

## **The Child Protective Services' System**

**by Molly Fleming**

In the year 2011, 1,258 children died from child abuse in America. 534 of those children were under the age of one. This isn't even the worst of it, 676,569 children suffered from abuse and neglect. The worst part is more cases are out there, but aren't being reported. With this I believe Child Protective Services needs to improve their system to help prevent and stop child abuse.

It has been stated that for every one case of child abuse declared, two cases go unreported. However, we can make those two cases noticed. I think we need to start with the kids. If children aren't offered help, they won't go seeking it themselves. Child Protective Services should have mandatory meetings with the school guidance counselor and every child, set up at least once a year. During the meeting a Child Protective Service employee would sit in looking for anything suspicious. If something seems to be going on they would continue to check up on the child. This system will only help kids who are in school, but there are still young children who can't reach help. For example the young girl in Florida, she was thrown off of a bridge in Tampa by her father. However, the outcome could've been different if there was way for her to get help. So if Child Protective Services can reach out to schools making children aware that they can get help we might be able to save those two cases that are going unnoticed, and help prevent cases before they go too far.

Once a child is put back in their home, it is only a matter of time until the abuse returns. After a case has been run through CPS, a lot of the time the child will be put back in their home. Majority of the time this is for the best, but more times than not this is trouble. Most of the time this can be Child Protective Services fault. For example, CPS will only follow up for a family for a month after their case has closed. Not to mention they will give the family a 24 hour notice before they visit. This is not a lot of time, but it is enough time to clean up and get rid of anything concerning. Although this is bad it is not the worst part, the worst part is that CPS is lying about their cases. As said before, CPS is required to check up on the children, but many times the agents don't even go to the home and when they do they tend to lie about what they witnessed. For example, two years ago an infant was taken out of it's home and then quickly put back in. The caseworker said they checked on the baby and reported that nothing was wrong, but just weeks later the baby was killed by his parents. And it was proved that the caseworker failed to check on the baby. As bad as that is, it can get worse; over 50 Child Protective Services' employees have been caught covering up sloppy work and lying about the cases. To make matters worse majority of the workers continue to be working there. Also a large number of the workers have been on trial for their sloppy work. This proves that CPS needs a better system when they are checking up on families. I believe that CPS needs to continue to check up for longer than just one month, and when they do check up they need to do this unwarned. With this we could be one step closer to stopping child abuse in the United States.

People can argue that the number of child abuse cases have decreased in the past few years, but I don't think this is a fair argument. I believe that this is invalid, because there are still over 600,000 kids being abused in their homes. It has been proved that in 2009 there were 86,431 more cases. However, too many children are still being abused, when we could have a way to stop it. I think that it is great that the number is dropping, but what are we going to do about those other 600,000 children. As you argue this point those other children are sitting in a home of violence with no way to get help. This is where I believe CPS can come in and help. If Child Protective Services can improve their system and find the abuse before it is happening, and they could easily drop the number if they were to continue to check up on the families. Yes, it is great to have the number of cases dropping, but they aren't dropping by enough.

If Child Protective Services develops a better system they could restrain and control child abuse in the United States. CPS could do this in two simple ways, they need to offer their services to children. Also they need to continuously check on families for the children to make sure they are safe. With these two simple things I think that we will be one step closer to stopping child abuse in America.