# Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDING DONORS

In 2012 when we founded the Moore Center, we had one goal: to eradicate child sexual abuse.

We were fueled by our commitment to the issue and by our confidence in the power of public health. We knew how devastating child sexual abuse is, and we wanted to prevent others from experiencing this pain. We wanted to use a public health approach to preventing child sexual abuse from occurring and we knew that we must partner with a top school of public health and use research modalities and new tools to examine this complex social issue.

Ten years have passed, and we are so thrilled with the Moore Center’s progress.

We are proud of the relationships the Center has forged with leading organizations in this space, including Oak Foundation and World Childhood Foundation. It’s heartening to know that we have played a role in uniting like-minded people who share our vision. Together we’ve helped advance the understanding that child sexual abuse is preventable, and we can do so much better than only focusing on punishment after harm has occurred.

In addition, we are pleased that the Moore Center is making a difference through advocacy as well as research. Under the leadership of Elizabeth Letourneau, the Center successfully advocated for a new line item in the federal budget to support child sexual abuse prevention research. Funding has grown from an initial $1 million annually in 2020 to $3 million in 2023. Without Elizabeth’s dedication and tenacity, we would not have secured an ongoing source of federal funding for prevention research.

The support we’ve received from the leadership of Johns Hopkins University and the Bloomberg School of Public Health has also been key to our success. This can be a challenging topic, and we are grateful to President Ronald J. Daniels, Dean Ellen J. MacKenzie, and many others at Johns Hopkins who have believed in our work.

Together we have played an important role in transforming the way people think about child sexual abuse. There is still so much more to do.

Over the coming decade, we would like to see youth-serving organizations, including scouting groups, churches, and athletic organizations, increase their focus on prevention by partnering with the Moore Center. We’d like to see more educators and researchers and advocates trained in this field. And we hope to identify more resources to support this work so that we can continue to drive meaningful change.

Our original goal remains the same. By keeping the discussion vibrant and engaged, bringing in resources, conducting research, and changing the perception of child sexual abuse to preventable, not inevitable, we can effect change not just in the U.S., but internationally.

We are excited to work with you to achieve our goal of eradicating child sexual abuse, and we can’t wait to see what the future holds.

Dr. Stephen and Mrs. Julia Moore  Founding Donors
Hello and welcome to our 10th Annual Report!

It is my great pleasure to lead off this year’s report with a look back at our first 10 years. Parents, entrepreneurs, or anyone who is engaged in any way with ‘growing’ something or someone will appreciate just how fast these years flew by!

During the past decade, our efforts to prevent child sexual abuse have focused in five domains: research, education, communication, advocacy, and policy. A few achievements in these areas include:

- Our research efforts include creating and testing two novel child sexual abuse perpetration prevention interventions: the online self-help Help Wanted Prevention Intervention and the school-based Responsible Behavior with Younger Children program.
- Our education efforts include developing the graduate-level course, Childhood Victimization from a Public Health Perspective, which has received Excellence in Teaching Awards nearly each year it has been offered.
- Our communications include Prevention Now, our bimonthly Psychology Today blog that receives some 2,400 views per post and our quarterly newsletter, which has 1,300 subscribers.
- Our advocacy resulted in recurring federal funding, now at $3 million annually, for the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention to fund and lead child sexual abuse prevention research.
- Our policy efforts contributed to growing calls to end harmful policies that subject children to sex offender registration and notification requirements.

Over the years we’ve grown from just three members (including Amanda Ruzicka, now co-deputy director of the Moore Center and Ben Hubbard, our first data manager) to 14, and from having a national to a global impact.

Ours is the leading center, and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health is the leading academic institution, focused on child sexual abuse prevention.

Generous philanthropy from our founding donors Dr. Stephen and Mrs. Julia Moore, grants from funders such as the Oak Foundation, and gifts from so many of you, helped us achieve these and many other successes and help provide us with the resources we need to grow our work in our second decade and beyond.

Thank you for being a part of our mission to ensure a childhood free from abuse!

With great affection,

Elizabeth J. Letourneau, PhD  Director
OUR MISSION AND VISION

At the Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse we are committed to preventing child sexual abuse. We recognize that everyone shares in the responsibility for prevention and everyone benefits when children remain safe from abuse. The Center pursues its mission through targeted endeavors in five key areas: research, education, communications, advocacy, and policy. We collaborate with a broad coalition of stakeholders including child sexual abuse survivors and their advocates and allies, help seekers and others with relevant lived experience, policymakers, practitioners, funders, and law enforcement. In addition to supporting efforts to prevent child sexual abuse, we support the healing of survivors, treatment for those who have caused harm, and efforts to ensure justice for all. We recognize the right of all children to grow up free from abuse.

Our vision is a world without child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is a preventable, not inevitable, public health problem. We believe that everyone shares the responsibility for prevention, and everyone benefits when children remain safe from abuse.

OUR STRATEGY

The RECAP Framework: Five fundamental steps that have been applied to public health challenges across the United States and around the world that we apply to the task of preventing child sexual abuse:

**RESEARCH** to advance the primary prevention of child sexual abuse, including the development and rigorous evaluation of prevention interventions;

**EDUCATION** for and from child sexual abuse survivors and their advocates and allies, help seekers and others with lived experience, policymakers, practitioners, funders, law enforcement, media, and other stakeholders;

**COMMUNICATION** that delivers clear, unbiased, objective information on all aspects of child sexual abuse, including victimization, perpetration, and prevention;

**ADVOCACY** to secure and promote the use of effective prevention strategies;

**POLICY** efforts to engage lawmakers to fund and otherwise support effective prevention solutions.
Moore Center-led research finds the U.S. spends $5.4 billion annually to incarcerate adults convicted of child sexual abuse, more than 3,000 times what the Federal government budgeted in 2021 to support research to prevent child sexual abuse.

Moore Center director Elizabeth Letourneau delivers a 2016 TEDMED talk that sheds light on child sexual abuse prevention. Her talk has been viewed more than 35,000 times.

Research led by the Moore Center in 2018 establishes the annual economic impact of child sexual abuse in the U.S. is approximately $9.3 billion and finds that individual survivors experience an average financial loss of $283,000, primarily due to productivity losses.

Help Wanted, an online course dedicated to helping people with an attraction to children live safe, healthy, non-offending lives developed by the Moore Center, goes live in May 2020. Help Wanted has been accessed more than 500,000 times to date.

Citing Moore Center research showing the harmful effects of juvenile registration, the American Law Institute revises its Model Penal Code in 2022 to essentially abolish the practice of subjecting children to this harmful policy.

Responsible Behavior with Younger Children, a Moore Center school-based prevention program designed to help adolescents interact appropriately with younger children and avoid behaviors associated with child sexual abuse, shows promise in pilot study held in 2018.

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To help ensure the future of the Moore Center, Dr. Stephen and Mrs. Julia Moore launch the Center’s endowment campaign in 2022. The donation and matching funds raised a total of $2.5 million to endow a professorship for the center director.

Join them by making a gift today.

Moore Center director Elizabeth Letourneau delivers a 2016 TEDMED talk that sheds light on child sexual abuse prevention. Her talk has been viewed more than 35,000 times.
ANNUAL COST OF INCARCERATING ADULTS CONVICTED OF CHILD SEX CRIMES TOPPED $5.4 BILLION IN 2021

The U.S. government spent an estimated $5.4 billion in 2021 to incarcerate adults convicted of sex crimes against children under age 18, according to a new study led by Elizabeth Letourneau, director of the Moore Center.

The study calculated annual spending on incarcerated adults convicted of sex crimes against children under age 18 in U.S. federal and state prisons and sex offender civil commitment facilities. The findings, published online March 23 in the journal Sexual Abuse, highlight the cost of what is considered a preventable public health problem.

By comparison, the U.S. federal government budgeted only $1.5 million in 2021 to support child sexual abuse prevention research.

“We spend billions of dollars on criminal justice remedies after child sexual abuse has already occurred, and yet there are very limited resources for preventing this abuse from occurring in the first place,” said Letourneau.

Based on average periods of imprisonment and commitment—an average of eight years—researchers found that the U.S. stands to spend nearly $49 billion on the cohort of about 144,453 people convicted of sex crimes against children currently in prison and sex offender civil commitment facilities: $33 billion for state prisoners, $5 billion for federal prisoners, and $10.7 billion for inmates in sex offender civil commitment facilities.

The study, co-authored by Travis T.M. Roberts, Moore Center collaborator Luke Malone, and data manager Yi Sun, notes that the estimated costs of incarcerating adults convicted of sex crimes against children are conservative, since they did not include costs related to the justice process—including investigation, prosecution, and adjudication.

Incarcerating adults for harmful and violent behavior, including for the sexual abuse of children, can be an appropriate component to a comprehensive national response, the authors note. At the same time, research suggests that incarceration in and of itself fails to prevent new incidents of child sexual abuse and does not reduce or prevent recidivism.

Letourneau, a professor in the Bloomberg School’s Department of Mental Health, conducted the study after hearing many elected officials and staff say that they supported the concept of child sexual abuse prevention research but cited federal budget caps and deficits as barriers to funding new prevention initiatives.

The authors recommend developing effective, proactive strategies aimed at child sexual abuse prevention as well as improving reactive strategies like incarceration for sex crimes. “Child sexual abuse is indisputably both a criminal justice problem and a public health problem,” Letourneau says. “We need to develop, evaluate, and disseminate effective sex crime prevention strategies and these efforts—like reactive strategies—also require more resources.”
A school-based prevention program designed to help adolescents interact appropriately with younger children and avoid behaviors associated with child sexual abuse shows promise for building a foundation for prevention, according to a new study led by Elizabeth Letourneau.

This small randomized controlled trial—an analysis of responses from 123 sixth- and seventh-graders in four urban schools—assessed students’ awareness and intentions around child sexual abuse after completing the Responsible Behavior with Younger Children prevention program.

Researchers found students who had participated in the program demonstrated increased accuracy in their knowledge about child sexual abuse norms and laws and sexual consent. Study participants also reported increased intention to avoid or prevent child sexual abuse with younger children and peer sexual harassment. The findings were published online Sept. 30 in the journal *Child Maltreatment*.

The authors of the new study designed the 8-part prevention program for sixth and seventh graders because they are typically younger than 14 years, the peak age among adolescents for sexual offending against younger children, yet old enough to be contemplating or engaging in early sexual behaviors. The program covers such topics as developmental differences between children and teenagers, peer harassment, and healthy versus unhealthy teenage-younger child relationships, and building skills to identify and choose behaviors to keep themselves and others safe.

“We tell older kids not to kick or punch or tease younger children, but we don’t always give them the same clear guidance that sexual behavior with younger kids is harmful and illegal,” said Letourneau.

“We want to give them the information, tools, and skills they need to recognize child sexual abuse and keep themselves and other kids safe.”

Earlier research suggests that half or more of sexual offenses against U.S. children are perpetrated by other children under age 18 and that ignorance about child sexual abuse and general impulsivity are risk factors for adolescents to engage a younger child in problem sexual behavior.

For the study, co-authored by Cindy Schaeffer and Catherine Bradshaw, and Moore Center deputy directors Amanda Ruzicka and Luciana Assini-Meytin, postdoctoral fellow Evelyn Thorne, and Reshmi Nair, researchers enrolled sixth and seventh grade participants at four urban middle schools in Maryland. They also convened a parent advisory group and an expert advisory group.

The research team is looking to expand their research to a larger trial with at least 40 schools.

“We’re optimistic that a program like this could help give young adolescents a better understanding of the rules of the road so they don’t engage younger children in harmful or illegal sexual behavior,” said Letourneau.
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION KEY TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION

The Moore Center’s annual symposium, the Envision National Prevention Conference, drew its largest and most diverse audience to date on Nov 8-9, as survivors, researchers, policymakers, advocates, and providers came together to explore the importance of effective communication in preventing child sexual abuse.

The virtual conference was held in partnership with Darkness to Light, which empowers adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse through awareness, education, and stigma reduction. Speakers included researchers, advocates, experts, and survivors, who shared the tools, resources, and insights needed to keep kids safe from harm.

Daniela Ligiero, PhD, executive director of Together for Girls, spoke in her keynote speech about the need to change the narrative about child sexual abuse to invite people to create change.

“We need to change from a narrative of despair and horror to a narrative of change and hope. There are things that can be done. We can do prevention. It doesn’t have to be this way,” Ligiero said.

Other keynote speakers included Rosie Hidalgo, special assistant to the President and senior advisor on gender-based violence at the White House Gender Policy Council, and Anthony Edwards, an award-winning actor, director, and producer who is chairman of the board of directors of 1in6. Edwards spoke movingly about his experiences as a survivor of child sexual abuse and led a panel discussion about the need to unify male voices in the prevention of child sexual abuse.

Moore Center faculty affiliate Rebecca Fix, PhD, led a thoughtful discussion with Pamela Mejia, MS, of the Berkley Media Studies Group, Karen Baker of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, and Joan Tabachnick, head of DSM Consulting, about successfully framing conversations about child sexual abuse, a topic few people want to discuss.

And in a session about media, misconceptions, and missed opportunities in messaging about people with an attraction to children, journalist Luke Malone and Moore Center postdoctoral fellow Allyn Walker, PhD, discussed the importance of recognizing the distinction between attraction and behavior, and how destigmatizing having an attraction to children can help people in need of support to access resources and keep kids safe from harm.

Other conference highlights included a session by Kacey Long and Alyssa Girardi of the Army of Survivors about the need to communicate effectively using trauma-informed and person-first language, a roundtable about challenges and solutions of engaging families and communities in child sexual abuse prevention, and a panel discussion about the Keep Kids Safe movement.

The Envision National Prevention Conference drew more than 1,200 registrants.
RESEARCH UPDATES

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION PROJECTS

The Global Perpetration Prevention Project is a five-year program that began in March 2021 and is funded by a $10.3 million grant from the Oak Foundation. The program of research aims to identify, validate, and disseminate effective child sexual abuse perpetration prevention programs worldwide. In 2022 the team conducted an extensive scoping process to identify dozens of existing perpetration prevention programs, which were then rated for promise by the research team and the program’s Advisory Council. Partners at Management Systems International then evaluated promising programs for international scalability. Next, the research team, with input from the Advisory Council, identified the most promising interventions to evaluate for efficacy. Separately, the team developed a Global Perpetration Prevention Resource Center website, which launches in 2023. The website will provide information on child sexual abuse perpetration prevention programs and will be a resource for policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

The Perpetration Prevalence Project is a first-of-its-kind program of research to estimate the scope of child sexual exploitation and abuse perpetration in at least six countries. We launched this program in fall 2021. In partnership with the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group and the CDC, we developed perpetration-focused questions to include within the CDC’s multi-national Violence Against Children Surveys. The team also created a stand-alone perpetration prevalence survey that will be implemented online to establish prevalence and identify risk and proactive factors that influence perpetration.

Responsible Behavior with Younger Children is a middle school prevention program designed to reduce the prevalence of child sexual abuse behaviors by providing students, and their parents and educators, with the knowledge, skills, and resources to promote and engage in responsible behaviors with younger children and peers. Results of a pilot randomized controlled trial, published in 2022, showed that RBYC participants demonstrated increased student knowledge about developmental differences, consent, and about problem sexual behaviors with younger children and with peers. Focus groups with educators, parents, and students indicated strong support for the program, its utility, and feasibility to implement RBYC in schools. With support from the World Childhood Foundation, the Moore Center partnered with Kennedy Krieger Institute to adapt RBYC for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In December 2022, the World Childhood Foundation provided a second grant to develop educational videos to further adapt the RBYC curriculum for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Help Wanted is an online self-help intervention for adolescents and adults with an attraction to children. The program includes five sessions containing content designed to provide help seekers with the tools and resources to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives. A separate resource page includes session transcripts in Arabic, Chinese, French, Hindi, and Spanish, as well as English. Help Wanted has received an overwhelmingly positive response and has been visited more than 500,000 times since it launched in May 2020, in part due to support from Google and Meta for developing and running ads promoting the program across their platforms. In 2021, the Moore Center received funding from the CDC to revise Help Wanted based on help seekers’ feedback and to conduct a randomized controlled trial to evaluate its efficacy. Also in 2021, we received funding from Google Foundation to adapt Help Wanted for Mexico.
RESEARCH UPDATES

Preventing child sexual abuse within youth serving organizations is a program of research that released an online desk guide designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in organizational settings in 2020-2021. Funded by the Bloomberg American Health Initiative, the guide sets out eight core principles to help youth serving organizations protect children from sexual abuse. In 2022 the Bloomberg American Health Initiative funded a study by the Moore Center to extend the acceptability and feasibility of this framework to protect children in K-12 school settings. Also in 2022, and with funding from the CDC, we completed a national survey of more than 4,000 U.S. adults to examine the effects of child sexual abuse prevention efforts in the context of youth serving settings. Data analysis is currently underway.

COMMUNICATIONS

Changing the Paradigm: Child Sexual Abuse as a Preventable Public Health Problem is an NIH-funded program of research aimed at developing new messaging to improve the way researchers and other stakeholders communicate about child sexual abuse as a preventable public health problem. In 2022 the team moved into the final phases of the study. In partnership with the FrameWorks Institute they collected data, including interviews with expert and members of the general public about child sexual abuse prevention, and developed and tested new messaging about child sexual abuse as a preventable public health problem. Researchers are currently developing a messaging toolkit for researchers, advocates, and the media.

POLICY

The National Evaluation of Medicaid Expansion on the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, Youth Violence, and Intimate Partner Violence is a CDC-funded project dedicated to studying the effects of the federal Medicaid expansion policy on multiple forms of violence including child maltreatment and youth violence. The team published a 2022 study showing that Medicaid expansion was associated with reduced child neglect rates in states that expended Medicaid relative to states that did not adopt this policy. The team also published in 2022 about the impact of Medicaid expansion on reported incidents of child sexual abuse and on the conceptual framework that informed our policy work. Analyses on Medicaid expansion’s impacts on youth violence and intimate partner violence are underway.

PUBLICATIONS

Visit our website for details about research published by the Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse in 2022.
GOAL 1

Increase federal funding for child sexual abuse prevention research.
Since 2018, the Moore Center has worked with a Washington, DC-based advocacy partner, CRD Associates. This collaboration, in partnership with a large coalition of like-minded organizations, has yielded significant results. In 2020 the federal budget included a new line item for $1 million to the CDC in support of child sexual abuse prevention research. The line item was increased to $1.5 million for 2021, $2 million for 2022, and $3 million for 2023. Our goal is to reach $10 million.

GOAL 2

Support evidence-based policies.
The Moore Center advocates for the elimination of juvenile sex offender registration. Research led by several Moore Center faculty and others conclusively demonstrates registration policies fail to improve public safety and are associated with significant harm to the children who are subjected to these policies. These harms include increased risk of suicide attempts and sexual assault victimization. Our findings were widely cited by the American Law Institute in the revised Model Penal Code, which recommends eliminating juvenile registration. In 2022 we engaged two new advocacy partners, Collier Collective and the Juvenile Law Center, to help us work toward the removal of children from federal registration requirements.
DONORS AND FUNDING

FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS

In 2022, Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse donors recognized our 10th anniversary by helping us achieve a remarkable year in supporting child sexual abuse prevention.

1. **donor joined our Legacy Society** by including the Moore Center in her will (see her story on page 12)

2. **families honored the memory of their loved ones** by suggesting gifts to the Moore Center in lieu of flowers

3. **donors shared their story** in our newsletter about why they give to the Moore Center, helping others see the importance of increasing support to preventing child sexual abuse

13. **donors gave $1,000 or more**

41. **donors gave for the first time**

79. **gifts were made this year for a total of $1,252,826**, a record for the Moore Center

**Our new online giving page makes giving easier than ever.** Every gift helps provide the Moore Center with the resources to advance prevention research and help keep children safe from harm.

We are grateful to every person who helped make a difference for children in 2022. We seek to continue the trend in 2023 in increasing support to end child sexual abuse.

Thank you!
ONE DONOR’S STORY
INVESTING IN PREVENTION

Dotty, MPH ’95, built a career in injury prevention—first at the Consumer Product Safety Commission, then as a consultant working with businesses to reduce the risk of injuries. From her decades in the field, she knew that investing in prevention is smarter than waiting until people get hurt to respond.

Both of Dotty’s long-time partners were sexually abused as children, and one of them, Deb, was open about how the trauma had affected her. After Deb died in 2016, Dotty recalled reading about the Moore Center in the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health alumni magazine and made her first gift in memory of both of her partners.

“When I first learned about the Moore Center, I was stunned to see that someone was studying child sexual abuse from a scientific approach as a research study,” Dotty said. “Prevention is really where the power is—it’s key to addressing child sexual abuse. Punishing people doesn’t help minimize abuse from happening again.”

Dotty recognized the combination of public health and prevention as a strong tool. A proud Bloomberg School alumna, the Center’s affiliation with the School “sealed the deal,” she said. “In my mind, that association ensures the quality and rigor of the science behind the effort.”

Since 2016, Dotty has continued to support the Moore Center and its work. In summer 2022 she became one of the Center’s first legacy donors. By including the Moore Center in her estate plan, she hopes she can help to ensure a solid base of funding so that the Center can succeed in its work to prevent child sexual abuse.

As someone who has devoted her life to science and research, Dotty sees supporting the Moore Center as a union of her professional and personal lives. “Prevention requires understanding; understanding requires research; research requires investment,” she said. “The Moore Center’s work is important and deserves support. To succeed and have an impact takes time—it’s not going to happen overnight.”

To join Dotty in supporting a gift to further the mission of the Moore Center, please make a gift. For more information, contact Joanna Schofield at jschofield@jhu.edu.
RECOGNITION

Here’s how members of the Moore Center team were recognized for their work in 2022:

**Elizabeth Letourneau, PhD**, received the Lifetime Significant Achievement Award from the Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse for her scholarly contributions to the field of child sexual abuse prevention, dedicated service and mentorship, and her work’s role in helping to change national and global policy for more than 30 years.

**Luciana Assini-Meytin, PhD**, was promoted to deputy director of the Moore Center. Luciana, a member of the Moore Center team since 2017, focuses on the development and evaluation of strategies to prevent children from being sexually abused. She also utilizes longitudinal cohorts to examine the long-term consequences of child sexual abuse victimization among men and women.

**Amanda Ruzicka, MA**, was promoted to deputy director of the Moore Center. A member of the Center team since its inception in 2012, Amanda focuses on the development, evaluation, and dissemination of interventions to prevent child sexual abuse and problem sexual behavior. In 2022 she was invited to serve on the Association for the Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Abuse’s Prevention Committee.