

Child Abuse and Neglect

Definition

Child Abuse and Neglect Report Rate
Child abuse is defined as the nonaccidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child under the age of 18. Child abuse includes physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual molestation. In Nevada, child abuse and neglect reports are divided into three outcome classifications: **Substantiated**, **Unsubstantiated** and **Unknown**.¹

Significance

Research on the effects of child abuse and neglect document both immediate and long-term harm to children. Child maltreatment can result in death, permanent disability and delayed development, and has been shown to be a factor in mental and behavioral problems, sexual problems, criminal behavior, depression and suicide.²

Risk Factors

Children are at increased risk for abuse if their parents were abused as children, if their parent is cohabiting, if their parents abuse drugs and alcohol and if their family is very poor.³ The potential for abuse is greatly increased if the parents were abused as children themselves and if they have poor parenting skills or unrealistic expectations of their child.⁴

Nevada KIDS COUNT 2000

Impact

- ◆ The impact of child abuse on children, families and society is profound and devastating. An estimated 1,238 children died in 1997 as a result of abuse or neglect, more than 3 children every day.⁵
- ◆ The vast majority of children who die from child maltreatment are very young: nationally, 79 percent of the victims are under the age of five and 39 percent are less than one year old at the time of their death.⁶
- ◆ Forty percent of child-maltreatment deaths involved children who had current or prior contact with child-protective service agencies.⁷
- ◆ The economic consequences of child abuse and neglect are staggering. In 1995, it costs the nation over \$11.2 billion to deal with the tragic and far-reaching consequences of child maltreatment.⁸
- ◆ Despite concerns about abduction by strangers and abuses by day-care providers, Nevada statistics show that over 80 percent of substantiated cases of abuse were caused by a natural parent.⁹
- ◆ A growing trend in the U.S. is placing children of abuse and neglect in homes of their relatives rather than in traditional foster-care homes. This trend has been attributed to a decline in the number of traditional foster-care homes, an increase in the number of children who need foster care and a change in attitude by judges and welfare workers regarding the significance of kin foster care.¹⁰

Nevada

Of the 13,705 total reports of suspected child abuse and neglect received, 4,743 or 34.6 percent were substantiated. The 1998 substantiated child abuse rate in Nevada was **16.4** per 1,000 children under age 18. Overall, there were 8,014 victims of substantiated child abuse and neglect and **1.69** victims of child abuse and neglect per substantiated report. The total number of child abuse and neglect reports has increased 28 percent from 1988 to 1998. The most commonly documented type of maltreatment was lack of supervision, 21.6 percent of all incidents, followed by physical neglect, (18.1 percent) and minor physical injury (12.4 percent).

Counties

Of the total number of child-abuse reports received in 1998, Clark County received 59.5 percent of all reports, Washoe County received 20.9 percent and the rural counties received 19.6 percent. The total percentage of substantiated child abuse reports received in 1998, ranged from an average of 18.5 percent in the rural counties, to 31.9 percent in Washoe County and 40.9 percent in Clark County.

“Despite the increased implementation of child death review committees and administrative attention to the issue of child abuse fatalities, recent research continues to indicate that such cases are substantially underreported.”¹¹

Prevent Child Abuse America

Child Abuse and Neglect Reports

1998 Child Abuse and Neglect Reports* (Ages 17 or less)

	Total Reports	Substantiated**	Unsubstantiated**	Unknown**	Substantiated Child Abuse Reports as a Percent of
					Total Reports***
Carson City	638	144	479	15	22.6 %
Churchill County	442	67	345	30	15.2
Clark County	8,152	3,333	4,384	435	40.9
Douglas County	197	25	169	3	12.7
Elko County	311	79	220	12	25.4
Esmeralda County	0	0	0	0	0.0
Eureka County	13	2	11	0	15.4
Humboldt County	166	19	131	16	11.4
Lander County	89	14	71	4	15.7
Lincoln County	18	6	12	0	33.3
Lyon County	312	53	237	22	17.0
Mineral County	85	12	70	3	14.1
Nye County	195	32	145	18	16.4
Pershing County	73	19	46	8	26.0
Storey County	21	1	19	1	4.8
Washoe County	2,866	914	1,612	340	31.9
White Pine County	127	23	102	2	18.1
Rural Counties	2,687	496	2,057	134	18.5
Nevada	13,705	4,743	8,053	909	34.6 %

* Reported by county of occurrence

** See General Information

*** Percentages based on small numbers should be used with caution

Source: State of Nevada Department of Human Resources, Division of Child and Family Services

Child Abuse and Neglect Victims

1998 Child Abuse and Neglect Victims (Substantiated* Cases Only)
(Ages 17 or less)

	Number of Victims of Substantiated Child Abuse and Neglect	Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect per Substantiated Report	Population Ages 17 or less	Reported Child Abuse Rate***
Carson City**	226	1.57	12,217	18.5 %
Churchill County**	105	1.57	6,666	15.8
Clark County	5,749	1.72	333,424	17.2
Douglas County**	39	1.57	9,598	4.1
Elko County**	124	1.57	15,153	8.2
Esmeralda County**	0	1.57	283	0.0
Eureka County**	3	1.57	396	7.9
Humboldt County**	30	1.57	5,437	5.5
Lander County**	22	1.57	2,249	9.8
Lincoln County**	9	1.57	1,031	9.1
Lyon County**	83	1.57	8,269	10.1
Mineral County**	19	1.57	1,739	10.8
Nye County**	50	1.57	6,877	7.3
Pershing County**	30	1.57	2,177	13.7
Storey County**	2	1.57	701	2.2
Washoe County	1,487	1.63	78,927	18.8
White Pine County**	36	1.57	2,735	13.2
Rural Counties	778	1.57	75,529	10.3
Nevada	8,014	1.69	487,879	16.4 %

* *Substantiated: The reported abusive or neglectful situation/incident is confirmed through the investigation/assessment process*

** *Individual rural county victim counts are estimated by applying the known rural county substantiated victim count per rural county substantiated report count to each individual rural county substantiated report count.*

*** *Case rates based on small numbers should be used with caution*

Source: State of Nevada Department of Human Resources; Division of Child and Family Services

Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics

Nevada Child Maltreatment Report Trends Percent Change 1987 - 1998			
	1987	1998	% Change
Unknown	263	909	71 %
Unsubstantiated	3,464	8,053	57
Substantiated	3,806	4,743	20
Total Reports	7,533	13,705	45 %

Source: Nevada Department of Human Resources:
Division of Child and Family Services, 1998

Nevada Child Abuse and Neglect Substantiated Cases, 1998 Percent and Type of Child Maltreatment		
Type of Maltreatment	# of Incidents to Children	Percent of Total Incidents
Physical Neglect	1,926	18.1 %
Lack of Supervision	2,299	21.6
Educational Neglect	241	2.3
Medical Neglect	251	2.4
Abandonment	228	2.1
Emotional Abuse/Neglect	312	2.9
Minor Physical Injury	1,325	12.4
Major Physical Injury	71	0.7
Sex Abuse/Exploitation	269	2.5
Other	3,717	34.9
Fatal	13	N/A
Total Reports	10,651*	

* Reports frequently include multiple types of maltreatment and more than a single incident
Source: Nevada Department of Human Resources: Division of Child and Family Services, 1998