

Child abuse in the 1950

[Society](#), [Child Abuse](#)



Child Abuse When you read articles over child abuse and see the damage that has been caused and what has become of child abuse in today's society the result is sickening. Child abuse has become a more common thing in today's society. The fact that there are people in this world, who not only abuse but also neglect their children without consequence, because they are not caught, is even worse. Thankfully, there are many ways today to help save a child who suffers from child abuse. Child protection in America has been in action since the colonial period; "The history of child protection in America is divisible into three eras.

The first era extends from colonial times to 1875 and may be referred to as the era before organized child protection. The second era spans 1875 to 1962 and witnessed the creating and growth of organized child protection through nongovernmental child protection societies. The year 1962 marks the beginning of the third or modern era: the era of government-sponsored child protective services. "(Myers, 1). Since the 1950s many laws have been implemented in order to protect children and keep them safe in our country.

Children have become increasingly safer over the past fifty years, largely because of the effect of Henry Kempe's article, "The Battered Child Syndrome" which led to more informed doctors, better media coverage, and more effective protection and reporting laws. John Caffey was a pediatric radiologist born in 1895. He later became known as the "father of pediatric radiology" (Girdany, 1978). In 1946, Caffey released an article called "Multiple Fractures in the Long Bones of Infants Suffering from Chronic Subdural Hematoma" based on long bone fractures in infants.

In his study he examined “ 6 patients who exhibited 23 fractures and 4 contusions of long bones. ”(Caffey) in which he concluded suffered from chronic subdural hematoma. Although he could not prove anything, his observations seemed to be unexplained to say the least, “ There was neither clinical nor roentgen evidence to support the idea that pre-existing systemic or localized skeletal disease weakened the bones and made them unusually vulnerable to trauma. ”(Caffey). With that observation he came to the conclusion that “ the long bones were injured and fractured during convulsive seizures.

There is little evidence to support such a postulate. In not a single case did fresh fractures appear immediately following the convulsive seizure and complete fractures occurred in patients who only had mild convulsions . . . [To] our knowledge, fractures of convulsive origin in the long bones have never been demonstrated in the common severe convulsive diseases of infancy and childhood such as lead poisoning, meningitis, cerebral neoplasm and hypocalcemic tetancy. ”(Caffey) but he still had doubts, because there was little evidence to support such theories.

He came to the conclusion that “ the fractures appear to be of traumatic origin but the traumatic episodes and the casual mechanism remain obscure. ”(Caffey). Caffey’s work and the article he published hinted at possibility of child abuse in such cases that he treated but could never be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. After the publishing of “ Multiple Fractures in the Long Bones of Infants Suffering from Chronic Subdural Hematoma,” it grasped the attention of many doctors who became interested in the signs of child abuse. In 1962 pediatrician Henry Kempe and his colleagues published the article

known as “ The Battered Child Syndrome”. Kempe played leading role in bringing child abuse to national attention during the 1960’s and 1970’s. ”(Myers, 455). In Kempe’s work he stated “ the battered-child syndrome is a term used by us to characterize a clinical condition in young children who have received serious physical abuse, generally from a parent or foster parent. ” (Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller, and Silver, 143). To collect data to further his research, Kempe and his fellow colleagues “ undertook a nation-wide survey of hospitals which were asked to indicate the incident of this syndrome in a one-year period. (Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller, and Silver, 143). After the survey he found the results that “ Among 71 hospitals replying, 302 such cases were reported to have occurred; 33 of the children died; and 85 suffered permanent brain injury. ” (Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller, and Silver, 143). To continue his research he also “ surveyed 77 District Attorneys who reported that they had knowledge of 447 cases in a similar one-year period. Of these, 45 died, and 29 suffered permanent brain damage. ” (Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller, and Silver, 143).

Once “ The Battered Child Syndrome” was published the public and media became more aware of child abuse and many reforms were implemented. “ Amendments to the Social Security Act were made. In the same year, the federal Children’s Bureau convened two meetings to determine how the Bureau could more effectively help states respond to child abuse. ” (Myers, 456). It is said that “ Attendees at the meetings, including Henry Kempe . . . [recommended] state legislation requiring doctors to report suspicions of abuse to police or child welfare. ” (Myers, 456).

By making these changes and requiring doctors to report suspicions of abuse all states had reporting laws by 1967. In 1962 the Social Security Act was amended which made changes to the child welfare provisions. In the following provision, “ Beginning July 1, 1963, State child welfare plans must provide for coordination their services with the services provided for dependent children. ” (Cohen, Ball, 3). Vincent De Francis stated that the 1962 amendments “ for the first time, identified Child Protective Services as part of all public child welfare. ”(Myers, 455).

Media Coverage brought child abuse to the attention of the general public. To help bring child abuse into the eye of the media and national public, Newsweek article “ When They’re Angry” quoted Kempe; “ One day last November, we had four battered children in our pediatrics ward. Two died in the hospital and one died at home four weeks later. . . [The] battered child syndrome isn’t a reportable disease, but it damn well ought to be. ” (Myers, 455). Stating this in Newsweek definitely brought attention to the situation at hand. As the media became more involved and reporting laws were made, more and more cases were reported. By 1974, some 60, 000 cases were reported. In 1980, the number exceeded one million. By 1990, reports topped two million, and in 2000, reports hovered around three million. In the early twenty-first century, reports declined but remained high. ” (Myers, 456). Although those statistics are high the cases are being reported and action is being taken in order to protect our children. The increase in public awareness called for stricter laws and protection of children in abusive situations. In today’s society we have Foster care and orphanages to help with the problems that come from abusive situations. In the early days,

foster care was viewed as a major advance and as the best solution for many dependent children. " (Myers, 456) That being said foster care was a way out for children in abusive situations and acted as a safe haven. " In the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, some came to view foster care as a problem rather than as a solution . . . [nearly] half a million children are in foster care at any point in time and that too many children get " stuck" in out-of-home care. " (Myers, 456) With that being said, there are some negative things that come along with the comfort of a foster home; " children of color . . [are] sadly overrepresented among foster children. Yet, despite problems, foster care remains a safe haven for many abused and neglected children. " (Myers, 456) Along with protection of children there were also stricter laws, and the government became more involved in child abuse and protection. " Due in substantial measure . . . [Congress] assumed a leadership role with passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 (CAPTA). " (Myers, 456). CAPTA acted as a guide line to federal funds throughout the government to " improve the state response to physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse.

CAPTA focused particular attention on improved investigation and reporting. " (Myers, 456). By creating CAPTA it allowed people to become more familiar with investigation and reporting's of child abuse throughout the nation. " In addition, CAPTA provided funds for training, for regional multidisciplinary centers focused on child abuse and neglect, and for demonstration projects. " (Myers, 456). With the creation of CAPTA responsibility for administering was placed in a new agency known as the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. The center funded important research on maltreatment. " (Myers,

456). CAPTA has had a major role in shaping today's nationwide system of governmental child protective services. CAPTA marked "the final passing of privately funded, nongovernmental child protection societies." (Myers, 457). All of this was able to happen simply because the attention the media brought to the reality of child abuse and that it can happen to anybody. Laws were implemented in order to better protect children and make reporting of child abuse cases easier. By the late 1970s, government-sponsored child protective services spread the nation, settling into urban and rural areas alike. "(Myers, 454). Along with sponsored child protective services, since 1974 laws and provisions relating to child abuse have been more frequent. Most importantly, Child protective services and Child Welfare gave opportunities to children who were in abusive situations. To focus more on child protection, "the 1962 amendments required states to pledge that by July 1, 1975, they would make child welfare services available statewide. (Myers, 455) By making that a law this fueled the expansion of child-welfare services as well as protective services. In 1967, Congress declared that all states were required to have reporting laws, which means that any suspicious child abuse that is happening must be reported. Once reporting laws were in effect, "the prevalence of child abuse and neglect came into focus." (Myers, 456). By demanding reporting laws it really opened up people's eyes when it came to child abuse and neglect and how it can affect a child.

Beginning in 1974, legislation has been passed to help fund child welfare and protection. By doing that the nation can depend on the system and believe that it isn't going anywhere. Since it is now funded by the government, it can help a child in a situation such as neglect have a positive outlook, and the

child can be taken care of in the best way possible. In October of 1984, congress created the Child Abuse Amendments of 1984 with a “ purpose to extend and improve provisions of laws relating to child abuse and neglect and adoption”(Childrens Bureau, 21).

This amendment “ required states to have in place procedures with State protective systems to respond to the reporting of medical neglect, including instances of withholding medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life threatening conditions. ”(Children’s Bureau, 21). With this amendment in act, any faulty observations made must be reported when the child’s health and neglect comes into question. This is important because it makes doctors more alert when they examine their patients, especially children. When it comes to a child, abuse is something that cannot be taken lightly.

Since the 1950s our government has worked to keep the children of this nation safe. They have implemented many laws and provisions. There are many options children in abusive situations have in order to better their lives. Since the 1950s, our children have become safer because of laws that have been created. Child abuse is not something to be taken lightly, and the government and public alike need to constantly strive to better the lives of children in this country. Work Cited: Child Abuse Caffey, John. (1946): n. page. Web. 6 Nov. 2012. . Cohen, Wilbur J. , and Robert M. Ball. " Public Welfare Amendments of 1962 and Proposal for Health Insurance for the Aged. " Social Security. N. p. , n. d. Web. 5 Nov 2012. . Girdany, Bertram R.. " John Caffey, 1895-1978. " . American Journal of Roentgenology, n. d. Web. 5 Nov 2012. . United States. Childrens Bureau. Major Federal Legislation

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