

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 safe environments in which they can learn to trust others and develop in a healthy manner, but not all children live in families free from abuse. Physical abuse can result in a variety of injuries, from cuts and bruises to broken bones and more serious injury. In addition to visible signs, physical abuse can cause emotional harm and impede cognitive development, which can make it difficult for children to trust others or concentrate in school.¹ Abuse and neglect can also lead to risky behaviors during adolescence and criminal activity in adulthood.²



Nationwide in 2007, approximately 794,000 children were victims of abuse or neglect, with ten percent of those victims having experienced physical abuse.³ The most frequent reporters of physical abuse were teachers (25 percent), followed by lawyers, police officers, and medical personnel.⁴ Kentucky law requires

everyone to report suspected abuse, and certain career fields explicitly require staff to do so. Tragically, the most severe forms of abuse and neglect can end in the death of a child.

While the number of Kentucky children in all investigations increased from 41,402 in 2003 to 46,447 in 2008, both the number of investigations and substantiations for physical abuse decreased. In 2008, there were 11,282 investigations of physical abuse, and 1,883 were substantiated. The number of investigations with physical abuse substantiated decreased by more than one third (36 percent) from 2003 to 2008. The rate of substantiated investigations decreased by 7 percentage points during that time, to 17 percent in 2008.

The majority of Kentucky counties mirrored the state trends of declining investigations and substantiations of abuse. Jefferson County saw the largest decreases in both investigations and substantiations of physical abuse from 2003 to 2008; however, Washington County saw an increase of more than 100 investigations of physical abuse.

From 2003 to 2008, the rate of substantiated investigations of physical abuse decreased in 83 counties, but more than tripled in Garrard County. Rates of substantiation ranged from 0 percent in Carlisle and Nicholas Counties to greater than 40 percent in Gallatin, Garrard, Lawrence, Marshall, Muhlenberg, and Trigg Counties.

Certain strengths, known as protective factors, can reduce risk factors of abuse for families and contribute to children's ability to thrive and cope with adverse situations.⁵ Steps to develop protective factors include increasing opportunities for health care and safe learning environments, and developing supportive social networks and strong neighborhoods.⁶

Kentucky's Cabinet for Health and Family Services offers family preservation programs that help families at risk of having a child removed due to abuse or neglect. These programs offer preventive services to ensure families at risk have the financial, emotional, and practical supports they need, reducing their risk factors for abuse or neglect and keeping these families intact. Family preservation services provide a dramatic cost savings to the state over the more traditional method of placing children outside the home, yet these services are not currently available to all families that would qualify. A 2008 evaluation of family preservation services in Kentucky shows that for every dollar spent on family preservation services, the state saves \$2.85 in out-of-home care costs.⁷

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

Data Note: Data for 2003 may differ from previous versions of the Kentucky KIDS COUNT book due to more recent data entry or modifications to the data due to appeals or other court actions.

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 2008 * 100) / (number of investigations of physical abuse in 2008)

INVESTIGATIONS OF CHILD PHYSICAL ABUSE

(number & percent substantiated)

	2003		2008		2003		2008		
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	
Kentucky	12,422	24	11,282	17					
Adair	61	20	38	16	Knox	75	21	117	24
Allen	56	34	48	31	LaRue	33	33	71	11
Anderson	41	37	86	13	Laurel	174	27	216	13
Ballard	2	50	8	25	Lawrence	61	23	45	42
Barren	173	27	204	14	Lee	30	10	7	29
Bath	50	16	33	9	Leslie	54	28	44	14
Bell	124	20	123	15	Letcher	111	20	77	13
Boone	102	25	144	15	Lewis	25	24	23	22
Bourbon	69	7	41	10	Lincoln	106	18	59	8
Boyd	185	16	170	8	Livingston	17	29	21	33
Boyle	71	14	79	14	Logan	26	23	50	18
Bracken	13	46	15	7	Lyon	14	43	27	33
Breathitt	98	16	62	13	McCracken	165	27	102	34
Breckinridge	30	10	58	14	McCreary	84	26	54	28
Bullitt	138	21	151	11	McLean	31	55	17	18
Butler	18	56	25	32	Madison	262	15	205	16
Caldwell	13	31	17	29	Magoffin	85	26	51	14
Calloway	63	24	62	19	Marion	65	23	52	10
Campbell	168	16	93	19	Marshall	27	41	21	43
Carlisle	41	41	14	0	Martin	114	18	83	30
Carroll	67	43	34	32	Mason	21	10	67	9
Carter	102	18	84	10	Meade	54	33	87	11
Casey	61	30	40	8	Menifee	25	4	21	14
Christian	200	19	196	26	Mercer	84	23	73	11
Clark	56	27	102	25	Metcalfe	34	18	23	22
Clay	104	22	132	18	Monroe	48	29	33	39
Clinton	40	18	62	8	Montgomery	57	21	60	17
Crittenden	35	23	36	17	Morgan	32	19	28	7
Cumberland	5	0	10	10	Muhlenberg	71	14	27	41
Daviess	413	19	263	17	Nelson	109	22	63	30
Edmonson	41	29	25	8	Nicholas	27	19	13	0
Elliott	13	31	16	38	Ohio	50	42	49	24
Estill	51	27	36	25	Oldham	58	22	90	9
Fayette	550	28	591	12	Owen	41	22	30	30
Fleming	39	23	27	7	Owsley	8	0	60	10
Floyd	166	16	215	13	Pendleton	35	37	23	22
Franklin	118	19	149	20	Perry	162	16	184	7
Fulton	33	33	7	14	Pike	197	18	194	21
Gallatin	24	33	15	47	Powell	51	20	36	19
Garrard	40	15	55	45	Pulaski	213	21	174	12
Grant	94	12	37	19	Robertson	6	33	0	*
Graves	75	36	81	19	Rockcastle	46	15	46	22
Grayson	60	22	71	33	Rowan	76	16	66	20
Green	25	36	31	10	Russell	48	29	67	10
Greenup	108	19	56	14	Scott	69	25	74	12
Hancock	26	15	27	7	Shelby	253	23	185	11
Hardin	288	18	329	12	Simpson	54	26	47	38
Harlan	93	23	97	18	Spencer	10	0	32	13
Harrison	57	11	31	6	Taylor	62	21	71	11
Hart	32	19	49	20	Todd	19	47	28	25
Henderson	144	24	112	21	Trigg	11	36	22	41
Henry	19	26	53	9	Trimble	48	23	36	25
Hickman	9	22	5	20	Union	42	48	32	13
Hopkins	144	31	100	18	Warren	296	25	199	20
Jackson	40	23	42	14	Washington	23	17	134	10
Jefferson	2,482	30	1,911	18	Wayne	55	11	79	8
Jessamine	124	24	103	10	Webster	27	37	26	15
Johnson	172	17	148	5	Whitley	117	26	125	17
Kenton	373	18	326	25	Wolfe	33	18	43	14
Knott	105	15	62	6	Woodford	47	28	56	11

* County had no investigations for physical abuse.