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DCS releases 2020 child fatality report

INDIANAPOLIS (Dec. 30, 2021) – The number of children who died from abuse or neglect decreased by 18 percent from 2019 to 2020, according to data released in the 2020 Annual Report of Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities in Indiana.

The Indiana Department of Child Services was called to investigate 281 child fatalities. Fifty were determined to be a result of abuse or neglect, down from 61 in 2019.

“The decrease is a step in the right direction, yet I caution that this is not a reason to celebrate,” DCS Director Terry Stigdon said. “The loss of any child is traumatic for the family and the community. We hope the information in this report will help us collaborate better with parents, our providers, stakeholders, and community leaders to increase awareness of the risk factors that lead to these tragic incidents.”

Failure to provide medical care was a leading factor in neglect-related deaths documented last year. The annual report details 14 medical care-related deaths in which a caregiver was neglectful.

DCS is legally required to review all child fatalities that fit the following circumstances:

- For children under 3 years of age: the death is sudden, unexpected or unexplained, or involves allegations of abuse or neglect.
- For children age 3 or older: the death involves allegations of abuse or neglect.

The full report can be found [here](#).

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About Indiana DCS: *The Indiana Department of Child Services leads the state’s response to allegations of child abuse and neglect and facilitates child support payments. We consider the needs and values of all we serve in our efforts to protect children while keeping families together whenever possible. Indiana Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 800.800.5556. Child Support Customer Service Kidsline: 800.840.8757 or 317.233. www.in.gov/dcs*