



Child Maltreatment 2009: Summary of Key Findings

This factsheet presents excerpts from *Child Maltreatment 2009*, a report based on data submissions by State child protective services (CPS) agencies for Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009. The full *Child Maltreatment 2009* report is available on the Children's Bureau website: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm09/index.htm.

How many allegations of maltreatment were reported and investigated?

During FFY 2009, an estimated 3.3 million referrals involving the alleged maltreatment of approximately 6 million children were made to CPS agencies. An estimated 3.6 million children (duplicate count) were the subjects of one or more investigations or assessments.¹

- Approximately 62 percent (61.9 percent) of referrals were screened in for investigation or assessment by CPS agencies.
- Approximately 24 percent (23.9 percent) of the investigations or assessments found at least one child to be a victim of abuse or neglect, with the following report dispositions: 22.1

¹ The duplicate count of child victims counts a child each time he or she was found to be a victim. The unique count of child victims counts a child only once, regardless of the number of times he or she was found to be victim during the reporting year.



percent substantiated, 1.3 percent indicated, and 0.5 percent alternative response victim.²

- More than 76 percent (76.2 percent) of the investigations or assessments determined that the child was not a victim of maltreatment, with the following dispositions: 64.3 percent unsubstantiated, 8.7 percent alternative response nonvictim³, 1.3 percent “other,” 1.6 percent closed with no finding, 0.1 percent intentionally false, and 0.2 percent unknown or missing.

Who reported child maltreatment?

For FFY 2009, more than one-half (58.3 percent) of all reports of alleged child abuse or neglect were made by professionals. The term “professional” means that the person had contact with the alleged child maltreatment victim as part of the report source’s job. The remaining reports were made by nonprofessionals, including friends, neighbors, sports coaches, and relatives.

The three most common report sources were education personnel (16.5 percent), legal and law enforcement personnel (16.4 percent), and social services staff (11.4 percent).

Who were the child victims?

During FFY 2009, the number of estimated duplicate victims of abuse or neglect was 763,000; the number of estimated unique victims was 702,000. Among the children confirmed as victims by CPS agencies in 2009 (all of the following numbers refer to unique victims):

- Children in the age group of birth to 1 year had the highest rate of victimization at 20.6 per 1,000 children of the same age group in the national population.
- More than one-half (51.1 percent) of the child victims were girls, and 48.2 percent were boys. Less than 1 percent of victims had an unknown sex.

² The NCANDS disposition category of “alternative response victim” is defined as a conclusion that the child was identified as a victim when a response other than an investigation was provided.

³ The NCANDS disposition category of “alternative response nonvictim” is defined as a conclusion that the child was not identified as a victim when a response other than an investigation was provided.

What were the most common types of maltreatment?

- Eighty-seven percent of victims were comprised of three races or ethnicities—African-American (22.3 percent), Hispanic (20.7 percent), and White (44.0 percent).

As in prior years, neglect was the most common form of child maltreatment. CPS investigations determined the following (all of the following numbers refer to unique victims):

- More than 75 percent (78.3 percent) of victims suffered neglect.
- More than 15 percent (17.8 percent) of the victims suffered physical abuse.
- Fewer than 10 percent (9.5 percent) of the victims suffered sexual abuse.
- Fewer than 10 percent (7.6 percent) of the victims suffered psychological maltreatment.

How many children died from abuse or neglect?

Child fatalities are the most tragic consequence of maltreatment. During FFY 2009 (all of the following numbers refer to unique victims):

- An estimated 1,770 children died due to abuse or neglect.
- The overall rate of child fatalities was 2.34 deaths per 100,000 children.
- More than 35 percent (35.8 percent) of child fatalities were attributed to neglect only; 23.2 percent died exclusively from physical abuse. More than three-quarters (80.8 percent) of the children who died due to child abuse and neglect were younger than 4 years old.
- Boys had a slightly higher child fatality rate than girls at 2.36 boys per 100,000 boys in the population (compared to 2.12 girls per 100,000 girls in the population).

Who abused and neglected children?

In FFY 2009, States reported a total duplicate count of 894,951 perpetrators (counting an individual each time a report is made) and a total unique count of 512,790 perpetrators (each perpetrator counted just one time, regardless of the number of children or reports involved).

- About 80 percent (80.9 percent) of duplicate perpetrators of child maltreatment were parents, 6.3 percent were other relatives, and 4.3 percent were unmarried partners of parents.
- Women comprised a larger percentage of all unique perpetrators than men: 53.8 percent compared to 44.4 percent.
- Four-fifths (83.2 percent) of all unique perpetrators were between the ages 20 and 49 years.
- Less than 7 percent (6.5 percent) of duplicate perpetrators committed sexual abuse, while 10.0 percent committed physical abuse, and 61.6 percent committed neglect.

Who received services?

During an investigation, CPS agencies provide services to children and their families, both in the home and in foster care. For the 2009 duplicate count of children:

- Almost 60 percent (59.9 percent) of victims and 25.8 percent of nonvictims received postresponse services.
- More than 20 percent (20.8 percent) of victims and 3.6 percent of nonvictims were removed from their homes.

The statistics in the Child Maltreatment reports are based on data submitted to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). NCANDS is a voluntary reporting system that was developed by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to collect and analyze annual statistics on child maltreatment from State CPS agencies.

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