

# Lahotan Valley News

## Child Abuse Prevention Month: Concerns about NV kids' safety

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LAS VEGAS - April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and the depth of state budget cuts pending in Carson City has prompted questions about the safety of thousands of Nevada children.

Miriam Rollin, director of the group "Fight Crime Invest in Kids," says the Nevada Office of Children and Family Services faces a 10 percent cut - which she says means reduced funding for youths in foster care and even cutting the number of foster homes. Foster care is where children go when they're not safe at home, Rollin says, so cutbacks compromise their safety.

"Guess what happens if you put them in an unsafe environment and they're re-abused? You're just increasing manyfold the likelihood that you're going to have further problems down the line - including a higher likelihood of them becoming criminals."

Nevada Child Protective Services is handling about 7,000 active abuse and neglect cases, with about 5,000 of those children in foster homes.

Rollin is among those urging Congress to hold national hearings on child abuse and provide emergency funding for states. She says there is an opportunity for states such as Nevada that don't yet fund Home Visiting Programs that keep social workers and nurses in regular contact with at-risk families. The feds have set aside \$1.5 billion for states to share, to fund those programs for the next five years, but it's only available as matching money for states that help fund home visits.

"We know it works. We know it saves more money than it costs down the road. It's been shown to have these amazing results of cutting child abuse substantially, cutting later delinquency substantially."

President Obama and Congress have managed to provide critical support for measures such as the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which has the widespread support of law enforcement, Rollin says.

"That provides very important funding for a variety of things, including helping to support Child Protective Services around the country. So, for instance, when abuse and neglect happens, it has to be investigated by someone."

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that more than 12,000 children died from abuse and neglect from 2001 to 2008, Rollin says.

More information is online at [everychildmatters.org](http://everychildmatters.org).

<http://www.lahontanvalleynews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110414/NEWS/110419929/1055&ParentProfile=1045&template=printart>