

Silent Victims: Analysing child targeted crimes in LA

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Child-Targeted Crimes in Kenya

Kenya has witnessed several distressing child-related crime cases in recent years, highlighting issues ranging from domestic abuse to systemic failures. Here are some notable incidents:

1. Masten Wanjala – Child Serial Killer

Between 2015 and 2021, Masten Wanjala confessed to abducting and murdering over 10 boys in Nairobi. He lured victims by posing as a football coach, drugged them, and in some cases, drank their blood. After his arrest in July 2021, Wanjala escaped custody in October and was subsequently lynched by a mob in his hometown of Bungoma.

2. Baby Sagini – Ritual Attack

In December 2022, three-year-old Junior Sagini from Kisii County had his eyes gouged out in a suspected ritual attack. His cousin, Maina Ochoki, and other family members were arrested in connection with the crime. The incident sparked national outrage and highlighted the dangers of ritualistic practices.

3. St. Kizito School Massacre

In 1991, male students at St. Kizito Secondary School in Meru County attacked the girls' dormitory, leading to the rape of 71 girls and the deaths of 19. The incident highlighted severe issues of gender-based violence and institutional negligence.

Introduction

Child-targeted crimes are a global crisis, with harrowing cases in Kenya highlighting the extreme vulnerability of children to violence, neglect, and exploitation. These incidents are not isolated; they reflect systemic issues that transcend borders. To better understand and address this widespread problem, this project shifts focus to Los Angeles, where rich, publicly available crime data from 2020 to 2025 enables a detailed, data-driven analysis of child-targeted offenses — including crime types, victim demographics, locations, and methods used. Through this localized lens, the aim is to uncover patterns and inform conversations around prevention and policy.



Data Sourcing

The dataset used was obtained from [Data.gov](#). It contains detailed records of reported crime incidents across the City of Los Angeles from 2020 through March 25, 2025, based on LAPD reports.

The dataset includes 28 columns and approximately 1,005,198 records, capturing various attributes such as crime type, time, location, victim demographics, and case status



Columns

Basic Case Information

DR_NO: Division Report Number – a unique identifier for each crime report.

Date Rptd: Date the crime was reported.

DATE OCC: Date the crime actually occurred.

TIME OCC: Time the crime occurred (usually in military time, like 1430 = 2:30 PM).

Location Info

AREA: Numeric code for the area where the crime happened.

AREA NAME: Name of the area (e.g., Hollywood, Downtown, etc.).

Rpt Dist No: Reporting district number – a more specific sub-area within the AREA.

Premis Cd: Code indicating the type of premises (e.g., street, store, residence).

Premis Desc: Description of the premises.

LOCATION: Street address or general location of the incident.

Cross Street: Nearest cross street.

LAT & LON: Latitude and longitude for mapping the location.

Columns

Crime Details

Part 1-2: Crime classification – “Part 1” (serious crimes like murder, rape, robbery), “Part 2” (less severe crimes).

Crm Cd: Primary crime code.

Crm Cd Desc: Description of the crime (e.g., "Battery", "Burglary").

Crm Cd 1–4: Additional crime codes (if multiple crimes happened during one incident).

Victim Information

Vict Age: Victim’s age.

Vict Sex: Victim’s sex/gender (M, F, X).

Vict Descent: Victim’s race/ethnicity code.

Weapons & Methods

Weapon Used Cd: Code for the weapon used.

Weapon Desc: Description of the weapon (e.g., "Handgun", "Knife").

Mocodes: "Modus Operandi" – codes describing the method or tactics used in the crime (e.g., "forced entry", "used disguise")

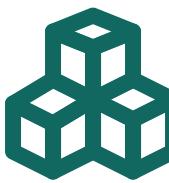
Case Status

Status: Case status code (e.g., “AA” = Adult Arrest, “IC” = Investigation Continuing).

Status Desc: Description of the case status.

Data Cleaning

Several columns contained missing values. Columns with over 80% missing data—Crm Cd 2, Crm Cd 3, Crm Cd 4, Cross Street, and Mocodes—were dropped due to insufficient information.



Decoding Numerical Categories

Fields like Area and Weapon Used Cd were originally encoded with numerical abbreviations. These were mapped to their corresponding names using the LAPD Area Codes and Weapon Codebook for clarity



Clarifying Victim Demographic Codes

Categorical fields such as Vict Descent and Vict Sex, which were represented by letter codes, were translated into their full descriptive labels (e.g., "M" to "Male", "W" to "White", etc.)



Imputing Missing Categorical Data

For categorical columns with missing values—namely Vict Sex, Vict Descent, and Weapon Used Cd—missing entries were filled using the mode to maintain consistency

Key Business Questions

1. Which crimes are most commonly committed against children?
2. What areas in LA have the highest concentration of reported child victim cases?
3. What is the gender distribution among victims?
4. Which descent group has the highest or lowest average victim age?
5. How has the number of reported victim cases changed from 2020 to 2025?
6. What are the most frequent tools of harm in child-related offenses?



Statistics

Kenya Statistics



Age Groups Most Affected

Among children aged 13–17, 13.5% of females and 2.4% of males experienced sexual violence in the past year.



Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

23% of girls and 12% of boys aged 13–17 have experienced sexual abuse.



Child Labor

5.9% of children aged 5–14 are engaged in child labor, totaling about 782,258 children. 16.4% of adolescents aged 15–17 are involved in hazardous work, equating to 569,031 children.

LA Statistics



1 in 3 Reported Crimes in LA Involve a Child Victim

29% of all reported crimes in LA involve child victims, while 71% of the reported crimes involve adult victims.



Age Groups Most Affected

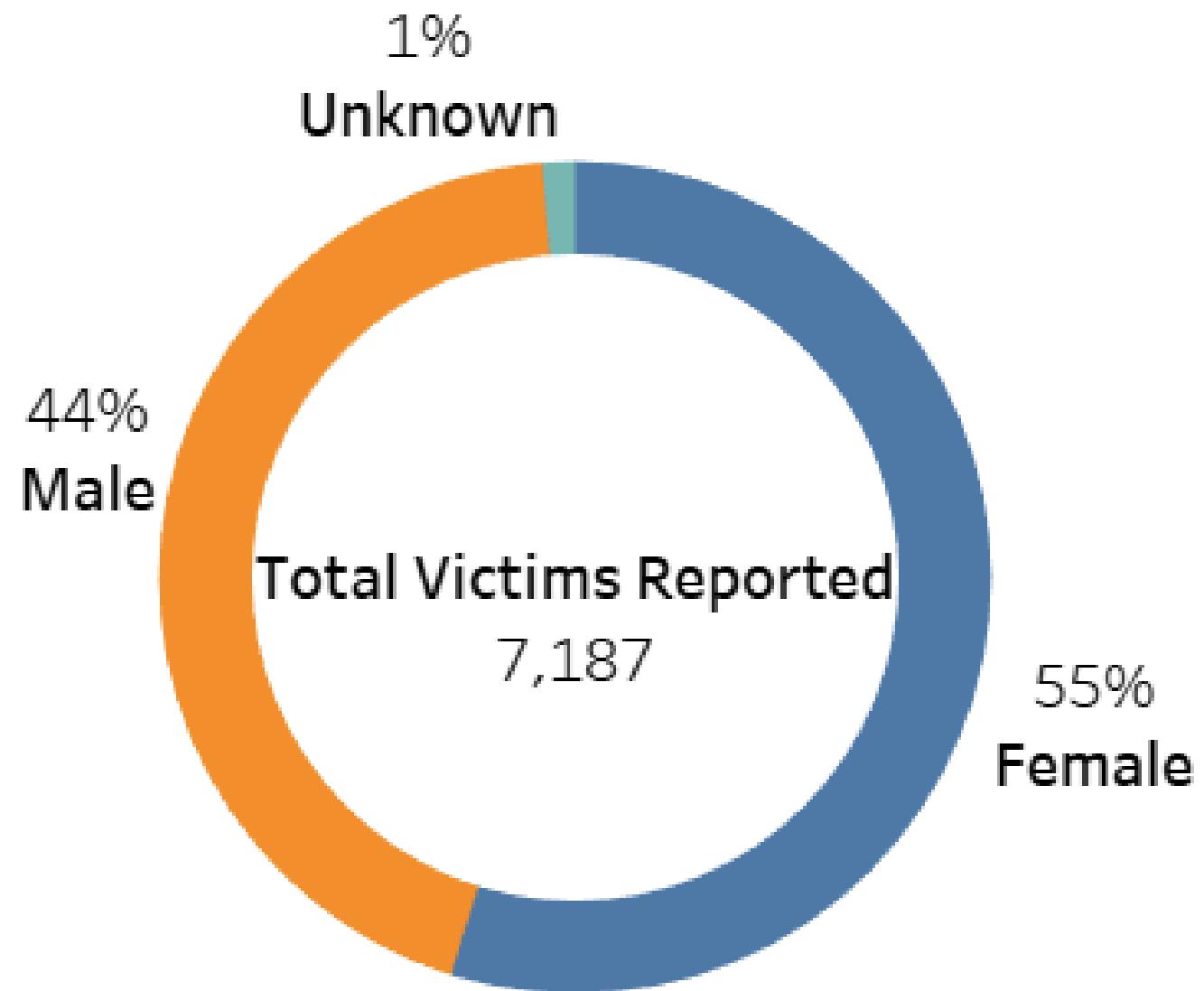
Children aged 13–17 years are the most affected, accounting for 38% of cases, followed by those aged 6–12 at 33%.



Low Arrest Rate

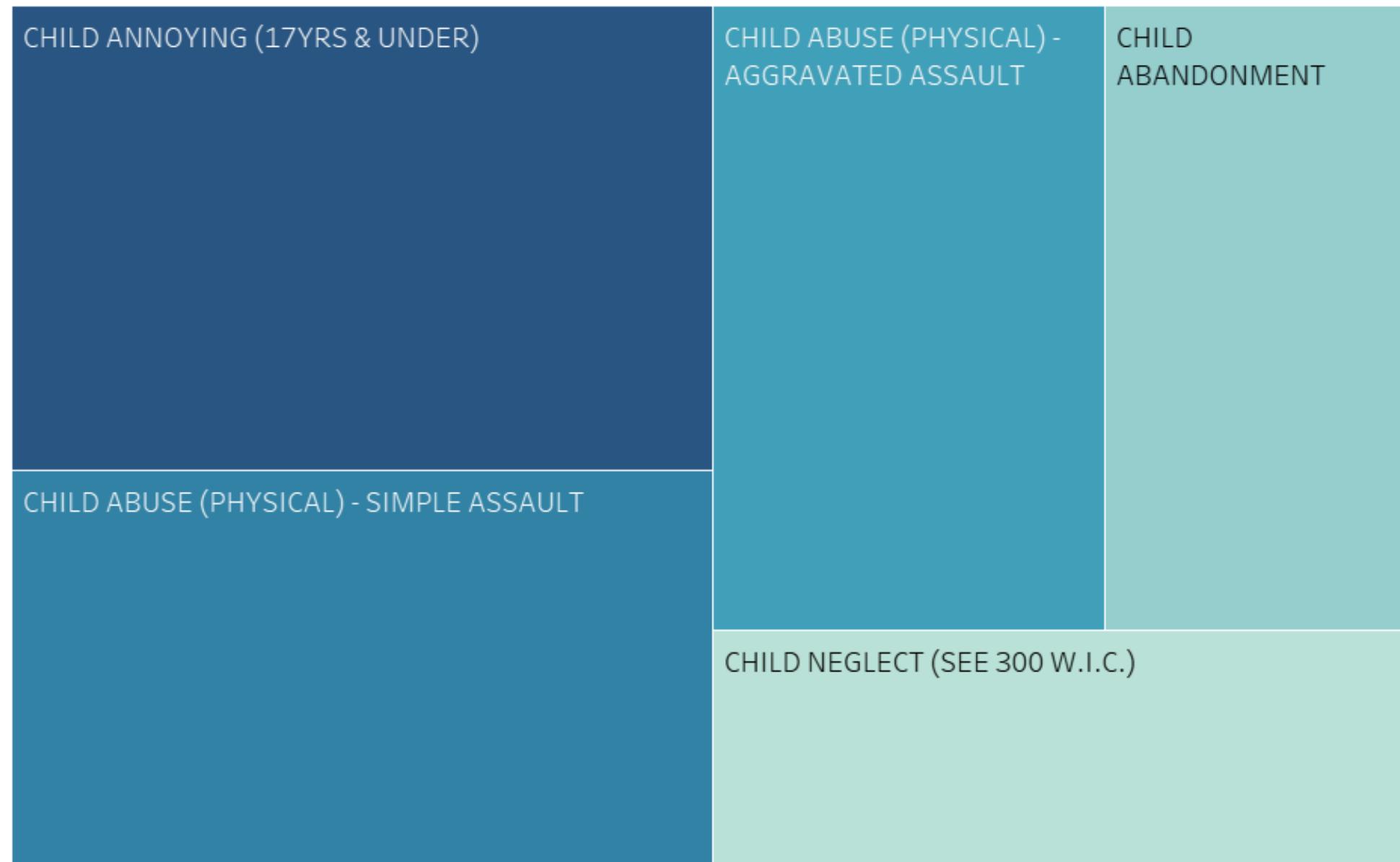
Only 27% of reported child-related crimes result in adult arrests, highlighting a significant gap in accountability and enforcement.

Gender Breakdown of Victims



- In Los Angeles, reported crimes against children from 2020–2025 show that female minors were slightly more likely to be victimized than male minors (55% vs. 44%).
- This pattern may reflect broader trends in LA's crime landscape, where offenses like sexual assault, domestic violence, and exploitation — crimes that disproportionately affect girls — remain significant threats.
- However, with boys making up nearly half of all victims, it's clear that child victimization in LA is not gender-exclusive, demanding comprehensive protection efforts for both girls and boys across the city.

Types of Crimes Against Children



Child Annoying (17 & Under)

- Most frequently reported offense
- Includes harassment, lewd behavior, inappropriate verbal/physical conduct
- Often a precursor to more serious abuse

Physical Abuse

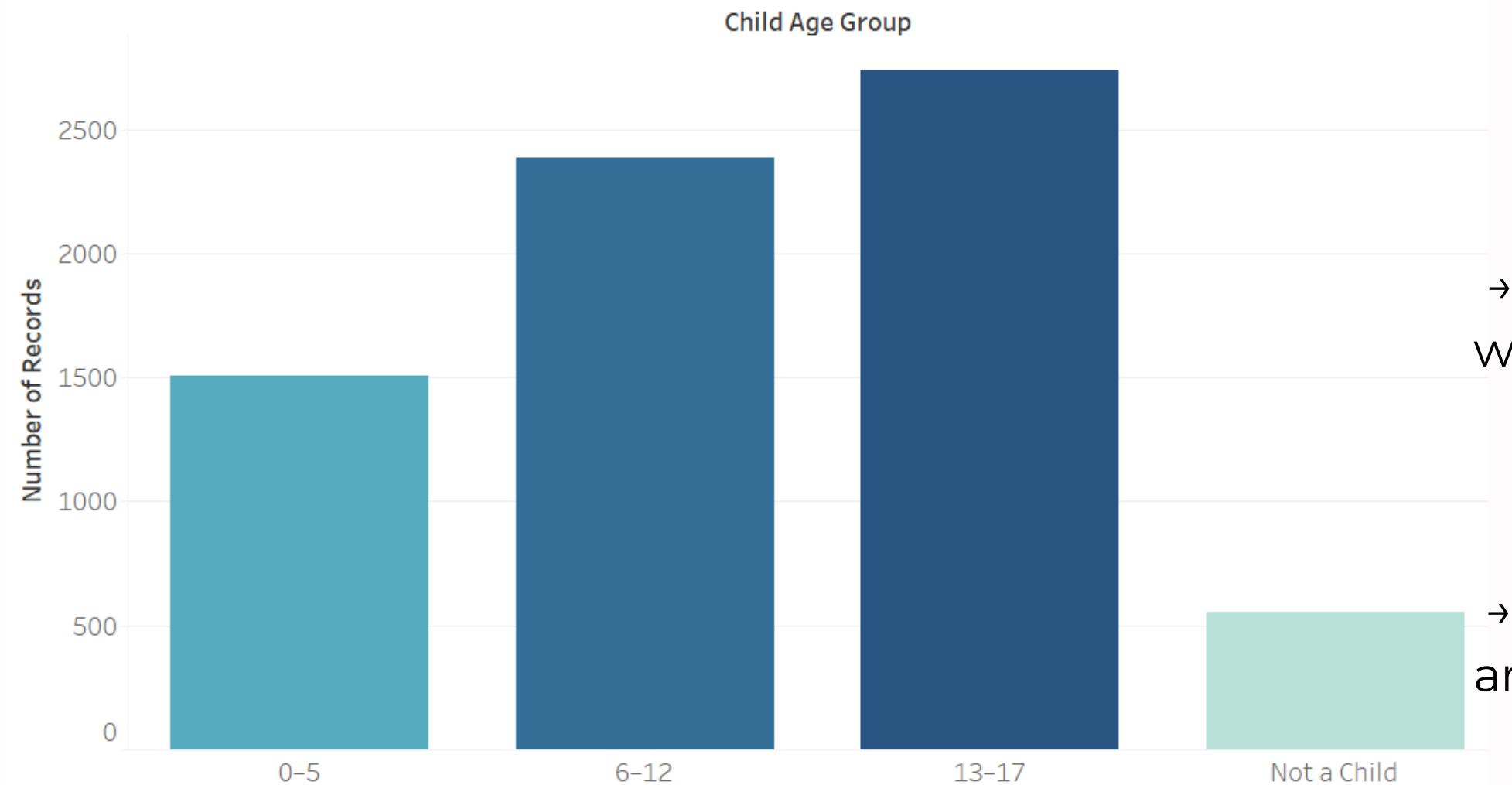
- Includes Simple Assault (minor injuries/threats)
- And Aggravated Assault (serious harm or weapon use)

Child Neglect & Abandonment

- Neglect: Failure to provide food, shelter, medical care
- Abandonment: Leaving child without appropriate supervision

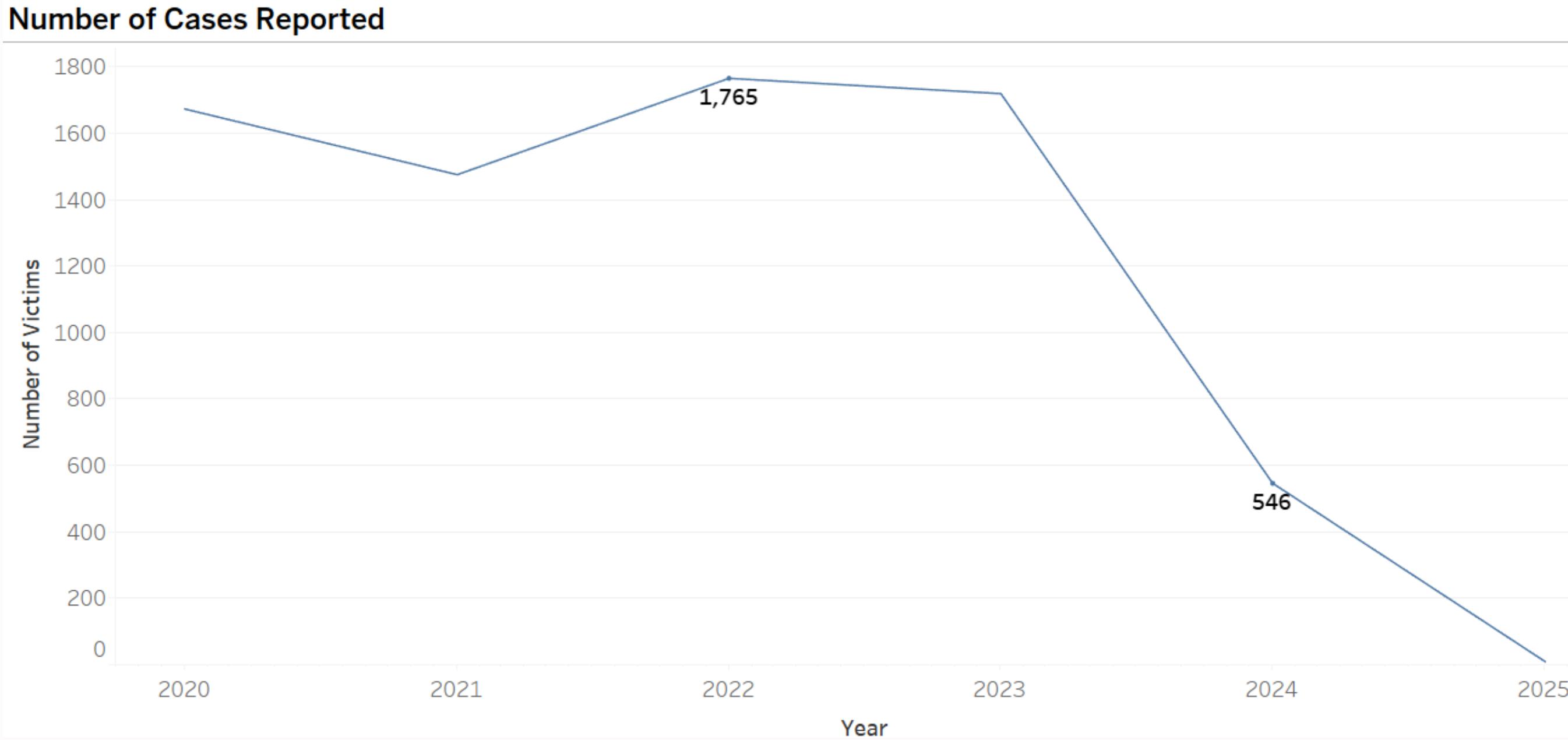
- **Child pornography**—legally categorized as "Possession or Control of Child Pornography"—is a major concern when it comes to crimes against children and is present in the LAPD dataset. However, it doesn't surface as a major crime type on the treemap due to several factors related to classification, lower frequency, privacy concerns, and data sensitivity. This issue is increasingly relevant in connection to children having access to phones at an early age.

Age Breakdown of Child Victims



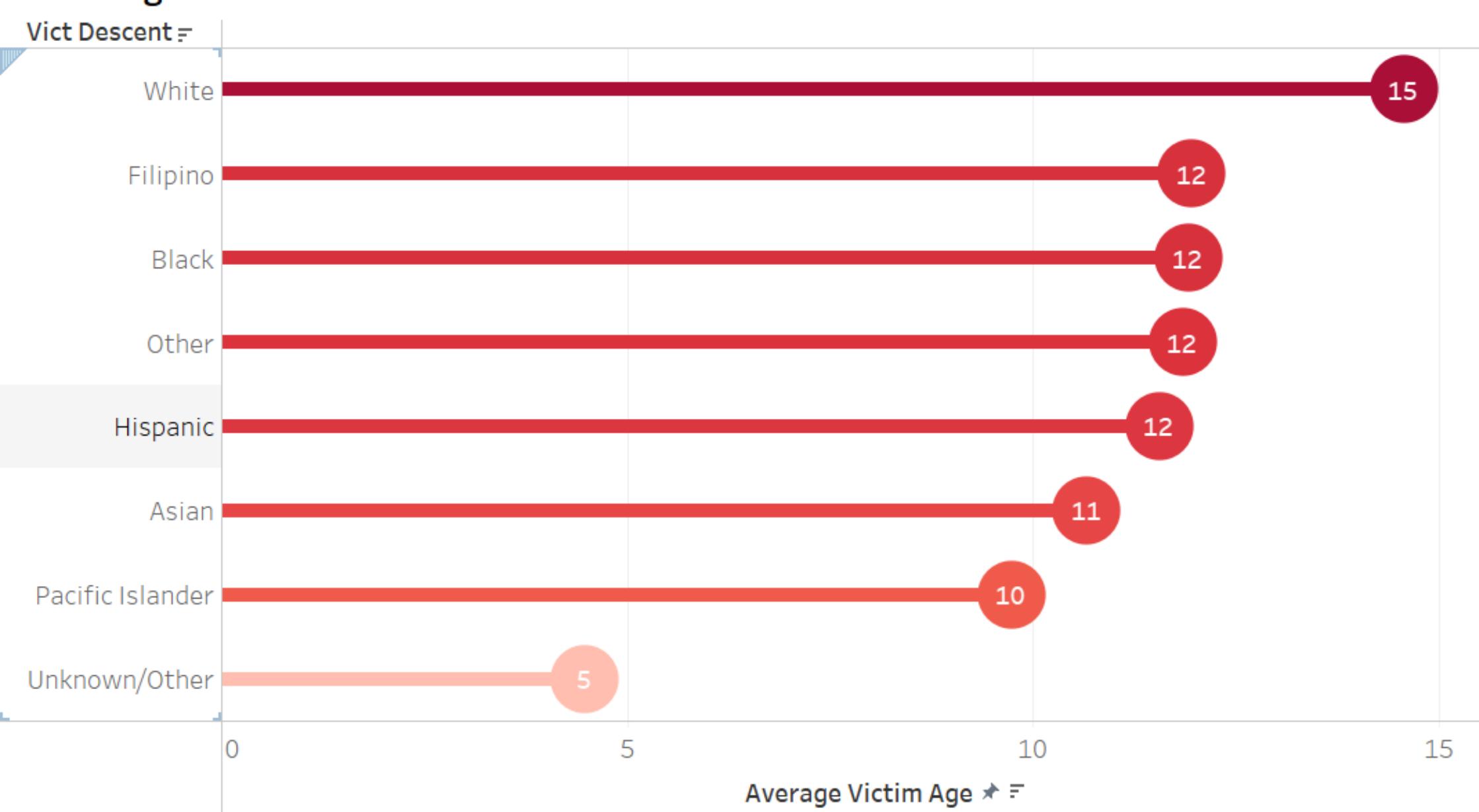
- **Children aged 13–17** faced the highest number of reported crimes—likely due to increased independence, more time spent outside the home or online, and a greater likelihood of disclosing abuse.
 - This age group may also be more visible to authorities, which can lead to higher reporting rates.
- **Teens (13–17)** are the most affected group, making up the highest number of reported child victim cases.
 - This suggests older minors may face more exposure to risk or are more likely to report incidents.

- **Middle childhood (6–12)** also shows a high volume of victimization, indicating that preteens are a major at-risk group.
- **Children aged 0–5** still represent a significant portion of victims, highlighting that even the youngest are not spared from harm.



- **2022** saw a sharp spike in child-related crimes, with 1,765 victims—the highest in six years—likely driven by post-pandemic stress, domestic tensions, and improved reporting.
- **By 2025**, cases had nearly disappeared—prompting questions about whether this reflects real change or shifts in reporting.

Victim Age Across Different Descents



1. White Children

Average Age: 15 years

Insight: Highest average age, possibly reflecting different reporting or abuse recognition patterns for older minors.

2. Filipino, Black, Hispanic, and "Other" Groups

Average Age: 12 years

Insight: These groups share similar vulnerabilities, especially among preteens and early adolescents.

3. Asian Victims

Average Age: 11 years

Insight: Victimization is more common among slightly younger children in these communities.

4. Pacific Islanders

Average Age: 10 years

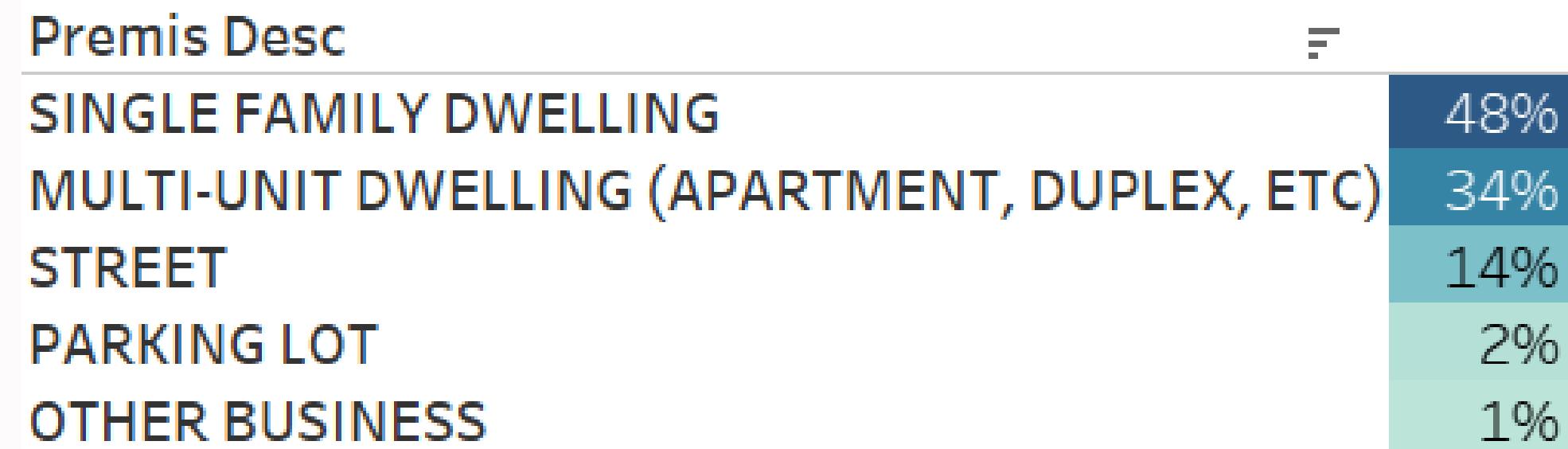
Insight: Younger victims, potentially indicating specific community vulnerabilities or underreporting issues.

5. Unknown/Other Category

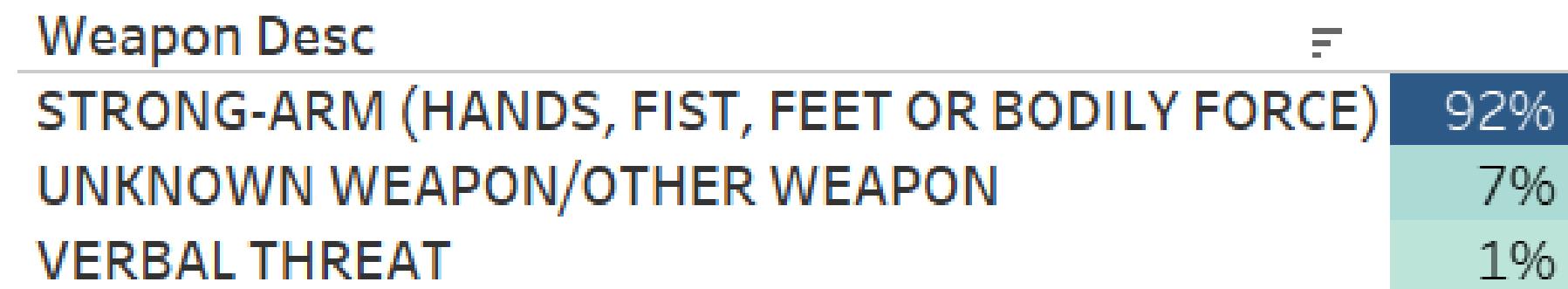
Average Age: 5 years

Insight: Alarmingly young average age, emphasizing the extreme vulnerability of the youngest and often most invisible victims.

Common Locations of Child Victimization



Most Common Weapons Used in Crimes Against Children



Recommendations

Train Key Adults to Detect Hidden Abuse

92% of these crimes involve bodily force, not weapons.
Equip teachers, nurses, and counselors to spot subtle signs of physical or emotional trauma.

Focused prevention programs for adolescents

With teens aged 13–17 accounting for the highest number of child victims, targeted programs should be introduced in schools and communities. These should focus on safety awareness, digital risks, and access to safe spaces for reporting and support.

Address Gender Gaps in Awareness

Nearly half of child victims are male, yet often overlooked. Promote gender-inclusive safety programs and destigmatize male vulnerability.

Focus Outreach by Age and Ethnicity

Different communities show different victim age patterns. Tailor prevention programs to match cultural contexts and specific age vulnerabilities.

Strengthen Reporting & Data Collection

The sharp decline in cases after 2022 may reflect underreporting.
Standardize LAPD crime logging and expand anonymous reporting tools in schools and clinics.

Rethink Child Safety Education

Most abuse happens at home—not from strangers.
Teach children how to recognize unsafe behavior in familiar environments, not just public spaces.

Conclusion

1. Abuse happens at home

Most crimes against children in LA occur inside homes—not on the streets—and often involve trusted individuals.

2. It's mostly physical

92% of these crimes involve bodily force, not weapons—making them harder to detect and easier to overlook.

3. We need more than awareness

To protect children, we must build:

- Systems that support families
- Programs that train caregivers
- Safe spaces where children can speak out
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4. Data is a spotlight

While it can't stop abuse, data reveals where we're failing—and where we must do better.

References

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- **U.S. Department of Labor (2022)** – Child Labor in Kenya
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THANK TOU

For watching this presentation

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