

2006 Child Abuse and Neglect Fact Sheet

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is non-accidental physical injury of a child inflicted by a parent or caretaker which ranges from superficial bruises and welts to broken bones, burns, serious internal injuries and in some cases, death. The definition of physical abuse includes actions that create a substantial risk of physical injury to the child.

Physical Neglect

Physical neglect is withholding, or failing to provide, adequate food, shelter, clothing, hygiene, medical care, education, and/or supervision, such that the child's physical, mental or emotional condition is impaired or at imminent risk of being impaired.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is when a parent or caretaker commits a sexual offense against a child or allows a sexual offense to be committed, such as rape, sodomy, engaging a child in sexual activity, engaging a child in – or promoting a child's – sexual performance.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse includes parents' or caretakers' acts or omissions that cause or could cause serious conduct, cognitive, affective, or other mental disorders. For example, torture, close confinement or the constant use of verbally abusive language to harshly criticize and denigrate a child. It also includes emotional neglect – withholding physical and emotional contact to the detriment of the child's normal emotional development, and in extreme cases, physical development.

Risk Factors

A combination of individual, relational, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of child maltreatment. Although children are not responsible for the harm inflicted upon them, certain individual characteristics have been found to increase their risk of being maltreated. Risk factors are contributing factors – not direct causes. Examples of risk factors include:

- Social isolation in families
- Parents' lack of understanding of children's needs and development
- Physical or mental disabilities in children that may increase caregiver burden
- Parents' history of domestic abuse and/or domestic violence
- Poverty and other socio-economic disadvantages, such as unemployment
- Lack of family cohesion
- Substance abuse
- Young, single, non-biological parents
- Poor parent-child relationships and negative interactions
- Parental thoughts and emotions supporting maltreatment behaviors
- Parental stress and distress, including depression or other mental health conditions
- Community violence

Reports and numbers of children

In 2006, 76,590 New York State children were abused or neglected, approximately 16.9 of every 1,000 children in the state. The NYS Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (the Child Abuse Reporting Hotline) received 158,855 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect, involving 209,425 children. Upon investigation, 51,449 (32 percent) reports were substantiated as situations of child abuse and/or neglect. There are more victims than reports because more than one child is involved in some cases. Compared to the prior year, the number of reports increased 14 percent, from 139,169; the number of substantiated reports increased 21 percent, from 42,641; and the number of victims increased 19 percent from 64,207.

Nationwide, an estimated 905,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in 2006, a victimization rate of 12.1 for every 1,000 children in the country (a child was counted each time he or she was found to be a victim; the adjusted estimate is 885,245 unique child victims). States investigated or assessed 3,600,000 children because of suspected abuse or neglect, approximately the same number of children investigated in 2005. Compared to 2005, the number of substantiated victims in 2006 increased by .7 percent.

Types of maltreatment

Child neglect continues to comprise the largest portion of cases of child maltreatment. According to the federal report *Child Maltreatment 2006*,

Child victims in the United States

- 64.1% were neglected
- 16% were physically abused
- 8.8% were sexually abused
- 6.6% were psychologically or emotionally maltreated
- 2.2% were medically neglected
- 15.1% other types of maltreatment

Child victims in New York State

- 91.5% were neglected
- 10.6% were physically abused
- 3.4% were sexually abused
- 0.7% were psychologically or emotionally maltreated
- 4.4% were medically neglected
- 25.6% other types of maltreatment

“Other types of maltreatment” include, for example, abandonment, threats of harm, or congenital drug addiction. Totals are more than 100 percent because a child may be the victim of more than one type of maltreatment.

Fatalities

In New York State in 2006, 75 children died as a result of abuse or neglect, a fatality rate of 1.64 per 100,000 children. This is the same number of fatalities as 2005.

Nationwide in 2006, an estimated 1,530 children died as a result of abuse or neglect, 2 of every 100,000 children in the population. This is a 4.8 percent increase from the 1,460 fatalities that occurred the previous year. Children younger than 1 year old accounted for 44.2 percent of fatalities, and 78 percent of fatalities were children younger than 4 years old.

Sources of Data: *Child Maltreatment 2006*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families; *2006 New York State Child Protective Services Data*, OCFS NYS Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment