

Child Abuse and Fatality Data Reporting

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Issue

This report describes federal requirements for states to report data on child abuse and neglect cases, including fatalities and near-fatalities, and the data states may voluntarily report.

Summary

Federal law requires states that receive federal grant money under the [Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act](#) (CAPTA) to report annually certain abuse and neglect statistics, such as the number of (1) children reported as abuse or neglect victims, (2) families that received preventative services, and (3) fatalities and near-fatalities resulting from abuse or neglect ([42 U.S.C. § 5106a](#)). States receive CAPTA funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to assist them in improving their state's child protective services system. In addition to this reporting, states may voluntarily report case-specific records and other aggregate data to a federal data collection system.

State Reporting Requirements

A state that receives a CAPTA grant must, to the maximum extent practicable, annually report the number of:

1. children who were reported to the state as child abuse or neglect victims;
2. reports that were (a) substantiated; (b) unsubstantiated; or (c) determined to be false;
3. children who (a) received services during the year under the state program, (b) did not receive services under the program, and (c) were removed from their families;

4. families that received preventive services from the state;
5. deaths resulting from child abuse or neglect and the number who were in foster care;
6. children reunited with their families or receiving family preservation services that, within five years, result in subsequent substantiated reports of child abuse or neglect, including death;
7. children for whom individuals were appointed by the court to represent the children's best interests and the average number of out of court contacts between these individuals and children;
8. children under the state child protection system's care who were transferred into the custody of the juvenile justice system;
9. infants referred to a child protective services system as being affected by substance abuse or withdrawal due to parental drug exposure and those for whom a (a) plan of safe care was developed and (b) referral was made for appropriate services;
10. children under age 3 in cases of substantiated abuse or neglect determined to be eligible for referral, and the number referred, to agencies providing early intervention services under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and
11. children determined to be sex trafficking victims ([42 U.S.C. § 5106a\(d\)](#)).

The annual report must also include the:

1. number of child protective service personnel responsible for intake, screening, assessment, and investigation of reports of child abuse and neglect;
2. average case load and specified education, qualifications, training, and demographic information of these child protective service personnel;
3. agency response time with respect to the (a) initial investigation of each report of child abuse or neglect and (b) provision of services to families and children; and
4. citizen review panels' annual report ([42 U.S.C. § 5106a\(d\)](#)).

Penalties for Failure to Meet CAPTA Requirements

States that do not meet the CAPTA requirements may jeopardize their grant funding.

In Connecticut, CAPTA funding is awarded and provided to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). According to the Office of Fiscal Analysis, DCF's most recent CAPTA award was \$862,606 for the period beginning Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019 (October 1, 2018) and ending FFY 2023 (September 30, 2023).

Voluntary Reporting

States may voluntarily report data to the [National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System](#) (NCANDS). NCANDS is a federal voluntary data collection system that gathers data on child abuse and neglect reports. Among other things, it identifies the federal role in supporting research and data collection activities.

The NCANDS system asks states to annually submit two files: a Child File and an Agency File. A Child File is an electronic file of child-specific records for each report of alleged child abuse and neglect that received a DCF response. An Agency File supplements the Child File and contains data not reportable at the child-specific level, including receipt of prevention and post response services and caseload and workload data.

Connecticut's Department of Children and Families (DCF) is responsible for submitting reports to NCANDS.

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