

# Child Abuse Prevention Efforts

National and state statistics about child maltreatment are derived from the data collected by child protective services agencies and reported to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). The data are analyzed, disseminated, and released in an annual report. The 2015 national statistics were based upon receiving case-level data all 52 states (including the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico). Key findings in the 2015 report include:

- The national estimate of children who received a child protective services investigation response or alternative response increased 9.0 percent from 2011 (3,081,000) to 2015 (3,358,000).
- The number and rate of victims have fluctuated during the past 5 years. Comparing the national estimate of victims from 2011 (658,000) to the rounded number of reported victims in 2015 (683,000) shows an increase of 3.8 percent.<sup>1</sup>
- Three-quarters (75.3%) of victims were neglected, 17.2 percent were physically abused, and 8.4 percent were sexually abused.
- For 2015, a nationally estimated 1,670 children died of abuse and neglect at a rate of 2.25 per 100,000 children in the national population.

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## We Must Look Beyond Statistics In Order To Effectively Prevent Child Abuse

All of us must learn how to recognize when there may be risk for harm to children – in person and over the internet - and know how to offer support and assistance before child abuse occurs.

**Prevention means understanding the conditions that make children vulnerable so we can effectively take the action necessary to improve those conditions. Preventing child abuse means strengthening the ability of parents and communities to care for their children's health and well-being.**

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories have child abuse and neglect reporting laws that mandate certain professionals and institutions to report suspected maltreatment to a child protective services (CPS) agency. Each State has its own definitions of child abuse and neglect that are based on standards set by federal law. Federal legislation provides a foundation for states by identifying a set of acts or behaviors that define child abuse and neglect. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), (42 U.S.C. §5101), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, retained the existing definition of child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum:

*Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act, which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.*

Most states recognize four major types of maltreatment: neglect, physical abuse, psychological maltreatment, and sexual abuse. Although any of the forms of child maltreatment may be found separately, they can occur in combination.

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Resource: [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. \(2017\). Child Maltreatment 2015; https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cm2015.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cm2015.pdf)

*This is the most current report as the research takes a few years to be collected and analyzed.*