

The Economics of Child Abuse

A Study of California

A Report by Safe & Sound

Child maltreatment is a persistent and pervasive problem throughout California. Although it is a hidden social ill, its impact is significant. Child maltreatment impacts not just the child, but the family, the community, and society at large. In California, as many as one out of every 19 children is suspected of being maltreated. The impact of maltreatment not only morally degrades our society, it significantly hurts our economy. In fact, the physical, mental, and emotional effects of maltreatment persist long after child maltreatment occurs, and result in ongoing costs to every sector of California.

Child maltreatment is a core underlying factor in many of California's ongoing struggles, such as high rates of school dropout, homelessness, incarceration, and chronic health issues. This report shines a light on this largely ignored issue and the negative impact it has on all of us.



California	\$19.31B
Bay Area	\$2.00B (19% of CA population)
SF	\$0.20B (11% of Bay Area population)

The Financial Impact of Child Maltreatment

The cumulative financial impact on California for the 71,289 verified child victims in 2017 is \$19.31 billion. These costs are accrued over the course of the victim's lifetime, however these costs will continue to accumulate each year, until we are able to reduce and ultimately end child maltreatment.

In 2017, Safe & Sound published a report titled *The Economics of Child Abuse: A Study of San Francisco*, finding the cost to be \$0.2B in San Francisco alone. Later that year we expanded our work to assess the greater Bay Area, finding the impact to be \$2B. Now, we have undertaken this report to look at the entire state of California, finding the financial impact to be \$19.31B.

\$268,544

Individual lifetime cost of child maltreatment survivors in 2017

× **71,156**

Substantiated survivors of child maltreatment in California in 2017

+ **\$207,024,000**

Cost for the 133 fatalities from child maltreatment in 2017

= **\$19,315,559,000**

Total economic burden incurred by the California community for the lifetime costs associated with the victims of child maltreatment in 2017

** Numbers in calculation have been rounded.*

Read the full report: <http://economics.safeandsound.org>

California's Community Risk Factors

A variety of factors make individuals and families more vulnerable to maltreatment. Risk factors are often related to life experiences, such as being a victim of maltreatment. Other risk factors are biological predispositions such as mental illness, or those related to one's community.

These factors place children at greater risk for maltreatment:

Socioeconomic Inequality & Poverty

Today, the gap between the rich and poor is twice as large in California as it was in 1980. Research suggests that income, or socioeconomic status, is the strongest predictor of maltreatment rates.

Lack of Adequate & Affordable Housing

Californians spend a disproportionate amount of their income on housing. California's median monthly housing costs were 47 percent higher than the U.S. median. In addition to increasing families' stress, lack of affordable housing leads to greater rates of cohabitation.

High Unemployment Rates

Although unemployment in California is historically low—4.2 percent as of June 2018—concentrated areas of unemployment persist. High levels of unemployment increase economic uncertainty and stress for families.

Homelessness

As of a 2017 point-in-time count, more than 112,000 individuals were homeless in California—more than 21,000 of whom were in families. Homelessness is a major driver of temporary family separation, not only increasing family stress but also the number of caregivers in a child's life.

Community Violence

Across the state, families exposed to a culture of violence often experience trauma, strain, and fear, all of which increase the likelihood of child maltreatment.

Substance Abuse

From 2014-2016, an estimated 6.37 percent of the California population consumed a problematic amount of alcohol. Families with problematic alcohol or drug use often experience trauma, strain, and fear.

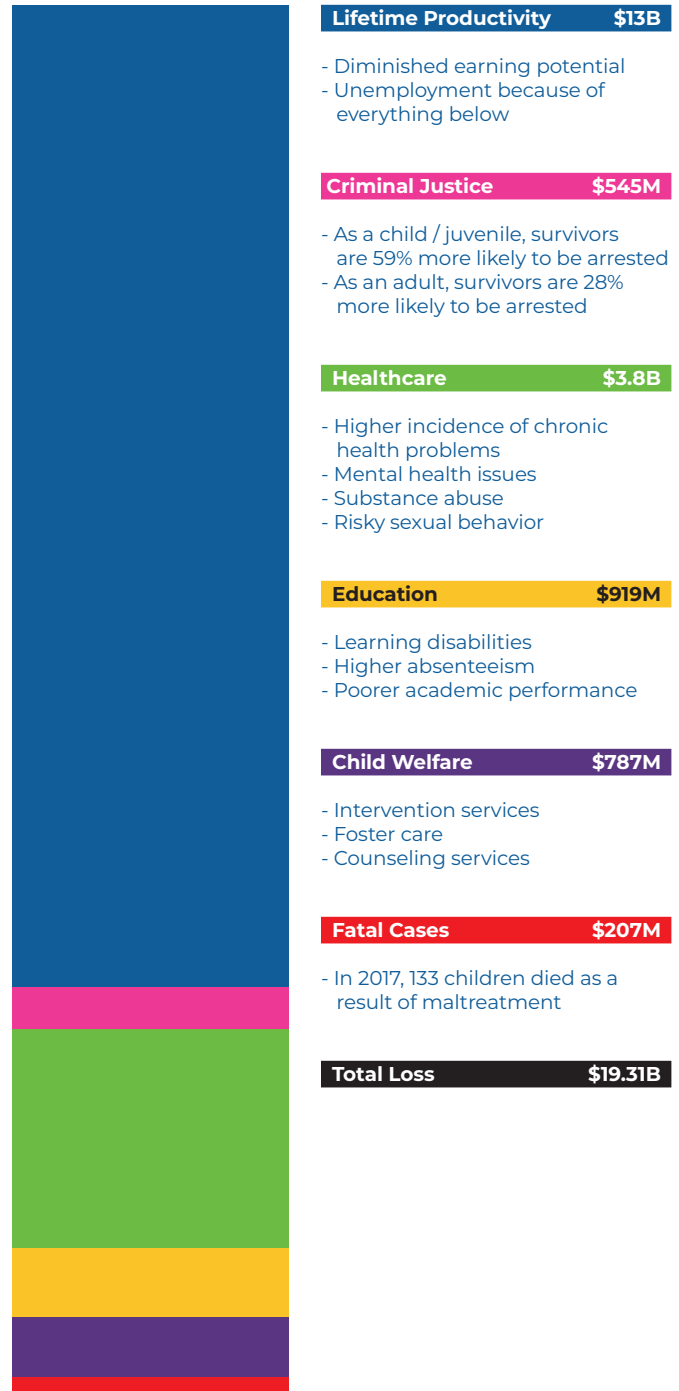
Social Isolation & Marginalization

In 2016, 27 percent of Californians were foreign-born and California's U.S.-born population was characterized by churn and turnover. From 2007-2016, about 5 million people moved to California from other states, while about 6 million left California, leading to deteriorated social and support networks.

Wildfires & Natural Disasters

In the last several years, wildfires have posed an ever-growing threat to Californians. For example, between July 2017 and July 2018, Sonoma County experienced several wildfires and saw a 35 percent increase in reports of child maltreatment, as well as increases in substance abuse and domestic violence.

Breakdown of \$19.31B



Strengthening Families.
Ending Child Abuse.

Safe & Sound is a children's advocacy organization working to prevent, stop, and ultimately end child abuse. Citations are available in full report. This report is based on *The Economics of Child Abuse: A Study of San Francisco*, a collaboration between Safe & Sound and Haas School of Business Social Sectors Solution program. This work was funded by: Blue Shield of California Foundation, the California Department of Social Services - Office of Child Abuse Prevention, Casey Family Programs, County Welfare Directors Association of California, S.H. Cowell Foundation, The Golden Door Foundation, The HAND Foundation, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation.