

Statement From Fight Crime: Invest in Kids National Leadership Council on the National Conversation on Policing

The death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer as three of his fellow officers failed to intervene has rightly shocked everyone across the nation, leading to protests and sparking difficult conversations between law enforcement and the communities we serve.

Law enforcement professionals throughout the country have publicly condemned racism and the deaths of George Floyd and others. We concur with the many law enforcement leaders who have spoken out in recent weeks to emphasize the paramount importance of fairness and equity in society and in policing. We also applaud the many officers who have respected the rights of protestors while continuing to carry out their duty to protect and serve their communities.

Recent events have underscored a reality our members have understood for the past quarter-century: We can't simply arrest our way out of large, societal problems. Our members have long championed the kinds of programs for children and families that not only address the root causes of crime—helping to stop crime before it happens—but which also serve to ease the inequities that threaten our social fabric and undermine our nation's fundamental, aspirational principles.

A commitment to invest substantially in high-quality supports that have a positive and protective impact on children and youth living in challenging circumstances can effectuate real, long-term, societal change. That commitment helps to address the negative consequences of systematic disinvestment in communities of color across the country that has had such a profound impact on the opportunities available to children living near or in poverty.

That desire to build stronger, safer communities through strengthening the same families we're sworn to protect is why we joined Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. For nearly 25 years, the police chiefs, sheriffs, and prosecutors who are members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids have spoken out in support of improving public safety by promoting investments that will allow **every** child to have the opportunity to reach their potential.

There is no single intervention that ensures a child will grow up to thrive, particularly a child growing up in an under-resourced community. Instead, a series of high-quality supports from birth to adulthood can combine to help put children on a path toward academic and life success—and away from crime.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids has laid out [four evidence-based crime prevention methods](#) that are proven to work: voluntary parent coaching programs for new parents, high-quality early childhood care and education, effective in-school and afterschool programs, and interventions for juveniles who are at-risk for involvement in the criminal justice system.

Together, our voices have helped gain significant state and federal investments in parent-coaching programs, increasing the number of children from low-income families who have access to high-quality early learning, the only dedicated federal source for out-of-school time funding, and a reauthorization of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) to direct more resources to anti-recidivism programs, including mentoring programs and effective interventions for families and children.

Giving children living in difficult circumstances access to these research-proven supports lays the groundwork for a safer, stronger community. But measures that address the additional challenge of police-community interactions head-on are also necessary to tackle the more immediate, festering societal issues that occupy our attention at this pivotal moment in history.

Following incidents in Ferguson, Missouri and communities across the nation where people of color, especially young men of color, lost their lives during encounters with law enforcement, the law enforcement members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids asked that the organization develop a program to provide tools to help prevent these incidents in the future.

This idea created the [Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Police Training Institute \(PTI\)](#) and its “Connecting Youth & Communities with Law Enforcement” (CYCLE) program, a high-level, interactive training that teaches law enforcement officers about adolescent brain development, de-escalation, implicit bias and informed response to trauma, while addressing the necessity of transparency and accountability.

To date, PTI has served 18 communities across the country, with plans to continue providing this high-quality training to many more communities in the future.

For our nation to thrive, we need to ensure that every child, in every community, can grow up safe, secure, healthy, and well-educated, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or zip code. Law enforcement leaders have a role in promoting long-term public safety by speaking out in support of the critical investments we need to make to keep our communities safe and allow children and families to reach their potential.

As law enforcement leaders sworn to protect our communities, we will continue to push for investments in research-proven programs that can set children on the path for success and, in doing so, easing the inequities experienced by far too many Americans.

Sincerely,

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids National Leadership Council

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