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The Honorable Charles McC. Mathias, Jr.
 United States Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Mathias:

Thank you for your letter of February 23 concerning National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) programs and support for research on child abuse and neglect. The subject of child abuse and neglect is very important and of great social concern. However, the role of the NICHD regarding research on this problem requires clarification.

The NICHD has never supported a program of research on child abuse and neglect. Programs directly related to this subject are the responsibility of the National Institute of Mental Health and the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families. NICHD continues its long-standing program of support for studies relating to human development. Such research contributes to knowledge of normal function and behavior. It provides a basis for understanding of problems of learning, mental retardation, personality development, social adaptation, and other areas. Child abuse is one of many topics that, although not a responsibility of the NICHD, are indirectly related to the Institute's mission.

Support of research on maternal-infant interaction, attachment behavior, socialization, and bonding between parent and child may contribute to the understanding of problems of child abuse and its prevention. Over the past four years, the NICHD has provided extramural funding of such studies in these amounts:

FY 1977	\$2,140,000
FY 1978	2,056,000
FY 1979	2,602,000
FY 1980	3,740,883

I might add, however, that the National Institute of Mental Health and the Administration for Children, Youth and Families have provided extramural funding for studies on child abuse and neglect in these amounts:

FY 1977	\$19,221,000
FY 1978	19,176,000
FY 1979	21,493,000
FY 1980	23,070,000

Regarding the 1977 consultants' recommendations on research in mental retardation, the NICHD continues to support studies which may contribute to the understanding of problems such as child abuse and neglect. It has maintained cooperation and coordination with the National Institute of Mental Health, one of the organizations which has had primary responsibility for direct research on child abuse.

Sincerely,



Richard S. Schweiker
Secretary