

2016 Three Branch Institute to Improve Child Safety and Prevent Child Fatalities

National Governors Association National Conference of State Legislatures
Casey Family Programs

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to Improve Child
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Child Fatalities



The Core Team

- Karen L. Bowling, Cabinet Secretary, WVDHHR
- Nancy Exline, Commissioner, Bureau for Children and Families
- The Honorable Phillip M. Stowers, Chief Judge, WV 29th Circuit
- Nancy Sullivan, Assistant to Cabinet Secretary, WVDHHR
- The Honorable Amy Summers, WV House of Delegates
- The Honorable Tom Takubo, DO, WV State Senate
- Nikki Tennis, Director, Division of Children's Services, Supreme Court of Appeals

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State Context/Challenges

- The entry rate for foster care is 8.6 percent, the highest rate in the U.S.
- In WV, 12.8 percent of the child maltreatment victims are under one year of age.
- In 2013, 54.3 percent of the maltreatment of children was neglect, 33.9 percent was physical abuse, 27.3 percent was emotional abuse, 5.2 percent was sexual abuse, and 1.2 percent was medical neglect.
- In 2013, the median length of stay in foster care was 9.7 months.
- WV is one of four states where less than 40 percent of the children legally available were adopted in less than 12 months.
- In 2013, child fatalities were at their highest in four years at 17, a rate of 4.5 per 100,000.

[Child Welfare Outcomes 2010-2013: Report to Congress](#)

Child Fatality Review

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- In 2014, the DHHR Bureau for Children and Families (BCF) established an internal child fatality review team to review incidents involving families who have a prior history with the Bureau.
- In 2015, the team began reviewing incidents of not only fatalities, but near fatalities and became the Critical Incident Review Team.
- In the FFY2015 Report on Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities Due to Abuse or Neglect in West Virginia, the fatality rate was seven, a decrease from the prior year of 17.

Critical Incident Review Team Findings

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Number of Victims in Abuse and Neglect Incidents by Known Cause of Fatality, FFY 2015

Unsafe Sleep/Drug Use	3
Physical Injury/Medical Neglect	3
Physical Injury/Inappropriate Caregiver	1

Number by Age		Number by Race		Number by Gender	
6 years	1				
2 years	1	Caucasian	6	Male	4
Infant	5	Two or more races	1	Female	3

Critical Incident Review Team Findings

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Number of Victims in Abuse and Neglect Incidents by Known Cause of Near Fatality

Shaken Baby	2
Drug Use Resulting in Injury	1
Shaken Baby/Medical Neglect	1
Physical Injury and Medical Neglect	2
Lack of Supervision Resulting in Injury	1

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Three Branch Institute Intended Outcomes

- All children and families at risk have access to evidence-based prevention and early intervention services.
- All children and families are identified at earliest signs of risk. Children under one year old are given high priority.
- The State has a comprehensive, multi-agency plan to prevent child maltreatment deaths.

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Early Intervention

All children and families at risk have access to evidence-based prevention and early intervention services.

- Review referral policies and funding mechanisms for early home visitation programs. October, 2016
- Revitalize Safe Sleep Campaign focusing on flood areas. January, 2017

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Early Identification

All children and families are identified at earliest signs of risk. Children under one year old are given high priority.

- Research and develop Resource Teams for CPS. February, 2017
- Analyze current data around the effectiveness of parenting classes and other available services. December, 2017
- Research practice models that promote a culture of safety. February, 2017

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The State has a comprehensive, multi-agency plan to prevent child maltreatment deaths.

State Plan

- Do multi-disciplinary in-depth review and analysis of five years of reports from all organizations tracking child fatalities, including those not known to CPS.
- Facilitate judge led regional stakeholder meetings to identify and develop community based solutions around child safety.

January, 2017

March, 2017