

**SECOND EDITION**



# **We Can Do Better**

Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths in America



## INTRODUCTION

September 2010

This is the second edition of “We Can Do Better–Child Abuse Deaths in America.” The first edition was published in 2009. Since then, much work has been done to increase public awareness of child fatalities and to enlist the federal government in elevating the issue.

In October, 2009, the release of the report reached millions of citizens because of extensive press coverage. The release was followed by a ‘Summit to End Child Abuse Deaths in America,’ which brought 150 child abuse experts from around the country to Washington, D.C. for three days of educational sessions and discussions. The Summit attendees made many recommendations for ending child abuse and neglect deaths. They can be found at [www.everychildmatters.org](http://www.everychildmatters.org).

In January 2010, five national organizations joined forces to address the issue of child abuse fatalities. The partnership, the National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths, includes the National Association of Social Workers, the National Children’s Alliance, the National Center for Child Death Review and the National District Attorneys Association, along with the Every Child Matters Education Fund. The coalition will soon announce an ambitious strategy for generating the attention that some 2,500 deaths of children a year at the hands of their family members deserves.

In April 2010, the new coalition conducted an educational briefing on child abuse and neglect for Congressional staff at the Capitol.

In a major development, the Government Accountability Office, in May of 2010, began a study of child abuse fatalities associated with the child welfare system. Members of the coalition have met with GAO staff. The coalition also has met with the commissioner of the federal Administration on Children and Families to voice its concerns and offer its assistance.

Additionally, a petition campaign has been initiated requesting Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Harry Reid to sponsor Congressional hearings on child abuse fatalities.

Much more must be done. The rate of child abuse fatalities continues to rise. The official number for 2008 was 1,740, nearly double the combined number of five other more publicized causes of death, as can be seen in this chart.

## Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities vs. Other Causes of Death

Cause of Death - Most recent data	Total Deaths
U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan <sup>1</sup>	479
H1N1 pediatric fatalities <sup>2</sup>	281
Food borne illnesses <sup>3</sup>	74
Toyota accelerator malfunction <sup>4</sup>	34
Coal mining accidents <sup>5</sup>	33
<b>Total other causes of death</b>	<b>901</b>
<b>Total child abuse and neglect fatalities<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>1,740</b>

An overhaul of the nation's child protection system is long overdue. The coalition's goal is to help prompt such an overhaul. You can help. Please visit [www.everychildmatters.org/petition](http://www.everychildmatters.org/petition) and sign this petition urging Congress to take action.

## Citations

<sup>1</sup> Faces of the Fallen: Iraq and Afghanistan 2009 Casualties. Retrieved from: <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/fallen/page5/>

<sup>2</sup> Laboratory-Confirmed 2009 H1N1 Influenza Pediatric Deaths. Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/updates/us/>

<sup>3</sup> Number of deaths and case fatality rate (CFR) in 2009, by age group and pathogen - Food borne Diseases Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet), United States. Retrieved from: [http://www.cdc.gov/foodnet/factsandfigures/2009/Table15\\_age\\_CFR\\_09.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/foodnet/factsandfigures/2009/Table15_age_CFR_09.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Toyota accelerator deaths rise to 34, 2000-2010. Retrieved from: <http://www.buffalonews.com/2010/02/16/958072/toyota-accelerator-deaths-rise.html>

<sup>5</sup> 2009 Fatalities Chargeable to the Coal Mining Industry. Retrieved from: <http://www.msha.gov/stats/charts/coaldaily.asp>

<sup>6</sup> Child abuse and neglect fatalities, July 2007-June 2008 Retrieved from: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/chapter4.htm#child>.

## Prologue

This is a report sure to sadden - and perhaps to anger. How could it be otherwise when we look at the innocent faces of children whose lives were cut short by abuse or neglect?

According to official federal statistics, 12,180 children died from child abuse and neglect during the 2001-2008 period examined in this report. Additionally, several studies have concluded there actually is significant undercounting of maltreatment deaths and that the true number may be several thousands more over the those eight years.

Much can be done to reduce these child abuse and neglect deaths. There exists a vast body of knowledge about healthy child growth and development, including how to prevent abuse in the first place, and how to protect children from further harm if abuse should occur. But the sheer amount of child abuse and neglect in America—already more than 20 million reports of maltreatment made to government agencies in this decade<sup>i</sup>—is certain evidence that, despite the best efforts of the many who work daily to address this problem, we continue to fall far short in applying our knowledge.

The preventable deaths of at least 12,000 children in an eight-year period demand the attention of policy makers and elected officials at all levels. And while the day to day direct responsibility for the protection of at-risk children rests with thousands of local and state child protection agencies, law enforcement, and courts across the country, their efforts could be greatly strengthened by expanding federal planning, coordination, and funding aimed at reducing child deaths.

President Obama and the 111th Congress already have shown strong interest in child well-being in their early policy and budget decisions. Now they must beef-up federal involvement in addressing what is assuredly a matter of homeland insecurity for thousands of the nation's tiniest citizens. We hope that the sad fate of the children in this report will help spark a national review of the nation's child protection system—and will lead to new federal policies and resources for safeguarding the children who depend on us.

Michael Petit  
President, Every Child Matters

**E**ach year our country fails to protect thousands of children in desperate circumstances, circumstances which sadly end only with their deaths.

**Here are 51 who met this fate.<sup>ii</sup>**

*NOTE: The actual number of child fatalities is unknown, however the numbers reported here were provided*

**Alabama**



6-month-old Phoenix Jordan Cody-Parrish was beaten to death in December 2004.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **177**

**Alaska**



5-month-old Kaydence Lewinski died in 2007 after being shaken and beaten.

*Deaths 2001-08\**    **18**

**Arizona**



5-year-old autistic Brandon Williams died in March 2007 from an inflicted fractured skull.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **148**

\*Alaska did not report fatalities in 2004.

## Child Abuse Deaths are Preventable. The President and Congress Must Elevate the Protection of Children to a National Priority if Children Facing Mortal Danger Are To Be Protected

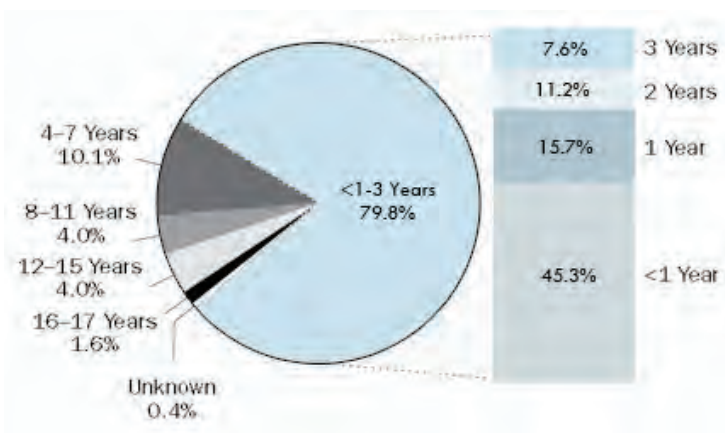
The official number of children killed from abuse or neglect nationwide in 2008 is 1,740. In 2001, the total was 1,300.<sup>iii</sup> Eighty percent of the children are under four. The current systems of child protection are stretched too thin to protect these children.

Between 2001-2008, the official number of child abuse and neglect fatalities was 12,180.<sup>iv</sup> The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has reported an increasing rate of fatalities.<sup>v</sup> In thousands of these cases, people reported the danger facing the child to authorities. For a variety of reasons—especially child protective agency budgets and staff capacity stretched dangerously thin in comparison to the problem—the response to these warnings failed the child. Now a harsh economy combined with a steadily weakened safety net in

many states—including unprecedented slashes in child protection spending in some states— threaten to put even more children at risk.

The direct administration of protective services to children at risk of imminent harm properly rests with state and local governments. But with a long history of inadequate funding for child protection and severe

### Child Abuse and Neglect Fatality Victims by Age 2001-2008<sup>vi</sup>



#### Arkansas



6-month-old Rihanna Robinson was strangled in February of 2009.

Deaths 2001-08 134

#### California



12-year-old Christopher Cejas died after being starved and beaten in August 2002.

Deaths 2001-08\* 948

#### Colorado



7-year-old Chandler Grafner died of starvation and dehydration in May 2007.

Deaths 2001-08 211

\*California did not report fatalities in 2003.

budget crises at the state and local levels threatening public safety, the federal government alone possesses the authority and resources to ensure equal protection to children all across the country.

It remains a little known fact that the federal government already provides nearly half of the funds in the formal child welfare system and much of the statutory framework. The federal government is also legally obligated to evaluate each state's child protection performance and to prescribe recommendations for improvement. But, as presently constructed, neither federal funding nor federal oversights are at levels sufficient to protect all children who require it.

### The Actual Number of Child Fatalities Is Unknown but Is Believed to Be Much Higher than Official Statistics

Well-documented research suggests the number of children who die from abuse and neglect is

considerably higher than official government statistics.<sup>vii</sup> Here's how the federal government defines maltreatment deaths:

*"Fatal child abuse may involve repeated abuse over a period of time (e.g., battered child syndrome), or it may involve a single, impulsive incident (e.g., drowning, suffocating, or shaking a baby). In cases of fatal neglect, the child's death results not from anything the caregiver does, but from a caregiver's failure to act. The neglect may be chronic (e.g., extended malnourishment) or acute (e.g., an infant who drowns after being left unsupervised in the bathtub)."*<sup>viii</sup>

Using this definition, several peer-reviewed studies conclude that there is a significant undercount of child maltreatment deaths. This is mainly due to what some researchers believe to be the improper classification of many maltreatment deaths as "unintentional injury death," deaths such as those caused by drowning, fire, suffocation, and poisoning. Upon examination of the circumstances underlying such deaths by

#### Connecticut



2-year-old Alex Nathan Murphy was shaken to death in November of 2007.

**Deaths 2001-08 56**

#### District of Columbia



12-month-old Selena McDonald was beaten to death in January 2004.

**Deaths 2001-08 55**

#### Delaware



14-month-old Jaylah Salam died from blunt force trauma in February of 2009.

**Deaths 2001-08 6**

forensic, medical and maltreatment experts—particularly if conducted by multi-disciplinary teams—the percentage of cases re-classified as maltreatment-related may comprise 50% or more of the unintentional injury deaths attributed to other causes on death certificates.<sup>ix</sup> The vast majority of these re-classified deaths are associated with inadequate supervision of children, often rising to the level of neglect.

If the research is correct about this “under-ascertainment” of maltreatment-related deaths, if it holds roughly true nationwide, then thousands of additional children should be included in the official maltreatment death toll from 2001-2008. What explains the undercount? There are a variety of reasons, including different state definitions of what constitutes a child abuse and neglect death, data collection methodologies, inconsistent record-keeping across the country, and who it is that actually determines the cause of death.

For example, a local child protective services agency

opens a case involving child neglect. But because the mother agrees to treatment, the agency decides to leave the child home.<sup>x</sup> However, the mother continues her drug use and one afternoon passes out in her apartment. Meanwhile, her two-year-old child plays unsupervised on a street and is struck by a car. In most states the death is recorded as a pedestrian accident, not the child neglect-related death that the federal definition would suggest it is.

A promising development in determining the amount of maltreatment deaths has been the creation of state child death review teams. In virtually all states there is a team which exists to review child deaths and determine their cause, including deaths from child abuse and neglect. The information resulting from this multi-disciplinary team process provides invaluable data which can shape public health, law enforcement, and child welfare policy and practice. The teams vary in their capacity to conduct their activities. Some are well-funded and give each case the attention required; many don't have the necessary resources. The review teams agree on the need for stronger efforts to

### Florida



3-year-old Zahid Jones was beaten to death in May 2007.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **970**

### Georgia



11-year-old Joella Reaves died of blunt force trauma in November 2003.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **514**

### Hawaii



5-year-old Talia Emoni died as a result of “battered child syndrome” in July 2005.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **34**

prevent child abuse and neglect deaths. In the words of one state's team manager: "For conditions that are 100% preventable, we do a very poor and extremely fragmented job at preventing child maltreatment, as well as protecting those being maltreated."<sup>xi</sup>

### *Reported Child Deaths 2001-2008<sup>xii</sup>*

	Reported
<b>2001</b>	1,300
<b>2002</b>	1,400
<b>2003</b>	1,500
<b>2004</b>	1,490
<b>2005</b>	1,460
<b>2006</b>	1,530
<b>2007</b>	1,760
<b>2008</b>	1,740
<b>Total</b>	12,180

## **Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities Flow from Extensive Child Maltreatment in the U.S.**

Nearly 20 million annual reports of abuse and neglect have been made to official state child protection agencies in this decade. And while 'only' a third or so of these reports were initially substantiated as abuse or neglect, it is often just a matter of time before many of the unsubstantiated cases also reveal themselves to be true as new reports involving the same family continue to be made to the child protection agency.<sup>xiii</sup> There is no evidence which suggests that intentionally false reports alleging maltreatment are a serious issue. The reality is that child abuse and neglect in our culture are common.

Furthermore, state reporting to the federal government—required by law—remains uneven: since 2001, 27 states did not report child abuse and neglect numbers for at least one of the years in the Department of Health and Human Services annual Child Maltreatment report.<sup>xiv</sup> Even without complete

### **Idaho**



6-year-old autistic Elizabeth Goodwin drowned in October 2002.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **16**

### **Illinois**



13-year-old Shavon Miles was bludgeoned with a 2-by-4 in August 2007.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **564**

### **Indiana**



7-year-old Adrian Norris, II was starved to death and set on fire in January 2003.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **388**

state data, the official numbers of children reported abused or neglected are staggering. Additionally, incidence studies of abuse and neglect conducted for the federal government suggest that the actual occurrences of maltreatment may be three times greater than the number of reports made to state child protection agencies.

***Reported Child Abuse and Neglect  
2001-2008<sup>xv</sup>***

	Reported
<b>2001</b>	2,659,000
<b>2002</b>	2,600,000
<b>2003</b>	2,900,000
<b>2004</b>	3,000,000
<b>2005</b>	3,300,000
<b>2006</b>	3,300,000
<b>2007</b>	3,200,000
<b>2008</b>	3,300,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	24,259,000

Of the 715,760 children confirmed abused and neglected in 2008:

- 71.1% did not receive proper food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, education, medical care or protection.
- 16.1% were physically abused.
- 9.1% were sexually abused.
- 7.3% suffered from emotional abuse.
- 2.2% suffered from medical neglect.
- 9% suffered from other mistreatment such as abandonment, threats, and congenital drug addiction.<sup>xvi</sup>
- 60% of people in drug rehabilitation centers report being abused or neglected as a child.<sup>xvii</sup>

Of the millions of children reported abused or neglected each year, several thousand are in life threatening situations. The present systems of child protection successfully intervene in many of these situations, and further harm to a child is prevented. But for nearly 2,000 children, whatever response may be generated is too little, too late, and children die.

**Iowa**



8-month-old Antwaun Williams died of head trauma in February 2008.

***Deaths 2001-08***     **85**

**Kansas**



9-year-old Brian Edgar died of asphyxiation after being bound with tape in December 2002.

***Deaths 2001-08***     **52**

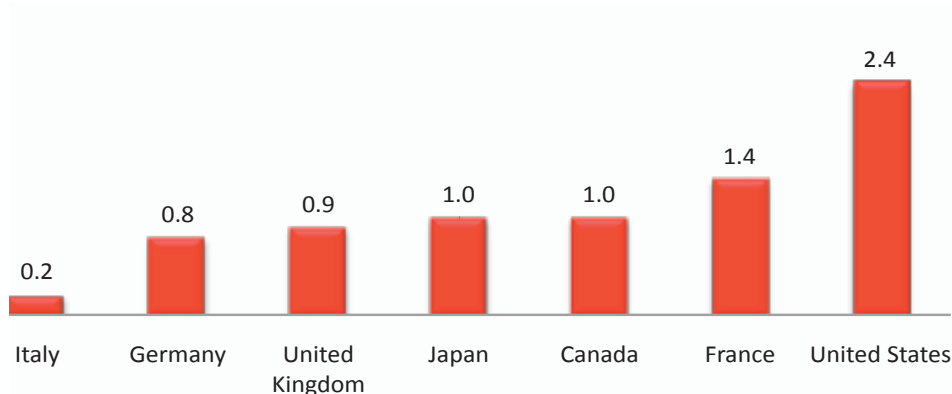
**Kentucky**



10-year-old Michaela Watkins was beaten to death in March of 2007.

***Deaths 2001-08***     **232**

### Child Abuse Fatalities in Rich Democracies (per 100,000 children)



### Many More American Children Die from Abuse and Neglect Than Do Children in Other Advanced Countries

Among the rich democracies, the U.S. child abuse death rate is 3 times higher than Canada's, and 11 times higher than Italy's.<sup>xviii</sup>

What accounts for the differences? Among other things, teen pregnancy, violent crime, imprisonment,

and poverty rates are much lower in these countries. Further, their social policies in support of families are much greater and typically include child care, universal health insurance, paid parental leave, visiting nurses, and more—all things which together can prevent child abuse and neglect in the first place.

The U.S. invests only modestly in similar preventive measures compared to the needs of the most vulnerable families. This serious social policy lapse

#### Louisiana



6-year-old twins Samuel and Solomon Simms were strangled to death in 2007.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **246**

#### Maine



5-year-old Logan Marr died of asphyxiation after being bound with duct tape in January 2001.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **17**

#### Maryland



11-year-old Irvin Harris was stabbed to death in July 2006.

*Deaths 2001-05\**    **143**

\*Maryland did not report fatalities in 2006-2008.

creates an environment where child abuse and neglect are common—and preventable maltreatment fatalities are inevitable.

### It Is Largely an Accident of Geography Whether Abused or Neglected Children Receive the Full Protection They Need

As hard as they may try, no states are in full compliance with federal child welfare standards.<sup>xix</sup> No matter, state child protection reform efforts, often stemming from federal reviews and evaluations, have fueled many positive changes in state child protection practices in recent years.

But the combination of millions of children in harm's way and inadequate resources leaves many states stretched too thin to protect all children who need it. Accordingly, it is unlikely that states will come into compliance with all federal standards anytime soon, especially in view of severe state budget woes. But some states do protect children better than others. For

example, in 2008 the child abuse and neglect fatality rate, in the states where there was a fatality, was 10 times greater in the bottom state than in the top state.<sup>xx</sup> And some states are willing to spend much more to protect children—as much as 12 times more per capita.<sup>xxi</sup>

Although a clear correlation has not been established on how much states spend on child protective services and their child abuse and neglect death rates, states which do allocate more funds are more likely to investigate all abuse and neglect reports, not just some, because social workers have more manageable workloads. They also are more likely to retain staff; invest heavily in training; provide timely mental health, substance abuse treatment, and other victim services; and to prosecute serious abusers. Some states have much less capacity to conduct such activities, and state budget problems are weakening already under-funded systems of child protection. Such huge variations in capability among the states and their thousands of child protection offices across the country can translate directly into whether children live or die.

#### Massachusetts



4-year-old Rebecca Riley died from an overdose of three medications in December 2006.

*Deaths 2001-05\** 70

#### Michigan



5-year-old Rose Kelley died from liver disease likely brought on by malnutrition and overuse of acetaminophen in June 2006.

*Deaths 2001, 05, 08\** 156

#### Minnesota



4-year-old Demond Reed was beaten, resulting in a trauma induced seizure. He died in February 2008.

*Deaths 2001-08* 119

\*Massachusetts did not report fatalities in 2006-2008

\*Michigan only reported fatalities in 2001, 2005, and 2008

## Many Child Protection Workers Frequently Lack the Resources and Training They Need

Child protection work is labor intensive, difficult, and emotionally stressful. The consequences of the decisions that child protection workers must make can be enormous: leave a child in harm's way, for example, or exercise powerful state authority that can result in the termination of parental rights. When trained and experienced staffs have access to experienced supervisors and to timely services such as mental health, substance abuse treatment, police back-up, and emergency shelter, children are much more likely to be protected, and abusive parents are much more likely to learn how to care for their children safely.

Recruiting and retaining highly trained social workers is a must. A major factor in retention is workload size. Children inevitably fall through the cracks when child protection workers have unmanageable workloads, leaving workers frustrated. Caseload ratios in some jurisdictions are as high as 60 or more,<sup>xxii</sup> even

while national standards recommend 12 or fewer cases per worker. Another factor in recruitment is compensation. Starting salaries under \$30,000 for child protection workers are not uncommon, and rarely do they rise above \$50,000—modest sums in view of the important jobs they are asked to do.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Further, while child protection workers are the most prominent “first responders” to child abuse and neglect, there are many others on the front lines who also may be involved, including education, law enforcement, and health professionals. Often, these groups lack training and support for fulfilling their own obligations to report abuse and neglect and to protect children.

To protect children at high risk of life-threatening abuse and neglect,

*There is virtually no press coverage of the federal government's role in the prevention of child abuse.*

### Mississippi



14-month-old Tykiriah McClendon was killed by blunt force trauma in October of 2008.

*Deaths 2001-08*    98

### Missouri



2-year-old Alyssa Eickmeier died from a skull fracture after being thrown in October 2006.

*Deaths 2001-08*    356

### Montana



2-year-old James Many White Horses was beaten to death and put in the trunk of a car in May 2008.

*Deaths 2001-08*    18

the official child protective services agencies and law enforcement must collaborate. Child protective workers are best able to focus on the needs of the child, and law enforcement personnel are essential when confronting serious abusers. Written protocols and joint training between child protective services and law enforcement are essential for protecting children. Such collaborative efforts are much better developed in some jurisdictions than others, including those served by children's advocacy centers.

### **Restrictive Confidentiality Laws Shield the Press, Elected Officials and the Public from Shortcomings in the Child Protection System**

Originally intended to protect living child victims from publicity, confidentiality laws have become a hindrance to a better public understanding of child abuse and neglect fatalities.<sup>xxiv</sup> Sometimes used to shield the public from the details of a child's death, confidentiality laws also interfere with journalists

gathering and reporting facts about the incident. Even lawmakers are sometimes denied access to information surrounding an individual case, information that is critical to strengthening the child protection system. The withholding of such information benefits no one. Stories about child abuse and neglect deaths are often reported in local papers, especially if a child's situation was brought to the attention of authorities. Frequently, however, these reports reveal little about how the formal child protection system performed in a fatality case. Instead they may focus on the seeming inadequacy of the child protective worker in the case, and often they prompt a call for both the worker and agency administrator to be fired. This response does little to address the underlying systemic problem.

The national press generally limits its maltreatment coverage to the most sensational child deaths. It provides virtually no press coverage of the federal government's role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect fatalities. And it is rare to see members of Congress or senior Administration officials speaking to the issue.

#### **Nebraska**



20-month-old Nathaniel Saunsoci-Mitchell died of brain injuries and other abuse caused in September 2006.

*Deaths 2001-08*     **103**

#### **Nevada**



3-year-old Crystal Figueroa was beaten to death and dumped in a trash bin in January 2006.

*Deaths 2001-08*     **81**

#### **New Hampshire**



21-month-old Rylea Belonga died from brain injuries sustained from severe abuse in January 2006.

*Deaths 2001-08*     **14**

## Stopping Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities Requires Fighting Child Poverty

While strengthening the formal child protective services system has the highest immediate promise for safeguarding children in dangerous situations, there are millions of children in marginal homes who are at daily risk of harm. Reducing this risk will reduce fatalities—and the need for protection in the first place. Reducing risk also poses an enormous economic challenge because, while child abuse occurs in all socioeconomic ranks, it lands hardest on children in the poorest families. In fact, poverty is the single best predictor of child abuse and neglect, and no wonder in view of the family stress often accompanying poverty. One study found that a child living in a family with an annual income of \$15,000 or less was 22 times more likely to be abused than one in a family with an income of \$30,000 or more.<sup>xxv</sup>

More than one in five American children, over 14 million, still live in poverty.<sup>xxvi</sup> Conditions that are still widespread in the U.S., i.e., teen parenthood, violence,

mental illness, substance abuse, imprisonment, unemployment, low education, and poor housing, are all disproportionately associated with poverty and often wreak havoc on poor families and children.

Most fatality victims are very young and very poor. In 2008, 80% were under age four, and almost half were under age

one. As noted in the federal Department of Health and Human Services' report *Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities: Statistics and Interventions*, "these children are the most vulnerable for many reasons, including their dependency, small size, and inability to defend themselves." Further, 80% of the fatalities involved a parent as perpetrator. And often the abuser is a poor "...young adult...without a high school diploma...depressed... [who] has experienced violence first hand."<sup>xxvii</sup>

*...the likelihood of a child not being protected and dying from abuse is much greater in some states than others...*

### New Jersey



7-year-old Faheem Williams died from starvation and blunt trauma in January 2003.

*Deaths 2001-08*    255

### New Mexico



5-month-old Brianna Lopez was raped and thrown, and she died in July 2002.

*Deaths 2001-08*    72

### New York



7-year-old Nixzmary Brown died from torture and starvation in January of 2006.

*Deaths 2001-08*    630

We know a great deal about preventing abuse and neglect and stopping related fatalities. When provided with support services and appropriate supervision, the vast majority of potentially abusive and neglectful parents can learn to safely care for their children. And many abused children who get help are resilient enough to overcome their history. But for many, the outcome is predictable: when childhood goes wrong, adulthood goes wrong, and the sad story of abuse, including death, repeats itself from one generation of troubled families to the next.

### Children at Grave Risk of Being Killed Require Protection from Their Government

We need a national approach for protecting children because of the heavy toll exacted from the nation caused by child abuse and neglect—thousands killed, millions of lives ruined, costs of more than \$100 billion a year.

While it is too late to help the children shown in this report, we can honor their memories by vowing to protect every child in danger.

Yet even with broad public support for protecting every child from harm, the nation's present commitment of resources, laws, and policies is too little.

We can overcome inadequate funding for child protective services and wide variations in capacity among states only by enacting federal policy committed to protecting children no matter where they live.

### Call to Action: Stop Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths

- Building upon the best of current child protection systems, the government should develop a strategy for stopping maltreatment deaths. It should include public

#### North Carolina



13-year-old Tyler McMillan died in June 2008 of dehydration and heat stroke after being tied to a tree overnight.

*Deaths 2001-02\** 50

#### North Dakota



4-month-old Reese Coleman died of brain damage after being severely shaken in February 2006.

*Deaths 2001-08* 9

#### Ohio



17-month-old Jaydon Hoberg was raped and beaten to death in July 2006.

*Deaths 2001-08* 602

\*North Carolina only reported fatalities in 2001 and 2002

**Cost of Child Abuse<sup>xxix</sup>**

<b>DIRECT COSTS</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>Daily Total</b>
Hospitalization	\$6,625,959,263	\$18,153,313
Mental Health Care System	\$1,080,706,049	\$2,960,838
Child Welfare Services System	\$25,361,329,051	\$69,483,093
Law Enforcement	\$33,307,770	\$91,254
<b>INDIRECT COSTS</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>Daily Total</b>
Special Education	\$2,410,306,242	\$6,603,579
Juvenile Delinquency	\$7,174,814,134	\$19,657,025
Mental Health and Health Care	\$67,863,457	\$185,927
Adult Criminal Justice System	\$27,979,811,982	\$76,657,019
Lost Productivity to Society	\$33,019,919,544	\$90,465,533

health and social services aimed at strengthening families and preventing maltreatment in the first place: home visiting, substance abuse and mental health treatment, teen pregnancy prevention, pre-natal care and other policies proven to work.

- Current levels of federal spending are far below the level needed to protect all children at imminent risk of harm. \$3 billion to \$5 billion in additional funds are required, for example, to allow child protective workers and other frontline personnel to have smaller

**Oklahoma**

4-year-old Christopher Barnard was beaten to death in April 2008.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **253**

**Oregon**

4-year-old Adrianna Romero Cram was beaten to death in June 2005.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **112**

**Pennsylvania**

3-year-old Kavannah Salvador was beaten to death in February 2008.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **353**

## We Can Do Better

caseloads and better training, and to provide a wide array of public health and social services to help at risk families.

- In consideration of expanded federal spending, states should be required to adopt national standards, drawn from existing best practices and policy, for protecting children.
- Congress should modify confidentiality laws to allow policy makers, the press, and the public to understand better what protection policies and practices need to be improved in the aftermath of a child's death.
- The Department of Health and Human Services should standardize definitions and methodologies used to collect data related to maltreatment deaths and

should require states to provide such data in order to receive federal funds. Further, state child death review teams should be adequately funded.

- The Department of Health and Human Services, in cooperation with state child protective and public health agencies, should conduct a public education campaign to encourage reporting of child abuse and neglect, and to enlist communities in the protection of children.
- To better protect children at imminent risk of severe harm, the federal government, led by the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, and in cooperation with states, should adopt a model protocol for assuring that civil and criminal legal proceedings are closely coordinated between child protection and law enforcement agencies.

### Rhode Island



6-week-old Naomi McCoy died in 2006 from blunt force trauma.

*Deaths 2001-08* 15

### South Carolina



6-year-old Chaquise Gregory was beaten to death in 2005.

*Deaths 2001-08* 162

### South Dakota



21-month-old Tanner Jurisch died of brain injuries after being thrown at his crib in January 2007.

*Deaths 2001-08* 30

### Tennessee



13-month-old Jordan Holland died after he was punched in October 2008.

*Deaths 2001-08* 225

**Texas**

7-year-old William Weschke was killed by blunt force head trauma in February 2008.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **1732**

**Utah**

2-year-old Jayden Cangro died after he was thrown across a room in July 2006.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **91**

**Vermont**

1-month-old Angelo MacEwan died from blunt impact to the head in December 2007.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **6**

**Virginia**

13-year-old Alexis Agyepong-Glover was drowned in January 2009.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **231**

**Washington**

4-year-old Summer Phelps was tortured and killed in March 2007.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **127**

**West Virginia**

2-year-old Logan Goodall was sexually abused and killed in September 2005.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **135**

**Wisconsin**

19-month-old Alicia Burgess was suffocated in May 2007.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **132**

**Wyoming**

13-month-old Ariana Martin was beaten to death in April 2008.

*Deaths 2001-08*    **22**

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT DEATHS - BY STATE				
	2008		2001	
State	Deaths	Rate	Deaths	Rate
Alabama	20	1.78	24	2.14
Alaska	2	1.11	4	2.07
Arizona	11	0.64	13	0.92
Arkansas	21	2.99	22	3.22
California	185	1.98	30	0.32
Colorado	32	2.65	20	1.77
Connecticut	6	0.74	8	0.95
Delaware	2	0.97	2	1.02
Florida	185	4.62	91	2.44
Georgia	68	2.67	48	2.17
Hawaii	2	0.70	3	1.01
Idaho	2	0.48	4	1.07
Illinois	69	2.17	79	2.43
Indiana	34	2.15	46	2.92
Iowa	11	1.54	15	2.05
Kansas	10	1.43	7	0.98
Kentucky	22	2.18	37	3.71
Louisiana	30	2.71	33	2.71
Maine	4	1.46	2	0.66
Maryland	n/a	n/a	27	1.97
Massachusetts	n/a	n/a	19	1.27
Michigan	59	2.47	49	1.89
Minnesota	16	1.28	16	1.23
Mississippi	17	2.22	5	0.64
Missouri	42	2.95	33	2.31
Montana	1	0.45	4	1.74
Nebraska	17	3.80	9	2.00
Nevada	17	2.55	4	0.74
New Hampshire	0	0.00	1	0.32
New Jersey	29	1.42	33	1.58
New Mexico	19	3.78	5	0.98
New York	107	2.43	78	1.67
North Carolina	n/a	n/a	24	1.21
North Dakota	3	2.10	1	0.63
Ohio	74	2.71	80	2.78
Oklahoma	31	3.42	33	3.70
Oregon	14	1.61	8	0.93
Pennsylvania	45	1.63	48	1.65
Rhode Island	0	0.00	5	2.01
South Carolina	21	1.97	23	2.26
South Dakota	2	1.01	2	0.99
Tennessee	55	3.72	13	0.92
Texas	223	3.32	206	3.43
Utah	15	1.77	11	1.51
Vermont	1	0.78	1	0.68
Virginia	37	2.03	36	2.05
Washington	23	1.49	16	1.04
West Virginia	5	1.29	16	4.01
Wisconsin	30	2.28	17	1.24
Wyoming	1	0.78	1	0.78

Rate per 100,000 children, Source: Child Maltreatment  
2008 – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;  
Administration for Children and Families

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTS - BY STATE		
State	2008	2001
Alabama	32,023	30,462
Alaska	13,508	9,775
Arizona	29,971	33,433
Arkansas	40,301	40,184
California	351,958	339,303
Colorado	71,141	65,826
Connecticut	*	*
Delaware	8,689	7,306
Florida	254,693	259,864
Georgia	45,989	63,621
Hawaii	*	*
Idaho	15,480	*
Illinois	*	*
Indiana	91,238	68,971
Iowa	*	39,847
Kansas	30,949	31,402
Kentucky	71,723	63,612
Louisiana	36,938	*
Maine	16,191	16,678
Maryland	*	*
Massachusetts	71,430	67,793
Michigan	116,730	*
Minnesota	53,339	56,581
Mississippi	29,890	26,964
Missouri	98,686	102,579
Montana	12,241	12,852
Nebraska	23,193	23,050
Nevada	20,321	22,492
New Hampshire	17,367	16,350
New Jersey	*	*
New Mexico	31,597	30,130
New York	*	*
North Carolina	*	*
North Dakota	8,335	*
Ohio	*	*
Oklahoma	65,657	62,965
Oregon	65,460	63,504
Pennsylvania	*	*
Rhode Island	11,524	12,443
South Carolina	27,232	27,293
South Dakota	14,405	14,481
Tennessee	97,224	*
Texas	204,916	202,015
Utah	31,606	32,424
Vermont	12,423	12,327
Virginia	57,684	58,060
Washington	74,427	74,381
West Virginia	33,327	31,813
Wisconsin	56,435	54,704
Wyoming	5,173	5,070

Rate per 100,000 children, Source: Child Maltreatment  
2008 – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;  
Administration for Children and Families

## SOURCES

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<sup>ii</sup> All of these children died at the hands of family members or other caretakers to whom they were entrusted. Because of the possibility that criminal prosecution continues in some of these cases, we have chosen to omit the identification of the perpetrators, alleged or convicted. Additional information may be available upon request.

<sup>iii</sup> *Fatalities Child Maltreatment*. (2008). Retrieved June 24, 2010, from Administration for Children and Families: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/chapter4.htm>

<sup>iv</sup> *ibid*

<sup>v</sup> *ibid*

<sup>vi</sup> *Fatalities Child Maltreatment*. (2008). Administration for Children and Families: Retrieved June 23, 2010, [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/figure4\\_1.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/figure4_1.htm)

<sup>vii</sup> Herman-Giddens, M. E., Brown, G., Verbiest, S., et al. (1999). Underascertainment of Child Abuse Mortality in the United States. *JAMA*, 463-467., Cotton, E. E. (2006). *Administrative Case Review Project, Clark County Nevada*. Retrieved May 18, 2009, from [http://www.youthlaw.org/fileadmin/ncyl/youthlaw/litigation/Clark\\_K.2/Ed\\_Cotton\\_Report.pdf](http://www.youthlaw.org/fileadmin/ncyl/youthlaw/litigation/Clark_K.2/Ed_Cotton_Report.pdf), Crume, T. L., DiGuseppi, T. B., Sirotnak, A. P., & Garrett, C. J. (2002). Underascertainment of Child Maltreatment Fatalities by Death Certificates, 1990-1998. *Pediatrics*. Herman-Giddens, et al estimate actual child abuse and neglect deaths to be as high as three times the national reported amount; similarly Cotton, et al and Crume, et al found the actual number of deaths to be twice that reported.

<sup>viii</sup> *US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children, Youth and Families*. (2009, April). Retrieved June 23, 2010, from Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities: Statistics and Interventions: [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

<sup>ix</sup> Schnitzer, P. G., Covington, T. M., Wirtz, S. J., Verhoek-Oftedahl, W. P., & Palusci, V. J. (2008). Public Health Surveillance of Fatal Child Maltreatment: Analysis of 3 State Programs. *American Journal of Public Health*, 296-303.

<sup>x</sup> Child Protective Services—CPS—is the name given to those government agencies officially charged with investigating child abuse and neglect reports. Each state has a CPS agency and each state CPS agency has many field offices, sometimes one in every county. Child protection services usually are provided by state workers, but in some states the services are provided by county employees under state supervision. Many agencies, often private and non-profit, provide prevention services to families at risk of abusive behavior, or to families as part of a treatment plan. When children cannot safely remain with their families they are placed in foster care. Many children return to their families without further incidence. Those that cannot return may remain in foster care until age 18, or may be adopted. All of these options and interventions comprise a state's child welfare system

<sup>xi</sup> Valiquette, M. (2009, June). Survey of Child Death Review Teams. (E. C. Matters, Interviewer)

<sup>xii</sup> *Fatalities Child Maltreatment*. (2007). Retrieved May 18, 2009, from Administration for Children and Families: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm06/chapter4.htm#child>

<sup>xiii</sup> *Maltreatment*. (2008). Retrieved June 24, 2010, from Administration for Children and Families: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/table3\\_7.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/table3_7.htm)

<sup>xiv</sup> *ibid*

<sup>xv</sup> *Statistics and Research Child Abuse and Neglect*. (n.d.). Retrieved May 18, 2009, from Administration for Children and Families: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats\\_research/index.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.htm)

<sup>xvi</sup> *Victims by Maltreatment Type 2008*. (n.d.). Retrieved May 18, 2010, from Administration for Children and Families: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/figure3\\_5.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/figure3_5.htm)

<sup>xvii</sup> *National Child Abuse Statistics*. (2009). Retrieved May 18, 2010, from Childhelp: <http://www.childhelp.org/pages/statistics>

<sup>xviii</sup> *A League Table of Child Maltreatment Deaths in Rich Nations*. (2003). Retrieved May 18, 2009, from Innocenti Report: <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rep-card5e.pdf>

<sup>xix</sup> *Child and Family Service Reviews, Individual Key Findings Reports, 2001-2004*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 24, 2010, from Administration for Children and Families: [http://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/cwmd/docs/cb\\_web/SearchForm](http://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/cwmd/docs/cb_web/SearchForm)

<sup>xx</sup> *Child Maltreatment 2008*. (n.d.). Retrieved May 18, 2010, from Administration for Children and Families: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/table4\\_1.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/table4_1.htm)

<sup>xxi</sup> Kerry DeVooght, Tiffany Allen, Rob Geen, "Federal, State, and Local Spending to Address Child Abuse and Neglect in SFY 2006", *Casey Child Welfare Report*

<sup>xxii</sup> Cotton, E. E. (2006). *Administrative Case Review Project, Clark County Nevada*. Retrieved June 25, 2010, from [http://www.youthlaw.org/fileadmin/ncyl/youthlaw/litigation/Clark\\_K.2/Ed\\_Cotton\\_Report.pdf](http://www.youthlaw.org/fileadmin/ncyl/youthlaw/litigation/Clark_K.2/Ed_Cotton_Report.pdf)

<sup>xxiii</sup> *May 2008 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*. (2008, May).

Retrieved May 18, 2010, from Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/2008/may/oes211021.htm>

<sup>xxiv</sup> Three recent articles illustrate this hindrance confidentiality laws have created: Boston Globe, "Vermont gets 'F' for transparency on child abuse role", 4/29/08, [http://www.boston.com/news/local/vermont/articles/2008/04/29/vermont\\_gets\\_f\\_for\\_transparency\\_on\\_child\\_abuse\\_role/](http://www.boston.com/news/local/vermont/articles/2008/04/29/vermont_gets_f_for_transparency_on_child_abuse_role/); Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, "State too secret on children, groups say. Little transparency in death cases stifles reform, report notes", 5/1/08, <http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/29490064.html>; Philadelphia Inquirer, "NJ --Editorial: The faces of child abuse", 8/4/09, [http://www.philly.com/inquirer/opinion/20090804\\_Editorial\\_The\\_faces\\_of\\_child\\_abuse.html](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/opinion/20090804_Editorial_The_faces_of_child_abuse.html)

<sup>xxv</sup> *America's Children, How Are They Doing?* (2005). Retrieved June 24, 2010, from American Humane Association: <http://www.americanhumane.org/about-us/newsroom/fact-sheets/americas-children.html>

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