



COLORADO Child
Fatality
Prevention
System

Child Maltreatment Death Data,
2012 - 2016



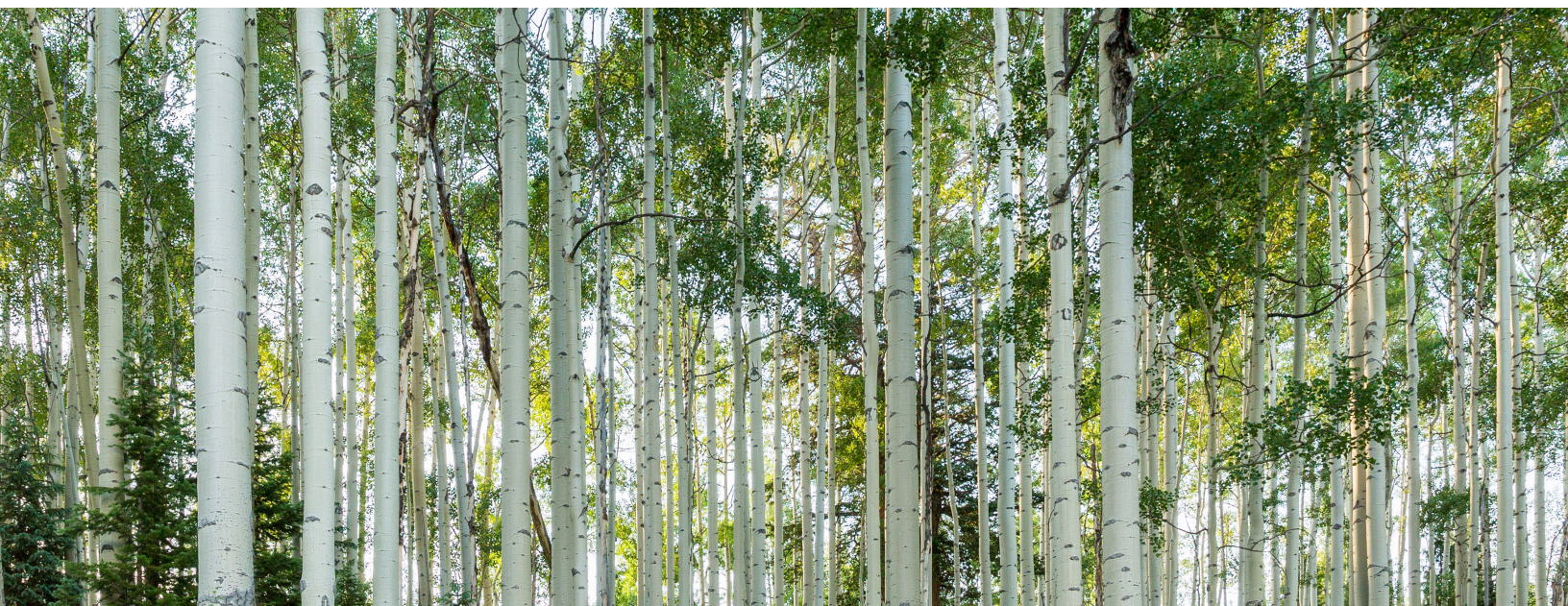
Introduction

The Child Fatality Prevention Act (Article 20.5 of Title 25, Colorado Revised Statutes) established the Child Fatality Prevention System (CFPS), a statewide, multidisciplinary, multi-agency effort to prevent child deaths. Although not codified in Colorado Revised Statutes until 2005, CFPS has been conducting retrospective reviews of child deaths in Colorado since 1989. CFPS applies a public health approach to prevent child deaths by aggregating data from individual child deaths, describing trends and patterns of the deaths and recommending prevention strategies. Child fatality prevention review teams and their partners implement and evaluate the identified strategies at the state and local levels with the goal of preventing similar deaths in the future.

The data presented within this data summary come from comprehensive, statutorily-mandated reviews of deaths among those under 18 years of age occurring in Colorado between 2012 and 2016. Local child fatality prevention review teams are responsible for conducting individual, case-specific reviews of deaths of children meeting the statutory

criteria. Reviewable child deaths result from one or more of the following causes: undetermined causes, unintentional injury, violence, motor vehicle/transport-related, child maltreatment, sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) and suicide. During Fiscal Year 2018, local teams reviewed deaths that occurred in 2016.

The CFPS review process includes deaths of Colorado residents occurring in Colorado, as well as deaths of out-of-state residents who died in Colorado or were transported to a Colorado hospital and died. CFPS does not review deaths of Colorado residents that occur outside of the state. These criteria are different from other reports of child fatality data and in many other Colorado government data sources. As a result, the data presented in this topic-specific data brief may not match other statistics reported at both the state and national levels. This data brief provides an overview of child maltreatment death data from CFPS. For more details on CFPS data, access cause-specific data briefs and an interactive data dashboard here: www.cochildfatalityprevention.com/p/reports.html.



Child Maltreatment Death Data, 2012-2016

Overview of Child Maltreatment Deaths

Although Colorado's Children's Code (C.R.S. 19-1-103 (1)) and legal definitions of child abuse and child neglect serve as guidance for the system, CFPS local teams make determinations of child maltreatment (abuse or neglect) based on available information from the case reviews and professional judgments. While these multidisciplinary teams do include representatives from departments of human services, the determination is the subjective opinion of the CFPS local teams and does not trigger any prosecution or action on the part of departments of human services or have any legal ramifications. As such, fatalities classified as child maltreatment by CFPS local teams will not be the same as official counts of child abuse or child neglect fatalities reported by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). Additionally, some of these fatalities do not meet the criteria for review by the CDHS Child Fatality Review Team. This is because deaths of children with no previous involvement with county departments of human services prior to their deaths do not meet the CDHS Child Fatality Review Team review criteria.

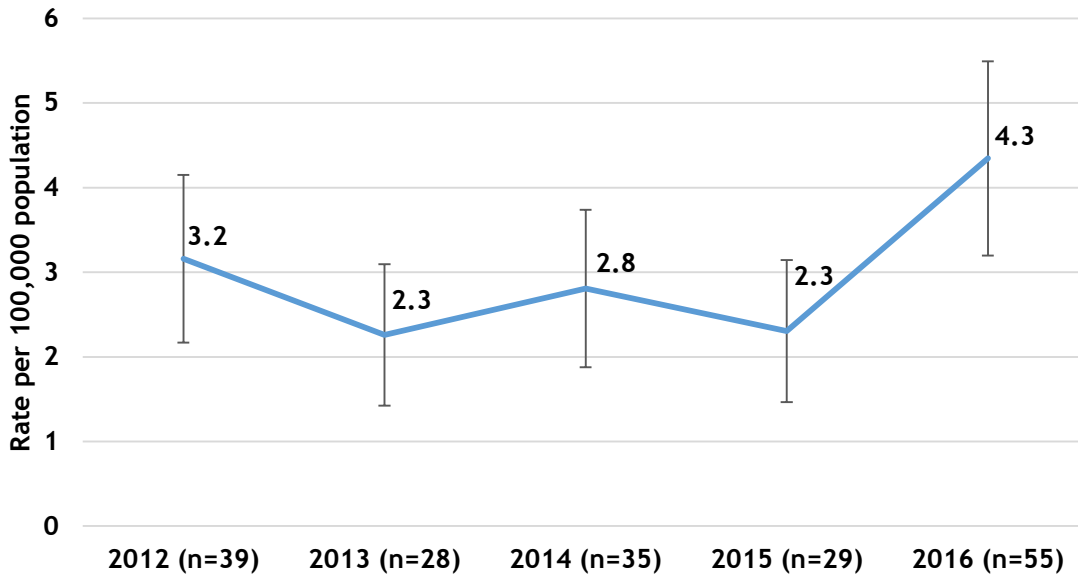
From 2012-2016, there were 202 deaths where child maltreatment caused and/or contributed to the circumstances of death among children and youth ages 0-17 in Colorado. Figure 1 displays the rates of child maltreatment fatalities, as defined by CFPS, among Colorado

residents under 18 by year. The crude rate of child maltreatment deaths from 2012-2016 was 3.0 per 100,000 population; however, the rate of 4.3 per 100,000 population in 2016 was not significantly different from the rate of 3.2 per 100,000 population observed in 2012. It is worth noting that child maltreatment and its identification, according to the definition provided, allows CFPS teams great latitude when determining whether child maltreatment contributed to the events leading to death.

Prior to 2014, the CFPS State Review Team identified all child maltreatment fatalities substantiated by county departments of human or social services as child maltreatment deaths. When local teams began reviewing child deaths in 2014, however, several fatalities each year were substantiated by county departments of human services, but were not identified as child maltreatment within CFPS. These observations suggested more technical assistance and training should be provided to local teams about the role of CFPS in identifying cases where child maltreatment should be indicated as contributing to the deaths of infants, children and youth in Colorado. The data presented here include all deaths substantiated by county departments of human services and additional deaths not substantiated by county departments of human services ruled child maltreatment by CFPS local teams.

Child Maltreatment Death Data, 2012-2016

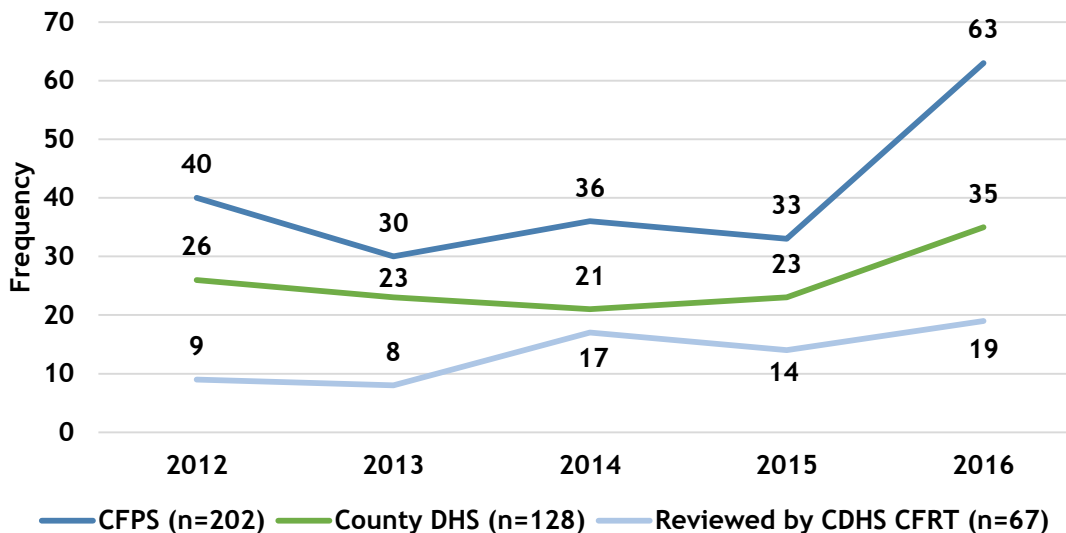
Figure 1. Crude rate of child maltreatment deaths occurring in Colorado among Colorado residents under 18, 2012-2016 (n=186)



*Error bars represent 95% confidence limits for rates.

Although CFPS review teams and county departments of human services define child abuse and neglect differently, county departments of human services substantiated 128 (63.4 percent) of the 202 deaths CFPS identified as due to child maltreatment from 2012-2016. Additionally, 67 (33.2 percent) of these deaths met the statutory criteria for CDHS Child Fatality Review Team review (Figure 2). The remaining 74 (36.6 percent) of the 202 child maltreatment deaths were identified as child maltreatment deaths solely by CFPS local teams. These 74 fatalities were either not reported to county departments of human services or the incident did not meet the statutory definition of child maltreatment that guides the work of CDHS.

Figure 2. Deaths occurring among those under 18 in Colorado ruled child maltreatment by CFPS, substantiated by county departments of human services, or reviewed by CDHS CFRT by year, 2012-2016



Child Maltreatment Death Data, 2012-2016

Demographics of Child Maltreatment Deaths

Of the 202 child maltreatment fatalities the CFPS identified from 2012-2016, 74.8 percent (n=151) occurred among children under age 5 and 62.9 percent (n=127) of those who died were male. Table 1 displays the rates of the child maltreatment deaths CFPS identified by age group. The highest rates of child maltreatment fatalities were among children under age 5. The age-specific rate of child maltreatment deaths for children under age 1 was 23.5 per 100,000 population, almost eight times the rate for all ages and more than 20 times the rate for those ages 5-9. For children ages 1-4, the rate of child maltreatment deaths was 4.8 per 100,000 population, 1.6 times the rate for all ages and nearly five times the rate for children ages 5-9. Additionally, the incidence of child maltreatment deaths among males was 3.6 per 100,000 population, a rate more than 1.5 times greater than that observed among females (2.3 per 100,000 population).

Table 1. Age-specific rate of child maltreatment deaths occurring in Colorado among Colorado residents under 18 by age group, 2012-2016¹

Age Group	n ²	Rate ³	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Limit	Upper Limit
All Ages	186	3.0	2.6	3.4
< 1 year	78	23.5	18.3	28.7
1 through 4	64	4.8	3.6	6.0
5 through 9	19	1.1	0.6	1.6
10 through 14	14	0.8	0.4	1.2
15 through 17	11	1.1	0.5	1.8

1. As defined by the Colorado Child Fatality Prevention System.

2. Rates with fewer than 20 observations may be unstable.

3. Per 100,000 Colorado residents.

Data source: Colorado Child Fatality Prevention System, Colorado State Demography Office

Child Maltreatment Types and Circumstances

Of the 202 child maltreatment deaths occurring between 2012 and 2016, neglect caused or contributed to 53.5 percent (n=108) of the deaths, abuse caused or contributed to 31.7 percent (n=64), both abuse and neglect caused or contributed to 12.4 percent (n=25) and too little information was available for five (2.5 percent) of the deaths, due to ongoing investigation or litigation, for local teams to determine whether abuse, neglect or abuse and neglect caused or contributed to the death (Figure 3).

Among deaths classified as involving abuse (those classified as abuse or abuse and neglect, n=89), all involved physical abuse, including 50.6 percent (n=45) where abusive head trauma occurred and 43.8 percent (n=39) where other abusive injuries occurred (data not shown). Among deaths classified as involving neglect (those classified as neglect or abuse and neglect, n=133), 64.7 percent (n=86) involved a failure to protect from hazards. Following a failure to protect from hazards, the next most common neglect categories were failure to provide necessities (11.3 percent, n=15) and failure to provide medical treatment (10.5 percent, n=14) (data not shown).

Child Maltreatment Death Data, 2012-2016

Figure 3. Child maltreatment deaths occurring among those under 18 in Colorado by type, 2012-2016 (n=202)

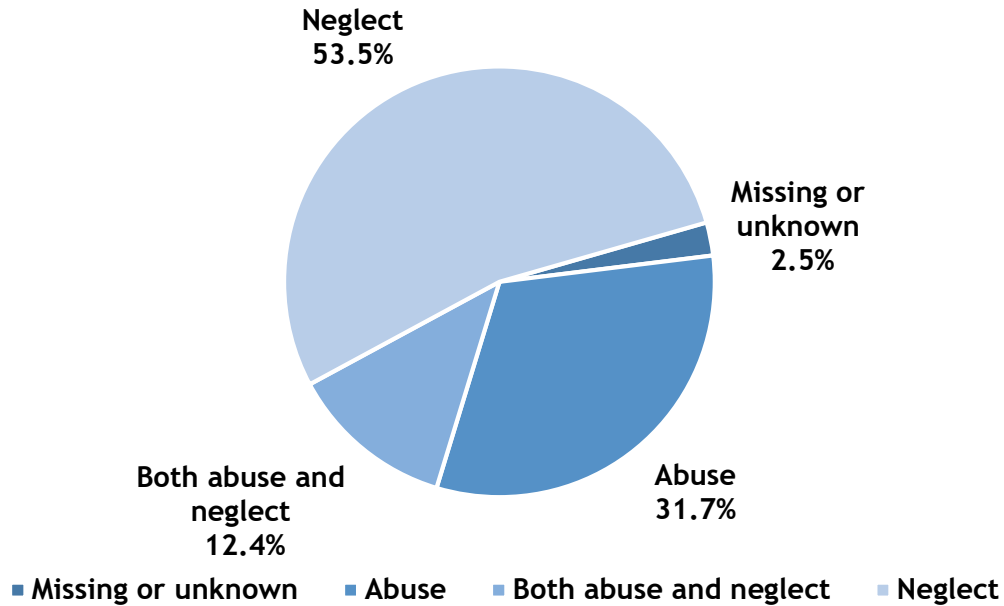


Figure 4. Decedent's history of maltreatment for child maltreatment deaths occurring among those under 18 in Colorado, 2012-2016 (n=202)

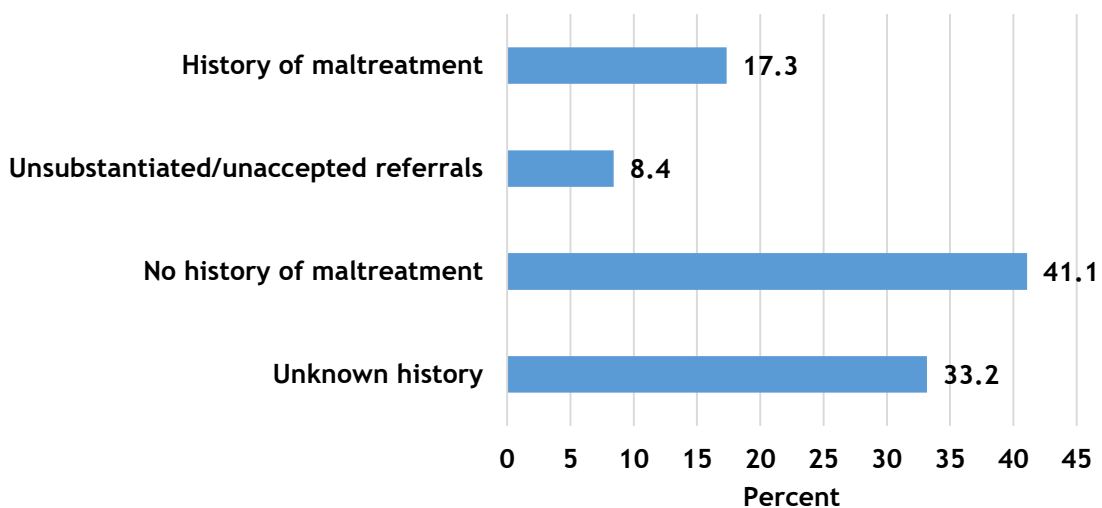


Figure 4 displays information on decedent history of child maltreatment. Approximately 17 percent (n=35) of the children who died had a substantiated history of child maltreatment by CDHS, 8.4 percent (n=17) had only unsubstantiated or unaccepted referral(s) and 41.1 percent (n=83) had no known previous history of maltreatment. Information on history of child maltreatment was missing or unknown for 33.2 percent (n=67) of the deaths.

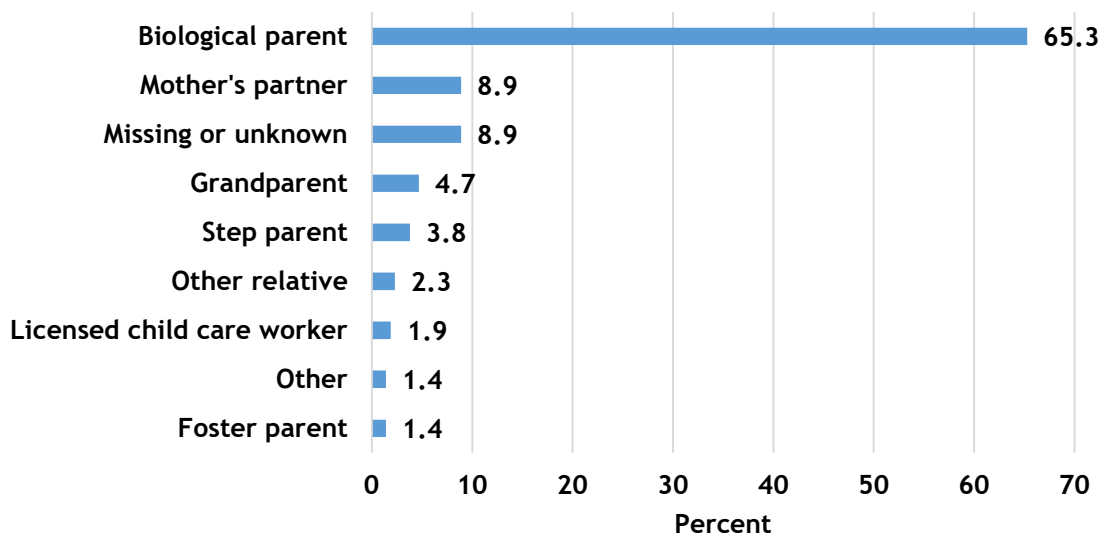
Child Maltreatment Death Data, 2012-2016

Perpetrators of Child Maltreatment

The CFPS review process allows for the identification of up to two perpetrators for each child maltreatment death reviewed (i.e. one perpetrator may have caused the death and another perpetrator may have substantially contributed to the death). From 2012-2016, 213 total perpetrators caused or contributed to 202 child maltreatment deaths. As shown in Figure 5, biological parents were most often indicated to be the perpetrators of child abuse or neglect (65.3 percent, n=139) followed by mother's partner (8.9 percent, n=19). When stratified by maltreatment type (abuse or neglect), the proportion of biological parents identified as perpetrators is higher for deaths involving neglect (75.4 percent, n=113), while the proportion where the mother's partner is identified is higher for deaths involving abuse (17.3 percent, n=18).

Among perpetrators of child maltreatment deaths, 15.5 percent (n=33) had a known, previous history of child maltreatment as a perpetrator, 7.0 percent (n=15) had an unsubstantiated or unaccepted referral(s) and 29.1 percent (n=62) had only previous history of child maltreatment as a perpetrator. This information was missing or unknown for 48.4 percent (n=103) of the perpetrators. Additionally, 29.1 percent (n=62) of the perpetrators had a history of intimate partner violence, 15.5 percent (n=33) as a perpetrator and 13.6 percent (n=29) as a victim. Information on history of intimate partner violence was missing or unknown for 37.6 percent (n=80) of perpetrators listed (data not shown).

Figure 5. Perpetrators of child maltreatment deaths occurring among those under 18 in Colorado by type, 2012-2016 (n=213)



For more information about CFPS data, please contact the CFPS Support Team at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: support@cfps.freshdesk.com