



Child Fatalities and Severe Injuries in Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes in America

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Nearly 11 million children are in child care programs across the nation, including child care centers, family child care homes and in-home child care (the child is cared for in his/her own home by someone other than the parents). In addition, other children are in family, friends and neighbor care that are not reported as child care. Child care fatalities are often private tragedies, characterized by insufficient investigative measures and a lack of information sharing between child care programs, parents, medical examiners, police, and local, state and national agencies. Many parents of deceased children receive little or inaccurate information regarding the circumstances or cause of their child's death. In addition, parents find out that providers have no liability insurance only when a death or serious injury occurs.

- Approximately two-thirds of infants in our country are in child care, and more than 30 percent of those children are in child care full time (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2004). These numbers indicate that less than 9 percent of SIDS deaths should occur in child care settings; however that number is closer to **20 percent**.
- The most recent study of child fatalities in child care is almost 10 years old. Fatalities and the Organization of Child Care in the United States, 1985-2003 (Wrigley & Dreby, 2005) reports on child deaths caused by violence/homicide, unintentional injuries, drowning, motor vehicle crashes and other causes in child care settings.
- From 1985–2003 the study found 1,362 child fatalities; 1,030 of these occurred in “home-based care” (either family child care or in-home care). The numbers of deceased children excluded those who died in irregular care arrangements (where care was not regularly scheduled with the same provider) (98 deaths) and children whose deaths were attributed to SIDS (289 deaths). The information and child fatality numbers in the report only include the deaths the authors were able to uncover. The number of unreported or undisclosed child fatalities in child care continues to be unknown for that time period and today.
- As of 2014, the United States still does not have federal reporting requirements for child fatalities in child care. State reporting requirements vary widely.
- Child care licensing agencies in only **38 states** require child fatalities in licensed child care settings be reported to the licensing agency (state licensing regulations posted on the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education in 2012). **Twelve states** do not require report of children's deaths in child care centers and **11 states** do not require the reporting of children's deaths in family child care homes
- Several organizations currently collect child fatality information, for example, the National Center for the Review and Prevention of Child Deaths. Participation in this Web-based reporting system is voluntary and dependent on state practices.

State Statistics on Child Fatalities and Injuries in Child Care:

Although no national statistics for child fatalities or severe injuries exist, some states have collected data on the incidents in their state for licensed care, while investigative journalists in other states have undertaken their own research. Even though these statistics are incomplete, inconsistent across states, and tend to provide only the most basic data, sometimes not even differentiating between licensed and unlicensed care or type of care, the numbers provided are some of the only data available to the public on the subject.

Indiana: An Indianapolis Star investigation last year reported 21 deaths at Indiana day cares from 2009 to June 2013, and 10 more child deaths have since been reported. 10 occurred in licensed child care programs, while 5 occurred in unlicensed care, and 16 in illegal child cares, with providers operating without a license and doing so illegally.

<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2014/03/09/death-toll-of-children-at-indiana-day-cares-hits-31/6232167/>

Minnesota: A Star-Tribune investigation revealed that from 2007 to 2011, the state averaged 10 deaths per year. It was on pace in early 2012 to outstrip those numbers, with six deaths in the first two months. The vast majority of the deaths occurred at licensed in-home day cares, and most involved sleeping infants. Following on the heels of the series, Minnesota implemented new health and safety standards in 2012 and 2103, and the number dropped to three children died in child care in 2013, down from nine in 2012 and 11 in 2011, according to a review released by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

<http://www.startribune.com/local/164215126.html>

Missouri: In 2012, the Post-Dispatch previously reported that 41 of 45 deaths in child care in the prior four years occurred in unlicensed home day cares. The newspaper's investigation showed Missouri has some of the weakest child care regulations in the nation, allowing the bulk of Missouri children to enroll in unregulated day cares.

http://www.stltoday.com/news/special-reports/daycares/more-missouri-babies-die-as-laws-oversight-lag/article_086e3cb5-1d44-5512-a038-4d4c2ff70eed.html

Texas: The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Web site reported the deaths of 49 children in Texas due to unregulated child care from 2004 to 2007.

<http://www.workforcesolutionsrca.com/news/view/Report--49-deaths-in-Texas-child-care-facilities>

For More Information:

Child Care Aware® of America's 2013 White Paper: Why Aren't We Outraged:

http://www.naccrra.org/sites/default/files/default_site_pages/2012/why_arent_we_outraged_july_22.pdf

Fatalities and the Organization of Child Care in the United States, 1985–2003

<http://www.asanet.org/images/members/docs/pdf/featured/Oct05ASRWrigleyDreby.pdf>