

Child Deaths

DEFINITION

Child deaths are the number of deaths from all causes to children ages 1 to 14, per 100,000 children. The data are reported by place of residence, not place of death.

SIGNIFICANCE

The child death rate is a reflection of the physical, mental and emotional health of children, the dangers to which children are exposed in the community, access to and use of safety devices and practices (such as bicycle helmets and smoke alarms), and the level of adult supervision children receive.¹ Children living in poverty are at the greatest risk for injury and death. Research indicates that poor children are more likely to die at every age and are five times more likely to die from infectious diseases and parasites.²

In Rhode Island, between 1999 and 2003 there were 148 deaths of children ages 1 to 14. Of these deaths, 93 (63%) were due to disease, 41 (28%) were due to unintentional injuries, 8% were due to intentional injuries (10 homicides and 2 suicides) and 2 (1%) were unknown.³ Between 1999 and 2003, Rhode Island had a child death rate of 15.5 per 100,000 children ages 1 to 14.^{4,5}

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 14 in Rhode Island, exceeding deaths from

any single disease.⁶ These injuries and deaths disproportionately affect poor children, young children, males, children in families with low levels of education and employment, children with developmental disabilities and minority children.^{7,8}

In the United States, the child death rate has steadily declined due to constant medical advances and a drop in motor vehicle accidents, the leading cause of injury among children. The death rates for Black and Native American children are higher than the rates for other children.⁹

Many of the injuries that do not result in death are extremely costly both financially and in terms of loss in quality of life. Injuries may leave children temporarily or permanently disabled, result in time lost from school, decrease children's abilities to participate in everyday activities and affect future

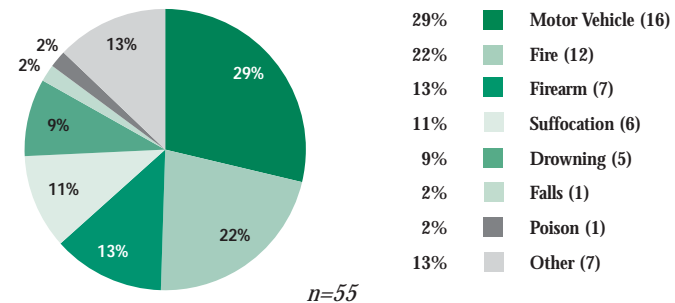
| Child Death Rate (per 100,000 Children Ages 1-14) | | |
|--|------|------|
| | 1996 | 2001 |
| RI | 15 | 15 |
| US | 26 | 22 |
| National Rank* | | 3rd |
| New England Rank** | | 2nd |

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: *KIDS COUNT data book: State profiles of child well-being 2004*. (2004). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Child Deaths Due to Injury, By Cause, Rhode Island, 1999-2003



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 1999-2003. May not total 100% due to rounding.

◆ Between 1999 and 2003, 55 children died as a result of injury. Of these 78% (43) of deaths were caused by unintentional or undetermined injuries. Twenty-two percent of child deaths by injury were attributed to homicide or suicide.

◆ In Rhode Island, as well as nationally, motor vehicle accidents are the most common cause of injury deaths to children ages 1 to 14. Between 1999 and 2003 there were 16 motor vehicle accidents, causing 37% of the unintentional injuries that resulted in child deaths in Rhode Island.¹¹

◆ Safety experts believe that as many as 90% of unintentional injuries are preventable. Effective safety products and safe environments can significantly reduce child injury and death. Child restraints in cars, adhering to traffic laws, wearing bicycle helmets and possessing smoke alarms and checking the battery monthly are a few precautions that can be taken to help prevent accidental childhood injury and death.¹²

References for Indicators

^{1,8} *Childhood injury fact sheet*. (2004). Washington, DC: National Safe Kids Campaign.

^{2,9} *KIDS COUNT data book 2004: State profiles of child well-being*. (2004). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

^{3,4,6,11} Rhode Island Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 1999-2003.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, 1999-2003.

⁷ *Report to the nation: Trends in unintentional childhood injury mortality, 1987-2000*. (2003). Washington, DC: National Safe Kids Campaign.

¹⁰ Miller, T. R., Romano, E. O., & Spicer, R. S. (2000). The cost of childhood injuries and the value of prevention. *The Future of Children*, 10(1), 137-163.

¹² *KIDS COUNT indicator brief: Reducing the child death rate*. (2003). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.