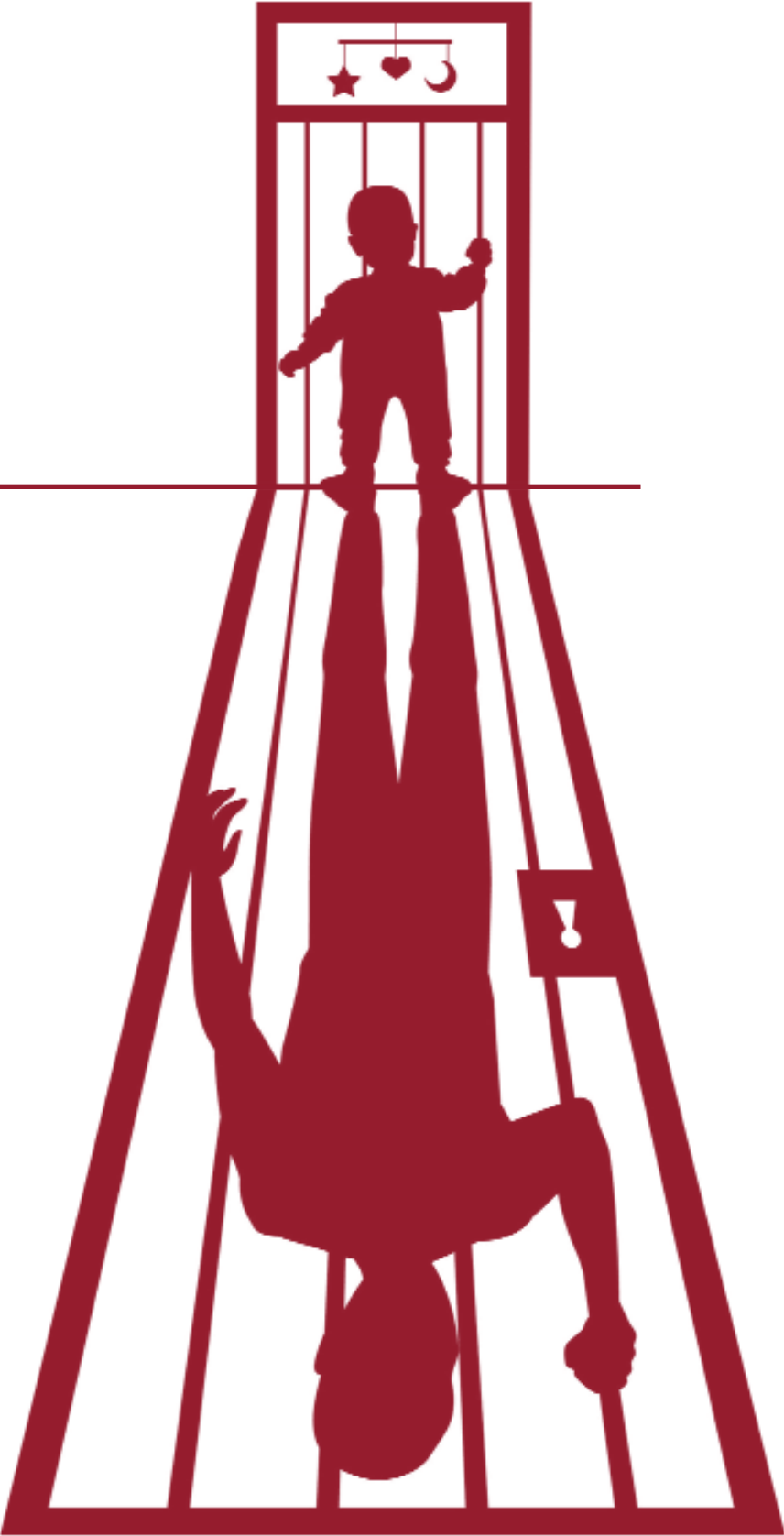


Part I

Chapter 2



Faces of Children at Risk of or in the Pipeline

Unless otherwise noted, photographs are by Steve Liss, a 30-year veteran photographer for *Time Magazine*. We recommend his moving book, *No Place for Children: Voices from Juvenile Detention* (University of Texas Press, 2005).



Poverty

Poverty is the largest driving force behind the *Cradle to Prison Pipeline* crisis, exacerbated by race. Although a majority of poor children live in working families playing by the rules, they cannot earn enough to escape poverty. A minimum wage job pays only 58.9 percent of the federal poverty level for a family of four. Livable wages and increases in income supplements like the Earned Income and Child Tax Credits and work supports like child care and health care can close the poverty gap.

Child poverty in America continues to grow. In 2006, 17.4 percent of children in America, 13 million children (one in six), were poor. Today there are 1.2 million more children living in poverty than there were in 2000, an increase of 11 percent. Children under the age of five remain more likely to be poor than older children, with 4.2 million living in poverty, one out of every five.

More than half of all poor children live in 10 states:

Ten states with the greatest number of poor children, 2005-2006

	Number	Percent
California	1,697,024	18.1%
Texas	1,527,262	23.9
New York	888,344	20.0
Florida	689,315	17.5
Illinois	543,373	17.1
Ohio	508,703	18.7
Georgia	484,525	20.2
Pennsylvania	464,686	16.9
Michigan	445,142	18.3
North Carolina	429,169	20.2

Ten states (and the District of Columbia) with the highest child poverty rates, 2005-2006

	Number	Percent
District of Columbia	36,678	32.6%
Mississippi	220,420	29.5
Louisiana	298,228	27.8
New Mexico	127,823	25.6
West Virginia	96,386	25.2
Oklahoma	212,672	24.3
Arkansas	164,545	24.3
Texas	1,527,262	23.9
Alabama	253,108	23.0
Kentucky	223,296	22.8
Tennessee	322,483	22.7





There are more poor White (4.2 million) than Black (3.8 million) or Latino children (4.1 million) although Black and Latino children are disproportionately poor. Poverty afflicts rural, urban and suburban areas. U.S. child poverty rates exceed those of all other (and less) wealthy industrialized nations and are a national disgrace. We need leaders and citizens who will commit to ending child poverty by 2015 in the richest nation on earth.

Child poverty is not inevitable. It's a national choice that we can change with political and moral leadership.

In the richest nation on earth, 35.3 percent of Black children, 28.0 percent of Latino children and 10.8 percent of White, non-Latino children live in poverty. Almost half of Louisiana's and Mississippi's Black children are poor.

Number and Rate of Children Living in Poverty in 2006

Ranked by number poor:			Ranked by poverty rate:		
State	Number	Rate	State	Number	Rate
Black Children			Black Children		
United States	3,776,153	35.3%	United States	3,776,153	35.3%
Georgia	276,929	33.6	Louisiana	201,830	48.4
Texas	275,457	34.8	Mississippi	160,287	47.6
Florida	266,813	32.0	Oklahoma	35,312	46.1
New York	259,728	32.0	Minnesota	36,453	45.3
Illinois	220,177	38.8	Wisconsin	50,369	44.9
Louisiana	201,830	48.4	Kentucky	38,829	44.5
North Carolina	189,568	36.1	Missouri	84,620	43.0
California	178,111	28.5	Arkansas	56,589	42.6
Michigan	171,849	40.7	Ohio	168,021	42.0
Ohio	168,021	42.0	District of Columbia	33,088	41.7
Latino Children (may be of any race)			Latino Children (may be of any race)		
United States	4,112,200	28.0%	United States	4,112,200	28.0%
California	1,133,514	26.3	Montana	3,150	42.3
Texas	972,344	36.1	Kentucky	10,622	40.1
New York	299,317	34.0	Tennessee	25,546	39.8
Florida	193,806	22.3	Oklahoma	34,521	37.5
Arizona	185,672	29.3	Pennsylvania	66,609	37.1
Illinois	148,831	22.2	Massachusetts	58,420	35.7
Colorado	95,628	23.7	Rhode Island	14,827	35.5
New Jersey	87,013	26.6	Arkansas	17,541	34.8
New Mexico	79,405	31.9	Wisconsin	31,157	34.7
Georgia	70,939	39.2	Texas	972,344	33.7
White, non-Latino Children			White, non-Latino Children		
United States	4,506,802	10.8%	United States	4,506,802	10.8%
Ohio	287,316	13.6	West Virginia	86,170	24.4
New York	269,581	11.4	Kentucky	162,406	19.6
California	241,847	8.3	Oklahoma	99,078	18.1
Texas	240,752	9.9	Arkansas	81,785	17.7
Pennsylvania	223,096	10.8	Maine	41,895	16.5
Michigan	206,928	11.9	Tennessee	161,671	16.1
Florida	204,570	10.3	Mississippi	53,416	14.1
Indiana	165,054	13.6	Indiana	165,054	13.6
Kentucky	162,406	19.6	Louisiana	80,406	13.6
Tennessee	161,671	16.1	Ohio	287,316	13.6

Source: 2006 American Community Survey

Note: Poverty measures in the American Community Survey are derived from 12 monthly samples and are not comparable to the calendar year estimates from the March ASEC. Calculations by CDF.





Child poverty is costly. Every year that 13 million children live in poverty costs the nation \$500 billion in lost productivity. Child poverty could be eliminated for \$55 billion a year and could be paid for by the tax cuts currently received by the top one percent of taxpayers. The \$100 billion a year we are spending on the Iraq war could lift every child in America from poverty twice over.

Race

Racial disparity runs through every major system impacting children's life chances: limited access to health care; lack of early Head Start and quality preschool experiences; children waiting in foster care for permanent families; and failing schools with harsh discipline policies that suspend, expel and discourage children who drop out and don't graduate and push more children into juvenile detention and adult prison. We must identify key decision points where disparate treatment of poor children of color can and must be systematically addressed and monitored.





Photo © David Rae Morris

A black boy born in 2001 has a 1 in 3 chance of going to prison in his lifetime; a Latino boy a 1 in 6 chance; and a White boy a 1 in 17 chance. Black juveniles are about four times as likely as their White peers to be incarcerated. Black youths are almost five times and Latino youths are more than twice as likely to be incarcerated as White youths for drug offenses. Today, 580,000 Black males are serving sentences in state or federal prison, while fewer than 40,000 Black males earn a bachelor's degree each year.

Black children are twice as likely as White children to be put in programs for mental retardation; almost twice as likely to be retained in a grade; three times as likely to be suspended; and 50 percent more likely to drop out of school. Although Black children constitute 16 percent of the child and youth population, they constitute 32 percent of those in foster care. Minority youth make up 39 percent of the juvenile population but are 60 percent of committed juveniles.





Single Parents

Black babies are almost twice as likely as White babies to be born to teen parents and grow up in single parent households. Single mother households are almost six times as likely to be poor as two parent households. Latino children are 40 percent more likely than White children to grow up in single parent homes; 56 percent of Black children, 29 percent of Latino children, and 21 percent of White children live in single parent households.

Each year over 400,000 babies are born to teen mothers. Teen birth rates dropped significantly between 1991 and 2004 although out of wedlock rates have increased. Today, 35.8 percent of all babies, 68.8 percent of Black babies, 46.4 percent of Latino babies, 62.3 percent of American Indian babies, and 30.5 percent of White babies are born to unmarried mothers.





Although many single parents are successfully raising children, children need the emotional and financial support and guidance of fathers as well as mothers. Teen pregnancy prevention and parenting preparation and support measures should be addressed to males and females. Poverty and basic skills levels are the largest predictors of who will become a teen parent and hope is the best contraceptive. Young people need both the capacity and the motivation to resist self limiting actions. They need to have a sense of a positive future they can attain and the supports to strive for it.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Need Support

There are 2.5 million grandparents raising their grandchildren; 963,000 of these children have no parent in the household. They need support. Strengthening kinship networks is crucial to keeping children out of the child welfare system and the juvenile and criminal justice systems.





Unmet Health and Mental Health Needs

If your family has money, you get psychiatric intervention.... If they don't, you get the prison psychologist.

- Ed Latessa, University of Cincinnati criminologist

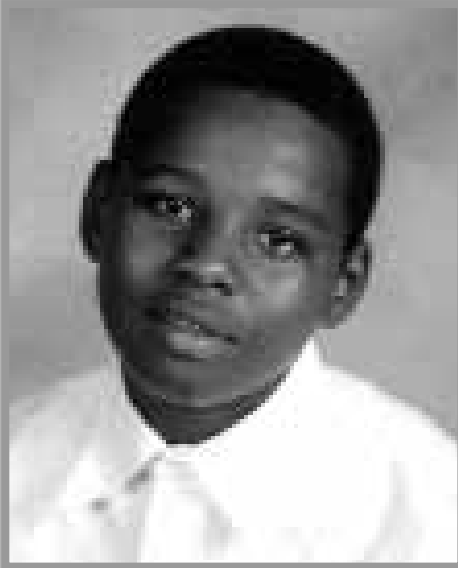
The future of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast does not depend on structures. Our future depends on our children. If we do not provide the safe, nurturing, predictable and enriched experiences these children need, and if we do not arm our caregivers, educators and mental health providers with the tools they need to understand, engage, educate and heal traumatized children, all these new buildings will be filled with struggling children growing into adulthood expressing only a fraction of their true potential.

**- Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., Senior Fellow,
The Child Trauma Academy, Houston, Texas**

In 2006, the number of uninsured children from birth through age 18 rose for the second year in a row. Another 707,000 children have become uninsured, bringing the total to more than 9.4 million uninsured children in America. This increase is more than double the jump from 2004 to 2005. It is a national disgrace that the richest nation on earth has actually increased the number of uninsured children, preventing them from getting the critical health coverage they need to grow and thrive.

Tavis Smiley's Covenant with Black America makes health security the first covenant. We applaud Rep. Bobby Scott from Virginia for introducing and the entire Congressional Black Caucus, as well as other Congresspeople (64 total), for co-sponsoring the *All Healthy Children Act* (H.R. 1688) and Senator Bernie Sanders from Vermont for introducing the Senate bill as S. 1564. This pending child health bill is the only bill that would cover *all* nine million uninsured children and pregnant women now, ensure a national health safety net with comprehensive benefits including mental and dental health coverage, and greatly simplify enrollment and retention procedures. It would cost about three months of the Iraq war or one half of the tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires.

More than 1,200 organizations, faith leaders and public officials across the country have endorsed CDF's Healthy Child Campaign. We must finish the job and hold our elected officials accountable in 2008 if they do not stand up for the health of *all* our children *now*.



**Deamonte Driver,
12 years old, from Maryland –
Died 2/25/07**

when bacteria from an abscessed tooth infected his brain, when a routine \$80 tooth extraction would have saved him.

**Devante Johnson,
14 years old, from Texas –
Died 3/1/07**

from kidney cancer after being wrongfully denied health coverage and the treatment he desperately needed.





A Congressional study found 15,000 children in juvenile detention facilities, some as young as 7 years old, solely because community mental health services were unavailable. Many parents are forced to declare themselves neglectful and abusive to get their children admitted to institutions in hopes of getting treatment. Too often, once in care, their children experience neglect and sometimes abuse. Youth in a Mississippi detention center were found by the Justice Department and courts to suffer sexual abuse by guards, cruel shackling, harassment and inhumane demands to eat their own vomit. Human rights abuses pervade too many child and youth detention facilities and group homes across America.

Our nation refuses to provide children and youths or adults access to crucial mental health coverage and services to detect and treat early on their problems before they drop out of school or become a threat to others. Lack of access to mental health services for parents and children pushes thousands of poor children into the Cradle to Prison Pipeline every year. Studies have reported that as many as three-fourths of incarcerated youths have mental health disorders and about 1 in 5 has a severe disorder. Latino children have the highest percentage of unmet mental health needs.



I hate my self.
I feel I could
die.

I'm so
stupid

I feel
loney

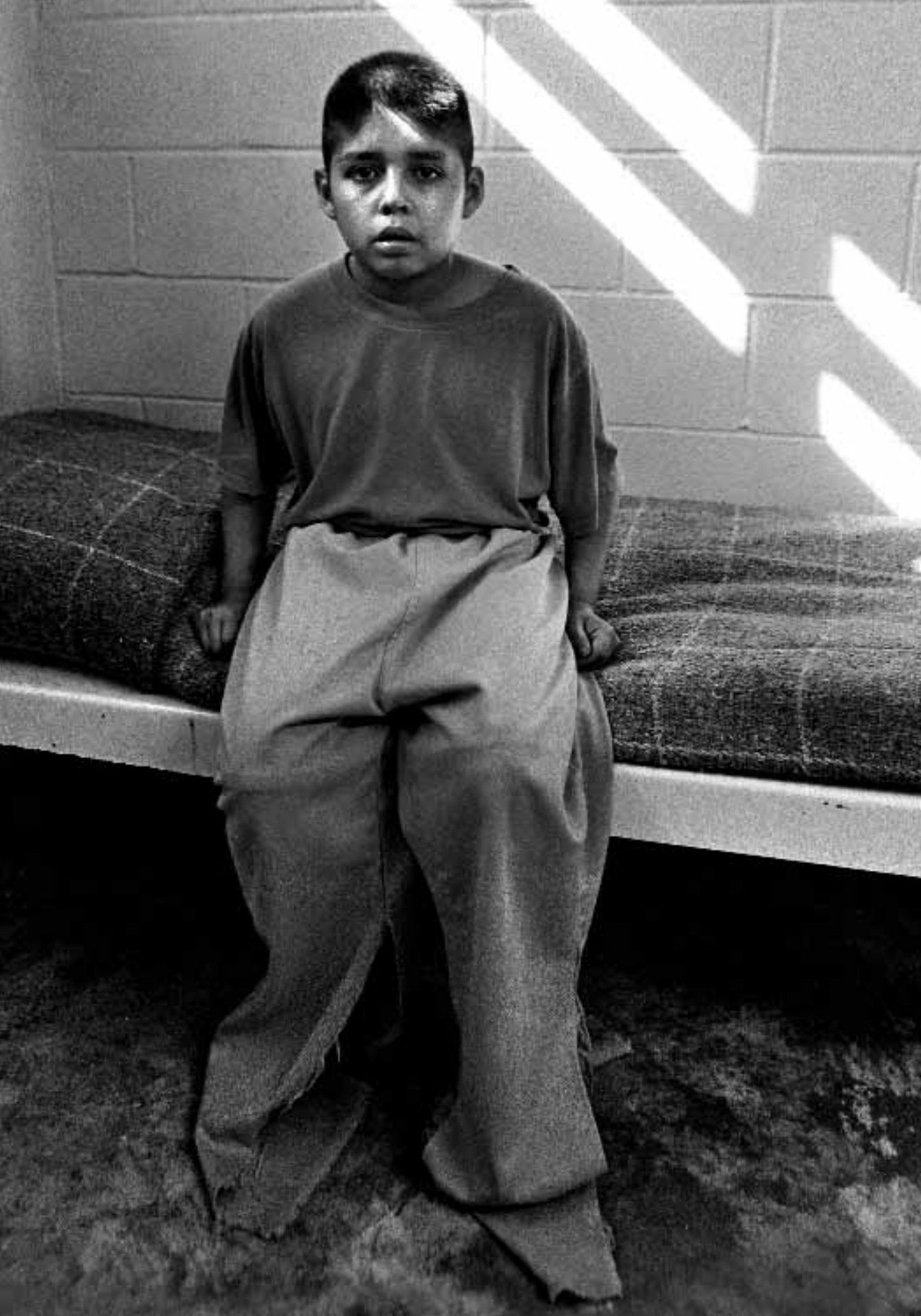


Every child's life is of equal value and every child should have a national health and mental health safety net now as seniors do. Children's chances to survive, thrive and grow should not depend on the compassion of a Governor or wealth of a state or the fickleness of political winds. A compassionate and sensible society must ensure thresholds of decency and protection for every child.

And Katrina's children are still waiting for relief from their post-traumatic stress disorders.



Photo © T.C. Perkins, Jr.



Criminalizing Children at Younger Ages

Schools use detention centers as their discipline. I get calls every week, if not every day, from parents about their children being taken out of school in handcuffs by police.

**–Margaret Burley, Ohio Coalition for the
Education of Children with Disabilities**

I sat at a desk and I had kids I couldn't even see...They weren't tall enough. I wondered, "What in the world could you have done?"

**–Mark Reed, Juvenile Court Administrator,
Hamilton County, Ohio**

A 5-year-old girl in St. Petersburg, Florida, was arrested and handcuffed by three police officers after she had stopped her temper tantrum and before her mother could arrive at school to consult with teachers. A 10-year-old girl was arrested in Philadelphia for having scissors in her backpack, which she had brought for use in class.

Have we adults lost our common sense, arresting and handcuffing 5-, 6-, 8- and 10-year-old children on school grounds and criminalizing children at younger and younger ages for offenses that used to be handled by schools or in communities?

One-size-fits-all zero tolerance school discipline policies need to be re-examined and changed. While it is important that schools be safe and orderly learning environments, the majority of suspensions, expulsions and arrests are for nonviolent offenses. Community and faith leaders need to meet with school officials to develop more child-appropriate discipline policies and procedures. Putting troubled children without treatment out of school just creates more troubled children.





Homelessness

An estimated 1.7 million children run away or are cast out of their homes every year; more than 3 out of 4 of them return home within a week. On any given night, 200,000 children are homeless, 1 in every 4 of the homeless population. Shelters are no place for children, who need a stable, safe place called home.

Many children and teens aging out of the child welfare system or leaving juvenile or adult detention often lack the most basic or adequate community transition supports. Targeted actions to meet the needs of young children at risk of entering the system and of older youth aging out of the system are crucial.





Girls in the Pipeline

Boys are five times as likely to be incarcerated as girls. But in 2003 almost 15,000 girls were incarcerated, 1 of every 7 juveniles in residential placement. While programs targeted to males are crucial and need to be expanded, attention and targeted services also must be provided to girls.

A Black girl has a 1 in 17 chance of going to prison in her lifetime; a Latino girl a 1 in 45 chance.





Substance Abuse

Drugs, tobacco and alcohol lead our children down the wrong path. Disconnected youth, lacking a decent education or high school degree, or job training skills, and social support systems or mentors, often resort to self-destructive acts. They thrive in the underground economy, denied a chance for honest work, a useful education or hope. In 2003, 74 percent of adult males arrested tested positive for drugs or alcohol.

Alcohol and other substance abuse treatment for youth and for parents and adults is in too short supply.





Juvenile Detention

A jail or detention cell after a child or youth gets into trouble is the only universally guaranteed child policy in America. It's time to guarantee every child in the richest nation on earth the health and mental health, early childhood experience, quality education, safe and stable housing and safe neighborhoods, and quality out-of-school time care they need to stay out of trouble and avoid imprisonment.

Reliance on punishment and incarceration too often as a first rather than last resort has given the U.S. the largest prison population in the world. In 2006, the United States' inmate population of 2,312,414 exceeded China's, whose population is more than four times as large. We need a paradigm change.





States spend on average nearly three times as much per prisoner as per public school pupil. In some states, the growth in prison costs exceeds the growth in higher education spending. It costs more to detain a child than to provide him a Head Start. What a wrongheaded investment policy.

At mid-year 2006, 837,000 African American men were incarcerated—many of them fathers. Zero tolerance drug laws, unequally applied, combined with poor skills and education, and lack of jobs, often exclude them from contributing to our economy. Reconnecting disconnected youth through education, job training and community support is essential. The increased incarceration of young men of color, disruption of family ties, and loss of ability to find work and vote after prison threaten to disempower minority communities and reverse the gains of the Civil Rights Movement.





Child Gun Deaths

A child or teen is killed by gunfire about every three hours—nearly eight a day. Over 101,000 children and teens have died from gunfire since 1979 with four to five times as many child gun injuries. In 2004, 2,845 children and teens died from guns—more than the number of American military deaths between 2003–2006 in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Black males ages 15–19 are about eight times as likely to be gun homicide victims as White males; White males ages 15–19 are twice as likely as Black males to commit suicide with a firearm.

Renewing the assault weapons ban, controlling illegal gun trafficking, funding more community policing and positive community alternatives to the streets for children, teaching nonviolent conflict resolution skills and values in our homes, congregations and schools, and avoiding and opposing violent Internet and video games and messages are all needed steps to controlling the epidemic violence that terrorizes children and adults all across America in the war zones of our cities and rural areas.

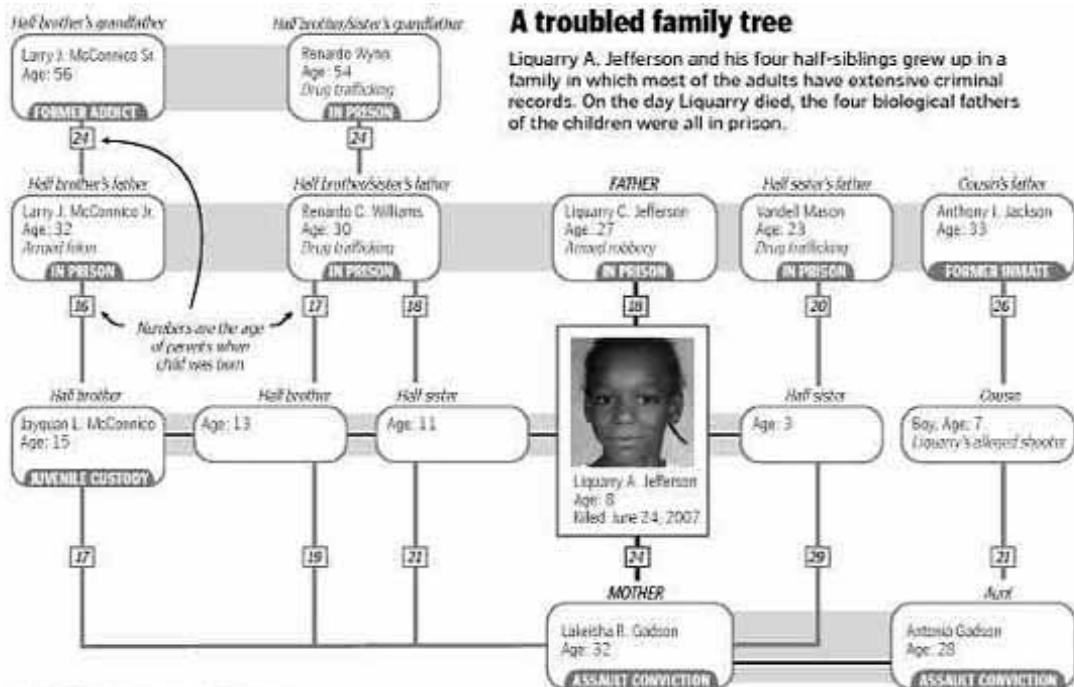
Intergenerational Transmission of Violence

The *Boston Globe* recently chronicled the tragic life and death of 8-year-old Liquarry A. Jefferson, killed June 24, 2007—shot to death accidentally by his 7-year-old cousin. Both boys lived in Grove Hill, a violence saturated neighborhood and in a family in which most of the adults have extensive criminal records. On the day Liquarry died, the four biological fathers of Liquarry and his four half siblings were all in prison. The bad news about Liquarry’s premature gun death, the article noted, is that “crime in many neighborhoods runs in families, where elders bequeath gang membership, drug abuse, joblessness and brutality to their offspring like a toxic inheritance. In Grove Hill, police estimate that 2.4 percent of the area’s 19,000 residents cause most of the serious crime. Many of those people, police say, are related.”

While this points to the need for intensive, targeted community law enforcement and social services action in crime saturated neighborhoods and families, the *good news* is that over 97 percent of the children and families are not serious criminals and can be helped to escape the Pipeline with one or more interventions. An unusual initiative underwritten by the Boston Foundation launched in 2003, called the Comprehensive Community Safety Initiative, targeted high crime families “not just with patrol cars, but with social services that might help the next generation break with tradition.” But the larger need is to ensure a healthy, safe and fair start for the overwhelming majority of children struggling to grow up in poor neighborhoods everywhere.

A troubled family tree

Liquarry A. Jefferson and his four half-siblings grew up in a family in which most of the adults have extensive criminal records. On the day Liquarry died, the four biological fathers of the children were all in prison.



A REIGN OF TERROR IN GROVE HALL



- Oct. 31, 1990:** Kimberly Rae Harbour gang-raped and killed *Larry McConico Jr.*, 15, the father of Lakeisha Gadson's first child is a witness for the prosecution. He later refused to testify at the suspect's trial and was sentenced to three months in prison for contempt.
- Jan. 10, 1993:** *Laricia McConico*, 19-year-old sister of Larry McConico, 17, is shot to death.
- Feb. 15, 1993:** *Larry McConico*, 17, beats and kicks Antonia Gadson, 13, the sister of 18-year-old *Lakeisha Gadson*. He gets probation and a suspended sentence.
- May 22, 1996:** *Lakeisha Gadson*, 20, files a restraining order against Renardo Williams, 19, the father of her second son and first daughter, after he beat her.
- Feb. 20, 1997:** Garrett Marshall beaten and stabbed to death in a friend's apartment over a drug dispute with two 17-year-old men, one is *Liquarry C. Jefferson*, father of Liquarry A. Jefferson. Jefferson is imprisoned for manslaughter.
- June 28, 1998:** *Lakeisha Gadson*, 23, gets probation for assaulting a former girlfriend of Liquarry C. Jefferson.
- Aug. 12, 1998:** *Liquarry C. Jefferson*, 18, beats *Lakeisha Gadson*, 24, with a barbel and belt while she is pregnant with his son.
- Sept. 28, 2001:** *Lakeisha*, 27, and *Antonia Gadson*, 19, are charged with armed robbery after they were part of a group that beat the staff of a Burger King with broom handles after they had to wait in line for additional food.
- Aug. 5, 2003:** *Lakeisha Gadson* gets six-month suspended sentence for assaulting police officers who asked her to leave the front steps of her apartment building.
- Sept. 14, 2003:** *Vandell Mason*, the father of Liquarry Jefferson's youngest half sibling, arrested for selling crack cocaine near a school.
- March 15, 2004:** *Lakeisha Gadson*, 29, her sister *Antonia*, 25, and her 12-year-old son *Jayquan McConico* allegedly beat and stab a woman after an incident involving teasing of the victim's disabled son.
- April 19, 2004:** *Jayquan McConico*, 12, oldest brother of *Liquarry A. Jefferson*, shot in the leg in drive-by shooting. The boys' aunt, *Antonia Gadson*, is grazed.
- Aug. 2, 2004:** William Bendolph and his stepson shot to death. *Renardo Williams*, 27, the father of two of Liquarry A. Jefferson's half siblings; tried and acquitted of the killings.
- June 24, 2007:** Eight-year-old *Liquarry A. Jefferson* accidentally shot to death by his 7-year-old cousin.



Community Supports, Role Models and Mentors

Too many children have too few positive alternatives to the streets or positive mentors and role models after school and in summers when parents work. The drug dealers and gang leaders are available and busy seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Families and community institutions must compete with them. The cultural messages that glamorize and normalize gun violence and prison, abusive treatment of women and disrespectful racial and gender stereotypes are relentless. Counter messages and values must be transmitted by anchor institutions in our society so that children have a positive vision of who they are and can become, and grow up with respect for others and for life because they are respected and their lives are valued. Families, faith leaders, women leaders, civil rights leaders, early childhood teachers and educators at all levels must raise their voices against demeaning and destructive cultural messages from within and without our communities and must stop patronizing those who undermine our children's healthy and safe development and perpetuate racial stereotypes and underachievement.

Equally important, we need to open up our congregational, school and community center doors to the children of our community and engage them in purposeful and enriching activities. In summer 2007, 124 CDF Freedom Schools® sites operated by college mentor-teachers served nearly 8,500 children ages 5–16. Vacation Bible Schools need to become *CDF Freedom Schools* sites in every neighborhood where children need quality summer programs and after-school programs throughout the year that foster a love of learning and an ethic of service and achievement.



Photo © T.C. Perkins, Jr.



All children need mothers and fathers and strong positive male and female role models and mentors of all colors and backgrounds in their homes, schools, child serving institutions and public life. They need permanent family connections. They need to see sound examples of who and what they can become from the adults they see in daily life and at important stages in their development. That so few Black and Latino male teachers are in our schools and that so many teachers do not live in the communities of the children they serve needs to be addressed in our diverse society. In the entire state of South Carolina, there are fewer than 200 Black male elementary school teachers.

Continuing and expanded efforts encouraging talented and committed young people to enter teaching and to work with children and youth are crucial—as is stressing the importance of parenting and family.



Photo © T.C. Perkins, Jr.



Children need to be empowered and trained to make a difference and to know the difference between service and justice. *CDF Freedom Schools* children in Ohio and all across the country stood up for health coverage for all nine million children in America by visiting the local offices of their members of Congress. In past years, Freedom Schools children have protested gun violence against children in their communities.