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DCS releases 2019 child fatality report

INDIANAPOLIS (Dec. 31, 2020) – The number of children who died from neglect or abuse dropped slightly last year, according to new data released in the 2019 Annual Report of Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities in Indiana.

The Indiana Department of Child Services investigated 276 child deaths in 2019 as required by state law. Sixty-one were determined to have been caused by caregiver maltreatment, down from 65 in 2018.

Improper sleeping arrangements, including co-sleeping, remain a leading contributor to infant fatalities. The annual DCS report details 11 unsafe sleep-related deaths in which a caregiver was determined to have been neglectful.

Lack of supervision was frequently cited in death investigations in 2019. Caregivers were found responsible in seven drownings, and three children died after they or another child accessed an unsecured firearm.

“We owe it to our communities to study the circumstances surrounding the death of any child,” DCS Director Terry Stigdon said. “Each year, this report is used to inform policy, practice and legislation aimed at protecting Hoosier children.”

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

- For children under 1 year of age: the death is sudden, unexpected, unexplained or involves allegations of neglect/abuse.
- For children age 1 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 engages with families and collaborates with state, local and community partners to protect children from abuse and neglect and to provide child support services. Indiana Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 800.800.5556. Child Support Customer Service Kidsline: 800.840.8757 or 317.233.5437. www.in.gov/dcs*