

AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC

52 foster care deaths in '01, Betsy claims

By THOMAS ZAMBITO
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A record 52 children in families served by city foster care workers died last year, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum charged in a report issued yesterday.

Fully half of the deaths, she maintained, could have been prevented.

Gotbaum said the city's Administration for Children's Services is swamped by having to investigate more than 56,000 reports of child abuse or neglect each year.

"An overburdened system means that mistakes are made at both ends of the spectrum," she said. "Some children die because of missed warning signs and others remain apart from their families unnecessarily."

The total number of deaths, the report said, has more than doubled since 1999, when 23 children died, and represents an increase of almost 10% since last year.

ACS disputed Gotbaum's numbers, saying there were only 22 fatalities in 2000 and 32 last year. ACS spokeswoman MacLean Guthrie said there have been 21 child fatalities so far this year.

The reason for the discrepancy in the numbers of deaths is unclear - but the report immediately set off a harsh exchange between the two city agencies.

ACS accused the public advocate of blindsiding them and pointed out that that the report comes as the agency has dramatically reduced the number of children in foster care to 26,600, the smallest total since 1991.

"It is clear that the public advocate's office is unaware of the successes of this administration and the comprehensive range of services our agency offers to the children and families of New York City," the agency said in a

This was submitted to Congress as proof deaths in foster care falsified nationwide! This link no longer exist - another article has replaced it!!

They reported 2 or 11 times or 1100% less DHS

2003

statement.

Guthrie said she "had no idea" how Gotbaum came up with her totals.

Gotbaum's office says it analyzed fatality reports issued by the state Office of Children and Family Services and determined that 26 deaths in 2001 - or exactly half - could have been averted by increasing supervision of foster homes, intervening with families or simply educating parents about how to care for youngsters.

The very young continue to be the most vulnerable. Of the deaths Gotbaum says could have been avoided, half were 3 or younger.

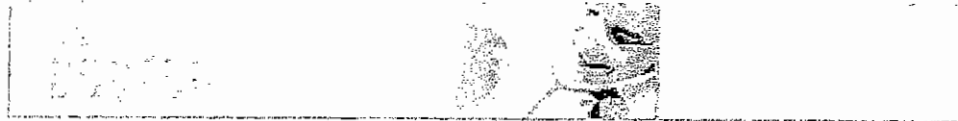
Among them:

- A 3-month-old girl smothered when she rolled over onto a soft pillow that was placed in her crib.
- Three months before a 3-year-old girl died of child abuse, ACS received reports that she had bruises on her face, under her eye and near her temple and discovered that the child suffered a fractured leg. Her parents said she broke it when she fell from a bunk bed. But the agency never checked with a physician and declared the report of abuse unfounded, the report said.

The report also acknowledged that the city faces difficult challenges caring for the teenage foster care children, 40% of the total, who place disproportionate strains of the system.

A recent Daily News investigation found that 11 teenagers in the city's care have have been killed or committed suicide since 1999.

Originally published on December 10, 2002

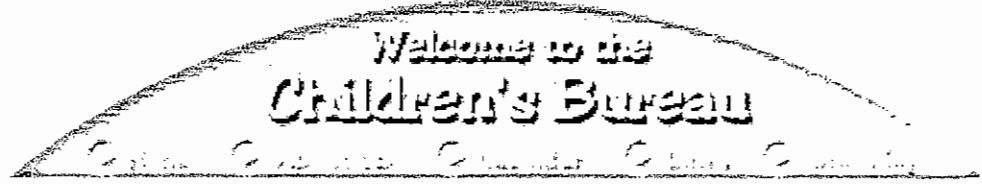


Visit other Real Cities sites

Select a city



All contents © 2003 Daily News, L.P.



Child Maltreatment 2000
Table 5-3 Child Fatalities in Foster Care, 2000

State	Total Fatalities	CPS Reported Child Fatalities in Foster Care	Child Fatalities in Foster Care (Agency File)	Total Child Fatalities in Foster Care	Percent of Child Fatalities that Occurred in Foster Care
Alabama	27	0		0	0.0
Alaska	8	0		0	0.0
Arizona	7		0	0	0.0
Arkansas	12		0	0	0.0
California	30		12	12	40.0
Colorado	31	2		2	6.5
Connecticut	8		1	1	12.5
Delaware					
District of Columbia	5	0		0	0.0
Florida	65		0	0	0.0
Georgia	45	0		0	0.0
Hawaii	3	0		0	0.0
Idaho	1	0		0	0.0
Illinois	76	2		2	2.6
Indiana	44		0	0	0.0

Iowa	13		0	0	0.0
Kansas	7	0		0	0.0
Kentucky	21		0	0	0.0
Louisiana	36		1	1	2.8
Maine	3		0	0	0.0
Maryland					
Massachusetts	4		0	0	0.0
Michigan	49		1	1	2.0
Minnesota	21	0		0	0.0
Mississippi	12	0		0	0.0
Missouri	48	2		2	4.2
Montana	2	0		0	0.0
Nebraska					
Nevada	3	0		0	0.0
New Hampshire	9		0	0	0.0
New Jersey	37		0	0	0.0
New Mexico	6		0	0	0.0
New York	79	2		2	2.5
North Carolina	47		1	1	2.1
North Dakota	0	0		0	0.0
Ohio	58	1		1	1.7
Oklahoma	45		0	0	0.0
Oregon	21	0		0	0.0
Pennsylvania	38	2		2	5.3
Rhode Island	3	0		0	0.0
South Carolina	20	1		1	5.0
South Dakota					
Tennessee					
Texas	177	1		1	0.6
Utah	12		0	0	0.0
Vermont	1		0	0	0.0
Virginia	29		0	0	0.0
Washington	14	2	0	2	14.3
West Virginia	4		1	1	25.0
Wisconsin					

Wyoming	1		0	0	0.0
Total/Percentage	1182	15	17	32	2.7
Number Reporting	45	23	23	45	45

Percentage of fatalities that occurred in foster care is based on total fatalities in States that reported on fatalities in foster care.

This table compares the number of fatalities associated with foster care to all child fatalities. The first column lists all of the States by name and the second lists the total number of fatalities. The third column reports the number of child fatalities from foster care according to CPS and the fourth reports child fatalities from other agencies for a grand total of foster care deaths in the fifth column. The last column gives a percentage of fatalities that occurred in foster care as compared to the total number of fatalities. Among the 45 States reporting, the percentage of fatalities in foster care was calculated to be 2.7 percent.

Return to

Please send all comments and questions on this subject to
Please send all comments and Web feedback to
Updated on August 22, 2002

3 suicides
5 auto
18 medical
1 SIDS
unexplained

Part of the problem is that states define abuse, neglect and child homicide differently, but the studies also noted that incomplete investigations may rule some deaths actually due to abuse and neglect as accidents, homicides or SIDS.

18 deaths were the results of medical conditions or complications, including one death from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). (SIDS is the sudden death of an infant under one year of age that cannot be explained after a thorough case investigation, complete autopsy, examination of the death scene and clinical history review.)¹

Of the 18 deaths from medical complications or natural causes, 10 were the result of abuse or neglect injuries received before the children entered foster care.

homicide

neglect and child homicide differently, but the studies also noted that incomplete investigations may rule some deaths actually due to abuse and neglect as accidents, homicides or SIDS.⁵ No one has conducted similar studies in Texas.

One of the deaths indicated in the chart below as caused by foster caregiver abuse was a two-year old boy who died of blunt head trauma in 2002. A coroner ruled the death a homicide. Despite substantial bruising over much of his body, the child's foster mother denied doing anything to hurt the

emotional abuse and... elderly woman whom she cared for in home. Before the baby died, DPRS received allegations that this person had abused baby. According to two witnesses, the foster mother repeatedly pushed the child's into stroller cushions to muffle his crying. DPRS investigator ruled out abuse or neglect regarding these allegations due to "a lack of evidence." Concerning the child's death, investigator determined that, since the coroner ruled that the child died of no abuse or neglect occurred.⁶

Physical Restraints

Some deaths related to "physical restraint as the name implies, the act of immobilizing a child by holding him or her tightly, have been highly publicized over the past few years across the country.

The *Hartford Courant*, in a five-part series on physical restraints that drew national attention, estimated that "fifty to 150 die every year as a result of being physically restrained or put in seclusion in institutional settings."⁷ The federal government is currently considering legislation on restraints

Children who die from restraint usually die from asphyxiation, either because of excessive pressure on the chest or due to pressure on the stomach that causes them to choke on their own vomit; some have heart attacks.

Two Texas foster children died of asphyxiation after restraint in fiscal 2000. In fiscal 2001, a 2001 death at a residential treatment facility, labeled an accident, also occurred. One foster child died in fiscal 2002 did so after several

Child Deaths in DPRS Conservatorship 1999-2002

DPR- Stated Cause of Death	Fiscal Years		
	1999	2000	2001
Foster Caregiver Abuse or Neglect (includes restraints)	2	2	4
Suicide	1	3	0
Drowning	2	1	0
Vehicle Accidents	4	0	0
Other Accidents	1	0	1
Medical Conditions or Complications or Natural Causes	5	12	18
Medical - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome	0	2	4
Unknown or Undetermined	1	1	1
Uncategorized	*	*	10
Total	16	21	38

*Data unavailable
Source: Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services.