

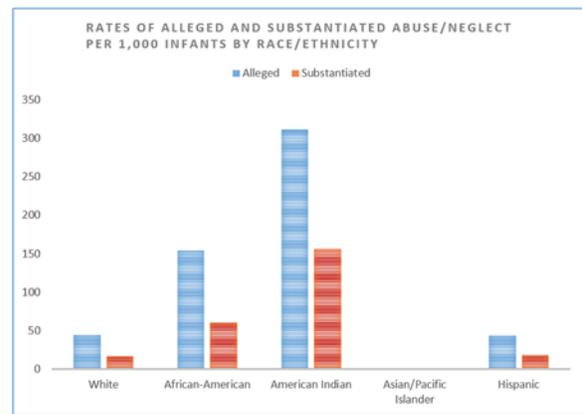
Abuse & Neglect of Nebraska's Infants

According to Nebraska's Child Protective Services, the incidence of maltreatment (abuse and/or neglect) in infancy is not improving over time. Considerable racial and ethnic disparities exist, with American Indian infants suffering substantiated maltreatment at a rate nine times higher than White infants; substantiated maltreatment of African American infants occurs at a rate three and a half times higher than White children. The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act defines abuse and/or neglect as "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." No child should ever be abused or neglected.

Adverse childhood experiences such as child maltreatment have significant life-long consequences. Impacts include disruption to growth and development, depression, higher incidence of illness and chronic diseases as well as a shortened lifespan.

Criterion 1: The Problem is Worse than the Benchmark or Increasing

Nebraska's incidence of infant abuse and neglect is not changing significantly over time. In 2009 the rate of substantiated maltreatment (evidenced child abuse/neglect after investigation) was 25.2 per 1,000 infants; in 2013 the rate was non-significantly lower at 22.7. The state of Nebraska removes children from their homes at nearly twice the national rate, according to the Kids Count report.



Criterion 2: Disparities Exist Related to Health Outcomes

Across Nebraska's racial groups, known disparities in abuse and neglect exist. **Among children ages 0 to 4**, the rate of substantiated cases of abuse and neglect varied drastically across races in 2013. African American children (27.76 per 1,000) and American Indian children were abused or neglected at rates four times greater (27.8 and 27.4 per 1,000, respectively) than were White children (6.8 per 1,000).

The growth in child poverty may be a factor, the report stated. In 2001, 54,967 Nebraska children were in poverty; as of 2009, that figure had grown to 67,346

Criterion 3: Strategies Exist to Address the Problem/An Effective Intervention is Available

Child abuse is a complex problem rooted in unhealthy relationships and environments. Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families can prevent child abuse. However, the solutions are as complex as the problem.

Increasing factors that protect children can reduce the occurrence of abuse. Preventing child maltreatment means influencing individual behaviors, relationships among families and neighbors, community involvement, and the culture of a society.

Practices shown to be potentially effective exist, including:

- Evidence Based Home visitation
- Respite for parents
- Education related to child development
- Depression Screening
- Breastfeeding

Recognized Community Strategies:

- Financial Independence classes
- Period of Purple Crying education
- Shaken Baby Education
- Rehab programs offered to addicted parents
- Domestic violence resources
- Teen pregnancy prevention
- Social supports to decrease prevalence of isolation
- Community Based Initiatives

The 20th annual Kids Count report made numerous policy recommendations for Nebraska officials, including:

- Boost financial assistance for food stamps and Medicaid, for example, to a level nearer national averages.
- Help more parents obtain treatment for their mental health and substance abuse problems.
- Eliminate “forensic” investigations of families who voluntarily seek help, so they'll be less fearful of turning to the system.
- Broaden the definition of kinship beyond blood ties so children taken from homes have a greater chance of being placed with people already connected to the family, such as godparents.

Criterion 4: Societal Capacity to Address the Problem

Major agencies working to address infant abuse and neglect include:

- Statewide home visiting programs
- Nebraska Children & Families Foundation
- Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund Board
- Nebraska Statewide Child Abuse Prevention Partnership
- Prevent Child Abuse Nebraska
- NE DHHS-MCH, N-MIECHV, WIC
- Local health departments
- Nebraska Department of Education-Sixpence
- Early Head Start

DHHS has multiple grants and contracts that support home visiting in various organizations both public and non-profit. With passage of the Affordable Care Act a new section of home visiting had been added to the Title V of the Social Security Act with likely impacts on Nebraska. This program has now been reauthorized through federal FY 2017.

Criterion 5: Severity of Consequences

The long-term physical, psychological, behavioral and societal consequences of child abuse and neglect can last for generations. Child abuse and neglect cause direct suffering and long-term damage to physical and emotional wellbeing. Many fatalities from injuries such as drowning or suffocation can be linked to abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect increase the risks of:

- Juvenile delinquency and adult criminality
- Substance abuse
- Adolescent pregnancy
- School failure
- Suicide attempts
- Poor mental and physical health

Child abuse and other adverse childhood experiences contribute to chronic diseases and poor health decades later. Survivors of sexual

abuse are at risk for a wide range of health problems. These include post-traumatic stress symptoms, re-victimization, and high risk sexual behaviors. A review of long-term studies found that abuse in childhood consistently predicted risk for depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder in adulthood. (Source: US DHHS Child Welfare Information Gateway, “Long-term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect,” https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/long_term_consequences.pdf).

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study has shown that adverse childhood experiences including child abuse and neglect are related to poor mental and physical health outcomes in adults. The stress of adverse childhood events leads to these poor outcomes, including negative impact on brain development and weakened immune systems. (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Adverse Childhood Experiences Study”, <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>).

Economic Consequences

According to a study funded by the CDC, the total lifetime cost of child abuse and neglect and related fatalities in 1 year totals \$124 billion in the United States. This economic burden is more costly on an annual basis than two high profile public health problems, such as stroke and Type 2 diabetes.

The estimated average lifetime cost per victim of nonfatal child maltreatment is \$210,012 (in 2010 dollars) including:

- childhood health care costs
- adult medical costs
- productivity losses

- child welfare costs
- criminal justice costs
- special education costs
- The estimated average lifetime cost per death is \$1,272,900, including medical costs and productivity losses (Fang et al., 2012).
- Research suggests the benefits of effective prevention likely outweigh the costs of child maltreatment.

References

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/consequences.html>

DHHS Nebraska Child Abuse and Neglect Annual Data Calendar Year 2013-
http://dhhs.ne.gov/children_family_services/Documents/CAN2013ANNUALREPORT.pdf

Kids Count -
<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#NE/2/0>

Voices for Children in Nebraska -
<http://voicesforchildren.com/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children’s Bureau. (2015). Child maltreatment 2013. Retrieved from
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