



## Some Facts about Prevention

Prevention programs save children and families from misery. But they also save the state from more expensive spending later on. Here are some examples of proven prevention savings, followed by some promising practices.

### Return on Investment

**Immunization**—Immunization saves lives, lowers medical costs and prevents serious illness and disabilities. For every dollar invested in just one Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTP) vaccination, Connecticut saves \$6.21.

**Home Visitation**—Home visitation saves in family strengthening and averted child abuse and neglect. For every dollar invested in home visitation, Connecticut saves \$6.12.

**Preschool**—Preschool saves in school readiness and averted grade retention, special education referrals and problem behavior. For every dollar invested in quality preschool, Connecticut saves \$18.89 in lifelong gains.

**Mentoring**—Mentoring saves in school performance and averted crime, school dropouts, substance abuse and early sexual activity. For every dollar invested in quality mentoring, Connecticut saves \$3.28.

**WIC**—A proven factor in saving babies from low birth weight is a federal program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, popularly known as WIC. It's estimated that enrolling pregnant women 12 to 24 weeks before delivery produces a 31 percent reduction in the risk of low birth weight, which in turn produces a significant decrease in hospital costs per birth. Delivering a baby with low birth weight costs a hospital an average of \$70,000.

**Healthy Start**—Healthy Start is a state health insurance program for low income pregnant women whose household income is at or below 250% of the federal poverty level. Services include case management for the pregnant woman and for her children ages 0-2. A cost-to-benefit analysis determined a return on investment of \$2.20 to 2.60 for every dollar spent. Healthy Start spending is eligible for a 50% federal Medicaid match.

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## **Promising Practices**

**Parent Engagement**—Parent engagement benefits children by improving overall student performance, enhancing school morale, creating sustained achievement gains, and improving accountability in policies and programs for children.

**After School**—Quality after school programs save in averted juvenile crime and school difficulty. It also decreases alcohol and drug experimentation, truancy, smoking, and teen pregnancy while boosting school success.

**Safe Schools**—Comprehensive school-wide strategies to improve both learning and behavior lead to improved school performance and safety. The Positive Behavioral and Intervention Supports approach decreases discipline referrals, teacher absences, and special education placements while increasing quality instructional time and academic functioning.

### **Connecticut's Landmark Prevention Law**

In 2006, Connecticut lawmakers concluded that state government did too much “crisis” spending, or paying huge sums to deal with the results of troubled and neglected childhoods. They therefore adopted **Public Act 06-179, An Act Concerning State Investment in Prevention**. Approved unanimously by the General Assembly and signed into law shortly afterward by Governor M. Jodi Rell, the legislation was aimed at preventing children and youth from falling behind in the first place – and saving taxpayer dollars in the process.

Among other things, it set a goal for all state agencies that serve children and families: allocation of at least 10 percent of their budgets to prevention services by the year 2020. It requires the governor to report annually on their progress toward meeting this goal.

The law also reactivated the State Prevention Council's work and sharpened its prevention mission; revived the Governor’s biennial prevention budget and aligned it with child and family prevention goals already in Connecticut law; directed state agencies to report annually on the effectiveness of their prevention services and their efforts to improve child outcomes.

Most of the information above comes from the Commission on Children publication, **A Children’s Stock Portfolio: One Smart Investment**.

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