

# “Defending Childhood” Public Service Announcement to Star Attorney General



U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder’s “Defending Childhood” initiative is taking a higher profile this week with the airing of a public service announcement promoting the effort.

The attorney general launched the initiative in September to address what he called “a national crisis”: the exposure of the American children to violence as both victims and witnesses. A [Department of Justice-funded study](#) had concluded that most children have been “exposed to violence, crime, or abuse in their homes, schools, and communities. The consequences of this problem are significant and widespread. Children’s exposure to violence, whether as victims or witnesses, is often associated with long-term physical, psychological and emotional harm. Children exposed to violence are also at a higher risk of engaging in criminal behavior later in life and becoming part of a cycle of violence.”

The “Defending Childhood” initiative is designed to “prevent exposure to violence, mitigate the negative impacts of exposure when it does occur and develop knowledge and spread awareness about this issue.” As part of that effort, the Obama administration has sought to increase the amount of funding going going to DOJ efforts to address the children’s exposure to violence.

The 30-second PSA is airing on the Investigation Discovery Channel and also can be viewed on YouTube.

According to a DOJ press release:

“A key component of the Defending Childhood initiative is a multi-year demonstration program to develop comprehensive, community-based strategies to prevent and reduce the impact of children’s exposure to violence in their homes, schools and communities. In 2010, eight planning grants were awarded to begin this process to the City of Boston; the City of Portland, Maine; the Chippewa Cree Tribe of Montana; the City of Grand Forks, N.D.; the Cuyahoga County, Ohio, Board of Commissioners; the Multnomah County, Oreg., Department of Human Services; the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, S.D.; and Shelby County, Tenn.

“Defending Childhood involves collaborative efforts across the Department of Justice and other federal agencies including the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education. Critical partners outside the federal government include state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies, national experts, practitioners and advocates.”