

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

A WHITE PAPER FROM THE GOOD COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The problem of child abuse and neglect has challenged our nation and community for decades. It is an issue which continues to surface as a serious threat to the welfare of children and families across the socioeconomic spectrum. And while we spend millions of dollars to address the effects of child abuse and neglect, it remains difficult to focus resources and attention on prevention.

It isn't easy for most people to believe sexual and physical maltreatment of children actually occurs in their neighborhoods. And when something such as tragic as the death of Dominic James occurs, it is essential for us to identify the system and human failures which allegedly allowed a child in protective custody to die. It is as important, however, for our entire community to accept some responsibility for not preventing the circumstances which originally necessitated out-of-home placement for this child.

To some extent, we can identify and understand the risk factors for child abuse. Both anecdotal and statistical information indicate that abuse is often the result of a lack of parenting skills and proper supervision coupled with unrealistic expectations of children. While there are some programs and systems directed at primary prevention of abuse by counteracting these kinds of underlying causes, there is still a significant gap between resources directed at dealing with the after-effects of abuse and prevention of abuse.

While the data indicate child abuse and neglect are significant problems in Greene County, there is also some evidence that a strong network of professional service providers and law enforcement may be responsible for better reporting and prosecution of child abuse. While this is debatable, we do know there are problems unique to our area such as the methamphetamine explosion which have a strong link to increasing child abuse and neglect cases.

There is a need to raise community awareness about the causes and consequences of child abuse and neglect. We must build stronger support for prevention education and initiatives which strengthen parents and families. We have an opportunity to develop a collaborative strategy to measurably reduce child abuse and neglect in the same way other public health goals are achieved. The new youth initiative, Every Kid Counts, will play a leading role in this effort.

The Good Community Committee convened expert panels to discuss the many aspects of the child abuse and neglect problem in general and locally. This paper outlines that examination including focusing on the extent of the problem, causes and consequences of child abuse and neglect, services and programs currently offered to address the effects of and to prevent child abuse and neglect, and finally what next steps should be taken by our community to combat this problem.

The cost of failing to prevent child abuse is enormous -- our nation spends more than \$200 million a day dealing with the effects of abuse. The cost in human suffering is impossible to calculate. The Good Community Committee invites individuals, agencies, businesses and institutions to join in responding to the urgent need for prevention of child abuse and neglect.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

INTRODUCTION

More than one million children are victims of abuse and neglect each year. Three children die each day as a result of abuse and neglect in this country.¹ In Greene County, there are many indicators that the problem of child abuse and neglect is significant and in some categories appears to be on the rise.

The costs associated with this devastating problem are enormous. Nationally, addressing the consequences of child abuse costs an estimated \$258 million per day.² In Missouri, the cost of foster care for children in the state's custody for FY 2001 totaled more than \$40 million.³ In Greene County, the cost of foster and residential care for abused and neglected children was nearly \$3.5 million.⁴ The costs in human suffering are incalculable. Children who are victims of abuse tend to suffer from a range of problems including emotional disorders, substance abuse, juvenile and adult crime, and greater difficulty parenting the next generation.

Discussions with community experts and activists in this area reveal the majority of our services and resources locally are directed at dealing with the effects and consequences of child sexual and physical abuse. There is less focus on primary prevention, or prevention strategies to intervene before a child is harmed, and far fewer resources directed at this level.

Those in our community working directly with children and families where child abuse and neglect has occurred offered insight into the causes of this problem. Those often cited included lack of parenting skills/generational cycles of abuse and a lack of supervision, higher levels of substance abuse especially related to methamphetamine, economic stress, and a basic lack of understanding about child development.

A PROFILE OF THE PROBLEM IN GREENE COUNTY

Division of Family Services Statistics for Greene County and Missouri⁵

For the past four fiscal years, data indicate more Child Abuse and Neglect (CA/N) reports per thousand are initiated in Greene County and those reports are more likely to be determined probable cause, (probable cause means a finding that abuse has occurred or is occurring as a result of visible signs, physical and/or credible verbal evidence provided to the children's services worker by the child, perpetrator or witness in accordance with the definitions of abuse and neglect,) than in Area 4, (the Division of Family Services administrative area which contains Greene County and 32 other southwest Missouri counties,) and the state. (See Appendix, page 12, tables A and B; see page 18 for a map of DFS Area 4.)

The rate of children entering or re-entering DFS custody has increased and is higher per thousand in Greene County than in Area 4 or the state. The rate of exits from custody in Greene County is lower per thousand than both Area 4 and the state. (See Appendix, page 12, tables C and D.)

Overall, the number of children in DFS custody has grown in Greene County from 1998 to 2001, from 772 to 1,032. While that number also has increased for other counties in this area and statewide, the rate of growth for Greene County has been faster. (See Appendix, page 13, table E.)

While the rate of children reunified with their families has been down statewide, the decrease has been much greater in Greene County. In 2001, about 10% of children were returned home while that percentage statewide was 21%. (See Appendix, page 13, table F.)

In Greene County, for calendar year 2001, the number of probable cause CA/N incidents totalled 580. Nearly half of the incidents were categorized as neglect. The next two largest categories were physical abuse

which constituted nearly one-fourth of the incidents and approximately 20 percent were ruled sexual maltreatment. (See Appendix, page 13, graph A-1.)

In Greene County probable cause cases, victims tend to be slightly younger than for the state overall. In neglect cases here, nearly 60% of the children are from 0 to 6 years. In physical abuse cases in Greene County, the largest number of children affected is in the 11 to 15 year old range. This trend is not reflected in the state which has percentages more evenly distributed from 0 to 17 years. In the sexual abuse category, state and Greene County percentages are similar. In Greene County, the largest group of victims are from 13 to 14 years old. (See Appendix, page 14, graph B-1 for a more comprehensive demographic profile of victims in Greene County.)

Of the 49 children involved in child fatalities in Missouri in 2001, one of whom was in Greene County, the majority were under five years of age; 61% were male; 53% were white and 45% were black. More than 60% of the fatalities were caused by physical abuse.

It is estimated the perpetrator is related to the child victim in 77% of sexual abuse cases and 88% of the time sexual abuse occurs in the home. For the state and Greene County, the top three categories of alleged perpetrators are the natural parent of the child, the parent's paramour and a step-parent. A major difference between Greene County and the state--the majority of perpetrators in Greene County were female, 53%. (See Appendix, page 14, profile A for a demographic profile of perpetrators.)

Reports of child abuse and neglect can be made by persons who are either "permissive" or "mandated." Mandated reporters, such as health care and education professionals, foster parents and social workers, are required by statute to report abuse/neglect when they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse is occurring. In Greene County, 39.4% of reporters of child abuse/neglect are permissive. The top three mandated categories of reporters for the county are peace officer/law enforcement official, social worker, and principal or other school official.

Local Law Enforcement/Court and Service Provider Data

In Greene County, 28 felony charges of child sex abuse were filed by the Greene County Prosecutor's office for the period of December 2001 to March 2002.⁶ That number is up from 16 for the same time period the previous year. Of the cases that come to the Prosecutor's office, 52% of them involved mandated reporters.

In 2001, the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in Springfield saw 774 children for sexual abuse forensic exams/interviews. That number has increased from 452 in 1999 and is higher than the number of children seen at Child Advocacy Centers in Kansas City, 565, and St. Louis, 248.⁷ It is important to note that Springfield's Child Advocacy Center currently serves an 18 county area -- 50% of the total number of children seen are from Greene County. Approximately 95% of the cases the CAC investigates are related to sexual abuse. The remaining 5% are physical abuse cases. They do not have the resources to provide services for all physical abuse allegations. (See Appendix, page 14, profile B for demographic information about children seen by the CAC.)

RISK FACTORS FOR/CAUSES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Characteristics Associated With Probable Cause Incidents

Information gathered during a CA/N investigation can identify factors which place a child at risk for abuse/neglect. A standardized list of both negative and positive characteristics is used by DFS investigative and other staff to describe a particular case. These statistics from the Division of Family Services⁸ provide insight into the family characteristics correlated with abuse as well as the nature of the abuse. Up to four char-

acteristics may be cited. The three most frequently cited characteristics in Greene County probable cause cases include “Single Parent Household,” “Lack of Parenting Skills” and “Amenable to Services,” (amenable meaning responsive to services.) Drug and alcohol related problems and domestic violence appear to be more frequently cited in Greene County than in state overall. (See Appendix, page 15, graph A.)

A Division of Family Services worker can also cite up to 31 findings from a standardized list to describe each abused/neglected child. In general, for the state and Greene County, the largest number of findings were related to neglect, then physical abuse, with sexually abused children representing the smallest group. In Greene County, “Lack of Supervision” was often cited and appeared to be a pervasive problem in all types of cases. (See Appendix, pages 15 and 16, graph B, graph C and graph D for more detailed information about DFS worker findings for neglected children, physically abused children and sexually abused children.)

Workers can cite up to four characteristics for perpetrators in probable cause cases. The list contains both positive and negative characteristics. “Unrealistic Expectations of Child” is overwhelmingly the most frequently cited characteristic for perpetrators in both Greene County and the state. The state and Greene County are quite similar in the frequency of many cited characteristics, however, drug and alcohol problems seem to be somewhat more frequently identified with perpetrators in Greene County. (See Appendix, page 17, graph E.)

Community experts and service providers also discussed a number of causes and risk factors they have observed and/or studied related to abuse. Many are inter-related and cyclical in nature.

Poor Parenting Skills and Lack of Understanding About Child Development

There are parents in our community who are isolated from support systems such as churches, extended family and neighbors. Without these connections, families in crisis have fewer resources to prevent abuse and few models for good coping skills. Single parents have little respite and certainly may experience substantial economic stress. Parents without a strong understanding of child development may have unrealistic expectations for their child’s behavior and be more easily frustrated or less likely to provide proper protection or nurturing during critical years of brain development. Other parenting problems include self-absorption, emotional immaturity, an inability to put the needs of their children ahead of their own needs, a lack of empathy, and inability to control anger or mood swings.

Cycle of Abuse and Domestic Violence

It is estimated that about one-third of abused children will one day abuse their own offspring. In homes with domestic violence, children are at greater risk for being abused and continuing the generational cycle of violence. Violent child victimizers are substantially more likely than those that victimize adults to have been physically or sexually abused as children.⁹

Substance Abuse

Children of substance abusing parents are three times more likely to be abused and four times more likely to be neglected than by parents who are not substance abusers.¹⁰ This problem is also cyclical--about two-thirds of people in drug treatment programs report they were abused as children.

Many of the abuse and neglect cases in Greene County are related to the explosion in methamphetamine production and use. Two of the nation’s top four counties for meth busts are in this area of the state. Prosecutors estimate that the increase in meth use has led to an increase in crimes of all types including sexual assaults of children. As well, users often leave children unattended or in the care of potential abusers. The drug destroys any sense of parental responsibility or conscience and consequently many parents themselves become abusers. It is estimated that nearly one-third of the abuse and neglect cases moving through the courts in Greene County may be related to meth abuse.

There also is some concern that traditional substance abuse treatment programs do not adequately address the virulent nature of meth addiction. If abusers aren't adequately treated, this makes recidivism more likely which adversely affects the chances for successful family reunification.

Teen Mothers

Studies show the children of teen mothers are more likely to suffer child abuse and be placed in foster care than other children.¹¹ Both teen mothers and their children are less likely to be economically and socially successful as adults.

CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The consequences of child abuse and neglect are devastating and far-reaching. The problem is costly in both societal and economic terms.

Out of Home Placement

Entrance into the foster care system is most often the result of physical/sexual abuse or neglect. Several decades of study show that children in foster care are at high risk for socio-emotional, behavioral and psychiatric problems.¹² The developmental and behavioral problems manifested by these children often are directly related to other problems such as dropping out of school, delinquency/criminal activity, teen pregnancy, homelessness, and unemployment. (For a demographic profile of Greene County children in out-of-home placement, see page 17, profile C.)

Delinquency & Running Away

If a child is abused, the risk for delinquency and criminal behavior is much greater. A National Institute of Justice study examined the long-term effects of childhood abuse and its relationship to criminal behavior. Children who are abused or neglected are 53% more likely to be arrested while a juvenile, and 38% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime when an adult.¹⁷ In a US Dept. of Justice report, more than 4 in 10 female inmates reported they had been physically or sexually abused as children.¹⁸ Research also indicates that children and adolescents who run away are more likely to have a history of sexual abuse.

Mental Health Problems & Developmental Delays

A child abuse victim will often suffer from low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, psychiatric disorders and suicidal feelings. Long term studies show child sexual abuse is associated with increased risk of psychiatric disorder in young adults.¹⁹ Suicide attempts in adolescents are often found to be related to a history of abuse in the family.

We know the most rapid period of brain development throughout the whole life span occurs during the first two to three years of life. While brain growth can be enhanced by positive stimulation, it can also be disrupted and stunted by abuse and maltreatment. An adolescent health survey of more than 35,000 middle and high school students found that students with a history of sexual abuse had higher rates of poor school performance than did a comparison group.²⁰ Significant developmental delays can be experienced by children who are abused and neglected during early childhood.

Homelessness & Dependence

Children who are abused are also at greater risk of becoming homeless adults. In a study of homeless women with children in foster or other care, some of the problems associated with these mothers included having drug or alcohol problems, having been sexually abused as a child, and/or ran away from home as a child.²¹

Studies indicate that adults with a childhood history of abuse are much more likely than non-abused adults to be in need of public assistance programs.²²

WHAT WE ARE DOING

An Aggressive Approach to Identifying and Stopping Abuse and Neglect

In Greene County there are many public/private agencies and initiatives focused on reporting, investigating and prosecuting child abuse and neglect. Well-trained and experienced investigators, law enforcement officers, prosecutors and mandated reporters are essential to removing children from unsafe homes and preventing future abuse. Cooperation and communication also are important in protecting children.

The Child Advocacy Center is an excellent example of this kind of inter-agency cooperation. After allegations of abuse surface, children come to the Center for the appropriate exam and interview activities. The child only has to tell the story of his or her abuse one time thanks to the Center's innovative approach which brings the necessary technology and personnel together in the same place. The child no longer needs to be transferred from place to place, reliving the ordeal at each point. The expertise of the staff means interviews and exams are conducted professionally and provide law enforcement, DFS investigators and prosecutors with a best information obtainable.

While Greene County's statistical profile shows increases in probable cause cases of abuse and neglect and higher numbers of children in custody, some community experts think they may be in part a result of the kind of cooperation represented by success of the Child Advocacy Center and a strong commitment from involved agencies to improve training and resources directed at this problem. Assistant Greene County Prosecutor Jill Geary is cross-training a number of prosecutors so more of them can work on abuse and neglect related cases.²³ The Springfield Police Department plans to add another investigator to help address the workload related to assaults on children.²⁴ Many non-profit organizations related to serving victims of abuse and neglect are recruiting more professional staff and volunteers to address the burgeoning need.

Helping Child Victims of Abuse and Neglect

There are many resources directed at helping victims of abuse in our community. The shortage of foster homes in Greene County means children are moved more frequently, often far beyond the boundaries of the county. This makes visitation with family and case managers more difficult and cases may progress to a conclusion more slowly because of the additional bureaucratic burden of dealing with staff in other counties and states. To help the Division of Family Services provide safe and stable placements for children removed from their homes because of abuse and neglect, the Council of Churches has developed a program to recruit more foster families through the network of churches in our area. Retention of foster families also is addressed by asking each faith community to help support its foster families with showers when new children are placed, by providing respite care on occasion and offering emotional support when necessary. While a number of families have been recruited it is still difficult to find families willing to make the substantial commitment to foster children in the state's custody.

The Ozarks Family Resource Center also developed in response to the crisis in foster care. Keeping children removed from their homes here in Greene County and helping sibling groups stay together has been a challenge here. This emergency placement center provides the opportunity to keep siblings together and in Greene County while an appropriate foster home or other placement is identified.

The Kids Clothes Closet helps supplement the small clothing allowance allotted to each foster child per year. Many other organizations provide counseling and other direct services to victims of abuse and their families such as The Victim Center, Parenting Life Skills Center, and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).

Preventing Abuse Before It Happens and Ending The Cycle of Abuse

While most of our community's efforts are directed at identifying existing abuse and coping with its

consequences, there are initiatives which are directed at primary prevention, i.e., preventing abuse before it occurs and in cases where abuse has occurred, attempting to stop the family and generational cycle of abuse.

The Victim Center, which provides services for victims of abuse, also provided more than 22,000 people in our area with prevention education in 2001. That message has been tailored to fit many audiences including young children, mandated reporters and policy-makers. Through the prevention message, children are empowered to protect themselves. And if abuse does occur, this education offers them the basic tools they need to quickly communicate what has happened. This awareness among children also may have helped improve the reporting of abuse and preventing it from continuing for an extended period of time.

The Parents As Teachers (PAT) organization also provides education which can be fundamental to preventing abuse. As previously reported, the most frequently cited characteristic of probable cause child abuse perpetrators was "Unrealistic Expectations of Child." By teaching parents about child development, PAT helps create more realistic expectations of children and an understanding of age-appropriate behavior. Parents also learn about the critical nature of the first years of child's life in terms of their overall brain development. PAT provides parents with the skills to create a more positive, nurturing and stimulating environment for their child which enhances development and learning potential. The PAT program is free to families and does not observe any need-based criteria--it is available upon request. This is important when considering the fact that abuse occurs at all socioeconomic levels.

Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers help Judges/Juvenile Officers, DFS Case Managers, and Guardian Ad Litem find victims of abuse permanent, loving homes more quickly. CASAs are assigned to children who have been removed from their homes because of abuse and neglect. By gathering information, CASAs help decision-makers determine the best outcome for the child whether reunification with their biological family or termination of parental rights/adoption. Studies show children with a CASA spend approximately one year less in foster care and re-enter the system less frequently than children without a CASA. By advocating to help children receive the services they need and by making certain they obtain permanency more quickly, CASAs help fight the cycle of abuse and decrease the potential for delinquency and other consequences associated with abuse.

Other organizations such as the Parenting Life Skills Center, Community Partnership of the Ozarks/Caring Communities have programs which help strengthen families and teach the coping skills necessary to prevent abuse from occurring or recurring. Caring Communities has a number of programs which bring at-risk children and families together to enhance communication skills, improve school participation/attendance and connect them with mentors, churches and neighbors so they have people to model and turn to when they are in crisis.

The Family Court of Greene County has numerous services and programs directed at many facets of the abuse and neglect problem. The Family Court Coordinating Committee, a citizens advisory group, has helped identify resources to strengthen families and children in our community. The Juvenile Division has many staff members and programs dedicated to providing services for victims of abuse as well as youth at-risk. The Court has focused on strengthening families in crisis by securing grants to enhance parent education and custody mediation programs. The successful Teen Court program for first time juvenile offenders and Greene County's new Truancy Court certainly help connect struggling youth and their families with available resources and support before problems become insurmountable. This is especially critical in light of the data showing links between abuse, juvenile delinquency and adult crime. Intervention such as these programs offer may help to avert this kind of vicious cycle.

Legislation passed several years ago expanded DFS's options in responding to reports of abuse and neglect. If reports indicate behavior that constitutes criminal violation, the response is a fact-finding, evidentiary investigation. The new option, if the report does not fall into the category of criminal violation, is the Family Assessment. The main goal of an assessment is to determine the child's safety and the family's need for services. This approach builds consensus between the family and social worker regarding a plan to address the family's difficulties and build on their strengths. The focus is on long-term, less intrusive intervention which will bring about family independence.

Prevention and Treatment Services DFS may refer include Family-Centered Services and Intensive In-Home Services/Therapy which may be provided by both DFS and/or community providers. In the state in 2001, 64% of reports initiated Assessments while 34% were responded to by Investigations.²⁵ In Greene County in 2001 there were 1,927 children involved in Family Assessments.²⁶ It was determined that for 20% of those children, services were needed. That number is similar to the statewide percentage of children with the Services Needed outcome.

While a two-year independent evaluation showed that the Assessment option decreased CA/N reports, connected families with services more quickly and increased community resource utilization, there is some concern on the part of the Greene County Assistant Prosecutor that Assessment has decreased prosecution of some less severe neglect/physical abuse cases. For example, the number of "dirty house" prosecutions has decreased locally. The statutes still provide for prosecution in these instances but those cases don't get to the Prosecutor's desk because Assessments do not generate a police report, as in the case of an Investigation.

There is the possibility that fewer minor cases being investigated and prosecuted allows more resources to be directed at more severe cases of abuse. However, if the law provides for prosecution of these infractions, it might be well to pursue that course of action whenever possible. One important issue highlighted by the discussion about Assessment is the importance of well-trained staff in determining which response is appropriate.

CONCLUSION -- FOCUSING THE COMMUNITY ON PREVENTION

"It doesn't make sense for this country to spend one dollar treating victims of child abuse and neglect while spending only one penny trying to prevent the abuse or neglect from occurring in the first place."

--A. Sidney Johnson III, President, Prevent Child Abuse America

The majority of resources in our community, and all communities, are directed at detecting and dealing with abuse after it occurs. There is a network of people and agencies working to report, investigate, and punish abuse. We must support that network because the work it does is essential.

However, we lack this kind of institutional coordination and commitment of resources directed at prevention. It is clear that unless we find new resources and new energy for preventing child abuse/neglect (and the other factors which stand between our children and success in life) we will be fighting a losing battle. A greater and greater percentage of our tax dollars will go to building jails and prisons (even as this paper is being written, discussions are under way regarding a new Greene County jail, or an addition to our present new Greene County jail), we will pay the burgeoning costs of out-of-home placement for children, and deal with the rising costs of mental health and other treatment services related to abuse. To say nothing of the tragic price the victims pay.

What must be done? At the moment our attention is focused on young Dominic James, whose death occurred while he was in foster care. However, our concern is too narrowly focused. We are asking who did

what wrong, where did “the system” fail, whom can we blame? We ought to be asking how this child, how any child, gets into such a situation in the first place, and how we can prevent such situations from arising. To do that we must turn our attention from children and direct it to parents, families, schools, churches, neighborhoods, jobs and family income, drugs and alcohol, and communities as a whole. That is where we find the roots of child abuse and neglect.

Informing and Mobilizing the Community

Our first step must be to help our citizens realize that child abuse/neglect is a problem of magnitude, worse here than in the rest of the state. Our children are at great risk; that is a hard fact to face. The public must understand that our children are not genetically different from other children, and that it is not a matter of chance that the problems are greater here.

Discussions throughout the community must occur so that the public understands the extent of the problem and that there are clearly recognizable risk factors that we can do something about, and there are specific things we can do to help our children develop resiliency and the capacity to make good choices. We must get our heads out of the sand.

Setting Goals

We need to define specific goals and a time line. Every Kid Counts will prepare an annual community report card on the condition of our children and youth. It will document where we stand in relation to the state as a whole. In those areas where we fall below the rest of the state we should commit ourselves to reducing that gap by 10% per year until we catch up with the state average, and then we should commit ourselves to move ahead of the state average by 10% per year.

Possible Courses of Action

There are small things and big things that can be done. The suggestions below are offered by way of example and to stimulate further ideas:

- Throughout the community, discussions should be held to emphasize the significance of the problem, and engage hundreds or even thousands of individuals in the search for solutions.
- We could offer a packet of prevention-oriented support materials to every woman who delivers a child in the county. Where such assistance would be accepted, new mothers could be paired with mentors from the faith community or other civic groups for a 24-month period and follow up.
- A 24/7 emergency hotline for parents could be established.
- Steps should be taken immediately to implement in families, schools, churches, the media and other institutions those known strategies for combating risk factors and encouraging the protective factors which develop resiliency in children. There is an abundance of literature and best practice for helping children become emotionally and socially competent; we must make it happen.
- We need to find ways to bring together into collaborative relationships the many individuals and sectors of the community which can contribute to implementing preventive programs for our children. We need to seek consensus and the synergy that comes from working together.
- We need to find ways to support more adequately those programs with an established record of prevention success, such as Parents as Teachers, Caring Communities, and the Better Beginnings Program run by the Parenting/Life Skills Center.
- When holding planning retreats, all kinds of business and other entities could include in their agenda a discussion of possible ways to join in with the rest of the community in seeking ways to implement the total program of preventing child abuse/neglect and other handicapping experiences for children.

Resource Development

Local and state budgets are being drained by the problems which result from child abuse/neglect and other misfortunes among the young, many of which manifest themselves in adult years. As long as those problems exist, we must respond to them. Still, we must look to the day when prevention is more effective and treatment needs are reduced. In the meantime, we must find the financial and other resources needed to expand prevention now.

- Children’s Trust Funds license plates are available for our automobiles. For every set of license plates purchased, \$25 comes back to the community each year for preventing child abuse. Our streets should be full of cars with CTF license plates.
- We should encourage public entities—schools, city councils, the county commission—to give new priority to prevention efforts both in policy and budget.
- We should encourage businesses, churches, non-profit organizations, and citizens to be not only better informed about issues like child abuse/neglect but to be more generous in their support, financially and otherwise, of prevention efforts.
- We should encourage the media to focus on children’s issues as a long-range project, not just as news topics for a day or two of concern.
- We must find ways to provide more permanent financial support for successful prevention programs so that trained professionals do not have to spend all their time in fund raising. This support must be the result of private and public collaboration.

We want to be a “Good Community.” That means, in the words of an early statement of our Committee, a community where “Every child has a family (or surrogate family when necessary) where he or she is cared for and loved,” where “All children have access to the kind of education which builds character, citizenship, and career skills, and which provides the understandings and skills necessary for making good choices,” where “People are safe in their homes and on the streets” and “Resources that make for health are within the reach of all.”

We need to be in this for the long haul. To that end, the Good Community Committee has established the new city/county youth initiative, Every Kid Counts (EKC). EKC cannot do the job by itself, but it will do all that it can to keep us informed of the condition of our young people and to mobilize the entire community on behalf of its children. We urge the involvement of all individuals of good will who care about this place.

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NOTES

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- ²³Christine Justice, Springfield News Leader. *Sexual Attacks on Children Skyrocket*. June 2, 2002. Page 7A.
- ²⁴Christine Justice, Springfield News Leader. *Sexual Attacks on Children Skyrocket*. June 2, 2002. Page 7A.
- ²⁵*DSS/DFS Child Abuse and Neglect Annual Report CY 2001*. Page 21.
- ²⁶*DSS/DFS Child Abuse and Neglect Annual Report CY 2001*. Page 37.

APPENDIX

TABLE A

CA/N CHILDREN REPORTED PER THOUSAND AND PROBABLE CAUSE PER THOUSAND

	FY 98		FY 99		FY 00		FY 01	
	Total Children Reported	Probable Cause	Total Children Reported	Probable Cause	Total Children Reported	Probable Cause	Total Children Reported	Probable Cause
Greene Co.	71.33	18.07	64.04	15.53	63.90	13.44	83.22	15.31
Area 4	61.75	12.58	58.47	9.61	62.71	9.58	80.47	13.35
Statewide	55.07	10.74	50.96	7.53	53.16	6.68	60.96	7.73

TABLE B

PERCENTAGE OF ALL CA/N INCIDENTS DETERMINED PROBABLE CAUSE

	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01
Greene Co.	25.5	23.1	20.4	18.7
Area 4	21.0	16.8	15.9	17.7
Statewide	20.0	15.2	13.4	13.6

TABLE C

ENTRIES AND RE-ENTRIES INTO DFS CUSTODY, NUMBER AND NUMBER PER THOUSAND

	FY 98		FY 99		FY 00		FY 01	
	#	# / 1000	#	# / 1000	#	# / 1000	#	# / 1000
Greene Co	295	5.64	278	5.32	328	6.40	393	7.67
Area 4	1,426	5.54	1,380	5.36	1,550	5.97	1,985	7.64
Statewide	6,652	4.73	6,712	4.77	7,346	5.25	7,425	5.31

TABLE D

EXITS FROM DFS CUSTODY, NUMBER AND NUMBER THOUSAND

	FY 98		FY 99		FY 00		FY 01	
	#	# / 1000	#	# / 1000	#	# / 1000	#	# / 1000
Greene Co	207	3.95	225	4.30	217	4.23	232	4.52
Area 4	1,268	4.93	1,373	5.33	1,313	5.05	1,399	5.38
Statewide	5,968	4.24	6,453	4.58	6,766	4.83	7,071	5.05

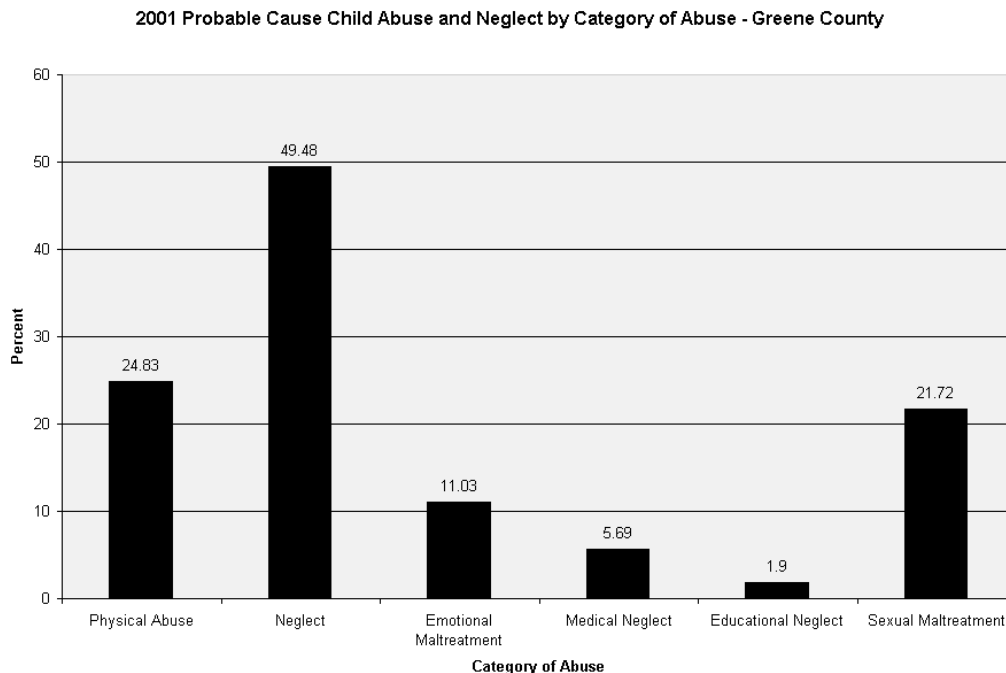
TABLE E
CHILDREN IN CARE, NUMBER AND NUMBER PER THOUSAND

	FY 98		FY 99		FY 00		FY 01	
	#	# / 1000	#	# / 1000	#	# / 1000	#	# / 1000
Greene Co	772	14.76	798	15.26	884	17.24	1,032	20.13
Area 4	3,034	11.79	3,181	12.36	3,316	12.77	3,770	15.29
Statewide	16,535	11.77	17,239	12.26	18,020	12.88	18,622	13.31

TABLE F
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN CARE RETURNED HOME

	FY 98		FY 99		FY 00		FY 01	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Greene Co	154	19.94	120	15.03	98	11.08	108	10.46
Area 4	893	29.43	855	26.87	794	23.94	856	21.56
Statewide	4,012	24.26	4,026	23.35	4,033	22.38	4,012	21.54

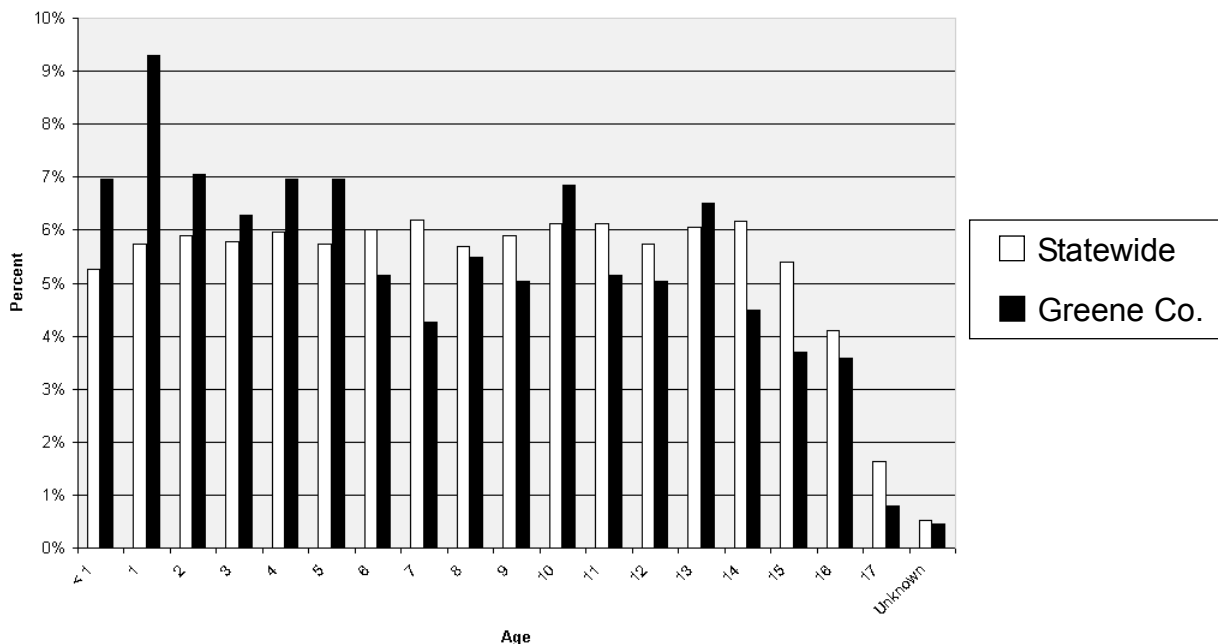
GRAPH A-1



The state has six categories for CA/N cases: Physical Abuse, Neglect, Emotional Maltreatment, Medical Neglect, Educational Neglect, and Sexual Maltreatment. An incident can be assigned more than one category. In Greene County, for calendar year 2001, the number of Probable Cause CA/N Incidents totalled 580--see category breakdown above. A total of 892 children were affected in those 580 incidents. By way of comparison, the number of Sexual Maltreatment incidents in Jackson County was 254 or 27% of the Probable Cause CA/N total number of incidents, 916. St. Louis City had 140 incidents of Sexual Maltreatment or 30.9% of the Probable Cause CA/N incident total of 453. The total number of Probable Cause CA/N incidents for St. Louis County was 548, 30% of which were Sexual Maltreatment. In the immediate geographical area, the total number of Probable Cause incidents for Christian County was 105, 27 of those or 25% were Sexual Maltreatment.

GRAPH B-1

2001 Probable Cause CA/N by Age - Greene County and Missouri



The demographic profile of probable cause CA/N victims in Missouri: 45% were male and 55 percent were female; the majority, 76%, of sexually abused children are female; approximately three-fourths of the abused children were white and almost one-fourth were black; most are from 5 to 9 years of age.

In Greene County probable cause cases, victims tend to be slightly younger than for the state overall. In Neglect cases specifically, in Greene County, nearly 60% of the children are from 0 to 6 years; the split between male and female is approximately 50-50; and 96.1% of the children are white, 2.9% are black. These numbers are similar to the state’s percentages in neglect cases. In Physical abuse cases in Greene County, the largest number of children affected is in the 11 to 15 year old range. This trend is not reflected in the state which has percentages more evenly distributed from 0 to 17 years. The majority of victims in the Physical Abuse category are male in Greene County, 53.4%, and the state, 53.6% and predominately white in both areas. In the Sexual Abuse category, state and Greene County percentages are similar. In Greene County, approximately 20% of the victims are 13 to 14 years old, 72% are female and predominately white.

PROFILE A - PERPETRATORS

In 2001 in Missouri, 63% of perpetrators were between 20 and 39 years of age; 52% were male and 45% were female; nearly three-fourths were white and 17% were black. In Greene County, the largest group of perpetrators were in the 30 to 39 age range and slightly fewer were in the 20 to 29 age range. In Greene County, about 90% of perpetrators are white and 4% black.

PROFILE B - CHILDREN EXAMINED AT THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

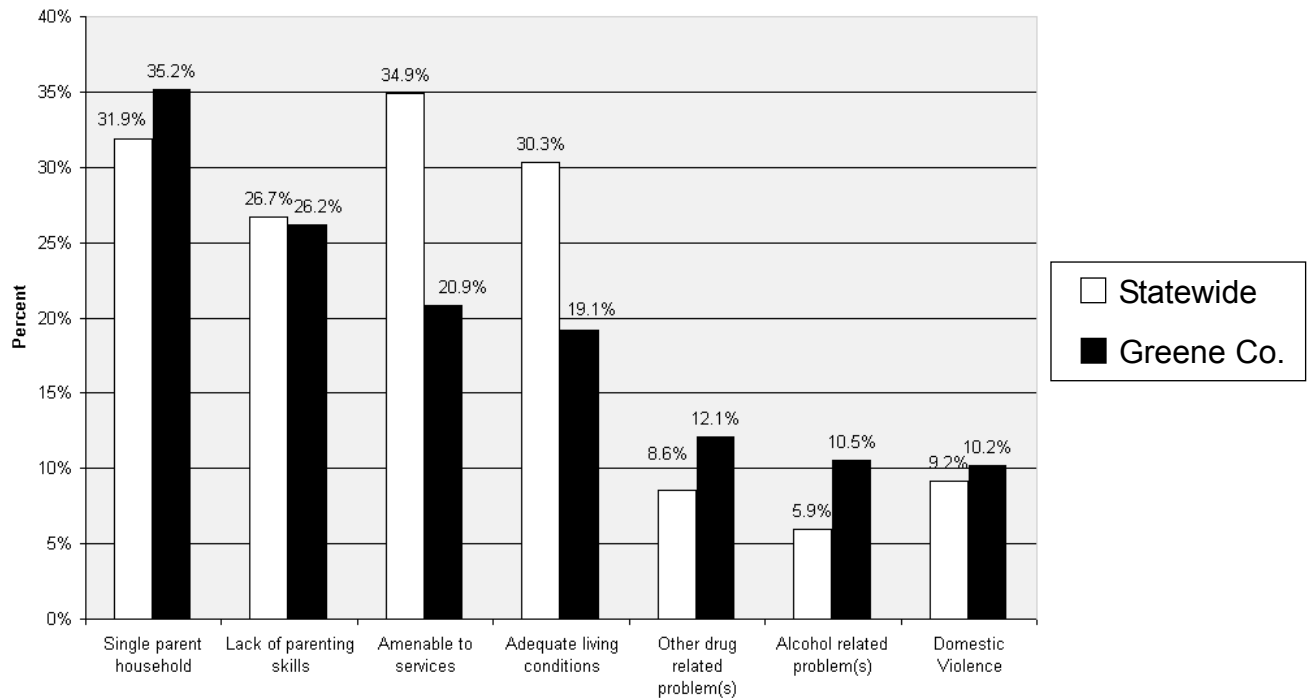
In 2001, of the 774 children (infants to age 18 years) seen by the CAC, 68 % were female and 32% male. Approximately 94% were caucasian, 3% African American and 2% Hispanic. The majority of the children were 6 or under, 40% 7 to 12 years, and 14% from 13 to 18. While it is more common to see children from impoverished families, all socioeconomic levels are represented. The reporting of abuse and neglect is more common among families who are struggling economically as they are more likely to be involved in public assistance programs which monitor them more closely as well as law enforcement agencies. Experts suspect abuse and neglect at higher socioeconomic levels is probably under-reported.

GRAPH A

Characteristics of Families Involved In Probable Cause Incidents

Percent is the percentage of the total number of probable cause cases with each characteristic; up to four characteristics may be cited in a case.

2001 Characteristics of Families Involved in Probable Cause Incidents

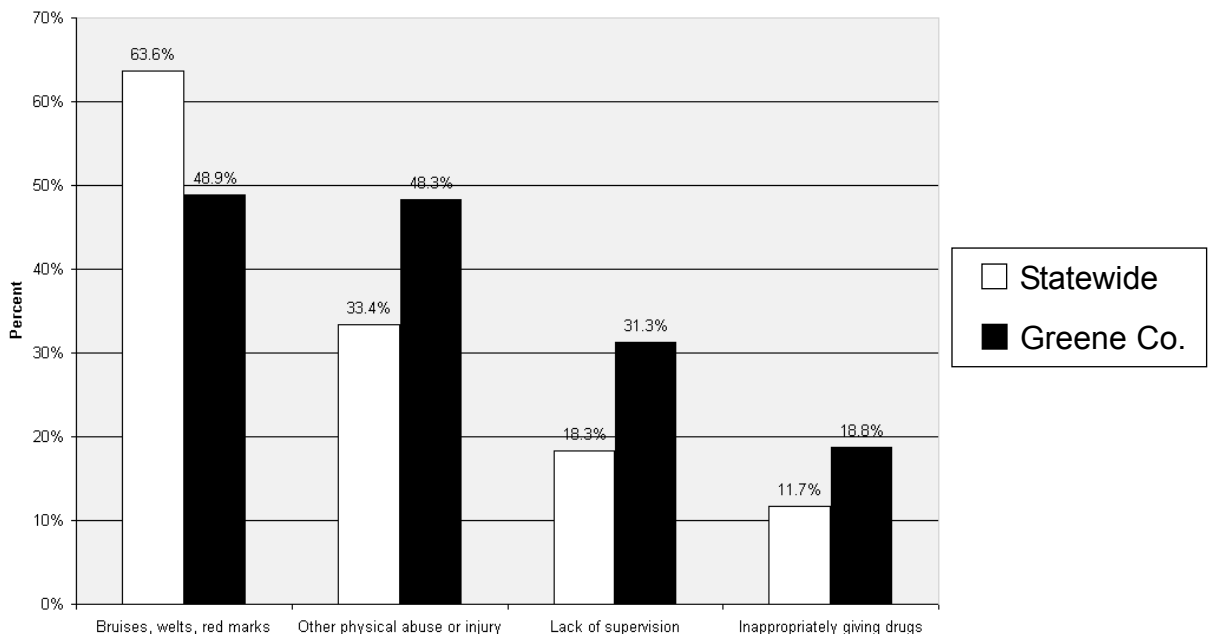


GRAPH B

Worker Findings for Physically Abused Children

Percent is the percentage of all physically abused children. Up to 31 findings can be cited for each child.

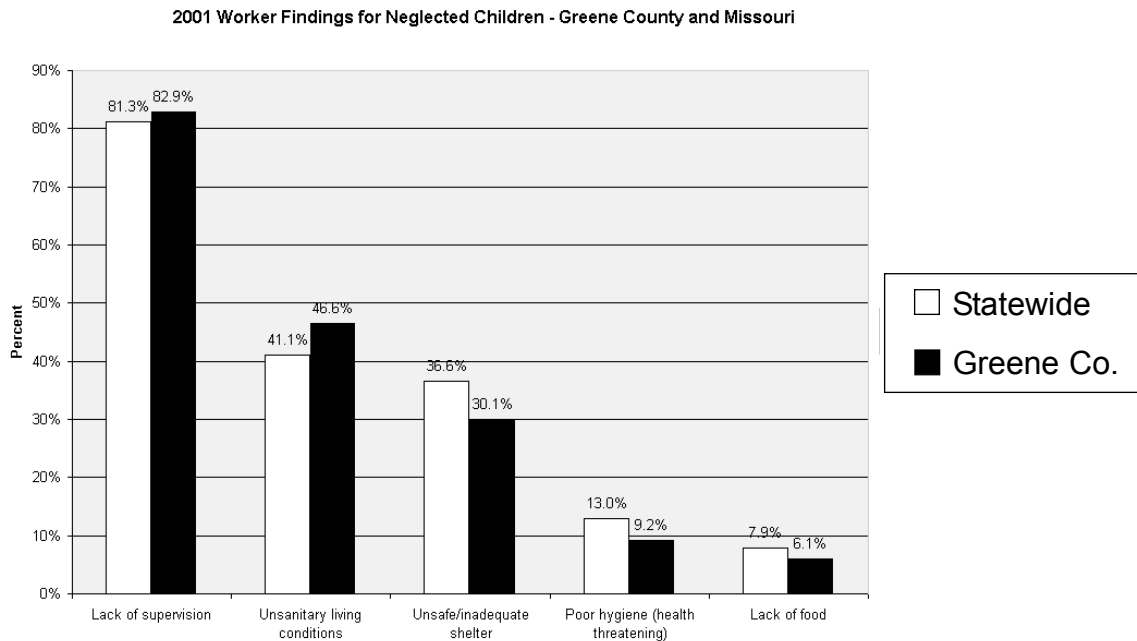
2001 Worker Findings for Physically Abused Children - Greene County and Missouri



GRAPH C

Worker Findings for Neglected Children

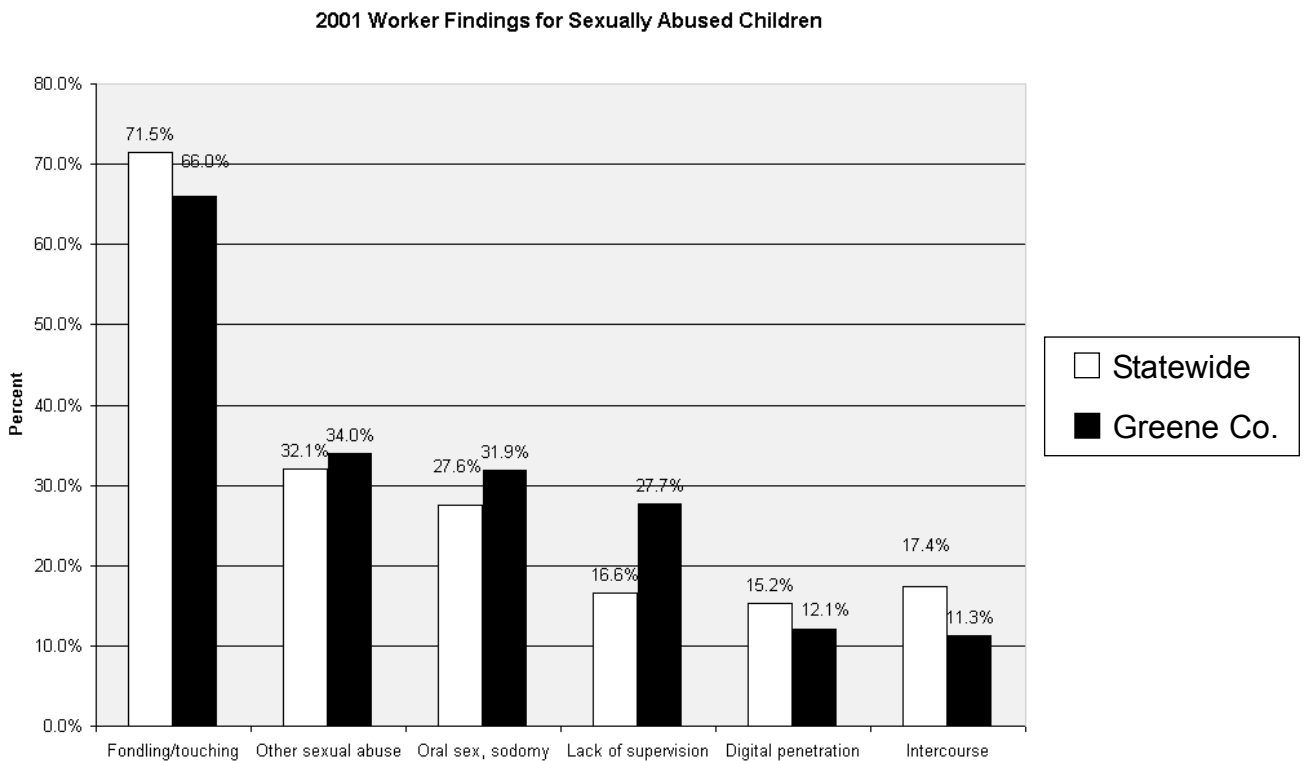
Percent is the percentage of all neglected children. Up to 31 findings can be cited for each child.



GRAPH D

Worker Findings for Sexually Abused Children

Percent is the percentage of all sexually abused children. Up to 31 findings can be cited for each child.

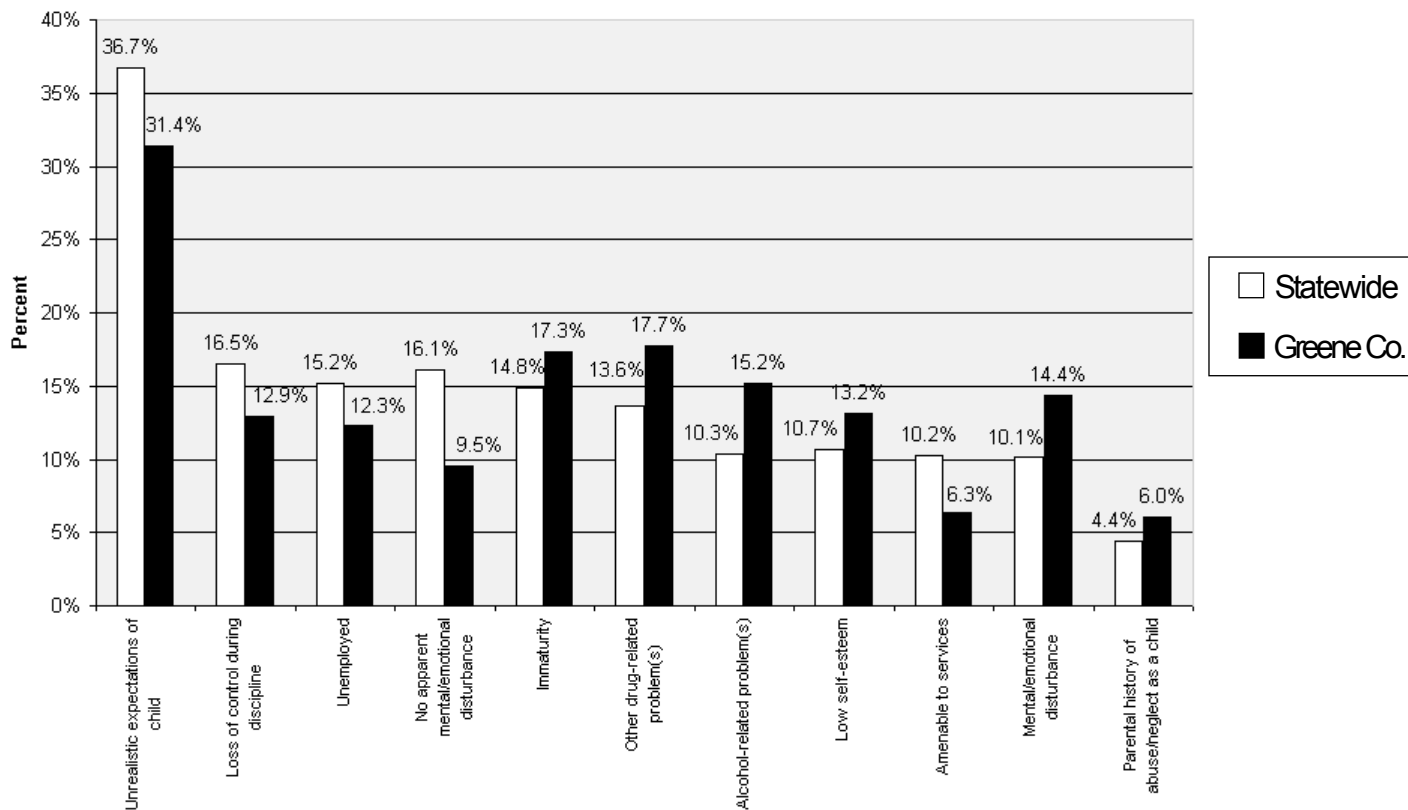


GRAPH E

Characteristics of Probable Cause Perpetrators

Percent is a percentage of the total number of probable cause perpetrators. Up to four characteristics can be cited for a perpetrator.

2001 Characteristics of Probable Cause Perpetrators



PROFILE C - GREENE CO. CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

The average age of children in out-of-home placement in Greene County is 8 years.¹³ The average length of stay in foster care here is 25.7 months.¹⁴ The state average is 20 months.¹⁵ Because of a shortage of foster homes in Greene County, our children are have been moved to 58 other counties and 12 states. The cost of foster care and residential treatment for Greene County’s children in FY 2001 was nearly \$3.5 million.¹⁶

