



## Facts About Young Children with Challenging Behaviors

### What is the **SIGNIFICANCE** of the issue?

- These children have a tremendous risk of school failure and adult lives characterized by violence, abuse, loneliness, and anxiety (McCord, 1978; Olweus, 1991).
- The developmental course is predictably negative for those who are “non-treated” or “poorly-treated” (Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Patterson & Fleishman, 1979; Wahler & Dumas, 1986).
- Early appearing behavior problems in a child’s preschool career are the single best predictor of delinquency in adolescence, gang membership, and adult incarceration (Dishion, French, & Patterson, 1995; Reid, 1993).
- If challenging behaviors are not altered by the end of the third grade, it appears that they should be treated as a chronic condition, hopefully kept somewhat in check by *continuing and ever more costly* intervention (Dodge, 1993).
- The absence of one comprehensive service delivery system dictates the need for systems of care - weaving together multiple existing services or programs into a cohesive, collaborative system. Evidence exists to show that interlocking and interconnected systems of care have been effective with older children and adults (Smith & Fox, 2003).
- The database on service utilization is sparse making it difficult to compare and contrast different approaches to identification, screening, referral and access to service (Fixsen, Powell & Dunlap, 2003).

### What are the **COSTS** of failing to address these challenging behaviors?

- Children who grow into adolescence with challenging behaviors are likely to drop out of school, be arrested, abuse drugs and alcohol, have marginalized adult lives, and die young (Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995).
- There is evidence to show that young children with challenging behavior are more likely to experience:
  - early and persistent peer rejection (Coie & Dodge, 1998);
  - mostly punitive contacts with teachers (Strain et al., 1983);
  - family interaction patterns that are unpleasant for *all* participants (Patterson & Fleishman, 1979);
  - school failure (Tremblay, 2000; Kazdin, 1993), and;
  - high risk of fatal accidents, substance abuse, divorce, unemployment, psychiatric illness, and early death (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Kazdin, 1985).

### What **POSITIVE OUTCOMES** can be expected from early intervention services that address these challenging behaviors?

- Decreased risk of withdrawal, aggression, non-compliance, and disruption (Strain & Timm, 2001).
- Treatment impact on fears, phobias, depression, anxiety, hyperactivity, conduct, and obsessive-compulsive disorders.
- Positive peer relationships including understanding of friendship, cooperation, and sharing (Denham & Burton, 1996).
- Increased self-control, self-monitoring, and self-correction and improved social-emotional health (Webster-Stratton, 1990).
- Academic success (Walker, et al., 1998).
- Reduced risk for teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, and special education placement (Strain & Timm, 2001).

- Coie, J.K. & Dodge, K.A. (1998). Aggression and antisocial behavior. In W. Damon (Editor in Chief) and N. Eisenberg (Vol. Ed.), Handbook of child psychology, 5th edition. Volume 3. Social, emotional, and personality development. NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Dishion, T.J., French, D.C., & Patterson, G.R. (1995). The development and ecology of antisocial behavior. In D. Cicchetti & D.J. Cohen (Eds.), Developmental psychopathology, Vol. 2: Risk, disorder, and adaptation (pp. 421-471). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Denham, S.A., & Burton, R. (1996). A social-emotional intervention for at-risk 4-year olds. Journal of School Psychology, 34(3), 225-245.
- Dodge, K. (1993). The future of research on conduct disorder. Development and Psychopathology, 5, 311-320.
- Fixsen, D., Powell, D., & Dunlap, G. (2003). Pathways to Service Utilization: A synthesis of Evidence Relevant to Young Children with Challenging Behavior. Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior. [www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org).
- Kazdin, A. (1993). Adolescent mental health: Prevention and treatment programs. American Psychologist, 48, 127-141.
- Kazdin, A. (1985). Treatment of antisocial behavior in children and adolescents. Homewood, IL: Dorsey.
- Lipsey, M.W. & Derzon, J.H. (1998). Predictors of violent or serious delinquency in adolescence and early adulthood: A synthesis of longitudinal research. In R. Loeber & D.P. Farrington (Eds.), Serious & violent juvenile offenders: Risk factors and successful interventions (pp. 86-105). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McCord, J. (1978). A thirty year follow-up of treatment effects. American Psychologists, 33, 284-289.
- Olweus, D. (1991). Bully/victim problems among school children: Basic facts and effects of a school-based intervention program. In D. Pepler & K Rubin (Eds.), The development and treatment of childhood aggression (pp. 411-446). London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Patterson, G.R. & Fleishman, M. J. (1979). Maintenance of treatment effects: Some considerations concerning family systems and follow-up data. Behavior Therapy, 10, 168-185.
- Reid, J.B. (1993). Prevention of conduct disorder before and after school entry: Relating interventions to developmental findings. Development and Psychopathology, 5, 243-262.
- Smith, B. J., & Fox, L. (2002). Systems of Service Delivery: A Synthesis of Evidence Relevant to Young Children at Risk for or Who Have Challenging Behavior. [www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org)
- Strain, P.S., Lambert, D., Kerr, M.M., Stragg, V., & Lenker, D. (1983). Naturalistic assessment of children's compliance to teacher's requests and consequences for compliance. Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 16, 243-249.
- Strain, P.S. & Timm, M.A. (2001). Remediation and prevention of aggression: An evaluation of the RIP Program over a quarter century. Behavioral Disorders, 26(4), 297-313.
- Tremblay, R.E. (2000). The development of aggressive behavior during childhood: What have we learned in the past century? International Journal of Behavioral Development, 24, 129-141.
- Wahler, R. & Dumas, J.E. (1986). "A chip off the old block:" Some interpersonal characteristics of coercive children across generations. In P. Strain, M. Guralnick, & H.M. Walker (Eds.), Children's social behavior: Development, assessment, and modification (pp. 49-91). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Walker, H.M., Kavanaugh, K., Stiller, B., Golly, A., Severson, H.H., & Feil, E. (1998). First Step to Success: An early intervention approach for preventing school antisocial behavior. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 6(2), 66-80.
- Webster-Stratton, C. (1990). Long-term follow-up of families with young conduct-problem children: From preschool to grade school. Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 19(2), 144-149.

November, 2004