhancing child well-being and

family self-sufficiency within these populations.

Those briefs summarizing research studies must include a brief overview of the study objectives, a discussion of the data collection methods and sample, a summary of the key findings, and a discussion of the study's implications on practice and policy. Briefs focusing on programmatic or policy changes must include a brief summary of the policy or program objectives, a discussion of the historical context or situation that led to the policy or program development, a description of the innovation's key elements, the implementation challenges faced, and the lessons learned from this process. All briefs should be between 1,000 and 1,500 words.

Those interested in submitting a brief should e-mail a short abstract of their concept to ISPCAN by September 30, 2007. Final briefs will be due by November 1, 2007.

If you have questions about the content of the brief, please e-mail [ispcan@ispcan.org](mailto:ispcan@ispcan.org).

Sincerely,

Deborah Daro, Ph.D., Editor  
Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago

Kimberly Svevo, ISPCAN Executive Director

## ISPCAN ICAST Questionnaires - Update

The project was undertaken in conjunction with the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children. Since its inception, ISPCAN has received 44 requests for ICAST Child, 44 requests for Parent and 39 requests for Retrospective (Youth) questionnaires. Sixty three researchers from Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America, Arab region, and Australia have made a commitment to share their results with ISPCAN once their project is complete. As of August 2007, ICAST questionnaires are available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Icelandic, Marathi, Hindi, and Russian language. For more information, please go to [www.ispcan.org/questionnaires.htm](http://www.ispcan.org/questionnaires.htm)

Wasifa Chowdhury, ISPCAN Education Coordinator

### Effects of maltreatment on Developing Brain *(Continued from page 1)*

These effects may be a result of extreme emotional neglect due to parental drug and alcohol abuse. Some of these children will also have great difficulty in regulating their emotional arousal and respond angrily or excitedly in an uncontrolled way to apparently minor triggers.

#### Undesirable, insensitive and stressful- distorted experiences

Early harmful experiences can have significant long-term negative effects on the developing brain. Negative experiences, for instance, significant exposure to angry faces or to violence, lead to amplification of synapses and neuronal networks associated with negative affect and the under-use and pruning of those involved in positive affect and approach behaviour. Enduring changes have been found in their behaviour and emotional state. In comparison to non-abused children, children who have been abused in early life have been found to have a more intense response recorded on an electro-encephalogram (EEG) when focusing on angry, rather than happy faces. Moreover, they have also been found to interpret facial expressions, which are ambiguously sad/angry or frightened/angry, as angry. In practice, it has been repeatedly found that both boys and girls who had been physically abused before the age of five years have been found to be aggressive and have difficulty with externalising behaviour and peer relationships in later childhood and into adolescence, even when the abuse had ceased. The implication is that a negative and angry affect carries a different meaning for maltreated children and elicits a physiologically measurable different response. For a child in danger, it is adaptive for their survival to construe possible signals of danger as such. This predisposition becomes maladaptive when used indiscriminately and outside of abusive situations.

#### The stress response

The body's response to stress is a physiological coping response necessary for survival, and involves several body systems. They include the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA), the autonomic nervous system, the neurotransmitter system and the immune system. There are individual variations in the threshold above which an individual perceives an experience to be stressful. These individual differences in stress responsiveness are partly innate (genetically determined) and partly based on prior experience. There are costs to the stress response and individual children who are innately more reactive to stress are therefore more vulnerable to its consequences.

The end result of the HPA axis response to stress is the increased secretion of cortisol and other hormones in this system, and this response commences in early infancy. Serum cortisol acts in a number of different ways and on most tissues and organs. Its actions include suppressing the immune response, increasing the level of circulating glucose and dampening of fear responses to the stressor, as well as adverse effects on the hippocampus, which is particularly involved in the processing of memory for events. Children with raised levels of cortisol during normal days at nursery, have greater difficulty in focusing and sustaining attention.

The response of the sympathetic nervous system to stress results in secretion of adrenaline and noradrenaline (norepinephrine). The effects of these hormones include raising heart rate and blood pressure, sweating and activation of the fight or flight response. There is also an increase in neurotransmitter secretion in the brain in response to stress which includes noradrenaline and dopamine and serotonin. Significantly raised levels of these neurotransmitters in the prefrontal cortex interfere with such functions as the planning and organising of actions

using 'working memory' and the inhibiting of inappropriate responses and attention to distractions ('executive functions'), disturbance not unlike Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

What are the specific effects on the developing child of early stressful events and activation of the stress response? Early stress caused by neglect, abuse or exposure to inter-parental violence is often the beginning of an enduring pattern. Predictability and a sense of control modulate the stress response to potentially threatening experiences. Both predictability and the sense of control are compromised in the face of abuse and neglect.

Children who have been abused and neglected have been found to show dysregulated cortisol responses as well as other evidence of neurobiological changes. One study, has found some decrease in brain volume in children who had been abused and who suffered from post traumatic stress disorder, thought to be an effect of prolonged and heightened stress response.

Overactivation of the stress response early in life with overstimulation of the noradrenergic system may lead to a long lasting reactive repression of noradrenaline. 'Normal' children learn to avoid responses which have negative consequences such as excessive anger, which is mediated by noradrenaline in the brain. Children who have been abused continue to respond more angrily to a perceived threat. This is postulated to be related to a diminished noradrenergic behavioural inhibition system, leading to continued arousal.

Young children who are securely attached to their mothers have been found to show a less intense stress response when faced with threat than children whose attachment was insecure. Insecure, particularly disorganised attachment is commonly found in children who have been physically and psychologically abused and neglected. They may therefore lack the protective effect which a secure attachment confers in the face of stress.

#### Conclusions

Young children who lack appropriate interactions during particular stages of development, such as the opportunity for forming an attachment before the age of three, may not develop the normal aspects of these functions. Harm also follows stressful, inappropriate early experiences which are incorporated into the neural networks at the time of synapse formation, as part of experience dependent brain maturation and the effects of the stress response on the developing brain. Although later experience will be incorporated and added on to past neuronal connections, the new experiences cannot undo established patterns, only modify them over time. In younger children, it is the changes in the interactions with the child and their parents and with other significant persons in their immediate environment. The primary focus for early intervention, therefore, needs to be with the primary carers and the carer-child relationship. Later direct therapeutic work with the child who is in a more optimal environment will also be required. The most effective intervention is undoubtedly the prevention, or very early recognition of inappropriate parent-child interactions when effects on the young child may not yet be apparent.

Danya Glaser (England)  
Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist  
ISPCAN President

#### References:

- Glaser D (2000) Child abuse and neglect and the brain - a review. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 41, 97-116.
- Glaser D (2003) Early Experience, Attachment and the Brain in Corrigan J & Wilkinson H (eds) *Revolutionary Connections: Psychotherapy & Neuroscience* pp.117-133. London: Karnac.

## 17th ISPCAN International Congress - Hong Kong, 2008

The XVIIth ISPCAN International Congress, entitled, "Towards a Caring and Non-Violent Community: A Child's Perspective," will be held in Hong Kong, China from 7 to 10 September. The Congress is being organized by the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) in collaboration with Against Child Abuse (ACA), Hong Kong.

Children around the world face different forms of maltreatment: some unique to their locations and many more that transcend cultures and nations. ISPCAN congresses provide a unique opportunity for professionals all over the world to meet, discuss their concerns, learn from each other and to support each other.

The scientific program will cater to colleagues ranging from those who just recently joined the field to those looking for refinements in professional practices. The many concurrent sessions will offer participants new advances and opportunities to present innovative approaches to the subject and share well-trying evidence-based best practices. The field is moving fast with increasing international collaboration. Invited experts will highlight the latest developments and directions in practices and policies in child abuse and neglect reporting and prevention.

### Program Overview

The program will encompass a number of high quality keynote speakers on general topics with an international perspective. There will also be high quality symposia, which will give an opportunity for delegates to debate and discuss topics with experts in their field. Other sessions will encompass free papers and workshops that allow practitioners and researchers to report on their clinical practice or research findings.

There will also be interactive discussion presentations where individuals can present in more detail in a less structured environment. Interwoven with these highly academic sessions will be an opportunity for meeting old and new friends, not only over

coffee and lunch, but also at social events.

### Congress Subthemes:

- Psychological Abuse: Identification, Assessment and Intervention
- Culturally-relevant, Evidence-based Intervention
- Child Trafficking, Child Labor, Child Sexual Tourism
- Domestic Violence and Child Abuse
- Children's Voices and Children's Rights (including Legal Protection of Children)
- Forms of Neglect (including Institutionalized Children).

### Keynote Speakers:

- Dr. Cindy Kiro (New Zealand), *Commissioner for Children in New Zealand*
- Dr. David Finkelhor (United States), *Director, Crimes against Children Research Center, Co-Director, Family Research Laboratory*
- Mrs. Priscilla Lui Tsang Sun Kai (China), *Executive Director, Against Child Abuse (Hong Kong)*
- Prof. Xu Yongxigang (China), *Dean and Professor, Colleague of Social and Public Administration, East China University of Sciences*
- Prof. Michael Freeman (UK), *Professor of English Law, University College, London*

### Key Dates:

- 15 June 2007: Abstract Submission Opens
- 1 November 2007: Online Registration Begins
- 31 January 2008: Abstract Submission Deadline
- 10 June 2008: Early Registration Deadline

For more information, please visit:  
[www.ispcan.org/congress2008](http://www.ispcan.org/congress2008).

## XIth ISPCAN European Regional Conference on Child Abuse - Portugal, 2007

The XIth ISPCAN European Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect will take place from 18 to 21 November 2007 in Lisbon, Portugal. Entitled "Supporting Prevention and Recovery from Child Abuse and Neglect: Role of Professionals, Communities and Families," the conference aims to challenge existing research and work in the field of child abuse and neglect prevention, providing a forum for thematic meetings in which attendees are given the opportunity to share knowledge and skills in order to build bridges between theory and practice.

### This year's keynote speakers are:

- Arnon Bentovim, FRCPsych, DPM (United Kingdom): Promoting the Recovery of Children and Parents Growing Up in a Climate of Violence and Adversity: A Life Span Trauma Narrative Approach
- Claire Brisset, UNICEF (France): Implementing the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC): From a Document to an Instrument
- Kevin Browne, Ph.D. (United Kingdom): The Overuse of Institutional Care for Young Children in Europe and its Relation to Child Abandonment and International Adoption
- Bragi Gudbrandsson, Barnaverndarstofa (Iceland): Child Protection in Europe: The Impact of the UN CRC and International Collaboration on Policy and Practice
- Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Ph.D. (Brazil): The World Report on Violence Against Children: The Way Forward

- Carl Göran Svedin, M.D., Ph.D. (Sweden): Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation and Use of Pornography: The Plague of Modern Society?

### Advanced Knowledge and Skill-Based Training

**Institute** will be offered in association with the Conference. It will be a full day pre-Conference event taking place Sunday, 18 November. The Institute will serve as a tool for professionals attending the Conference to gain more intensive, advanced, and focused training. Tilman Furniss (Germany) will serve as the facilitator. More information regarding the Advanced Knowledge and Skill-Based Institute can be found on our website: [www.ispcan.org/euroconf2007](http://www.ispcan.org/euroconf2007). The Institute will take place at the Lisbon Marriot Hotel.

The conference is being organized by ISPCAN in cooperation with The Association of Women Against Violence (AMCV), a Portuguese Women's Non-Governmental Organization that works in the area of violence against women and children.

### Key Dates:

- 10 November 2007: Last day to register online
- 18 November 2007: Advanced Knowledge and Skill-Based Training Institute
- 19 November 2007: Conference Opens

For more information, please visit:  
[www.ispcan.org/euroconf2007](http://www.ispcan.org/euroconf2007).

## DONOR RECOGNITION

Recognizing Contributions of Time and Resources during  
April - August 2007

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- African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Kenya
- African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Nigeria
- African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Uganda
- Against Child Abuse (ACA), Hong Kong
- American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), United States of America
- Asian Regional Network, Asia
- Asociación Contra El Maltrato Infantil (AFECTO), Colombia
- Association Française d'Information et de Recherche sur l'Enfance Maltraitée (AFIREM), France
- British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (BASPCAN), United Kingdom
- Cameroon Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (CASPCAN), Cameroon
- Danish Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (DASPCAN), Denmark
- Enfants Solidaires d'Afrique et du Monde (ESAM), Benin
- German Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (GESPCAN), Germany
- INGO "Ponimanie" ("Understanding"), Belarus
- Italian Network of Services for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (CISMAI), Italy
- IUS et VITA (I.E.V. - Justice and Life), Congo

## NEW ISPCAN MEMBERS

ISPCAN warmly welcomes new members joining April - August 2007

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			<b>ZIMBABWE</b> Theresa Maturure

- Japanese Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (JaSPCAN), Japan
- Malaysian Association for the Protection of Children (PPKM), Malaysia
- National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), Australia
- National Society for Child Abuse and Neglect (NS-CAN), Romania
- Nordic Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NASPCAN), Denmark, Greenland, Iceland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden
- Singapore Children's Society, Singapore
- South African Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (SASPCAN), South Africa.
- Turkish Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (TSPCAN), Turkey

**7th ISPCAN Asian Regional Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect****Theme:** I Am For The Child**Dates:** 23-26 September 2007 **Venue:** Manila, Philippines**Contact:** Julia De Leon, research.publication@cpu-net.org.ph**Website:** www.ispcanmanila.org.ph**11th ISPCAN European Regional Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect****Theme:** Supporting Prevention and Recovery from Child Abuse and Neglect: Role of Professionals, Communities and Families**Dates:** 18-21 November 2007 **Venue:** Lisbon, Portugal**Contact:** English - ISPCAN Congress & Conference Manager, eventmanager@ispcan.org;

Portuguese - Cristina Severiano, euroconf2007@mail.telepac.pt

**Website:** www.ispcan.org/euroconf2007**ISPCAN Global Institute 2008****Theme:** Cross-Border Child Trafficking**Dates:** January 28, 2008 **Venue:** San Diego, California, USA**Contact:** Angela Mock, Senior Event Coordinator: events@ispcan.org.Further events information available at [www.ispcan.org](http://www.ispcan.org).**17th ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse & Neglect****Theme:** Towards a Caring and Non-Violent Community: A Child's Perspective**Dates:** 7-10 September 2008 **Venue:** Hong Kong, China**Contact:** USA - ISPCAN Congress & Conference Manager, eventmanager@ispcan.org;

Hong Kong - Priscilla Lui, priscilla@aca.org.hk

**Website:** www.ispcan.org/congress2008**ISPCAN Training Events 2007****Venue:** RUSSIA, **Date:** 19-21 September 2007 - Pre-conference training. **Contact:** Elena Volkova, envolkova@yandex.ru**Venue:** RUSSIA, **Date:** 22-24 September 2007 - "The Right to Childhood: Prevention on Child Abuse". **Contact:** Elena Volkova, envolkova@yandex.ru**Venue:** GEORGIA, **Date:** September 2007 - Training for Multidisciplinary Professionals. **Contact:** Lia Saralidze, LSaralidze@childabuse.ge**Venue:** ESTONIA **Date:** 19-20 October 2007. **Contact:** Ruth Soonets, ch.abuse@online.ee**Venue:** GEORGIA, **Date:** November 2007 - Training for Journalists. **Contact:** Lia Saralidze, LSaralidze@childabuse.ge**New Zealand prohibits hitting children**

New Zealand has just passed a law to end legal hitting of children. The two years of its passage through New Zealand's Parliament have seen vigorous public debate but in the end, the law change was supported by all major political parties and all but a few members of parliament.

The old law which the new one replaces permitted parents to use 'reasonable force by way of correction.' Such a law is found in many countries. In New Zealand, it has been successfully used by parents as a defense against prosecution for assault when they have attacked children with hosepipes, horsewhips and the like. The law stood as a perverse standard of child-rearing and a negation of the right to freedom from violence and the threat of violence that all citizens other than children enjoy.

The new law explicitly prohibits the use of force for the purpose of correction, but acknowledges the need sometimes to restrain a child, that would technically amount to assault, in order to prevent the child causing harm to herself or others or in 'performing the normal daily tasks that are incidental to good care and parenting.'

With the historic passage of this law, New Zealand has set its foot on a path toward ending the fear and violence that has been the experience of too many of its babies and children.

For more information, contact Ian Hassall  
Institute of Public Policy, New Zealand.  
[ian.hassall@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ian.hassall@aut.ac.nz)

**ISPCAN Welcomes Child Helpline International**

ISPCAN is very pleased to announce that in 2007, for the first time, ISPCAN's network of professionals working to prevent child abuse and neglect will include members from 50 Child Helpline International offices in 49 countries.

Children's helplines around the world provide an invaluable service to children in need of care and protection. While a child's reason for calling may vary between continents, regions, countries and cities, one factor remains the same: a child is asking to be heard, a right that is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC).

*Eight-year-old "Sonya" calls a children's helpline and tells the counselor that she wants to kill herself. After asking her several questions to keep her on the line, the counselor learns that Sonya's father has been molesting her during the past several months. Her father makes her promise not to tell her mother. During the call, the counselor asks Sonya whether she thinks the family would really break up if she tells her mother. Sonya hesitates, but listens. The counselor asks her to think about this option and, in the meantime, think of ways to prevent being alone with her father. They also talk about how to deal with her angry*

*feelings. At the end of the phone call, Sonya promises to call the helpline if she feels like hurting herself. A few weeks later, Sonya calls and says that she is ready to tell someone. With the guidance of a counselor, Sonya tells her mother, and finds her to be supportive. Sonya begins meeting with a counselor on a regular basis to help her process her thoughts and feelings.*

At present, Child Helpline International has 98 child helpline members operating in 87 countries. In 2005, child helplines answered 10.5 million calls. Since 2004, Child Helpline International has been submitting recommendations on behalf of member helplines to the United Nations Committee on the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the UN Body which oversees states' parties' adherence to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The recommendations request that governments recognise child helplines as a tool toward child protection. During this period, 65% of Child Helpline International's recommendations have been recognised by the Committee in its concluding observations.

For more information, visit: [www.childhelplineinternational.org](http://www.childhelplineinternational.org)

## ISPCAN Working Group on Child Maltreatment Data

Last September, the first meeting of the working group on child maltreatment data was held during the International Congress in York. Presentations from this meeting are available on ISPCAN's website. The purpose of the group is to develop areas of common interest for organizations and individuals who are actively working on child maltreatment programs directly sponsored by governments. Countries that are involved in planning and developing such systems as well as those which already have maltreatment systems in place are invited to participate.

The agreed goals are as follows:

- To engage countries and participants with existing or planned data programs to expand the international community with an interest in this area;
  - To develop and promote the goals of national child maltreatment data through various exchange activities such as workshops;
  - To promote the use of data to inform policy development;
  - To promote the development of national data collection programmes;
  - To provide professional assistance to developing nations.
- The group is continuing to work on how best to promote and

support work in this area, in particular through holding workshops or giving presentations at regional and international ISPCAN events. We are preparing an article for the World Perspectives that will be released in conjunction with the Hong Kong Congress. This article will compare data from countries that collect child protection data; at this time we have information from Australia, Canada, England and the United States. In this article, we will compare data on investigation and substantiation rates from 1995 to the present as well as maltreatment (neglect, emotional maltreatment, physical and sexual abuse) specific rates. If you are aware of any other national child protection data systems we would appreciate it if you contacted us by September 30, 2007 via [ispcan@ispcan.org](mailto:ispcan@ispcan.org)

The next time we get together in person will be at the international congress in Hong Kong. We would welcome suggestions about what would be helpful to present or discuss at this meeting. Contact details for members of the group are available on the Child Maltreatment Data section of ISPCAN's website: [www.ispcan.org/CMDData/index.shtm](http://www.ispcan.org/CMDData/index.shtm)

Jenny Gray, ISPCAN Councillor (UK)

## Asian Regional Network, Members and Partners Meeting - Manila, September 2007

Announcement: Please join ISPCAN at the Asian Regional Network, Members and Partners Meeting at the Asian Regional Conference in Manila, Philippines on Tuesday, 25 September 2007 from 17:30 to 18:30. We hope all of you who have registered for the Asian Regional Conference will be able to join us for important updates, presentations and discussions

regarding ISPCAN membership, partnership and the Asian Regional Network. Please contact [membership@ispcan.org](mailto:membership@ispcan.org) for more information.

Melissa Loomis, ISPCAN Membership Coordinator

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*Mission: To support individuals and organizations working to protect children from abuse and neglect worldwide.*

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