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Good Cop -- Bad Cop: Police Violence and the Child's Mind

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ESSAY

Good Cop-Bad Cop: Police Violence and the Child's Mind

ANDREA L. DENNIS*

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INTRODUCTION

Police violence against citizens lately has gripped the nation's attention because of recent cases in Ferguson, Missouri; Staten Island, New York; Cleveland, Ohio; Baltimore, Maryland; and elsewhere. Children in those communities and nationwide have been directly and indirectly exposed to these well-publicized incidences of police killings and the aftermath of those killings.

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Exposure to police violence may cause children physical, cognitive, emotional, and social trauma. Moreover, the exposure may negatively influence children's mindsets regarding the criminal justice system and police.

Undoubtedly, these events of late are not the first and only instances in which children have been exposed to physically aggressive and violent law enforcement action. And they are unlikely to be the last instances in which youth will be subjected to police violence. They are, however, a call for action.

Federal law enforcement officials already devote significant resources to the widespread problem of children's exposure to violence. However, their efforts have been impoverished because they have failed to account for police violence and the negative impacts stemming from that violence. To thoroughly tackle the problem of children's exposure to violence, officials addressing the issue should collaborate with others focusing on reform of police-citizen interactions. Their concerted effort must then prioritize data collection respecting, and research regarding, the impact of police violence on children from infancy through late adolescence. Additionally, their work must generate evidence-based programming sensitive to youths' developing perspectives on the legal system and legal actors.

I. CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE HAS ATTRACTED FEDERAL ATTENTION AND RESOURCES

In 2010, United States Attorney General Eric Holder launched the Defending Childhood Initiative aimed at addressing children's exposure to violence.¹ As part of the initiative, Holder established a national task force.² Two years later, in December 2012, the task force issued a national report,³ which serves as "a blueprint for

1. *Defending Childhood: About the Initiative*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, <http://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/about-initiative> (last updated Oct. 22, 2014). In 1999, Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder launched his first effort to attend to this issue when, as Deputy Attorney General, he began the Safe Start Initiative. See U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE: THE SAFE START INITIATIVE (2001), available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/fs200113.pdf>.

2. *Defending Childhood: Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, <http://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/task-force-children-exposed-violence> (last updated Oct. 16, 2014).

3. U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, REPORT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON CHILDREN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE (2012) [hereinafter TASK FORCE REPORT], available at <http://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/cev-rpt-full.pdf>. In other years, the United States Department of Justice has issued more focused reports on the topic. See U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE: A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL SURVEY (2009),

preventing children's exposure to violence and for reducing the negative effects experienced by children exposed to violence . . . across the United States."⁴ In the report, violence is defined as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation."⁵ More particularly, the report focuses on children who experience sexual or physical abuse, witness intimate partner or inter-familial violence, and experience or witness violence in community spaces.⁶ Thus, a child may be directly exposed to violence—as when the child is the target of the violence—or indirectly exposed—as when the child witnesses or observes the use of violence or "has lost a loved one to violence."⁷

As explained in the report, children who are exposed to violence can be traumatically affected in their immediate development and might face difficulties as they transition to adulthood.⁸ Among the litany of negative outcomes specifically identified are, in no particular order, physical illness, cognitive impairments, emotional and mental health problems, impaired interpersonal relationships, deviant sexual behavior, feelings of powerlessness, self-blame, hypervigilance, use of violent behavior, normalization of violent behavior, and criminal association and activity.⁹ Further, it is contended that juveniles who suffer negative outcomes can have short-term and long-term impacts on, and interactions with, public and private human services agencies and programs.¹⁰

In addition to identifying and explaining the problem of children's exposure to violence, the task force offered many recommendations. In short, it proposed the development of a nationalized effort to end children's exposure to violence, consisting of federal involvement, youth inclusion, data collection and research, and development

available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/227744.pdf>; U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE AND THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN DELINQUENCY AND VICTIMIZATION (2013), available at <http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/240555.pdf>; CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE: THE SAFE START INITIATIVE, *supra* note 1.

4. *Defending Childhood: Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence*, *supra* note 2.

5. TASK FORCE REPORT, *supra* note 3, at 210–11 (quoting the World Report on Violence and Health) (quotation marks omitted).

6. *See id.* at 31–33.

7. *Id.* at 211 (defining the term "violence exposure").

8. *See id.* at 3, 29–31.

9. *Id.* at 29–34.

10. *See id.* at 28.

of evidence-based programming.¹¹ More specifically, this nationalized effort would encourage (1) identification, assessment, and treatment of children exposed to violence; (2) prevention of in-home exposure through the creation of safe, nurturing homes; (3) reduction in community violence through identification of community challenges, resources, and strategies, the involvement of men and boys as well as law enforcement and schools, and putting an end to bullying; and (4) reformation of the juvenile justice system for violence-exposed youth.¹²

II. THE FEDERAL APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE IS DOUBLY DEFICIENT

Although comprehensive in its approach to the identified issue, the task force report is lacking in two respects. First, the task force should have included police violence among the types of violence that youth may be exposed to and traumatized by. Furthermore, task force officials failed to recognize that children exposed to violence—especially police violence—may be negatively socialized to distrust the criminal justice system and avoid law enforcement.

A. Omits Police as a Source of Violence

The task force report fails to acknowledge that children—including young children—are subjected to violent acts committed by law enforcement against citizens. The perpetrators of violence with whom the report is concerned include family members as well as community members such as peers, teachers, coaches, community leaders, gang members, and others engaged in criminal activities.¹³ The report does not recognize police officials as a source of violence—whether in homes or public spaces—and so law enforcement violence is seemingly excluded from consideration.¹⁴ This absence should be rectified. Children are subjected—personally and otherwise—to many different forms of violent police action in a variety of settings, and all encounters can be trauma inducing.

Police behavior that commonly would be viewed as violent encompasses a wide array of conduct. While recent national attention

11. *Id.* at 9–11.

12. *Id.* at 11–23.

13. *Id.* at 107–110, 141–145 (describing violence in homes and families and by community members).

14. *See id.* (describing violence in homes and families and by community members).

has focused on police killings of citizens, police violence should be broadly interpreted to include actual and threatened physically aggressive policing behavior. On one extreme police violence should embrace harassment or threats of serious bodily injury or death and on the other extreme it should include homicide of an individual. Examples along the spectrum between the extremes include, in no particular order, rough hand-cuffing; rough frisking; frisking under clothes; strip searching; tasing; pepper spraying; firing, pointing, or brandishing of a weapon; deployment of police dogs; pulling or pushing; stepping on; kicking; hitting with or without a physical object; and use of the chokehold.¹⁵

Children learn about these violent police behaviors in many different ways and settings. Children, in their homes, experience police officers executing warrants or responding to emergency calls.¹⁶ Children observe police officers interacting with and arresting other individuals in public.¹⁷ Children themselves encounter police on the street or in school for investigatory or arrest purposes.¹⁸ While any of

15. Recent events in Baltimore, Maryland, are notoriously exemplary of the problems that may arise due to physically aggressive policing. In response to Freddie Gray's death while in Baltimore police custody, law enforcement presence and shows of force generally were ratcheted up throughout the city. One weekday afternoon, Baltimore police converged on the area near Mondawmin mall and Frederick Douglass High School, based on what was believed to be a credible threat of a "purge" to occur after school let that afternoon. Numerous police were in the area wearing riot gear, carrying batons and shields, and physically corralling the youth. Police helicopters swirled above. Eventually, youth and police directly and violently clashed. See Sam Brodey and Jenna McLaughlin, *Eyewitnesses: the Baltimore Riots Didn't Start the Way You Think They Did*, MOTHERJONES, Apr. 28, 2015, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/04/how-baltimore-riots-began-mondawmin-purge>.

16. See Susan D. Phillips & Jian Zhao, *The Relationship Between Witnessing Arrests and Elevated Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress: Findings from a National Study of Children Involved in the Child Welfare System*, 32 CHILD. & YOUTH SERVICES REV. 1246, 1249 (2010); Ryan Sit et al., *Meet the NYPD Officers with the Most Lawsuits over the Past Decade*, N.Y. DAILY NEWS (Feb. 16, 2014, 2:30 AM), <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/meet-nypd-4-sued-officers-decade-article-1.1616033> (describing lawsuit against New York City Police Department officer alleging wrongful arrest and harassment of mother in front of her 10-year-old daughter); Anthony Advincula, *Children Who Witness Parent's Immigration Arrest May Suffer Lifetime Health Consequences*, REPORTING ON HEALTH, <http://www.reportingonhealth.org/children-who-witness-parents-immigration-arrest-may-suffer-lifetime-health-consequences> (last visited Mar. 26, 2015).

17. See Jenny Anchondo, *Arrest at Royses Outrages Parents*, FOX 4 NEWS (Mar. 2, 2015), <http://www.fox4news.com/story/28243285/arrest-at-royses-city-father-daughter-dance-outrages-parents>.

18. See CTR. FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, *STOP AND FRISK: THE HUMAN IMPACT* 13 (2012) (providing statistics and anecdotes of stops and frisk by juveniles of New York City Police Department); Ryan Devereaux, *'We Were Handcuffing Kids for No Reason': Stop-and-Frisk Goes on Trial*, THE NATION, Mar. 28, 2013 (describing officer's testimony admitting illegal stops and frisks of juveniles by New York City Police Department); Conor Friedersdorf, *The City Where Blacks Suffer Under 'Stop and Frisk on Steroids'*, THE ATLANTIC, May 30, 2014, <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/05/where-blacks-suffer-under-stop-and-frisk-on-ster>

these interactions or observances may be relatively uneventful, violence can occur during these interactions and children can be exposed. Children are personally victims of police violence.¹⁹ In real-time, children observe others victimized by police.²⁰ Even if they do not personally experience or witness police violence, children can overhear adult conversations regarding police violence.²¹ Finally, the 24-hour news stream, internet, and social media make it possible for children to repeatedly view and discuss video and photographic images of police violence and any aftermath.²²

It stands to reason that children exposed to all manner of police violence, whether directly or indirectly through those they know, may suffer many of the cognitive, emotional, and social harms earlier itemized in relation to other forms of violence to which children may be subjected. But even children who are far removed from the actual events and become aware of the violence through traditional media, social media, or conversation can be negatively impacted. Secondary trauma, also known as compassion fatigue, can result when a child learns about the traumatic experiences of others, including by watching news stories or images after the events have occurred.²³ For these

oids/371869/ (reporting on stop and frisk practices in Miami Gardens, Florida, that included stopping children on playgrounds and identifying a 5-year-old child as “suspicious”).

19. See Wesley Lowery, *Tamir Rice Family Attorney Says ‘Unbelievable’ that City of Cleveland Court Filing Blames Tamir for His Own Death*, WASH. POST (Mar. 2, 2015), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/postnation/wp/2015/03/02/tamir-rice-family-attorney-says-unbelievable-that-city-of-cleveland-court-filing-blames-tamir-for-his-own-death/> (reporting on lawsuit filed by Rice family against Cleveland as a result of police officers killing 12-year-old Tamir Rice who was playing with toy gun at time of shooting); Steve Visser, *Governor Interested in Results of Habersham Raid Investigation*, ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION (June 2, 2014), <http://www.ajc.com/news/news/breaking-news/surgery-delayed-for-baby-wounded-by-habersham-gren/ng-CCf/> (describing execution of search warrant at a house while toddler present leaving toddler on life support).

20. See *Video Shows Police Kill Man With Hands Up In Front of Witnesses, Children—What Happened?*, INQUISITR, (Feb. 11, 2015), <http://www.inquisitr.com/1833556/video-police-shoot-man-hands-up/>; *3 Kids Witness Police-Involved Shooting from Back of Fleeing Car*, NBC CHICAGO (Jan. 5, 2013), <http://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/3-Kids-Witness-Police-Involved-Shooting-from-Back-of-Fleeing-Car-185740902.html>; cf. Julie Bosman & Joseph Goldstein, *Timeline for a Body: 4 Hours in the Middle of a Ferguson Street*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 24, 2014, at A1 (describing parents shielding their children from observing Michael Brown’s body in the street after he was killed by law enforcement).

21. See Rachel L. Swarns, *A Conversation About the Police a Mother Didn’t Want to Have*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 8, 2014, at A20.

22. See *Talking with Kids about News: Age-by-Age Insights*, PUB. BROAD. SYS. <http://www.pbs.org/parents/talkingwithkids/news/agebyage.html> (last visited Mar. 26, 2015). Internet searches on Google and Youtube for “police beating people” result in both still images and videos worldwide.

23. See *Secondary Traumatic Stress*, NAT’L CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK, <http://www.nctsn.org/resources/topics/secondary-traumatic-stress> (last visited Mar. 28, 2015); *Tips for Media Covering Traumatic Events*, NAT’L CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK, <http://www.nctsn.org/resources/topics/secondary-traumatic-stress>

reasons, exposure must be broadly understood to include not just personal or semi-personal experience but larger awareness of societal events.

B. Overlooks the Effects of Police Violence on Children's Legal Socialization

In keeping with the report's failure to include exposure to police violence among its concerns, the report also neglects to consider the impact of police violence on children's development of trust in and respect for the law and law enforcement. More specifically, children exposed to police violence may develop a negative perception of law enforcement and the criminal justice system.²⁴ In turn, this negative perception can affect their behavior toward law enforcement when young and later in adulthood.²⁵ The report, however, does not consider this significant concern, and it should.

Children are developmental sponges, soaking up all manner of knowledge and norms during their formative years.²⁶ Society wants children to trust in and respect the law, including legal enforcers such as the police. Thus, socialization into legal norms and the legal system begins in the earliest years of childhood.²⁷ Public education campaigns—such as Officer Friendly²⁸ and McGruff the Crime Dog²⁹—endeavor to teach children from as young as three years of age that

www.nctsnets.org/resources/audiences/for-the-media/tips-for-covering-events (last visited Mar. 28, 2015).

24. See Ronald Weitzer & Rod K. Brunson, *Strategic Responses to the Police Among Inner-City Youth*, 50 Soc. Q. 235, 241 (2009).

25. *Id.*

26. Lawrence A. Hirschfield, *Why Don't Anthropologists Like Children?*, 104 AM. ANTHROPOLOGIST 611, 615–16 (2002).

27. See Jeffrey Fagan & Tom R. Tyler, *Legal Socialization of Children and Adolescents*, 18 SOC. JUSTICE RESEARCH 217, 217-219 (2005) (explaining that the development of children's ties to law and legal actors begins in early childhood).

28. See Maureen O'Donnell, *Thomas J. Loftus, Nation's First 'Officer Friendly.' Dead at 75*, CHI. SUN TIMES (Jan. 12, 2015, 11:59 PM), <http://chicago.suntimes.com/obituaries/7/71/286411/xloftus13> (describing Chicago's creation of first Officer Friendly program in nation); Lucille deView, *'Officer Friendly' Teaches Kids to Beware of Strangers*, CHRISTIAN SCI. MONITOR (June 17, 1982), <http://www.csmonitor.com/1982/0617/061768.html> (describing Jacksonville's Officer Friendly program); see also *Officer Friendly Program*, CHI. POLICE DEP'T, <https://portal.chicago.police.org/portal/page/portal/ClearPath/Communities/Crime%20Prevention/School%20Programs> (last visited Mar. 28, 2015) (providing a modern expression of Officer Friendly programs and describing components of Officer Friendly school visitation program in Chicago).

29. See *About McGruff*, NAT'L CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL, <http://www.ncpc.org/about/about-mcgruff> (last visited Mar. 28, 2015) (describing the National Crime Prevention Council's McGruff the Crime Dog program). Children can visit a website containing videos, games, and educational information featuring McGruff the Crime Dog. See *McGruff the Crime Dog*, <http://www.mcgruff.org/> (last visited Mar. 28, 2015).

law enforcement is charged with protecting and serving the community, and children should call the police for help. Long-standing efforts to develop positive relations between children and the police include police visits to schools, mentoring programs and community-based programs.³⁰

Notwithstanding, children can be legally socialized to characterize law enforcement as a negative, not a positive.³¹ More pointedly, youth subjected to police violence may label law enforcement as the bad guys.³² At an early age, children become sophisticated learners able to handle complex information and experiences.³³ Further, from an early age, children can discern negative interactions between individuals, and begin to categorize individuals and emotions positively and negatively.³⁴ Consequently, even a young child who observes or learns of a police officer behaving in an aggressive manner may group law enforcement with other bad actors, characters or scenarios with which the child is familiar.

Moreover, police violence is probably especially likely to socialize children of color to be wary of police. Regardless of age, the victims of police brutality are overwhelmingly Black and brown.³⁵ As com-

30. Many law enforcement agencies, especially larger ones, have youth outreach programs. See, e.g., *Community Affairs: Youth Services Section*, N.Y. POLICE DEP'T, http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/community_affairs/youth_programs.shtml (last visited Mar. 28, 2015); *Lessons/Programs*, N.Y. POLICE DEP'T, http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/school_safety/school_safety_community_outreach_curriculum.shtml (last visited Mar. 28, 2015); *Police Kids and Youth Education Programs*, CITY OF CLEVELAND, http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/CityofCleveland/Home/Government/CityAgencies/PublicSafety/Division%20of%20Police/Community_Services (last visited Mar. 28, 2015); *Youth Programs*, L.A. POLICE DEP'T, http://www.lapdonline.org/youth_programs (last visited Mar. 28, 2015). An example of a non-governmental program is Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.). See D.A.R.E., <http://www.dare.org/about-d-a-r-e/> (last visited Mar. 28, 2015).

31. See *The 12 Core Concepts: Concepts for Understanding Traumatic Stress Responses in Children and Families 2012*, NAT'L CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK, <http://www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/parents-caregivers/what-is-cts/12-core-concepts> (last visited Mar. 28, 2015) (challenges to the social contract, including legal and ethical issues, affect trauma response and recovery).

32. See ALICE GOFFMAN, *ON THE RUN: FUGITIVE LIFE IN AN AMERICAN CITY* 21 (2014) (describing gritty versions of cops and robbers played by Black boys as young as 7 years who live in an impoverished, heavily-policed, urban neighborhood in Philadelphia, PA).

33. See HIRSCHFELD, *supra* note 26.

34. See generally Seth D. Pollak & Pawan Sinha, *Effects of Early Experience on Children's Recognition of Facial Displays of Emotion*, 38 DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOL. 784 (2002) (studying maltreated children's abilities to accurately identify facial expressions of anger).

35. See Ryan Gabrielson et al., *Deadly Force, in Black and White*, PROPUBLICA (Oct. 10, 2014, 11:07 AM), <http://www.propublica.org/article/deadly-force-in-black-and-white>; see also Rich Juzwiak and Aleksander Chan, *Unarmed People of Color Killed by Police, 1999-2014*, GAWKER, (Dec. 8, 2014, 2:15 PM), <http://gawker.com/unarmed-people-of-color-killed-by-police-1999-2014-1666672349>.

pared to whites, Blacks are more likely to have indirect exposure to policing as a result of conversations with family, friends, and neighbors.³⁶ Accordingly, children of color are more likely to become actual victims of police violence than white children, and children of color are more likely to be exposed to police violence perpetrated on people who look like them, whether friends or family or community members.

In addition to developing perceptions of law enforcement as illegitimate, research indicates that juveniles who have had negative exposure to the law interact with police in ways that affect safety and security.³⁷ Adolescents who negatively view police make significant efforts to avoid them, including by flight if possible.³⁸ In turn, law enforcement may chase the fleeing child and use physical force to subdue the child.³⁹ Kids who cannot avoid interacting with the police may refuse or ignore police commands, verbally resist orders, or in the most extreme instances, physically resist.⁴⁰ Finally, juveniles who have been victimized refuse to call the police for assistance.⁴¹ Any of these types of law enforcement-citizen interactions—or lack of interaction—manifests a breakdown in trust and respect and can put the lives of citizens and police at risk.

III. FEDERAL EFFORTS TARGETING CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE CAN BE STRENGTHENED

To address the identified inadequacies of the task force report, several steps should occur. As a preliminary matter, from a structural perspective, a coordinated response should be undertaken. Future government efforts targeted toward alleviating children's exposure to violence should work in tandem with those government efforts target-

36. See Weitzer & Brunson, *supra* note 24, at 249–50.

37. See *id.* at 241, 243, 245–46 (stating youth holding negative perceptions of law enforcement avoid interactions with police, refuse to report victimization to police, and overtly resist police during interactions).

38. See GOFFMAN, *supra* note 32, at 23–29 (describing the “art of running” from police by young Black men in an impoverished, heavily-policed, urban neighborhood in Philadelphia, PA); Weitzer & Brunson, *supra* note 36, at 237 (mentioning flight as a response to distrust of police).

39. Weitzer & Brunson, *supra* note 24, at 242 (describing incident in which juvenile running from law enforcement was caught and shot).

40. *Id.* at 243–46 (describing instances in which juveniles did not report criminal activity or their own victimization).

41. *Id.* at 243; see also Jennifer Fratello, et al., Vera Inst. of Justice, *Coming of Age with Stop and Frisk: Experiences, Self-Perceptions, and Public Safety Implications 2* (2013) (finding 6 out of 10 juveniles subject to stop-and-frisk by New York City Police were unlikely to call the police if in trouble).

ing the reform of police behavior. For instance, the Defending Childhood Initiative might implement the findings and recommendations of, as well as work with programs resulting from, the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, which President Obama created in response to the national uproar over citizen killings by police in Ferguson, Staten Island, and Cleveland to "provide an effective partnership between law enforcement and local communities that reduces crime and increases trust"42 Once government officials have coordinated their work, they should then partner with non-governmental institutions to address this problem.

After the collaborative structure is created, two goals should be established: evidence collection and analysis, and programming creation. Present and future efforts to gather data from children on violence exposure exist, yet those efforts should be expanded to capture information regarding children's exposure to police violence. Further, the collection process should utilize the broad definition of police violence and capture the variety of means of exposure described herein. Slight efforts on this front have already begun. The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing heard testimony from five individuals regarding their interactions with and resulting perceptions of law enforcement when young.⁴³ In light of these anecdotal reports, the interim report recommended that children's voices be included in efforts to reform police-citizen interactions.⁴⁴

While the information obtained by the Task Force on 21st Century Policing is enlightening with respect to children's responses to police interactions, it merely touches the surface. Researchers must

42. See Establishment of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing 79 Fed. Reg. 76865, 76865 (Dec. 23, 2014), available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/12/23/2014-30195/establishment-of-the-presidents-task-force-on-21st-century-policing>. For descriptions of its mission and process, as well as interim reporting, see U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, INTERIM REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING, 1-3 (2015). On March 2, 2015, the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing issued its interim report. *Id.* at 71 (recommending federal law enforcement agencies review the report recommendations and adopt those that can be implemented at the federal level).

43. On February 13, 2015, the 21st Century Policing Task Force held a listening session on Community Policing and Crime Reduction during which it heard testimony from youth concerning their experiences with law enforcement. U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, *Listening Session on Community Policing and Crime Reduction*, <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=2770> (last visited Mar. 26, 2015). During the Task Force's investigation phase, several other witnesses also commented on the impact—both negative and positive—on youth of law enforcement behavior. See INTERIM REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING, *supra* note 42 at 9, 14.

44. See INTERIM REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING, *supra* note 42, at 14-15, 49.

undertake systematic and critical data gathering and analysis.⁴⁵ More specifically, centers and programs for childhood studies are ideal institutions in which to conduct this intensive study of children's exposure to police violence. Childhood studies is an emerging field of research in American institutions. Whether multi- or inter-disciplinary in nature, childhood studies incorporates both humanistic and social science approaches to studying children and their lives.⁴⁶ These programs bring together researchers in different disciplines to coordinate, leverage, and sometimes integrate knowledge and efforts to address the problems of children.⁴⁷

With this new research in hand, reformers should then incorporate this information into innovative, data-driven programming that positively educates children about police, fosters positive youth-police relationships and, in a developmentally appropriate manner, helps children understand the complexities of law enforcement work.⁴⁸ Existing, traditional one-dimensional police characters and fleeting police-youth education and mentoring programs apparently have proven to be insufficient to overcome the problems resulting from children's exposure to police violence.⁴⁹ Consequently, officials should aim to develop novel, evidence-based programming promoting a culture in which children and police are mutually understood, respected, and trusted, not maligned, feared, and endangered.

Community-based programs will be helpful to gathering data as well as developing and implementing novel programming. One promising private program already in existence—Strategies for Youth

45. This proposed goal is consistent with the recommendation in the interim report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing that a nationalized system of data collection police-citizen interactions be established. *See id.* 19–20.

46. The Department of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University represents a multidisciplinary model. For information on the department, visit <https://childhood.camden.rutgers.edu/>. The Child Studies program at Vanderbilt University identifies itself as interdisciplinary. For information on the program, visit http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/psych/med_in_child_studies/index.php.

47. *See* NAT'L ACAD. OF SCIS., *Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research* 26-30 (2004) (defining multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research).

48. *See generally* Kami Chavis Simmons, *The Politics of Policing: Ensuring Stakeholder Participation in the Federal Reform of Local Practices*, 98 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY 489 (2008). In several instances, the Interim Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing recommended the development of youth-centered interactive programming for youth and police. *See* INTERIM REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING, *supra* note 42, at 14, 47, 49–50.

49. *Cf.* Renee Graham, *For African-American Children, There's No 'Officer Friendly'*, BOSTON GLOBE (Dec. 1, 2014), <http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2014/12/01/ferguson-other-incidents-show-that-for-african-american-children-there-officer-friendly/4xDLb16yEWNvziH6LOJ6M/story.html>.

(SFY)—is well-positioned to assist with the proposals made herein and serves as an example of the type of organization that may target this issue.⁵⁰ SFY is a national organization with the mission of improving police-youth relations by training law enforcement officers regarding juvenile development, mental health, and perceptions of police, as well as providing support for community efforts to develop positive law enforcement-juvenile relations.⁵¹ Currently, it provides general training to law enforcement on how to interact with youth when approaching them in public for questioning or investigation, when arresting them, or when arresting their parent.⁵² SFY also offers specialized training on how law enforcement should interact with children who have been chronically exposed to familial or community violence.⁵³ Pedagogically, SFY uses juveniles from the relevant community to assist in the training.⁵⁴ Thus, SFY grasps the importance of trauma exposure and prior police interactions as a factor influencing children's responses to police. Also, SFY recognizes that citizens—including youth—can play a role in training law enforcement.⁵⁵ For these reasons, SFY is ideally suited to gather information from children and other interested adults regarding the effect of police violence on children and transmit this knowledge to researchers and the larger community.⁵⁶ Moreover, expansion of SFY's current training slate to attend to the effect of police violence on children's perceptions of and responses to law enforcement is not untenable in light of its history and experience.

50. Attorney General Eric Holder also presents an opportunity to address this matter. He has mentioned to those who know him that after he leaves the Department of Justice he is interested "in establishing a center to continue his work on restoring trust between law enforcement and minority communities." Jerry Markon & Juliet Eilperin, *Attorney General Eric Holder to Step Down*, WASH. POST (Sept. 25, 2014), http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/attorney-general-eric-holder-to-step-down/2014/09/25/9b1dbb7a-44c3-11e4-b47c-f5889e061e5f_story.html. Work of the nature suggested herein would fit comfortably within that goal.

51. See *About*, STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH, <http://strategiesforyouth.org/about/> (last visited Mar. 30, 2015).

52. See *Model Guidelines*, STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH, <http://strategiesforyouth.org/for-police/model-guidelines/> (last visited Mar. 30, 2015).

53. See *Courses, Policing Youth Chronically Exposed to Trauma & Violence*, STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH, <http://strategiesforyouth.org/for-police/training/courses/> (last visited May 16, 2015).

54. See *Training Principles of Policing the Teen Brain*, STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH, <http://strategiesforyouth.org/for-police/training/> (last visited Mar. 30, 2015).

55. The Interim Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing recommended community participation in law enforcement training. See INTERIM REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING, *supra* note 42, at 53–54.

56. Strategies for Youth (SFY) has also already developed a training delivery model that may facilitate research and future implementation. See Lisa Thurau, *Not Your Older Brother's MBTA Police*, STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH, <http://strategiesforyouth.org/news-events/our-publications/not-your-older-brothers-mbta-police/> (last visited Apr. 28, 2015).

In closing, reformers focused on children's exposure to violence fail to account for the impact of police violence on children. This shortcoming must be redressed. Children exposed to police violence face physical, social, emotional, and cognitive harms similar to children exposed to other forms of violence from other sources. Moreover, they also can be legally socialized to mistrust the police. These negative effects can impede children's abilities to become healthy productive citizens who participate fully in society and receive its benefits. Rather, they may become fearful, suspicious, and avoidant. But it need not be this way. A collaborative government-backed effort involving childhood studies researchers, children's advocates, and police reformers can help children learn to trust the police and train the police to more effectively serve their youngest constituents and the larger community.

