



# CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT DEATHS IN AMERICA



july 2012

# INTRODUCTION

*This is the third edition of “We Can Do Better—Child Abuse Deaths in America.” If there is ever a fourth, we hope to report positive news about the thousands of American children currently in harm’s way. Until that time, Every Child Matters and its partners at the National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths\* will continue to bring this issue to the attention of the public and lawmakers.*

Since its inception in 2010, the Coalition has worked to increase public awareness of child fatalities and to enlist the federal government in elevating the issue. The Coalition has presented at Congressional Staff Educational Briefings, acted as consultants to the Government Accountability Office for its study on child abuse fatalities, provided expert witness testimony at a Congressional Hearing, and assisted in drafting the Protect Our Kids Act (S.1984 & HR 3653). The Coalition has also participated in numerous radio, print and television interviews, including CNN, and consulted with the BBC on its documentary, “America’s Child Death Shame.”

The Coalition was formed following the Summit to End Child Abuse Deaths in America, held in the fall of 2009. The Summit brought together 150 experts in the field of child abuse to review current policies and the most up-to-date research on the topic.

**A consensus document developed by the Summit participants concluded that\*:**

- Child abuse deaths are preventable.
- Children are safer in some states than in others.
- Often, child welfare policies are created in reaction to a tragedy, and reforms and policies swing from more to less restrictive and back again, not necessarily making children safer.
- Responsibility for the safety and well-being of children rests not only with an individual state or individual child welfare worker, but also with the larger community.

Due to the complexity in preventing child abuse deaths and because the lives of thousands of children are at stake, we need a national strategy. Enactment of The Protect Our Kids Act would provide a crucial step by creating a National Commission to develop a strategy to stop child deaths.

An overhaul of the nation’s child protection system is long overdue. Every Child Matters and its Coalition colleagues’ goal is to help prompt such an overhaul and end the killing. You can help. Please visit [www.everychildmatters.org/petition](http://www.everychildmatters.org/petition) and sign a petition urging Congress to take action.

**U.S. Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities vs. U.S. Combined Military Deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan 2001-2010**

	<b>Child Abuse Fatalities<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Combined Military Deaths<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>2001</b>	1,300	12
<b>2002</b>	1,400	49
<b>2003</b>	1,500	534
<b>2004</b>	1,490	901
<b>2005</b>	1,460	945
<b>2006</b>	1,530	921
<b>2007</b>	1,760	1,021
<b>2008</b>	1,740	469
<b>2009</b>	1,770	466
<b>2010</b>	1,560	559
<b>TOTAL</b>	15,510	5,877

*\*The National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths (NCECAD), is comprised of five national organizations, formed in response to a collective concern about the escalating number of child maltreatment deaths across the country. The five organizations include: the National Association of Social Workers, the National District Attorneys Association, National Children’s Alliance, the National Center for the Review and Prevention of Child Deaths, and Every Child Matters Education Fund. To learn more about the problem, and how to support the creation of a National Commission on Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths, visit [www.endchildabusedeaths.org](http://www.endchildabusedeaths.org) – Help win the fight against child abuse.*

*\*See full Summit Recommendations at [endchildabusedeaths.org](http://endchildabusedeaths.org).*

# 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, 15,510 children died from child abuse and neglect during the 2001-2010 period examined in this report.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, several studies have concluded there actually is significant undercounting of maltreatment deaths and that the true number is several thousands more over those 10 years.<sup>4</sup>

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 25 million reports of maltreatment made to government agencies in the last 10 years<sup>5</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 15,000 children in a 10-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.

There is no assurance needed improvement will occur. Federal and state budgets are still in turmoil and the economic recession continues.

No matter, the nation 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.

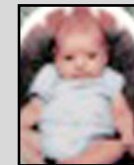
Michael Petit  
*PRESIDENT, EVERY CHILD MATTERS*

Each 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 by states in their annual reporting to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

Alabama



6-month-old Phoenix –  
beaten to death

DEATHS '01-'10: 204

Alaska



5-month-old Kaydence –  
shaken and beaten

DEATHS '01-'10: 19\*

Arizona



5-year-old autistic Brandon –  
inflicted fractured skull

DEATHS '01-'10: 198

\*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**

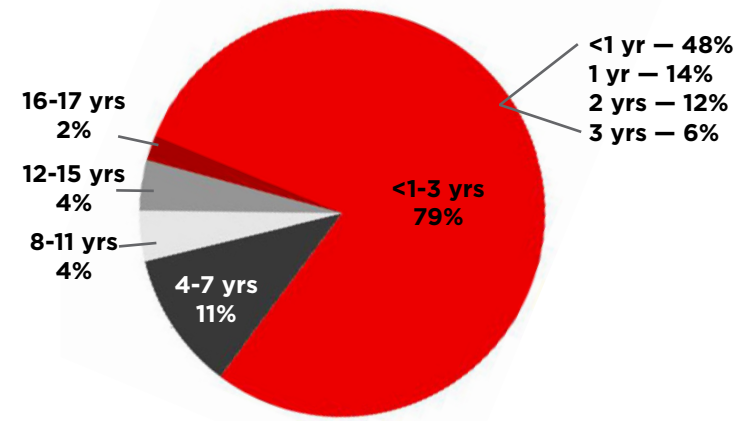
The official number of children killed from abuse or neglect nationwide in 2010 is 1,560.<sup>6</sup> In 2001, the total was 1,300.<sup>7</sup> Eighty percent of the children are under four. The current systems of child protection are stretched too thin to protect these children.<sup>8</sup>

Between 2001-2010, the official number of child abuse and neglect fatalities was 15,510.<sup>9</sup> The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has reported an increasing rate of fatalities. 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 continuing harsh economy combined with a steadily weakened safety net in

many states, including unprecedented slashes in child protection spending in some, 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

**Child Abuse and Neglect Fatality Victims by Age 2010<sup>10</sup>**



of inadequate funding for child protection and severe budget crises at 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. Spending on total child welfare declined in 22 states from 2006 to 2010.<sup>11</sup>

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. It is also required to evaluate each state's child protection performance. But, as presently constructed, neither federal funding nor oversight are at levels sufficient to protect all children.

**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>12</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>13</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 forensic, medical and maltreatment experts—particularly

**Arkansas**



6-month-old Rihanna – strangled

**DEATHS '01-'10: 166**

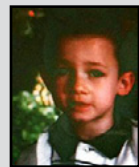
**California**



12-year-old Christopher – starved and beaten

**DEATHS '01-'10: 1,253**

**Colorado**



7-year-old Chandler – starvation and dehydration

**DEATHS '01-'10: 274**

**Connecticut**



2-year-old Alex – shaken to death

**DEATHS '01-'10: 64**

**District of Columbia**



12-month-old Selena – beaten to death

**DEATHS '01-'10: 62**

**Delaware**



14-month-old Jaylah – blunt force trauma

**DEATHS '01-'10: 11**

\*California did not report fatalities in 2003.

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>14</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 “underascertainment” 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 2001-2010. What explains the undercount? There are a variety of reasons, verified in a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) study, including different state definitions of what constitutes a child abuse and neglect death, data collection methodologies, inconsistent recordkeeping 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>15</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. These teams 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 unanimously agree on the need for stronger efforts to prevent child

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>16</sup>

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

More than 25 million reports of abuse and neglect have been made to official state child protection agencies in this past decade. And while ‘only’ a third<sup>18</sup> 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. 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>19</sup> Even without complete state

Reported Child Deaths 2001-2010<sup>17</sup>

	Reported
2001	1,300
2002	1,400
2003	1,500
2004	1,490
2005	1,460
2006	1,530
2007	1,760
2008	1,740
2009	1,770
2010	1,560
TOTAL	15,510

#### Florida



3-year-old Zahid – beaten to death

DEATHS ‘01-’10: 1,306

#### Georgia



11-year-old Joella Reaves – blunt force trauma

DEATHS ‘01-’10: 651

#### Hawaii



5-year-old Talia Emoni – “battered child syndrome”

DEATHS ‘01-’10: 39

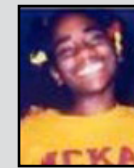
#### Idaho



6-year-old autistic Elizabeth – drowned

DEATHS ‘01-’10: 22

#### Illinois



13-year-old Shavon – bludgeoned with a 2-by-4

DEATHS ‘01-’10: 714

#### Indiana



7-year-old Adrian – starved to death and set on fire

DEATHS ‘01-’10: 455

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

**Reported Child Abuse and Neglect  
2001-2010<sup>20</sup>**

	Reported
2001	2,659,000
2002	2,600,000
2003	2,900,000
2004	3,000,000
2005	3,300,000
2006	3,300,000
2007	3,200,000
2008	3,300,000
2009	3,300,000
2010	3,300,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,859,000</b>

number of reports made to state child protection agencies.

Of the 701,158 children confirmed abused and neglected in 2010:

- 78% did not receive proper food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, education, medical care or protection.
- 18% were physically abused.
- 9% were sexually abused.
- 8% suffered from emotional abuse.
- 2% suffered from medical neglect.
- 10% suffered from other mistreatment such as abandonment, threats, and congenital drug addiction.<sup>21</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 more than 2,000 children, whatever response may be generated is too little, too late, and children die.

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

International comparison of the extent of child maltreatment, and in particular the incidence of the different types, is difficult due to definitional differences in maltreatment measures and variations in reporting rates generated by different institutional and societal attitudes. Studies from the 1990s showed that the United States had a higher incidence of child maltreatment deaths than other European countries as well as Canada and Japan.<sup>22</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 contributes to 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 might try, no states are in full compliance with federal child welfare standards.<sup>23</sup> No matter, state child protection reform efforts, often stemming from federal reviews and valuations, 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

Iowa



8-month-old Antwaun – head trauma

**DEATHS '01-'10: 103**

Kansas



9-year-old Brian – asphyxiation after being bound with tape

**DEATHS '01-'10: 66**

Kentucky



10-year-old Michaela – beaten to death

**DEATHS '01-'10: 296**

Louisiana



6-year-old twins Samuel and Solomon – strangled to death

**DEATHS '01-'10: 316**

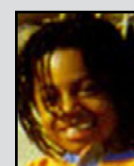
Maine



5-year-old Logan – asphyxiation after being bound with duct tape

**DEATHS '01-'10: 20**

Maryland



11-year-old Irvin – stabbed to death

**DEATHS '01-'10: 184**

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

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 2010 the child abuse and neglect fatality rate, in the states where there was a fatality, was 13 times greater in the bottom state than in the top state.<sup>24</sup> And some states are willing to spend much more to protect children—as much as 12 times more per capita.<sup>25</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.

### Many Child Protection Workers 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 front-line 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 staff retention is workload. 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>26</sup> even while national standards recommend 12 or fewer cases per worker. Another factor in recruitment is compensation. Starting salaries under \$35,000 for child protection workers are common, and rarely do staff earn more than \$50,000—modest sums in view of the important jobs they are asked to do.<sup>27</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, 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, which utilize a multi-disciplinary, joint response model for addressing child sexual abuse.

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

### Restrictive Confidentiality Laws Shield 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>28</sup> Sometimes used to shield the public

#### Massachusetts



4-year-old Rebecca – overdose of three medications

**DEATHS '01-'10: 70\***

#### Michigan



5-year-old Rose – liver failure likely caused by malnutrition and overuse of acetaminophen

**DEATHS '01-'10: 285**

#### Minnesota



4-year-old Demond – beaten, resulting in a trauma induced seizure

**DEATHS '01-'10: 154**

#### Mississippi



14-month-old Tykiriah – blunt force trauma

**DEATHS '01-'10: 129**

#### Missouri



2-year-old Alyssa – skull fracture after being thrown

**DEATHS '01-'10: 426**

#### Montana



2-year-old James – beaten to death and put in the trunk of a car

**DEATHS '01-'10: 18**

\*Massachusetts did not report fatalities in 2006-2008  
\*Michigan only reported fatalities in 2001, 2005, and 2008

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.

*The national press generally limits its maltreatment coverage to the most sensational child deaths.*

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 problems.

The national press generally limits its maltreatment coverage to the most sensational child deaths. It provides virtually no 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. In 2011, BBC Worldwide broadcast a story “America’s Child Death Shame” over seven days. Its website received one million hits on the story. U.S. press did not report on the BBC study.

**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

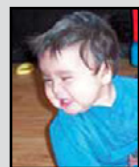
at daily risk of harm. Reducing this risk will reduce fatalities—and the need for protection in the first place. Reducing risk also poses an enormous economic challenge because, while child abuse occurs in all socioeconomic ranks, it lands hardest on children in the poorest families. In fact, poverty 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>29</sup>

Child poverty in the U.S. is exploding – nearly one in four American children, over 15.75 million, still live in poverty.<sup>30</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 2010, nearly 80% were under age four, and almost half were under age one.<sup>31</sup>

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>32</sup>

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.

**Nebraska**



20-month-old Nathaniel – brain injuries and other abuse

**DEATHS ‘01-’10: 120**

**Nevada**



3-year-old Crystal – beaten to death and dumped in a trash bin

**DEATHS ‘01-’10: 125**

**New Hampshire**



21-month-old Rylea – brain injuries sustained from severe abuse

**DEATHS ‘01-’10: 16**

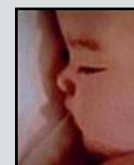
**New Jersey**



7-year-old Faheem – starvation and blunt trauma

**DEATHS ‘01-’10: 297**

**New Mexico**



5-month-old Brianna – raped and thrown

**DEATHS ‘01-’10: 101**

**New York**



7-year-old Nixzmary – torture and starvation

**DEATHS ‘01-’10: 843**



### 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 \$124 billion a year, according to the Center for Disease Control.<sup>33</sup> 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. And recent cuts in state budgets, combined with proposed deep federal cuts, will further weaken protection for the youngest children.

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. At present, there is little discussion off this issue at a national level.

#### Cost of Child Abuse<sup>34</sup>

SOURCE OF COST	
<b>NON-FATAL</b>	
Annual Total	
Incidence (cases)	579,000
Short-term health care costs	\$18,903,192,000
Long-term health care costs	\$6,096,870,000
Productivity losses	\$83,584,440,000
Child welfare costs	\$4,474,512,000
Criminal justice costs	\$3,906,513,000
Special education costs	\$4,631,421,000
TOTAL	<b>\$121,596,948,000</b>
<b>FATAL</b>	
Incidence (cases)	1,740
Medical costs	\$24,534,000
Productivity losses	\$2,190,312,000
TOTAL	<b>\$2,214,846,000</b>
TOTAL COSTS	<b>\$123,811,794,000</b>

### 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 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 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.

#### North Carolina



13-year-old Tyler – dehydration and heat stroke after being tied to a tree overnight

**DEATHS '01-'10: 67\***

#### North Dakota



4-month-old Reese – brain damage after being severely shaken

**DEATHS '01-'10: 12**

#### Ohio



17-month-old Jaydon – raped and beaten

**DEATHS '01-'10: 764**

\*North Carolina only reported fatalities in 2001 and 2002

#### Oklahoma



4-year-old Christopher – beaten to death

**DEATHS '01-'10: 303**

#### Oregon



4-year-old Adrianna – beaten to death

**DEATHS '01-'10: 147**

#### Pennsylvania



3-year-old Kavannah – beaten to death

**DEATHS '01-'10: 422**

- 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.

**Call to Action: Establish a National Commission to Stop Child Abuse Deaths**

Because the lives of thousands of children are at stake, the Congress should enact and the President should sign the Protect Our Kids Act (S.1984 & HR 3653). The Act is a critical part of a comprehensive national strategy to address the country's crisis of child abuse and neglect fatalities.

*The Commission created by the bill would:*

- Conduct a thorough study and evaluation of child abuse prevention and child protection programs and identify best practices.
- Hold hearings examining the federal, state, and local policies and resources that affect child abuse fatalities.
- Provide a comprehensive strategy to the Congress and White House for reducing child fatalities.

*You can:*

- Write a Letter to the Editor in support of the Act.
- Write a letter to your congressional delegation.
- Visit [endchildabusedeaths.org](http://endchildabusedeaths.org) and sign the petition asking Congress to pass the Protect our Kids Act.
- Encourage others in your community to do the same.

**Rhode Island**



6-week-old Naomi – blunt force trauma

**DEATHS '01-'10: 19**

**South Carolina**



6-year-old Chaquise – beaten to death

**DEATHS '01-'10: 215**

**South Dakota**



21-month-old Tanner – brain injuries after being thrown at his crib

**DEATHS '01-'10: 36**

**Tennessee**



13-month-old Jordan – punched

**DEATHS '01-'10: 309**

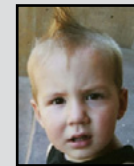
**Texas**



7-year-old William – blunt force head trauma

**DEATHS '01-'10: 2,233**

**Utah**



2-year-old Jayden – thrown across a room

**DEATHS '01-'10: 112**

**Vermont**



1-month-old Angelo – died from blunt impact to the head

**DEATHS '01-'10: 13**

**Virginia**



13-year-old Alexis – drowned

**DEATHS '01-'10: 297**

**Washington**



4-year-old Summer – tortured and killed

**DEATHS '01-'10: 160**

**West Virginia**



2-year-old Logan – sexually abused and killed

**DEATHS '01-'10: 149**

**Wisconsin**



19-month-old Alicia – suffocated

**DEATHS '01-'10: 177**

**Wyoming**



13-month-old Ariana – beaten to death

**DEATHS '01-'10: 23**

2010 Data for Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths by State

	DEATHS	RATE		DEATHS	RATE
Alabama	13	1.15	Montana	0	0.00
Alaska	0	0.00	Nebraska	7	1.55
Arizona	20	1.15	Nevada	15	2.20
Arkansas	19	2.68	New Hampshire	1	0.35
California	120	1.27	New Jersey	18	0.88
Colorado	27	2.20	New Mexico	19	3.72
Connecticut	4	0.50	New York	114	2.58
Delaware	2	0.97	North Carolina	17	0.75
Florida	180	4.44	North Dakota	1	0.69
Georgia	77	2.98	Ohio	83	3.06
Hawaii	2	0.69	Oklahoma	27	2.94
Idaho	2	0.48	Oregon	22	2.52
Illinois	73	2.30	Pennsylvania	29	1.04
Indiana	17	1.07	Rhode Island	2	0.88
Iowa	8	1.12	South Carolina	25	2.31
Kansas	6	0.85	South Dakota	2	1.00
Kentucky	30	2.96	Tennessee	38	2.54
Louisiana	30	2.67	Texas	222	3.22
Maine	1	0.37	Utah	13	1.50
Maryland	24	1.78	Vermont	4	3.17
Massachusetts*			Virginia	38	2.06
Michigan	71	3.02	Washington	12	0.76
Minnesota	14	1.11	West Virginia	8	2.07
Mississippi	17	2.21	Wisconsin	21	1.60
Missouri	31	2.17	Wyoming	1	0.76

Rate per 100,000 children, Source: Child Maltreatment 2010 – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families

2010 Data for Child Abuse and Neglect Reports by State

	REPORTS		REPORTS
Alabama	20,159	Montana	12,919
Alaska	14,416	Nebraska	26,909
Arizona	60,482	Nevada	18,649
Arkansas	45,872	New Hampshire	13,070
California	343,793	New Jersey	*
Colorado	72,818	New Mexico	30,313
Connecticut	45,313	New York	*
Delaware	11,084	North Carolina	*
Florida	193,339	North Dakota	8,024
Georgia	38,578	Ohio	139,079
Hawaii	*	Oklahoma	64,793
Idaho	14,887	Oregon	71,886
Illinois	*	Pennsylvania	*
Indiana	95,148	Rhode Island	11,790
Iowa	43,025	South Carolina	28,887
Kansas	32,377	South Dakota	15,228
Kentucky	73,026	Tennessee	89,025
Louisiana	38,642	Texas	207,965
Maine	15,578	Utah	31,693
Maryland	45,129	Vermont	14,278
Massachusetts	72,035	Virginia	64,739
Michigan	116,148	Washington	75,660
Minnesota	55,888	West Virginia	32,244
Mississippi	28,666	Wisconsin	60,726
Missouri	101,014	Wyoming	6,236

Source: Child Maltreatment 2010 – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families

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<sup>2</sup> icasualties.org, Coalition Military Fatalities By Year and Month – Operation Enduring Freedom and Coalition Military Fatalities By Year – Operation Iraqi Freedom. Accessed on June 20, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment (2001-2010)”

<sup>4</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>5</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment (2001-2010)”

<sup>6</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment 2010,” p.58

<sup>7</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment 2001,” <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm01/chapterfive.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment 2010,” p.59

<sup>9</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment (2001-2010)”

<sup>10</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment 2010,” p.59

<sup>11</sup> Kerry DeVooght, Megan Fletcher, Brigitte Vaughn, and Hope Cooper, Child Trends, “Federal, State, and Local Spending to Address Child Abuse and Neglect In SFYs 2008 And 2010”, June 2012, p.4

<sup>12</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>13</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>14</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>15</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>16</sup> Valiquette, M. (2009, June). Survey of Child Death Review Teams. (E. C. Matters, Interviewer)

<sup>17</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment (2001-2010)”

<sup>18</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment 2010,” p.5

<sup>19</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment (2001-2010)”

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment 2010,” p.24

<sup>22</sup> Unicef Innocenti Research Centre, “A League Table of Child Maltreatment Deaths in Rich Nations (2003)”, p. 4

<sup>23</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>24</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Child Maltreatment 2010,” p.63

<sup>25</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>26</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>27</sup> Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2011 National Occupational

Employment and Wage Estimates. Retrieved June 20, 2012, from Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211021.htm>

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<sup>29</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>

<sup>30</sup> Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey, 2002 through 2010 American Community Survey. 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)

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<sup>33</sup> Xiangming Fang, Derek S. Brown, Curtis S. Florence, James A. Mercy, “The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention”, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Volume 36, Issue 2, February 2012, p. 161

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