

# 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

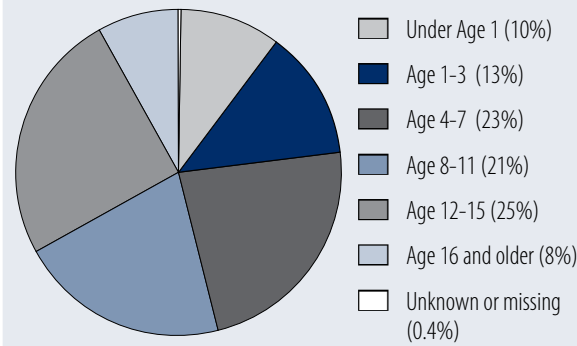
All children need to be safe from physical harm to grow and develop properly. Physical abuse, however, interrupts a child's brain development, causes pain and injury, and may have negative effects on overall physical health by leaving the child more susceptible to disease.<sup>1</sup> In addition to visible harm, physical abuse can cause child victims to have difficulty trusting others, performing in school, and socializing with peers.<sup>2</sup> Child abuse and neglect can also lead victims to engage in high-risk behaviors and delinquency during adolescence.<sup>3</sup>

Nationwide, 16 percent of approximately 905,000 child victims experienced physical abuse in FFY 2006.<sup>4</sup> In FFY 2006, parents were the most frequent perpetrators of child physical abuse (76.8 percent).<sup>5</sup> Teachers, police officers, and lawyers were most likely to report physical abuse that year.<sup>6</sup> Many professions obligate personnel to report suspected child abuse or neglect, and Kentucky law requires all citizens to report suspected abuse.

Although the violence of physical abuse is harmful, this type of maltreatment alone was not the primary cause of child maltreatment fatalities in FFY 2006, accounting for only 22.4 percent of all such deaths.<sup>7</sup> Neglect and multiple types of maltreatment were the most common causes (41.1 and 31.4 percent, respectively).<sup>8</sup>

Investigations with physical abuse reported

**Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Victims of Physical Abuse, FFY 2006**



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

decreased by 2,049 in Kentucky from 2003 to 2007. The percent of substantiated investigations with physical abuse reported also declined during this time statewide, by 5 percentage points. This type of abuse impacted fewer victims (35 percent decrease from 2003 to 2007) and affected a smaller portion of all child victims (from 20 percent to 12 percent).<sup>9</sup>

The majority of Kentucky counties mirrored the state trends of declining investigations and substantiations of physical abuse. Nine counties saw decreases of more than 50 percent in the number of investigations of physical abuse, including Bullitt, Fulton, Knott, Madison, McCreary, McCracken, Mercer, Nicholas, and Trimble. During that time, however, Henry and Owsley Counties saw substantial increases of physical abuse investigations.

All Kentucky counties had at least one substantiated investigation of physical abuse in 2007. That year, more than 50 percent of investigations were substantiated in Hickman and Trigg Counties. However, rates of substantiated investigations for physical abuse declined in 82 counties from 2003 to 2007.

Research indicates families do best when they possess multiple protective traits to reduce the impact of risk factors. Communities can help families develop protective factors by offering concrete supports such as housing and transportation; cultivating supportive relationships through neighborhood gatherings; teaching parenting skills through classes, home visitation, and tip sheets; and providing additional services during times of crisis, such as illness or lost employment.<sup>10</sup>

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

**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 2007 \* 100) / (number of investigations of physical abuse in 2007)

- 1 Child Welfare Information Gateway (2008). *Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Available at <http://www.childwelfare.gov>. Accessed July 2008.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 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.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Data obtained from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services, July 2008.
- 10 Child Welfare Information Gateway (2007). *Building on Strengths: Enhancing Protective Factors for Children and Families*. Available at <http://www.childwelfare.gov>. Accessed August 2008.

## Investigations of child physical abuse (number & percent substantiated)

	2003		2007	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
<b>Kentucky</b>	<b>12,422</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10,373</b>	<b>19</b>
Adair	61	20	34	18
Allen	56	34	57	25
Anderson	41	37	33	6
Ballard	2	50	5	40
Barren	173	27	145	17
Bath	50	16	27	22
Bell	124	20	78	17
Boone	102	25	151	15
Bourbon	69	7	51	12
Boyd	185	16	141	9
Boyle	71	14	72	17
Bracken	13	46	29	21
Breathitt	98	16	83	10
Breckinridge	30	10	52	12
Bullitt	138	21	48	46
Butler	18	56	40	25
Caldwell	13	31	16	13
Calloway	63	24	50	26
Campbell	168	16	90	30
Carlisle	41	41	29	34
Carroll	67	43	38	21
Carter	102	18	94	11
Casey	61	30	33	24
Christian	200	19	155	22
Clark	56	27	36	28
Clay	104	22	85	9
Clinton	40	18	32	13
Crittenden	35	23	21	10
Cumberland	5	0	8	25
Daviess	413	19	363	11
Edmonson	41	29	39	15
Elliott	13	31	17	12
Estill	51	27	41	17
Fayette	550	28	460	16
Fleming	39	23	44	9
Floyd	166	16	160	14
Franklin	118	19	133	11
Fulton	33	33	14	36
Gallatin	24	33	24	17
Garrard	40	15	31	35

	2003		2007	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Grant	94	12	54	19
Graves	75	36	83	25
Grayson	60	22	62	18
Green	25	36	21	38
Greenup	108	19	81	16
Hancock	26	15	33	18
Hardin	288	18	245	14
Harlan	93	23	93	12
Harrison	57	11	48	10
Hart	32	19	42	17
Henderson	144	24	74	31
Henry	19	26	71	15
Hickman	9	22	7	57
Hopkins	144	31	121	17
Jackson	40	23	36	17
Jefferson	2,482	30	2,312	21
Jessamine	124	24	81	14
Johnson	172	17	125	18
Kenton	373	18	352	21
Knott	105	15	46	13
Knox	75	21	68	13
LaRue	33	33	48	21
Laurel	174	27	204	19
Lawrence	61	23	45	20
Lee	30	10	25	16
Leslie	54	28	65	11
Letcher	111	20	96	20
Lewis	25	24	36	14
Lincoln	106	18	77	12
Livingston	17	29	14	36
Logan	26	23	17	47
Lyon	14	43	14	36
McCracken	165	27	81	25
McCreary	84	26	12	25
McLean	31	55	33	27
Madison	262	15	118	17
Magoffin	85	26	44	18
Marion	65	23	54	13
Marshall	27	41	31	48
Martin	114	18	63	24
Mason	21	10	45	29

	2003		2007	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Meade	54	33	74	14
Menifee	25	4	18	6
Mercer	84	23	33	18
Metcalfe	34	18	38	13
Monroe	48	29	31	10
Montgomery	57	21	36	22
Morgan	32	19	20	25
Muhlenberg	71	14	43	23
Nelson	109	22	102	12
Nicholas	27	19	8	13
Ohio	50	42	44	16
Oldham	58	22	52	33
Owen	41	22	23	9
Owsley	8	0	47	30
Pendleton	35	37	20	20
Perry	162	16	140	9
Pike	197	18	189	13
Powell	51	20	34	18
Pulaski	213	21	161	16
Robertson	6	33	8	13
Rockcastle	46	15	35	46
Rowan	76	16	75	12
Russell	48	29	24	17
Scott	69	25	64	22
Shelby	253	23	163	10
Simpson	54	26	29	28
Spencer	10	0	13	46
Taylor	62	21	43	9
Todd	19	47	31	29
Trigg	11	36	17	65
Trimble	48	23	20	10
Union	42	48	44	14
Warren	296	25	158	27
Washington	23	17	20	15
Wayne	55	11	32	6
Webster	27	37	14	29
Whitley	117	26	155	23
Wolfe	33	18	32	9
Woodford	47	28	47	26