

A Walk Upstream

An issue facing all communities: The national scope of the problem

How many children are abused and neglected in the United States?

- Each week, child protective services (CPS) agencies throughout the United States receive more than 50,000 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. In 2002, 2.6 million reports concerning the welfare of approximately 4.5 million children were made.
- In approximately two-thirds (67 percent) of these cases, the information provided in the report was sufficient to prompt an assessment or investigation. As a result of these investigations, approximately 896,000 children were found to have been victims of abuse or neglect – an average of more than 2,450 children per day.
- More than half (60 percent) of victims experienced neglect, meaning a caretaker failed to provide for the child's basic needs. Fewer victims experienced physical abuse (nearly 20 percent) or sexual abuse (10 percent), though these cases are typically more likely to be publicized. The smallest group (seven percent) were found to be victims of emotional abuse, which includes criticizing, rejecting or refusing to nurture a child.
- On average, nearly four children die every day as a result of child abuse or neglect (1,400 in 2002).

(11 percent) were Hispanic. American Indian or Alaska Native children accounted for two percent of victims, and Asian-Pacific Islanders accounted for one percent of victims.

Children of all ages experience abuse and neglect, but the youngest children are most vulnerable. Children younger than one year accounted for 41 percent of all abuse-related deaths reported in 2002; three-quarters (76 percent) of those killed were younger than four.

Who reports child abuse and neglect?

- In 2002, more than one-half (57 percent) of all reports made to CPS agencies came from professionals who came in contact with the child. Teachers (16 percent of all reports); legal, law enforcement and criminal justice personnel (16 percent); social services workers (13 percent); and medical personnel (eight percent) were the most frequent sources of reports in 2002. Many people in these professions are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect. However, many reports (44 percent) came from nonprofessional sources, such as parents, other relatives, friends and neighbors.

Safe Children and Healthy Families Are a Shared Responsibility
<http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention/index.cfm>

Who is more likely to be abused or neglected?

- No group of children is immune. Boys and girls are about equally likely to be abused or neglected.
- Children of all races and ethnicities experience child abuse. In 2002, one-half of all victims were white (54 percent), one-quarter were African American (26 percent), and one-tenth



To report suspected child abuse or neglect call 1-800-482-5964.