

Children's Defense Fund

Children's Rights

<https://www.childrensdefense.org/blog/new-report-on-child-maltreatment/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

This month, the Childrens Bureau released [Child Maltreatment 2019](#), the 30th annual report from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). In 1988, NCANDS was created as a national program for the collection and analysis of state-level child abuse and neglect data. Since that time, all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia voluntarily submit case-level data, as well as agency-level aggregate statistics for data that cant be reported at case-level. The information included in NCANDS is an important resource for understanding the realities of child abuse and neglect in America and is a vital tool for programs and organizations working to protect children.

The annual *Child Maltreatment* reports are valuable tools to truly understand how children are victimized. Of all children who were found to have been maltreated in 2019, 74.9 percent were victims of neglect, 17.5 percent were victims of physical abuse, and 9.3 percent were victims of sexual abuse. To track these numbers, children are counted once for each type of maltreatment they experience, and 15.5 percent of children suffer more than one type of maltreatment. Of the 491,710 children who suffered neglect in 2019, 399,992 (81.3 percent) suffered only neglect and no other form of substantiated maltreatment. Understanding these details is extremely important for child welfare reform, because cases that are only neglect are often symptoms of poverty that can be prevented by addressing child poverty.

This years report indicates that the number of children who were deemed to be victims of child maltreatment fell in 2019 from 677,000 in the previous year down to 656,000. However, while the national total fell, the number of children who were victims of maltreatment rose in 20 states, including 11 states that rose by between five and 26.8 percent. Additionally, the rate of maltreatment fatalities rose by 3.4 percent in 2019, with 1,840 children dying as a result of neglect or abuse.

The report showcased significant variations in the rate of child maltreatment. While 9.2 per 1,000 children were maltreated nationally, the rate varied heavily, with some states seeing rates as low as 1.8 per 1,000 and others as high as 20.1 per 1,000 children. Boys and girls face maltreatment at similar rates (8.4 and 9.4 per 1,000, respectively), but there is significant variation in the rate of maltreatment when differentiated by race. The maltreatment rates for White children and Hispanic children were 7.8 and 8.1 per 1,000 respectively, but 13.7 per 1,000 for African American children. American Indian and Alaska Native children had the highest rates of maltreatment at 14.8 per 1,000 children.

Younger children are significantly more vulnerable to abuse, as well, with rates of maltreatment dropping as children age. Children under one year of age have a maltreatment rate of 25.7 per 1,000 children more than double the rate for any other age group and children ages two and under make up 28.1 percent of all maltreatment cases. Infants under one year of age also made up a staggering 45.4 percent of all child maltreatment fatalities at a rate of 22.9 per 100,000, more than nine times the overall rate of fatalities.

Finally, while the number of children who were found to be victims of child maltreatment fell in 2019, so did the number of children receiving federally-funded services to prevent child abuse and neglect by supporting and strengthening families. These services, mostly funded through the MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program, the Social Services Block Grant, and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, were provided to 90,775 fewer children than in the previous year. Reducing the number of children who suffer maltreatment will require significant increased investment in these programs.

The data in *Child Maltreatment 2019* will be an important tool for advocates working to end child abuse and neglect. The information outlined here is just a small fraction of what is contained in the report. To learn more, [find the full report here](#).

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