

# New Research:

## The First Ever Program to Produce Population-Level Reductions in Child Sexual Abuse

### The Problem:

- Child sexual abuse (CSA) impacts **27.5% of girls** and **16.1% of boys** in the US, incurring high public costs and devastating consequences for survivors.
- US incidence rates have stagnated over the past 15 to 20 years, signaling a dire need for innovation in primary prevention.
- In 2024, the US Preventive Services Task Force reported that there is **insufficient evidence for the effectiveness of child abuse preventive strategies**, and none had ever shown decreases in incidence rates at the population level.

### A New Solution:

- A coordinated, multisector CSA preventive intervention targeting **children, parents, and community members** within 5 US counties was evaluated in a population cohort study.
- Population-level rates of CSA were **significantly reduced in intervention counties**, as compared with control counties for both substantiated and unsubstantiated CSA reports.

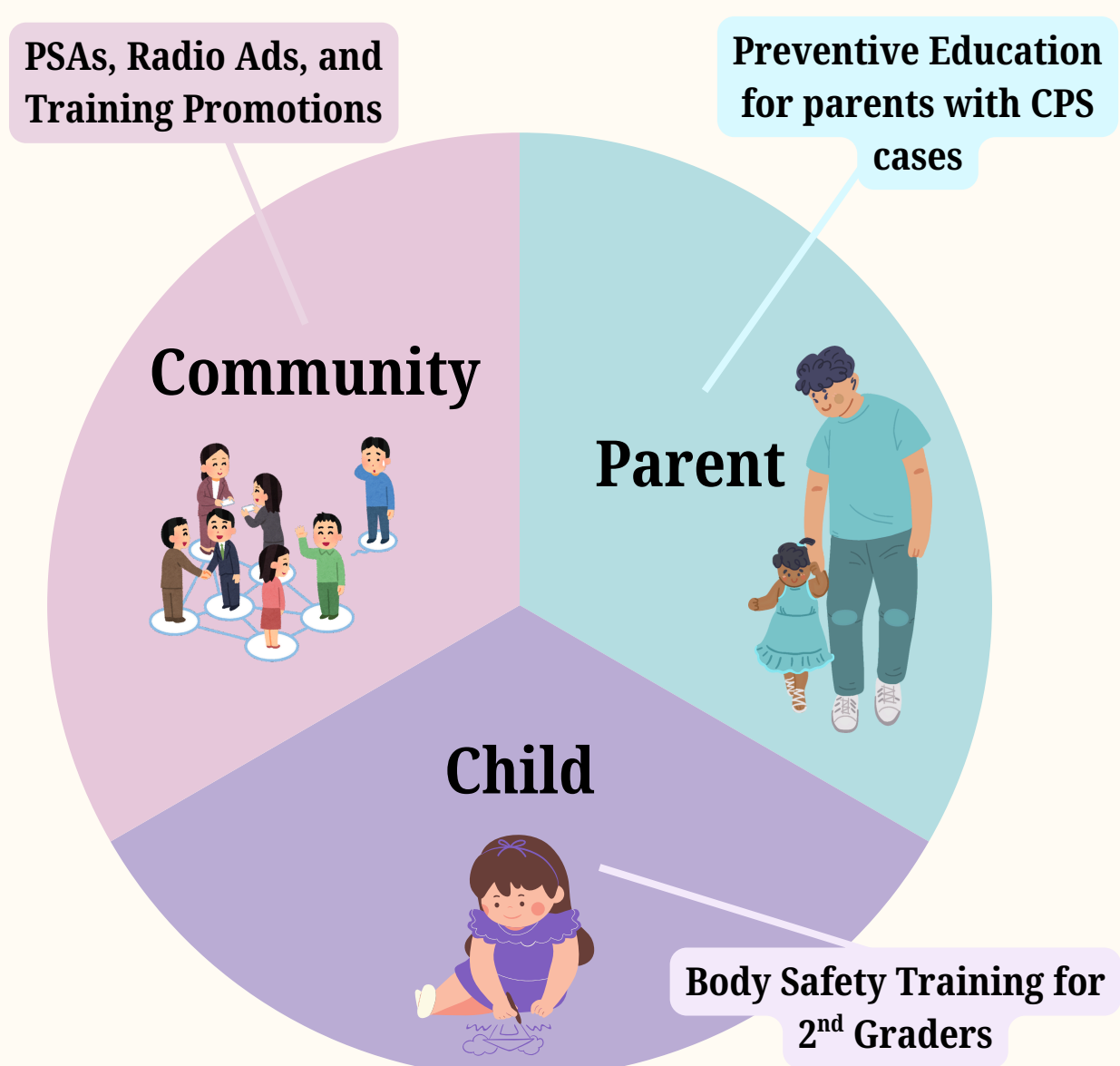
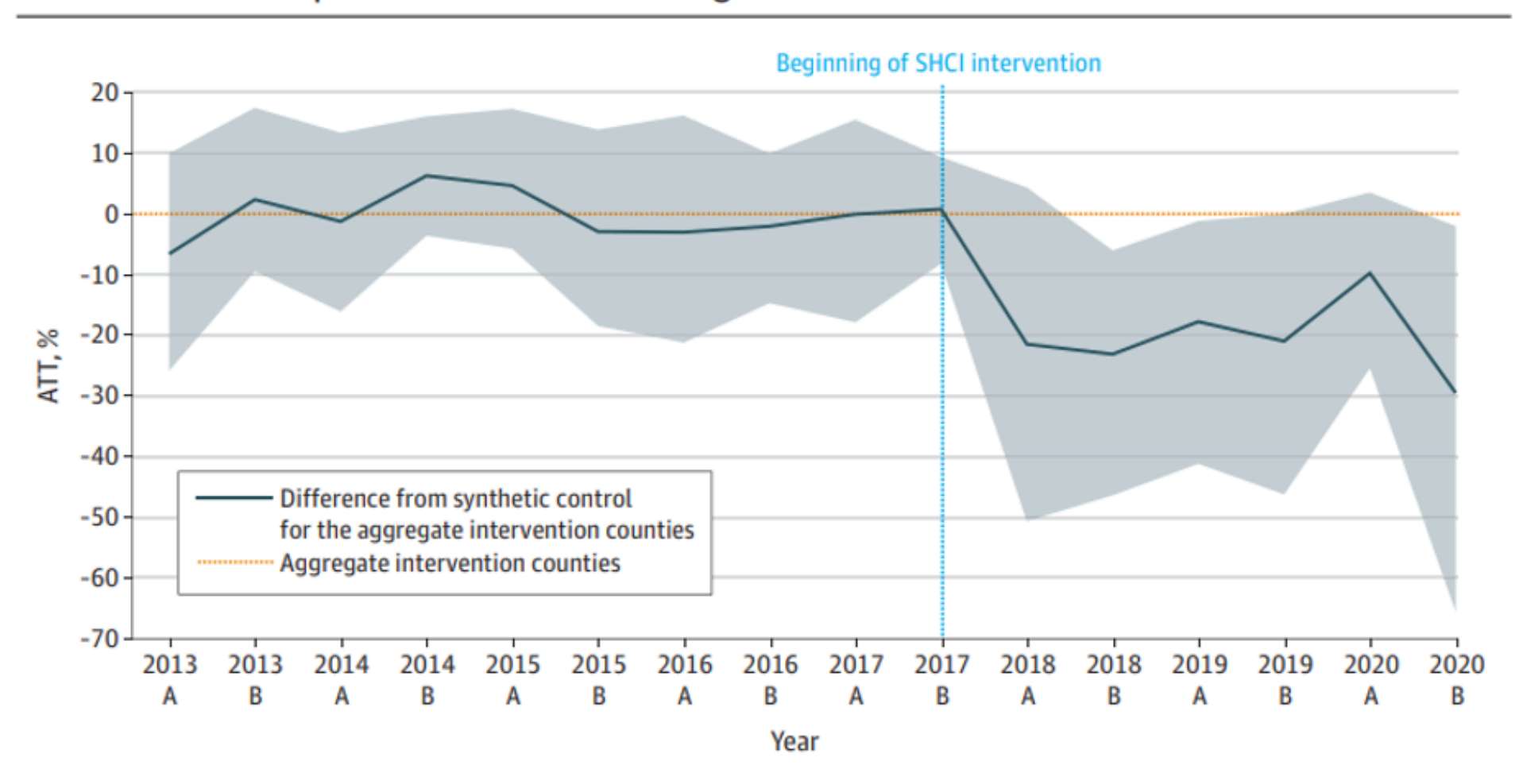


Figure 2. Results of the Pooled Synthetic Control Methods Analyses for Substantiated Child Sexual Abuse Reports With Covariate Balancing



### Key Takeaways

- This is the **first study** to ever show **population-level reductions** in child sexual abuse.
- This intervention worked because of **coordination across multiple sectors** to tackle a problem together.
- The **school-based component** was especially effective, with **92% of classrooms** opting in to participate.
- Preventing abuse now **saves costs** later: For every \$1 invested in this program, an estimated \$14.31 was saved in public expenditures

### Read the full article:

Noll, J. G., Felt, J., Russotti, J., Guastaferrero, K., Day, S., & Fisher, Z. (2025). Rates of Population-Level Child Sexual Abuse After a Community-Wide Preventive Intervention. JAMA Pediatrics. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2024.6824>