

LANE COUNTY CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION CLIMATE SURVEY

FULL REPORT

January 2016

Jeff Todahl, Phyllis Barkhurst, Kayla Watford

To go fast, go alone.
To go far, go together.

- East African Proverb

Among all participants, 98.4% agreed or strongly agreed that one of the most important responsibilities of adulthood is to ensure the safety of all children.

Center for the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect
5251 University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403-5251
541-346-7484



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
College of Education

CENTER FOR THE **PREVENTION** OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Introduction

Child abuse and neglect¹ is a complex, persistent, distressing and quite common social problem in Lane County, Oregon and across the world. There has been much research conducted in the past 30 years that document the high rates of child abuse and neglect and its long-term impact on survivors across the lifespan (Finkelhor, Shattuck, Turner, & Hamby, 2014). In Oregon in 2014, nearly 70,000 reports of suspected child abuse and neglect were made to child protective services – approximately 5,500 of these in Lane County (Oregon Child Safety Data Book, 2015). These figures very likely under represent actual rates of child abuse and neglect in Oregon. According to the Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (Sedlak, et al., 2010), three times as many children are abused and neglected than are known to Child Protective Services (CPS) agencies. In Lane County alone, 34.0% of participants in the *Child Abuse Prevention Climate Survey* (the study upon which this report is based), indicated that they experienced abuse or neglect in childhood. Given current population estimates, this translates to nearly 100,000 Lane County adults. Child abuse and neglect is much more, though, than statistics and reported rates – or headline news. It is painful and harmful for those who endure it, and for those that care for survivors and their families across the lifespan. It is largely preventable.

Because of advances in the field of prevention, there are some clear pathways ahead to significantly reduce child abuse and neglect in Lane County. Another layer of prevention is needed because, despite decades of concern, intervention, and determination by many, the prevalence of child abuse and neglect persists at unacceptably high levels. The vast majority of strategies designed to address and reduce child abuse and neglect in Lane County are delivered by government, law enforcement, and social service organizations. This sends a strong message that the work of preventing child abuse and neglect rests with government, law enforcement, and social service agencies. The framing of the issue of child abuse as one that is solely the concern of government or institutions obscures that there is a role for each Lane County resident to play a part in significantly reducing child abuse. Many studies have demonstrated that child abuse and neglect is lower in communities that have high levels of social connection and community involvement (Daro, 2010). Yet, although supportive and nurturing communities are vital for child abuse prevention, community-level and public health prevention efforts of this kind are rarely implemented in a systematic way in communities or counties.

Current interventions, delivered largely by government and Lane County social services organizations, generally emphasize parenting education and support, child protective services innovation (e.g., Differential Response), crisis intervention, counseling, respite, and early intervention. These approaches and services are vital in any effort to significantly reduce child abuse and neglect and warrant our support. For many members of our community, they are a lifeline and a pathway toward healing and change. However, existing strategies mostly respond to abuse and neglect *after* it has happened or implement interventions that target children and/or families known to meet specific risk factors for abuse and neglect. Most of these efforts do not directly address the underlying conditions that allow abuse and neglect to occur in the first place. They are not designed to do so. This leaves a need for an additional level of prevention to add to the efforts already occurring in Lane County; a level or prevention that is universal in approach.

¹ For a definition of child abuse and neglect used in this survey, please see Table 1.0.

The Purpose and Development of the Lane County Child Abuse Prevention Climate Survey

The *Child Abuse Prevention Climate Survey*² was designed to determine a baseline of information that identifies current thinking, attitudes, and knowledge relating to child abuse and neglect in Lane County, Oregon. It was also designed to provoke thinking and self-reflection, encourage conversation, and to inform the development of a locally-made, Lane County child abuse prevention strategic plan. The survey is one step and one part of the 90by30 Initiative. The 90by30 Initiative has a single aspirational goal: a 90% reduction in child abuse and neglect by 2030 in Lane County, Oregon. For more information about this initiative, please see <http://90by30.com>.

To meaningfully reduce child abuse we believe it is essential to first understand child abuse-related community attitudes, public opinion, and local social norms. Toward that end, the *Child Abuse Prevention Climate Survey* is designed to identify Lane County residents' beliefs about child abuse and its solutions. This information will provide a sense of direction toward a locally-made prevention plan. A child abuse prevention plan is much more likely to achieve real success if it fosters public input, builds on public opinion, recognizes the vital role of community involvement, draws on known successes in the community and elsewhere, and points to numerous avenues for participation by every Lane County resident, business, group and organization.

A randomized version of the survey will be administered every three years through Dec. 31st, 2030 as part of the effort to track changes in public attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors across the life of the 90by30 Initiative – and will measure those trends against a matched comparator county, Whatcom County, WA. During this same time period, the Center for the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect (CPAN) with numerous state, community, and funder partners will work together to more accurately measure the actual rates of child abuse and neglect in our community, versus reported rates, and will track this trend in relation to public attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and our locally-developed prevention plan.

The survey was designed, piloted and field tested by University of Oregon students, 90by30 staff, researchers from the Center for the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect, and nearly 500 Lane County resident volunteers. The development of the survey included 4 phases:

Table 1.0 – A Definition of Child Abuse & Neglect

Physical abuse: physically harming a child or doing something that could harm a child, such as hitting, slapping, hitting with objects, burning, and pushing hard.

Emotional abuse: insulting, humiliating, or otherwise putting a child down. For example, telling them they are hopeless, stupid, or no good.

Sexual abuse: any sexual contact from an adult or unwanted activities of a sexual nature, such as touching private body parts or showing private body parts.

Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence (Domestic Violence): children seeing or hearing adults being verbally, physical and/or sexually abusive toward a family member or other person in their household.

Child neglect: failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, access to education, supervision, and/or love and emotional support for a child.

² The Child Abuse Prevention Climate Survey was developed, piloted, and field tested by researchers and staff with the University of Oregon's Center for the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect, working in collaboration with UO students, Regional Leadership Team members, and nearly 500 Lane County resident volunteers.

- 1) Phase 1. Survey Construction, January – June 2013. Identification of survey purpose, survey priorities, theoretical assumptions, and key questions.
- 2) Phase 2. Pilot Test, June, 2013. The survey was distributed to 301 Lane County residents (non-randomized). It included 23 questions, 1 open-ended question, and several demographic questions (e.g., age, gender). The items were tested for clarity and reliability.
- 3) Phase 3. Field Test, November-December, 2013. Following the pilot test and review of the original questions, the survey was revised. It increased to 46 questions, 2 open-ended questions, and several demographic questions. The field test version of the survey was distributed to 133 Lane County residents. It was tested for average length of completion and item clarity, and specific feedback for final changes was provided by community volunteers.
- 4) Phase 4. Lane County Child Abuse Prevention Climate Survey. Implementation, April-May, 2014. The final draft of the survey (described below), was administered by phone to a random selection of Lane County (n=503) and Whatcom County, WA (n=425) residents.

A non-random, short-form of the survey in English and Spanish is currently being administered across Lane County in a variety of settings, including public libraries, farmer’s markets, community centers, and Dari Mart stores.

Characteristics of the Lane County Child Abuse Prevention Climate Survey

The final draft of the survey included 50 questions, 2 open-ended questions (described below), 2 scenarios, and several demographic questions³. It was administered to Lane County and Whatcom County, WA³ residents in April and May, 2014. All adult residents of each county with a land line or cell phone had an equal opportunity of being selected to participate. Participants who met the following conditions were eligible to participate:

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are age 18 or above, live in Lane County, OR (or, Whatcom County, WA), and are comfortable reading an English language survey online or completing an oral (voice) survey in English.

The survey was designed to better understand public attitudes, beliefs and behaviors associated with the following concepts and questions, among others:

- perceptions of neighborhood social connection and belonging; overall satisfaction with the community
- knowledge of child abuse and child abuse prevention efforts
- personal and community-wide commitment to reducing child abuse
- self-efficacy related to child abuse intervention, i.e., degree to which individuals feel confident about knowing what to do to reduce child abuse and neglect in our community

³ Whatcom County, WA was selected as a comparator community because it shares many similarities with Lane County.

- personal and community responsibility for child abuse and abuse prevention, i.e., degree to which individuals see themselves as having a direct role and responsibility in the safety of Lane County children
- perceived confidence in individual and community response to child abuse and neglect
- perceptions related to successful strategies for child abuse reduction
- recommendations for a prevention plan

Examples of Survey Items

Survey items and questions generally asked Lane County residents to rate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each item, for instance:

- 1) If you were to contact a pastor, priest, rabbi or other spiritual leader due to your concern about a child’s safety, how confident are you that it would be handled well?
- 2) One of the most important responsibilities of adulthood is to ensure the safety of children;
- 3) I know the key steps that must be taken to significantly reduce child abuse and neglect in Land County.

Participants were also asked to respond to several questions related to the following 2 scenarios:

Scenario 1: You notice that a 7 year-old child frequently plays outside in the front yard, alone and unsupervised. Car traffic is heavy, it is fairly cold outside, and the child is wearing a t-shirt. You are concerned about this child in this particular situation.

Scenario 2: In your opinion, a friend of yours is too strict with his 9 year-old son and 11 year-old daughter. You’ve also seen him be very rude toward his wife. You have good reason to believe that he recently shoved her into a wall during an argument, leading to three bruised ribs. The kids saw this happen. You’ve been worried about this for a long time and things seem to be getting worse.

Personal Experiences with Child Abuse and Neglect

Based on the definition of abuse and neglect we just shared with you, were you abused or neglected in childhood? In adulthood?

	<u>In Childhood, yes</u>		<u>In Adulthood, yes</u>
Female	37.7%	Female	30.8%
Male	31.1%	Male	14.2%

Finally, participants were asked to complete 2 open-ended questions:

Question 1: What do you believe is the single most important thing that must happen to significantly reduce child abuse and neglect in Lane County? Please briefly describe.

Question 2: I would be in full support of a local (Lane County-wide) effort to significantly reduce child abuse and neglect if I was sure that: _____.

Lane County Results⁴

Participants

- 503 Lane County adult residents
- 61.2% of the sample were female
- 26.7% of the sample were ages 18-44
- 35.8% were ages 45-64
- 35% were 65 and older
- Household size varied from one to eight members with 25% reporting one member, 39% two, 16% three, 11% four, and 9% five or more
- Household income was also widely distributed. When categorized as low (less than \$25,000), medium (\$25,001-\$74,999) and high (\$75,000 or greater), 22% of participants were in the lowest income bracket, 33% in the mid-level bracket, and 24% were in the highest bracket (Income level as a percent of the federal poverty guidelines, which incorporates both income and household size, is listed in Table 2.)
- Education levels roughly matched Lane County norms
- 46% of respondents have lived in Lane County between 10 to 40 years
- 33.4% of respondents have lived in Lane County for over 40 years
- Of the 465 participants who listed reliable zip codes, 68% (n=317) live in urban Lane County, 29% (n=148) live in rural Lane County.

Among all Lane County participants, 34% indicated that they were abused or neglected in childhood

Based on current Lane County adult population estimates, this represents nearly 100,000 Lane County residents. Whatcom County, WA, rates of abuse and neglect in childhood were virtually identical to Lane County rates with 34.8% of Whatcom County residents stating that they were abused or neglected in childhood.

- Childhood abuse rates by gender were similar (37.7% of females; 31.1% of males in Lane County)
- Rates of abuse in adulthood, however, varied significantly by gender; female participants were 2.7 times more likely to have answered yes to experiencing abuse in adulthood. Among all participants, 24% reported being abused in adulthood.
- Rates of child abuse and abuse in adulthood varied by income: For example, 51% of people who reported current household incomes of \$25,000 or less reported being abuse or neglected in childhood; rates were 23% for people with current household incomes above \$75,000. Rates of adult abuse and neglect with annual household incomes of less than \$25,000 was 41% compared to 19% for people with household income greater than \$75,000.
- Participants in this study reported similar rates of adult and childhood abuse and neglect in *urban* (Eugene, Springfield) and *rural* Lane County.

⁴ This report will focus on Lane County participant responses. On occasion, comparisons between Lane County and Whatcom County residents' responses will be presented. A separate report that more fully compares Lane and Whatcom County responses will be issued at a later date.

Table 2a
Demographic Characteristics of Lane County Participants

Characteristic	Number	Percent of Sample*
Gender		
Female	308	61.2
Male	191	38.0
Urban/Rural		
Urban	317	68.0
Rural	148	31.0
Education		
High school or GED	81	16.1
Some vocational	12	2.4
Vocational degree	16	3.2
Some college	97	19.3
2-year college degree	70	13.9
4-year college degree	99	19.7
Some graduate	21	4.2
Graduate degree	85	16.9
Parent/Caregiver of a Child		
Yes	390	77.5
No	109	21.7
# People Living in Home		
1	119	23.7
2	191	38.0
3	77	15.3
4	52	10.3
5	26	5.2
6 or more	24	4.8
Mandatory Reporter⁵		
Yes	160	31.8
No	286	56.9
I don't know	53	10.5

Table 2b
Survey Participants and U.S. 2014 Federal Poverty Level⁶

Federal Poverty %	Number	Percent of Sample*
0-132%	55	13.9
133-149%	66	16.7
150-199%	5	1.3
200-249%	21	5.3
250-299%	25	6.3
300-399%	38	9.6
400% or greater	185	46.8

* This reflects the percentage of participants who responded to the income question; 21% (n=108) did not respond.

⁵ Participants were asked: Are you a mandatory reporter of child abuse and neglect?

⁶ In 2014 the U.S. Federal poverty rate for a family of two living in Oregon is \$15,730, for a family of four \$23,850, and a family of six \$31,970.

Social Connection in Neighborhoods and Satisfaction with Lane County

Participants, overall, had positive feelings about Lane County. When participants were asked, ‘*overall today, how would you rate your feelings about Lane County,*’ a full 66.4% were somewhat or very positive about Lane County, while 14.1% were neither positive or negative, 10.7% reported feeling somewhat negative, and 1.8% were very negative about Lane County.

Participants mostly expressed feeling a strong sense of community with others in their neighborhood, a sense of belonging, and believed that there are people they can count on in their neighborhoods:

- 70% reported that over the past 12 months they never or rarely felt lonely or isolated
- 21.3% felt lonely or isolated ‘sometimes,’
- 5.4% ‘most of the time,’ and
- 1.6% ‘always’

For this survey question, one statistically significant difference existed by child abuse and neglect history: People who experienced child abuse were more likely to report feeling lonely or isolated in the past 12 months.

Is Child Abuse and Neglect a Problem in Lane County?

When asked to agree or disagree, 27.8% of Lane County residents said they strongly agree that child abuse and neglect is a problem in our community. Forty percent agreed, 6% disagreed, and 20.3% (n=101) indicated that they do not know.

Table 4
Social Connection in My Neighborhood

Question	% Agree/Strongly Agree	% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
People in my neighborhood help each other out	85.5%	11.9%
We watch out for each other’s children in my neighborhood	88.4%	11.6%
There are people I can count on in my neighborhood	87.7%	10.5%
I feel I belong in this community	90.5%	7.8%
I know I can count on friends or family for help	97.8%	1.8%
I feel a sense of community with others in my neighborhood	83.9%	13.7%

Who Do Lane County Residents Most Often Turn to For Support?

Participants were asked to list the 3 people that they most often turn to for support in their life. Lane County residents overwhelmingly listed friends and then family as the two groups of people they most often turn to for support. In descending order, and by percentage:

Friend	64.6% (n=325)
Sibling	59.8% (n=301)
Sig. other ⁷	54.3% (n=273)
Parent	31.8% (n=160)

Friends and family was followed, at much lower levels, by pastor/clergy, co-worker, other, and counselor/professional.

Pastor/cl	14.7% (n=74)
Co-worker	12.5% (n=63)
Other	12.3% (n=62)
Counselor/p	7.2% (n=36)

Finally, participants were asked to rate the following statement: *'When I turn to these people, they are helpful.'* A full 94.1% agreed or strongly agreed that when they turn to the people identified above for support, they receive a helpful response.

Are We Confident in Family, Friends and the 'the system' for Child Safety Help?

Family and Friends

Lane County residents in this survey reported most often turning to friends and family for support– and they often find it helpful. Participants were asked: *If you were to turn to your family members to help you with a concern about a child's safety, how confident are you that they would help you find a solution to your concern?*

- 91.8% reported being confident or very confident in family helpfulness
- This same question was asked about confidence in friends' helpfulness. Participants were highly confident: 93.7% were confident or very confident in friends' helpfulness.

Do I Know Where to Turn for Effective Help? Am I Confident in 'System' Helpfulness?

Participants were asked whether they know where to turn if they were to be concerned about their *own behavior* toward their child or spouse/significant other/partner. Most (76.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that they know where to turn for effective help if they were concerned about their own behavior toward their own child (13.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.) Many also reported that they know where to turn if they were to be concerned about their own behavior toward their intimate partner: 77.6% agreed or strongly agreed; 14.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

⁷ Significant other/partner/ husband/wife

In addition to being asked about knowing where to turn for help, participants were also asked to rate their degree of confidence in the people and services they would turn to. Participants were asked: *If you reached out for help because you were harming a child, how confident are you that you would get effective help.* To this, 63.9% were confident or very confident; 14.9% were not confident or not confident at all (21% did not respond to this question). When asked: *If you reached out for help because you were harming your romantic partner, how confident are you that you would get effective help,* 69.2% were confident or very confident; 16.5% were not confident or not confident at all (14.3% did not respond to this question).

Participants were also asked, specifically, about their confidence in child protective services, police, and clergy/spiritual leaders. They were asked, for example: *If you were to contact child protective services due to your concern about a child's safety, how confident are you that it would be handled well?* The rating scale was: (a) not confident at all; (b) not confident; (c) confident; and (d) very confident. Child protective services (CPS) received the lowest confidence score, though many did express confidence: Among all participants, 52.5% indicated being confident or very confident in CPS response, while 36.4% of participants reported being not confident or not confident at all. Table 5 provides additional information.

Outside of contacting police or child protective services, nearly 39% did not know whom to turn to if they were concerned about a child's safety.

Scenarios One and Two

S1. You notice that a 7 year-old child frequently plays outside in the front yard, alone and unsupervised. Car traffic is heavy and it is fairly cold outside, and the child is wearing a t-shirt. You are concerned about this child in this particular situation.

S2. In your opinion, a friend of yours is too strict with his 9 year-old son and 11 year-old daughter. You've also seen him be very rude toward his wife. You have good reason to believe that he recently shoved her into a wall during an argument, leading to three bruised ribs. The kids saw this happen. You've been worried about this for a long time

What Would You Do?

Participants were asked to read the scenarios to the left – and then agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

1. It is not my place to get involved in this.
2. I believe most parents in this situation would be receptive to my expression of concern.
3. I believe that if I were to express my concern to parents in this situation, it would lead to a positive change.
4. If I choose to take action in this situation, I know what to do to make a difference.
5. If I choose to take action in this situation, I am confident in my ability to do it well.

Overall, in both scenarios, most participants (79% S1, 88% S2) agreed or strongly agreed that it is their place to get involved. Moreover, participants largely believed that they know what to do in both situations and were confident in their ability to do it well. At the same time, many participants disagreed or strongly disagreed (35.6% S1; 46.4% S2) that parents would be receptive to their expression of concern. And, many disagreed or strongly disagreed (38.8% S1; 45.1% S2) that their expression of concern would lead to positive change. A belief in low receptivity and a belief that taking action would not likely lead to a positive change was more pronounced in scenario 2 involving intimate partner violence.

Finally, one statistically significant relationship in scenario 2 was found for gender: In scenario 2, men were more likely to agree that their expression of concern would lead to a positive change. And, one statistically significant relationship was found for abuse history in scenario one: In scenario one, people who experienced abuse or neglect in childhood were less likely to believe that parents would be receptive to expressions of concern

Additional information is provided in Table 6.

Table 5
Confidence in System Response

'System' Group	NCA	NC	C	VC
Police	4.8%	18.3%	52.1%	18.9%
Clergy	3.8%	17.7%	37.2%	23.7%
Child Protective Services	6.8%	29.6%	41.4%	11.1%

Table 6
What Would You Do?

Scenario	SD	D	A	SA
Scenario One				
<i>Front Yard</i>				
Not my place.	35.8%	43.3%	12.5%	4.8%
Parents receptive.	5.6%	30.0%	49.1%	9.7%
Will lead to change.	4.0%	34.8%	45.7%	7.2%
Know what to do.	1.2%	16.5%	54.1%	23.9%
Can do it well.	1.2%	12.5%	55.1%	27.8%
Scenario 2				
<i>Kids Seeing and Hearing</i>				
<i>Intimate Partner Violence</i>				
Not my place.	47.5%	40.8%	7.8%	2.6%
Parents receptive.	7.8%	38.6%	37.4%	8.5%
Will lead to change.	3.4%	41.7%	41.4%	4.4%
Know what to do.	1.2%	17.1%	56.5%	21.5%
Can do it well.	0.8%	17.5%	55.7%	22.9%

Do We Believe that People who Behave Abusively or Who Neglect Children Can Change?

Many Lane County residents believe that people who behave abusively or who neglect their children can change those behaviors. A full 74.9% believe that adults who abuse their children can change their abusive behavior, while 75.5% agree or strongly agree that adults who neglect their children can also change their neglectful behavior. Further, many are hopeful about adults who abuse their romantic partner – 65.8% believed that these individuals can change their abusive behavior. Eighteen percent, 17.9%, and 25.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed with questions 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

Table 7
Can Individuals Change?

	SD	D	A	SA
Many adults who abuse their children Can change their abusive behavior.	2.4%	15.9%	60.2%	14.7%
Many adults who neglect their children Can change their neglectful behavior.	1.2%	16.7%	64.2%	11.3%
Many adults who abuse their romantic Partner can change their abusive behavior.	2.6%	22.5%	57.1%	8.7%

What Would Be Useful to Reduce Child Abuse and Neglect in Lane County?

Based on nearly 3,000 ‘90by30’ interviews and community suggestions, five questions were included in the survey because they were frequently mentioned by Lane County residents when asked what they believe are the most important factors that would reduce child abuse. Specific responses are included in Table 8.

Table 8
Key Ingredients for Child Abuse Prevention

Belief	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
If we did away with poverty we would significantly reduce child abuse.	25.1%	57.5%
If we did away with drug abuse we would significantly reduce child abuse.	39.6%	86.8%
If we did away with all forms of discrimination we would significantly reduce child abuse.	39.8%	57.2%
If all people received the emotional support they needed we would significantly reduce child abuse.	10.1%	89.4%
A long term and community wide effort to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect would be helpful in reducing it.	8.8%	91.1%

Do We Have a Clear Idea about Key Steps to Take to Significantly Reduce Child Abuse?

Participants were very mixed when asked if they know the key steps that we need to take as a community to significantly reduce child abuse and neglect in Lane County. Nearly 44% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have a clear idea about the key steps, 10.1% strongly agreed and 36.4% agreed.

Participants were also asked to respond to this statement: *'I know what I can do to significantly reduce child abuse and neglect in Lane County.'* This question also had a mixed response. Forty three percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that they did not know what to do personally to contribute to a significant reduction of child abuse in our community. Nearly 10 percent strongly agreed and 37.8% agreed. Just over 14% of participants believe that we have a plan to significantly reduce child abuse in Lane County; 5.4% believe that we do not have a plan – and a full 80.4% do not know about a plan.

Do We Believe that We Can Significantly Reduce Child Abuse in Lane County?

A full 85.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that child abuse and neglect *can be* very significantly reduced in Lane County, while only 36% agreed or strongly agreed that it *will be* significantly reduced.

85.9% agreed or strongly agreed that child abuse can be very significantly reduced in Lane County, though only 36% agree or strongly agree that we will.

Is Reducing Child Abuse and Neglect My Personal Responsibility?

A very strong majority (84.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that there is a role for each and every person, neighborhood, group, organization, business and entity to prevent child abuse and neglect. An overwhelming majority (98.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that adults should do everything they can to ensure that all children in their community are safe. And, 98.4% agreed or strongly agreed that one of the most important responsibilities of adulthood is to ensure the safety of children. Lane County residents also highly value a community and households that are safe for children: 93.4% agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to them to live in a community where child abuse and neglect rarely happens.

An overwhelming majority of participants- 98.4% - agreed or strongly agreed that adults should do everything they can to ensure that all children in their community are safe.

Patterns and Relationships among Survey Questions

Several significant patterns and relationships between survey questions were found. For example, people who had incomes within or near the poverty level were more likely to report a history of abuse in childhood and adulthood, women were much more likely to report abuse in adulthood relative to men, and men and women experienced abuse and neglect during childhood at similar levels. Although

persons living below or near the federal poverty level had higher rates of abuse and neglect relative to people with higher incomes, it is important to note that many people with high household income – even as high as 300-400% and more above the poverty level, reported experiencing abuse or neglect in childhood and adulthood. In Lane County, 29% of people who reported moderate to very high household income reported abuse in childhood; 19% of this group reported abuse in adulthood.

Additional patterns and relationships included:

Optimism for Reducing Child Abuse in Lane County

A child abuse prevention success ‘optimism’ score was developed by drawing from the following items: (1) *child abuse and neglect can be very significantly reduced in Lane County* and (2) *child abuse and neglect will be very significantly reduced in Lane County*. In response to these items, 47% of participants said abuse/neglect *can and will be reduced*, 44% said it *can, but won’t be reduced*, and 9% said it *can’t and won’t*. We investigated the characteristics of participants who leaned toward and away from ‘optimism,’ including the following factors: federal poverty level, abuse history, education, gender, age, and urban/rural setting. Only one significant relationship existed: persons who responded ‘can/will’ were significantly younger than persons who responded can/won’t and can’t/won’t. This suggests that optimism around changing abuse/neglect in Lane County decreases with age. No other significant relationships were found, indicating that optimism was roughly equal for men and women and persons living in urban and rural parts of Lane County, etc.

Younger Lane County residents have significantly more optimism that ‘we can and will’ reduce child abuse and neglect than older residents.

Is Child Abuse a Problem in Lane County?

Among all participants, 21% indicated they do not know whether child abuse is a problem in Lane County. A small, though statistically significant difference was found for gender, childhood abuse history, and education. Men (27%) were more likely than women (17%) to report that they do not know if child abuse is a problem. People who have experienced child abuse were less likely to report they do not know whether child abuse is a problem compared to persons with no child abuse history (15% and 23%, respectively), and among people with a bachelor’s degree, 16% reported ‘not know,’ compared to 24% of those without a bachelor’s degree. No other significant differences for this item were found.

What Would You Do Scenarios One and Two

Small to moderate statistically significant differences were found for the ‘What Would You Do?’ scenarios. In scenario 1 (depicting child neglect), persons who believed it was not their place to get involved were more often men (15% of women, 24% of men) and more often did not have a bachelor’s degree (13% with a bachelor degree, 21% without a degree). Also in scenario 1, people who experienced abuse in childhood were less likely to believe that parents would be receptive to expressions of concern. No other significant differences for scenario 1 were found.

For scenario 2 (depicting children seeing intimate partner violence), a significant relationship was found for age. People who agreed that it was not their place to get involved tended to be older than those who believed it was their place to get involved. Also for scenario 2, men were more likely to agree that their

expression of concern would lead to a positive change. No other significant relationships for scenario two were found.

Additionally, several trends were found across participants related to both scenarios – and these trends were true for both scenarios and across all participant characteristics (gender, age, income, abuse history, education, and urban/rural). To summarize these statistically significant relationships:

1. Participants who believe that most parents would be receptive to their expressions of concern also very frequently believe that their expression of concern would lead to positive change. Put another way, people in this survey link parent receptivity with positive change, i.e., *if a person is receptive to feedback, change is more likely.*
2. Participants who know what to do to make a difference in the scenarios are also highly likely to be confident in their ability to intervene skillfully. Put another way, people who believe they know what to do to make a difference in specific abuse and neglect situations are also highly likely to be confident that they intervene well, i.e., *I know what to do and I can do it well.*
3. Participants who believe their expression of concern would lead to a positive change were also highly likely to report that they personally know what to do to make a difference in the situations depicted in the scenario. In other words, people in this survey who have high confidence in knowing what to do in specific situations are also likely to believe that their involvement will lead to a positive change, i.e., *since I know what to do, my involvement is more likely to make a difference.*

These relationships are perhaps revealing and they raise important questions about action and inaction. If, for instance, a person believes that they know what to do and can do it well, though – as was true for many respondents – they also believe that their involvement is not likely to be well received by parents and is unlikely to lead to change, than what are the odds that these persons will take action? In other words, if many Lane County residents believe that their action is likely to be futile, how many will choose to take action in situations such as those depicted in these scenarios?

I Would Be in Full Support, if...

All participants were invited to complete the following statement: *I would be in full support of a local (Lane County-wide) effort to significantly reduce child abuse and neglect if I was sure that _____.* Of the 281 responses to this item, 132 (46.9%) were about effectiveness. That is, the number one response – by a wide margin – was the idea that Lane County residents will be in full support of an effort to reduce child abuse and neglect if they believe that it has a high likelihood of being effective. Participants in this survey, for example, said: “if it actually helps individuals;” “if it were effective;” “if I trusted that it would work;” “if it solves the problem and isn’t just talk or marketing;” “if it were a good investment of time;” and “if it was going to do something and wasn’t politically motivated.” Other common responses included (a) using resources well, including attitudes about government

93.4% of Lane County residents agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to them personally to live in a community where child abuse and neglect rarely happens.

involvement; (b) the credibility of leaders; (c) a well-organized plan, including reliable follow-through; (d) community involvement, and (e) attitudes.

Resources and Government Involvement

Many participants indicated that they would be in full support of a county-wide effort to reduce child abuse if they believed that the funds to support it were used efficiently and for their advertised purpose. One participant reflected the view of many: “if all funds directed to the project stay within the project” Another said: “if any resources dedicated to this cause would go to this cause; it wouldn’t be siphoned off for any other purpose.” And, “if the funding was properly directed and utilized.”

Many participants were mixed about the role of government and tax support for child abuse prevention. Some said that they would support public funding if “it could be used efficiently;” and “if it had a reasonable opportunity to succeed compared to the amount of money it would cost.” Others were in support of child abuse prevention if (a) “it wasn’t another bureaucratic excuse to spend money, (b) “there were no new taxes on home buyers,” and (c) “my taxes weren’t going to be raised – I don’t agree with the way they (government) uses money.” Others indicated they would support the effort if they were sure that it was adequately or fully funded, e.g.: “if funding were available to support the initiative,” and “if there were resources – the money to support it.”

Leadership Credibility

Participants also indicated that they would be in full support of a Lane County-wide effort if they trusted the people who organized and led the effort and if those same people were skilled managers. Comments included, for example: “if there were good people running it; proven that they are trustworthy;” and “if there were reliable people in charge... [and doing it] in a responsible and caring way.” Others described the importance of skilled management, from “well administered,” and “proper oversight” to “run by people who understand child abuse” and leaders who “do what they say they are going to do.” Several others indicated that they would support a Lane County child abuse prevention initiative if “it was more of a grassroots effort.”

A Well-Organized Plan and Follow Through

Many participants also stated that they would be in full support of a Lane County-wide effort to reduce child abuse and neglect if they were sure that it was informed by a good plan and that it had reliable and ongoing follow-through. Regarding a plan, participants said: “if there was a well thought out plan that was successful in other communities;” “if there was a pragmatic program, one that had proof and results – too much of this is based on emotion;” “if there was a clear plan... and real action;” and “if there were a plan in place supported by local government and community organizations.”

Others highlighted that they would be in full support if the plan had good follow through. For example: “if it was actually going to happen; if people follow-through. We get promises and hopes and it just doesn’t happen.” Others said: “if it were actually carried out;” “if there was a long-term solution;” “if they would follow through with it – they can talk about things, but it needs follow through;” and “if there were follow through and commitment.”

A Local, Community Effort

Participants also frequently stated that they would be in full support of an effort that is local, well coordinated, and that widely involves the general public. For example: “if the community would do it as

a whole;” “if my community members were helping as well;” “if it were grassroots and stayed within the community;” and “if we had full support of the local government, churches, schools, leaders and spiritual leaders.” Others said they would be in full support if the effort inspired many to participate in a more coordinated fashion: “if they [initiative leadership] could get people involved in it;” “if the community was supportive of the efforts the county was doing to prevent child abuse;” “if everybody was on the same page, working together;” and “if efforts were balanced.”

Attitudes

Others indicated that they would fully support a local child abuse prevention effort if it conveyed certain attitudes and assumptions – from supportive attitudes toward parents to cautions against government infringement on personal rights. For example: “if it were done in a way that doesn’t blame parents;” “if I was sure that the message was not punitive toward parents;” “if it could be done in a responsible and caring way;” and, “if it is cautiously done.” Others stated: “if it didn’t conflict with people’s rights;” “as long as government wasn’t taking over;” and “if it wasn’t going to intrude and rip families apart in unnecessary situations.”

What Can We Do About Child Abuse and Neglect? Reflections and Next Steps

The 90by30 Initiative is designed as a community-based prevention effort that weaves together the proven and promising prevention strategies into the sociocultural context of individual Lane County communities. It is an aspirational goal and a vision toward a system of prevention that leads to the successful implementation of an effective, locally grown Lane County prevention plan.

My Role and Responsibility

A very strong majority (84.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that there is a role for each and every person, neighborhood, group, organization, business and entity to prevent child abuse and neglect.

This survey finds that more than 98% of Lane County residents believe it is their role and responsibility to create safe communities for children and prevent child abuse and neglect. These findings also show that many residents feel unsure about how to go about playing their part. This is where the work of 90by30 comes in. Our task is two-fold: 1) to develop the Lane County-wide prevention plan that focuses on increasing key protective factors, and 2) to create the infrastructure that provides access and opportunities for every individual, organization, and group to step up and participate in preventing child abuse and neglect.

Our infrastructure includes seven Regional Leadership Teams comprised of community members from seven unique Lane County geographic areas. These Teams are responsible for deciding what specific set of strategies they want to implement in their communities and working with 90by30 on the implementation and evaluation phase of the prevention plan. For more details on the Theory of Change and specific activities, please visit our website at <http://90by30.com>.

The protective factors that we are focusing on across Lane County include:

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Parental Resilience
- Social connections

- Concrete supports for parents
- Social and emotional competence of children.

Strategies under consideration include the universal application of:

- **Nurse Family Partnership**, and other nurse home visitation programs designed to increase parents nurturing and attachment
- **Make Parenting a Pleasure!**, **TripleP Parenting** and **Familias Unidas** to increase parental resilience
- **Front Porch Project** and the **Welcome Wagon** to increase social connections and social capital
- **Safe Families for Children**, a faith-based strategy to provide concrete support for children and families
- **Roots of Empathy**, **Incredible Years** and the **Good Behavior Game**, all school-based strategies to increase the social and emotional competence of children

90by30 will be implementing these specific strategies from 2016-2030, a fifteen year period, across Lane County within a larger social norm/social media strategy designed to shift cultural norms to a new place – a place where everyone believes that preventing child abuse is their job, and a place where we each know what to do and we individually and in groups take the actions necessary to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Among all participants, 88.8% agreed or strongly agreed that a long term and community-wide effort to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect would be helpful in reducing it.

Limitations of the Survey

Several limitations of this survey should be taken into consideration. First, although participants were selected randomly and people with both landline (61.2%) and cell phones (38.8%) were included in the sample, the sample is not fully representative of Lane County residents. Given sampling methods in this survey (random telephone), there is a sampling error of +/- 4-5%. For example, the participants in this survey have a higher percentage of people who have lived in Lane County for more than 40 years than likely exists in the public at large. And, college-age participants are underrepresented and youth were excluded. The survey was administered in English only. A question about racial identity was not included in the survey. Therefore, the degree to which the sample is representative of the racial diversity that exists in Lane County is not known.

It is also not possible to know the degree to which pro-social bias is represented in participants' responses. For example, people sometimes respond to questions in a way that reflects their belief about the most socially acceptable response, over and above their actual personal opinion. The degree to which this occurred in this survey is not known. And, finally, this study measures behavioral intent and attitudes about taking action (e.g., in the scenarios). The results do not provide information about actual behavior and steps that participants have taken toward child abuse intervention and prevention.

Information About Child Abuse and Neglect

Child neglect is the most common form of child abuse:

According to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015), among all acts of child abuse and neglect reported in the US, 78.3% were 'acts of omission' (child neglect), 17.6% were physical abuse, and less than 10 percent (9.2%) were sexual abuse. Oregon includes 'threat of harm' as one of its categories when a report is filed. In fact, 'threat of harm' is the most common report made in Oregon (51%), followed by neglect (34.5%), physical abuse (6.8%) and sexual abuse (6.3%).

Child abuse and neglect usually first happens very early in a child's life*:

Finally, although abuse and neglect occurs at all ages among children and youth, data suggests that very young children are disproportionately at-risk. In Oregon in 2011, for instance, 48.3 percent of confirmed child victims were younger than 6 years old⁸.

Child abuse and neglect most often happens in the privacy of the home:

Among "confirmed" (or "founded") incidents of abuse and neglect in Oregon in 2011, family members, such as mother, father, or live-in companion, were responsible for 93.8% of the reported acts of abuse and neglect. Mothers account for 44.1% of reports and fathers for 38.1%.

Child abuse and neglect happens across all racial groups in Oregon. In 2011, 60.2% of reported child victims were Caucasian, 16.9% were Hispanic, and 5.1% were African American.

Child abuse and neglect includes witnessing violence in the home. In the 5-year period before the Oregon Women's Health and Safety Survey (Drach, 2005), 26,910 children directly witnessed a physical assault and 1,178 witnessed a sexual assault against a mother or adult female caregiver.

Our children often feel like they have no one to talk to when abuse and neglect is happening to them or near them in their homes. In 2010, 351 Eugene and Springfield residents who were abused as children were randomly telephoned and asked: "During the period of time when you first experienced any of the abuse or violence just mentioned, how often did anyone try to help or protect you?" Their response options were never, rarely, sometimes and often. They responded:

- Rarely 19.4%
- Never 47.6%
- Sometimes 12.8%
- Often 11.7%

There are several factors that are often a part of households where children are reported as abused and/or neglected in Oregon. In 2011, they included:

- Alcohol and drug problems (46.8% of households)
- Domestic violence (35.2% of households)
- Parent involvement with law enforcement (26.4% of households)

⁸ These numbers are misleading as they reflect reports that were investigated and then 'founded' to have merit by child welfare investigators. It is the policy of child welfare agencies to use their limited resources primarily to investigate reports relating to very young children, because they are the most vulnerable. By not investigating anywhere near the same percentage of reports relating to adolescents, these numbers may be somewhat skewed.

References

- Child Welfare Data Book (2015). Office of Business Intelligence, Department of Human Services, Oregon Department of Human Services: Children, Adults and Families Division.
- Daro, D. (2010). Child abuse prevention: A job half done. Chapin Hall Issue Brief, University of Chicago. February, 2010.
- Drach, L. (2005). *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Oregon Women*. Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Epidemiology.
- Finkelhor, D., Shattuck, A., Turner, H.A., and Hamby, S.L. (2014) Trends in Children's Exposure to Violence, 2003-2011. *Pediatrics*, 168(6), 540-546.
- Sedlak, A.J., Mettenburg, J., Basena, M., Petta, I., McPherson, K., Greene, A., and Li, S. (2010). *Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4): Report to Congress, Executive Summary*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2015). *Child maltreatment 2013*. Available from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>