

Physical Abuse

Definition

Investigations is the number of allegations of physical abuse referred to, and investigated by, the Department for Community Based Services for the reported year. *Percent substantiated* is the percent of investigations for physical abuse where the Department for Community Based Services determined that physical abuse occurred.

Data in context

All children need to grow up free of physical harm. Physical abuse compromises a child's immediate safety and can have lasting effects on physical and mental health.¹ The way a child deals with the abuse and the possibility of long-term effects are based on factors such as the child's age and developmental stage, as well as the type, frequency, and severity of the abuse.² In the most extreme cases, children die as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Physical abuse caused 24 percent of child maltreatment fatalities in FFY 2005, and multiple types of abuse caused another 27 percent of the deaths.³

Of the nearly 900,000 victims of child abuse or neglect in FFY 2005, about 1 in 6 experienced physical abuse.⁴ Victimization rates by type of maltreatment have not changed significantly in recent years, but the number of investigations has increased since 2001.⁵

The number of allegations of child physical abuse decreased by nearly one quarter from 2003 to 2006 statewide. Investigations with reported physical abuse declined by 19 percent during that time. In the latter year, 21 percent of investigations of physical abuse were substantiated. The number of substantiated victims of physical abuse



decreased from 2,941 in 2003 to 2,114 in 2006, representing a shrinking portion of all child victims (declining from 20 percent to 13 percent).

The majority of Kentucky counties mirrored the trends of declining referrals, investigations, and substantiations of physical abuse. Bullitt, Jefferson, Madison, and Warren Counties each had declines in investigations of physical abuse of 100 or more. Physical abuse investigations increased, however, by 64 in Pike County between the two time periods.

From 2003 to 2006, the state rate of substantiated investigations of physical abuse declined by 3 percentage points, and 44 counties saw an even greater decline in the percent of substantiated physical abuse during that time. Substantiation rates ranged from less than 10 percent in eight counties to a high of 67 percent in Hickman County. Rates of substantiations

increased more than 15 percentage points in 13 counties and more than tripled in LaRue, Livingston, and Menifee Counties.

Communities can reduce the risk of child abuse by supporting families in strengthening protective factors, such as parenting skills, understanding of child development, supportive social networks for parents, and assistance with concrete needs like transportation and housing.⁶

Data Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services. Number of children for rate calculation from Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.

Rate Calculation: (number of investigations with physical abuse substantiated in 2003) * 100 / (number of investigations of physical abuse in 2003)

(number of investigations with physical abuse substantiated in 2006) * 100 / (number of investigations of physical abuse in 2006)

- 1 Springer, K., Sheridan, J., Kuo, D., and Carnes, M. (2007). "Long-Term Physical and Mental Health Consequences of Childhood Physical Abuse: Results from a Large Population-Based Sample of Men and Women." *Child Abuse and Neglect*, vol. 31, no. 5. Available at <http://www.elsevier.com>. Accessed August 2007.
- 2 Child Welfare Information Gateway (2006). *Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Available at <http://www.childwelfare.gov>. Accessed September 2006.
- 3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (2007). *Child Maltreatment 2005*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Child Welfare Information Gateway (2007). *Enhancing Protective Factors*. Available at <http://www.childwelfare.gov>. Accessed September 2007.

Investigations of child physical abuse (number & percent substantiated)

	2003		2006	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Kentucky	12,399	24	10,036	21
Adair	59	20	16	44
Allen	62	31	51	33
Anderson	42	38	38	29
Ballard	1	100	2	0
Barren	74	30	116	25
Bath	52	12	36	17
Bell	130	20	102	24
Boone	105	23	102	18
Bourbon	68	10	38	24
Boyd	117	24	158	11
Boyle	84	18	31	19
Bracken	11	55	16	25
Breathitt	104	14	64	19
Breckinridge	26	12	47	19
Bullitt	141	21	32	28
Butler	19	47	42	14
Caldwell	15	27	28	14
Calloway	64	22	31	35
Campbell	190	16	95	22
Carlisle	41	37	17	41
Carroll	66	42	27	30
Carter	124	17	139	14
Casey	69	26	15	13
Christian	183	19	205	20
Clark	49	22	18	50
Clay	43	26	27	30
Clinton	45	18	37	22
Crittenden	39	28	15	33
Cumberland	3	0	5	40
Daviess	397	21	331	14
Edmonson	46	26	33	42
Elliott	14	36	24	21
Estill	57	30	14	21
Fayette	545	27	520	19
Fleming	47	23	39	28
Floyd	161	17	121	6
Franklin	129	19	182	17
Fulton	34	32	24	29
Gallatin	27	22	12	33
Garrard	41	17	8	50

	2003		2006	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Grant	103	14	53	19
Graves	72	36	63	37
Grayson	54	26	55	27
Green	27	33	10	40
Greenup	110	18	134	19
Hancock	27	15	24	13
Hardin	427	21	398	14
Harlan	93	23	117	22
Harrison	67	12	52	4
Hart	34	15	46	13
Henderson	156	24	91	35
Henry	14	21	46	22
Hickman	11	45	6	67
Hopkins	159	29	161	12
Jackson	31	26	44	11
Jefferson	2,503	30	1,949	25
Jessamine	135	22	86	16
Johnson	130	17	113	16
Kenton	361	18	364	23
Knott	109	16	62	18
Knox	84	17	56	27
LaRue	15	13	46	41
Laurel	194	28	193	23
Lawrence	61	16	39	21
Lee	32	13	40	18
Leslie	54	28	41	7
Letcher	120	23	103	17
Lewis	31	19	24	25
Lincoln	101	17	64	11
Livingston	16	13	12	42
Logan	27	26	24	33
Lyon	11	55	19	47
McCracken	162	27	103	32
McCreary	88	28	15	20
McLean	31	55	29	45
Madison	253	15	95	14
Magoffin	85	24	44	7
Marion	66	20	53	13
Marshall	26	54	27	52
Martin	117	16	93	22
Mason	22	9	62	13

	2003		2006	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Meade	39	33	50	16
Menifee	36	6	16	38
Mercer	83	23	36	39
Metcalfe	35	26	34	29
Monroe	58	29	65	28
Montgomery	53	23	41	34
Morgan	37	16	35	29
Muhlenberg	71	17	33	18
Nelson	102	19	77	12
Nicholas	12	17	14	29
Ohio	60	37	39	23
Oldham	57	21	91	15
Owen	33	30	30	10
Owsley	11	0	23	30
Pendleton	31	45	16	50
Perry	165	15	139	7
Pike	193	18	257	16
Powell	53	21	41	17
Pulaski	223	19	132	22
Robertson	6	33	2	50
Rockcastle	48	15	34	15
Rowan	86	17	65	20
Russell	48	29	26	15
Scott	68	22	27	26
Shelby	134	22	91	27
Simpson	58	26	37	32
Spencer	5	0	17	12
Taylor	66	23	49	35
Todd	17	53	14	36
Trigg	9	33	16	56
Trimble	49	27	13	23
Union	39	44	22	18
Warren	355	23	247	26
Washington	27	15	64	13
Wayne	57	11	20	10
Webster	33	39	28	32
Whitley	114	26	121	24
Wolfe	38	18	23	4
Woodford	47	28	37	8