

# Neglect

## Definition

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

## Data in context

All children require basic food, shelter, and supervision to survive, as well as emotional support to learn to relate to others and thrive. Without these basic necessities, a child's development can be severely hindered. Neglect can occur in many forms, including physical, educational, or emotional neglect.<sup>1</sup> Children who have been neglected may experience cognitive delays, difficulty trusting others, and slowed or ceased physical growth.<sup>2,3</sup> In the most severe cases, children can die from lack of care.

Too often, barriers prevent parents from meeting their children's basic needs. Many characteristics of neglect coincide with conditions of living in poverty, making it difficult to distinguish safety issues from well-meaning parents who have limited resources to provide for their children. And because families of color are disproportionately affected by poverty, confusion between poverty and neglect has the potential to negatively impact children and families of color.<sup>4</sup> To achieve racial equity, child welfare services can collect and analyze data by race and communicate about findings to raise awareness of disparities and efforts to address them.<sup>5</sup> Kentucky's Race, Community and Child Welfare Initiative currently targets 11 counties where African-American children are overrepresented in the foster care population. Family Resource Centers also provide a valuable connection for families to community services such as education, health care, job training, and mental health treatment.<sup>6</sup>



Neglect is the most common form of child maltreatment, affecting 64 percent of all child victims in the United States in FFY 2006.<sup>7</sup> National data indicate that among Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White children, between 50 and 55 percent of child victims experience neglect.<sup>8</sup> Children age three and younger experienced neglect more frequently than older children in FFY 2006.<sup>9</sup>

In Kentucky, 87 percent of child victims were subject to neglect in 2007, an increase from 80 percent in 2003. During that time, investigations with neglect reported increased by more than 18 percent. From 2003 to 2007, Campbell and Jessamine Counties saw the greatest decreases in the number of investigations with neglect reported, while the number more than tripled in Butler, Henry, and Mason Counties.

Statewide, the percentage of substantiated investigations with neglect reported decreased slightly from 2003 to 2007 (1 percentage point). Neglect was substantiated in less than one third of the investigations in 42 counties; in only three counties was neglect substantiated in more than 70 percent of investigations where it was reported. While the rate of investigations with neglect reported and substantiated decreased in 69 counties, it increased by more than 25 percentage points in nine counties. The number of substantiated investigations more than doubled in Cumberland, Henry, LaRue, Oldham, and Owsley Counties from 2003 to 2007.

**Data Source:** Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services.

**Rate Calculation:** (number of investigations with neglect substantiated in 2003 \* 100) / (number of investigations of neglect in 2003) (number of investigations with neglect substantiated in 2007 \* 100) / (number of investigations of neglect in 2007)

- 1 Goldman, J., Salus, M., Wolcott, D., and Kennedy, K. (2003). *A Coordinated Response to Child Abuse and Neglect: The Foundation for Practice*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 2 Child Welfare Information Gateway (2008). *Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Available at <http://www.childwelfare.gov>. Accessed July 2008.
- 3 Block, R., Krebs, N., and the Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect and the Committee on Nutrition (2005). "Failure to Thrive as a Manifestation of Child Neglect." *Pediatrics*, vol. 116, no. 5.
- 4 Center for the Study of Social Policy (2006). *Places to Watch: Promising Practices to Address Racial Disproportionality in the Child Welfare System*. Available at <http://www.cssp.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Goldman, J., Salus, M., Wolcott, D., and Kennedy, K. (2003). *A Coordinated Response to Child Abuse and Neglect: The Foundation for Practice*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 7 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (2008). *Child Maltreatment 2006*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.

## Investigations of child neglect (number & percent substantiated)

	2003		2007	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
<b>Kentucky</b>	<b>31,090</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36,803</b>	<b>37</b>
Adair	172	34	101	40
Allen	107	48	184	40
Anderson	90	53	68	49
Ballard	5	0	14	36
Barren	545	47	675	38
Bath	152	38	161	30
Bell	261	39	423	32
Boone	210	38	350	31
Bourbon	152	23	126	49
Boyd	473	26	736	20
Boyle	170	33	234	27
Bracken	41	32	64	25
Breathitt	272	27	428	23
Breckinridge	100	52	110	37
Bullitt	221	52	85	54
Butler	33	42	134	29
Caldwell	39	62	46	30
Calloway	135	39	187	35
Campbell	454	22	276	49
Carlisle	71	38	77	14
Carroll	138	34	100	35
Carter	399	26	543	36
Casey	84	38	94	38
Christian	478	32	393	27
Clark	159	45	148	47
Clay	258	41	421	32
Clinton	71	27	86	26
Crittenden	64	33	110	32
Cumberland	17	18	42	48
Daviess	969	41	1,281	39
Edmonson	107	49	148	46
Elliott	72	57	135	29
Estill	195	33	181	22
Fayette	1,720	35	2,399	33
Fleming	113	45	181	34
Floyd	792	24	1,042	30
Franklin	351	46	395	36
Fulton	81	42	66	39
Gallatin	45	24	49	27
Garrard	63	30	91	51

	2003		2007	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Grant	198	30	148	36
Graves	254	47	187	46
Grayson	150	27	126	38
Green	85	58	95	46
Greenup	336	26	387	16
Hancock	43	65	76	20
Hardin	622	34	573	38
Harlan	284	30	433	29
Harrison	86	16	129	15
Hart	99	29	158	27
Henderson	408	45	356	52
Henry	29	31	176	39
Hickman	13	38	11	45
Hopkins	244	48	260	34
Jackson	92	47	94	43
Jefferson	4,273	47	5,582	46
Jessamine	414	33	236	43
Johnson	857	31	792	29
Kenton	822	40	1,105	40
Knott	287	38	339	36
Knox	185	32	183	40
LaRue	69	25	149	51
Laurel	514	38	709	33
Lawrence	174	36	289	36
Lee	115	43	177	32
Leslie	172	30	264	25
Letcher	540	34	548	45
Lewis	72	44	132	39
Lincoln	227	30	288	22
Livingston	45	38	28	71
Logan	60	67	70	36
Lyon	37	59	35	54
McCracken	409	42	344	62
McCreary	209	47	164	73
McLean	83	52	142	28
Madison	479	29	334	34
Magoffin	313	37	326	32
Marion	131	42	145	54
Marshall	89	45	118	55
Martin	420	32	430	40
Mason	39	44	166	24

	2003		2007	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Meade	77	56	143	19
Menifee	49	24	61	43
Mercer	231	33	98	55
Metcalfe	116	56	158	42
Monroe	77	29	182	29
Montgomery	123	51	178	24
Morgan	114	32	138	20
Muhlenberg	159	55	117	51
Nelson	179	32	184	36
Nicholas	38	37	17	29
Ohio	183	54	179	49
Oldham	55	36	200	36
Owen	62	27	56	36
Owsley	42	43	120	46
Pendleton	79	35	150	32
Perry	580	43	565	29
Pike	940	31	1,287	29
Powell	152	20	206	35
Pulaski	646	30	720	23
Robertson	17	41	6	50
Rockcastle	131	60	139	52
Rowan	260	38	254	31
Russell	108	31	63	25
Scott	210	29	150	46
Shelby	440	35	300	35
Simpson	79	29	72	57
Spencer	36	39	51	53
Taylor	191	28	175	41
Todd	42	57	71	61
Trigg	35	43	30	73
Trimble	50	40	47	47
Union	119	39	132	45
Warren	668	41	658	51
Washington	72	28	66	53
Wayne	112	43	119	50
Webster	66	38	70	53
Whitley	430	43	602	36
Wolfe	114	37	227	26
Woodford	151	42	124	34