

**REPORT ON CHILD DEATHS
DUE TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT IN VIRGINIA
DURING FISCAL YEAR 2006**

Prepared by:
Child Protective Services Program
Virginia Department of Social Services
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REPORT ON CHILD DEATHS DUE TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT IN VIRGINIA DURING FISCAL YEAR 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Local departments of social services investigated 55 reports of child deaths suspected to be caused by child maltreatment for fiscal year (FY) 2006 (July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006). Reports were founded for 29 children, two more than the number of founded child abuse fatalities in FY 2005. There were 24 reports that were unfounded. Two founded reports are currently under appeal.
- Eleven children died as a result of abuse, 15 children died as a result of neglect, and three children died as a result of both abuse and neglect.
- The children who died as a result of child abuse or neglect ranged in age from birth to 16 years. Of the 29 children who died from maltreatment, 24 (83 percent) were birth to four years of age. This is consistent with national data and previous state data that have found young children to be the most vulnerable.
- One or both parents were responsible for the deaths of 21 (72 percent) children. This is lower than national data and previous state data that found parent(s) to be responsible for about 80 percent of child maltreatment deaths.
- Of the 42 caretakers found responsible for the child deaths, 23 were women and 19 were men. This is similar to the national data that have found more female than male perpetrators.
- Twenty-four (57 percent) of the 42 perpetrators were between the ages of 20 and 29. These data are similar to national data and previous state data that confirm most caretakers to be young adults in their mid-twenties.
- Families of nine children who died as a result of child abuse or neglect were known to the child welfare system in some capacity.
- The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) continues to support collaborative efforts at the state and local levels to decrease the number of child fatalities due to child abuse and neglect in Virginia

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal: Promote interagency partnerships to prevent child fatalities due to child abuse and neglect

- The Child Abuse Prevention Committee (CAPC), under the auspices of the Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect (GAB), will continue to support and monitor the nine strategies of the Blue Ribbon Plan. The CAPC operates in partnership with VDSS and Prevent Child Abuse Virginia. Planned activities include a statewide conference to showcase programs in Virginia that promote positive outcomes for children and families and prevent child abuse and neglect.
- VDSS will work with the Office of Family Health Services in the Virginia Department of Health to develop an ongoing statewide public awareness campaign to educate parents, caregivers, children, and citizens of the dangers of leaving a child unattended in and around a vehicle.
- VDSS and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will continue to support existing local/regional child fatality review teams. Interest in establishing a regional team has been expressed by Hopewell, Petersburg, Prince George and Dinwiddie and also in the Lynchburg area and Loudoun County.
- VDSS will continue to collaborate on the Safe Families Recovery Project and its efforts to establish guidelines for health care providers and child welfare workers in working with substance using pregnant women.

Goal: Reduce child maltreatment fatalities among infants and young children

- VDSS will continue to support community prevention activities by staffing a child abuse prevention unit within the Division of Family Services to provide technical assistance, program evaluation, and grant administration to community based child abuse prevention programs.
- VDSS will continue to pilot a structured decision making (SDM) model in 45 localities to guide child protective services and foster care workers in the safety and protection of children. The SDM model utilizes tools to help child protective services (CPS) and foster care workers make more accurate and reliable assessments of safety and long-term risk. VDSS is currently engaged in a workload study to determine if additional resources are needed prior to making a decision regarding statewide implementation.
- VDSS will include information about the dangers of parent/infant co-sleeping in the annual child abuse prevention month packet.

REPORT ON CHILD DEATHS DUE TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT IN VIRGINIA DURING FISCAL YEAR 2006

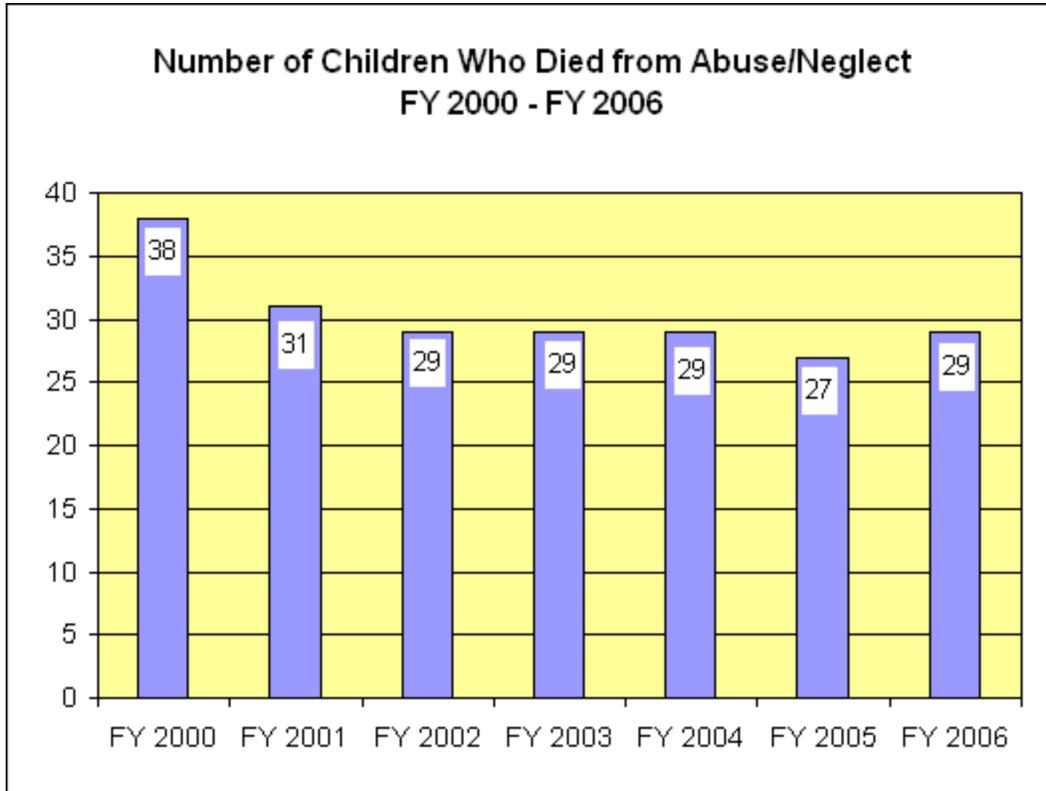
CHILD DEATHS

During FY 2006, local departments of social services investigated 55 reports of child abuse or neglect that involved a child fatality. Reports were founded involving 29 children and unfounded involving 24 children. Two founded cases are currently under appeal.

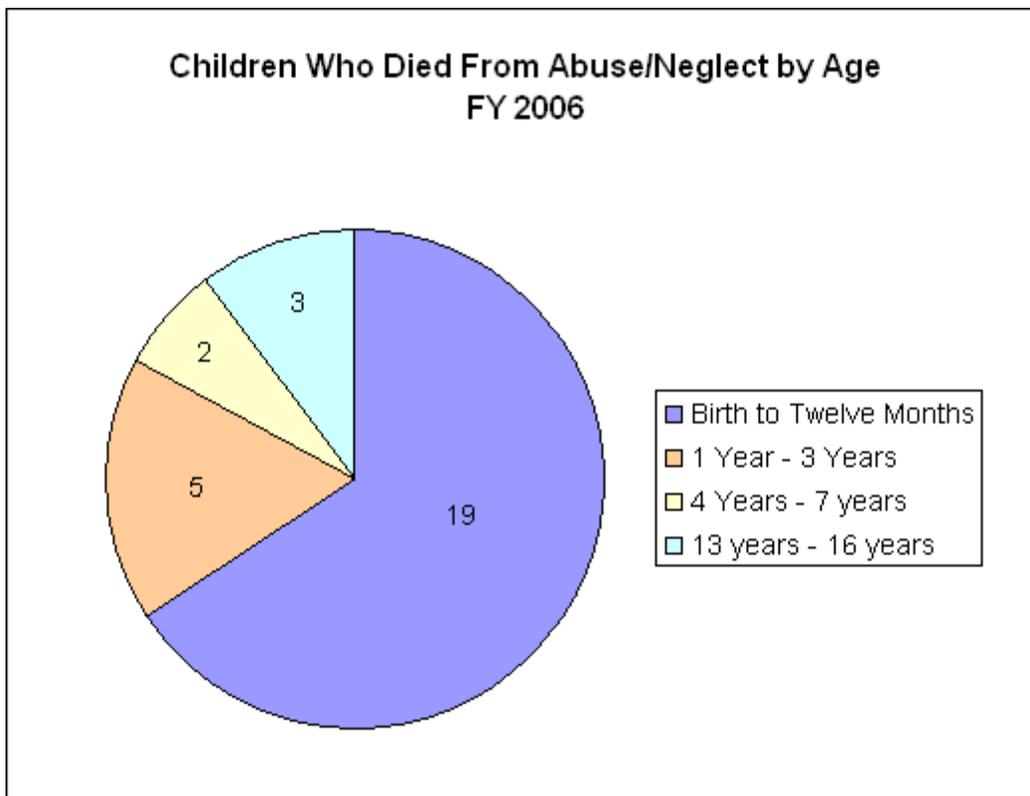
Dispositions of CPS Complaints with a Child Death by Locality FY 2006

Locality	Founded	Unfounded	Pending/ Appealed	Total Deaths Investigated
Accomack	1			1
Albemarle	1			1
Alexandria	2			2
Campbell		1		1
Chesapeake	1	1		2
Chesterfield	2			2
Danville		1		1
Fairfax	1			1
Fauquier		2		2
Hampton	1			1
Henrico	1			1
Henry/Martinsville	1			1
Isle of Wight	1			1
King George		1		1
Lee	1			1
Louisa			1	1
Manassas City		1		1
Mecklenburg		1		1
Newport News		2		2
Norfolk	4	2		6
Northumberland	1	1		2
Orange		1		1
Petersburg	1			1
Portsmouth	1	1		2
Prince William	2			2
Richmond City	1	4		5
Shenandoah Valley	1	1		2
Spotsylvania		1		1
Stafford	1			1
Suffolk	1			1
Virginia Beach	2	2	1	5
Washington	1			1
Wise		1		1
Totals:	29	24	2	55

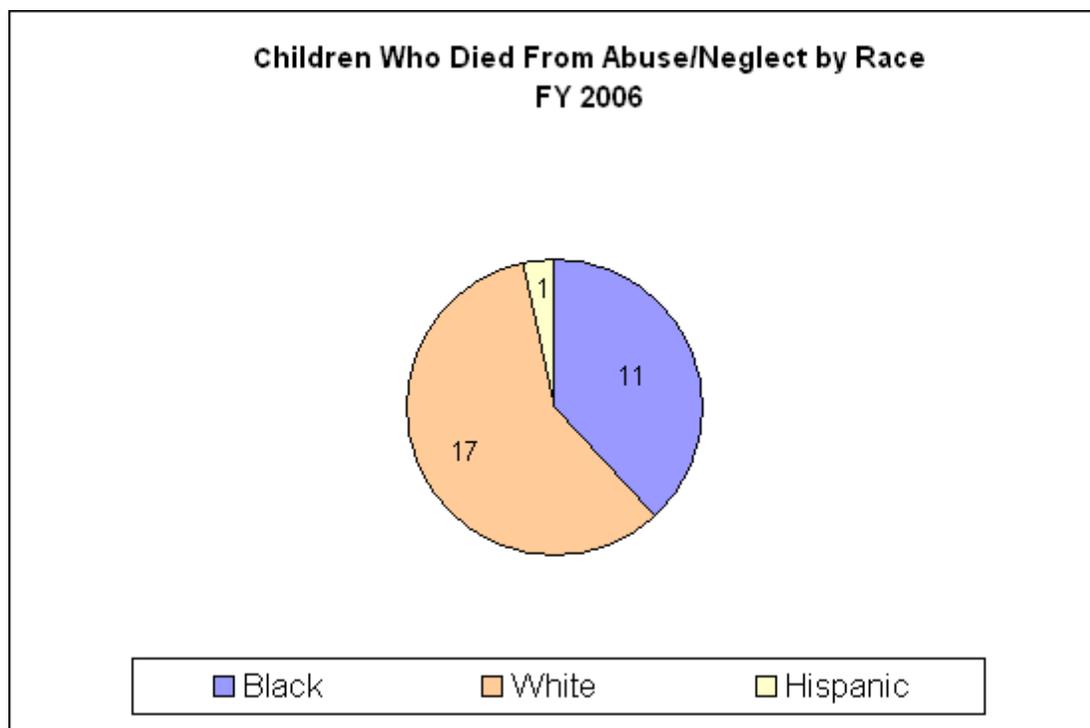
There were 11 (38 percent) deaths in the Hampton Roads area of the state. Six (21 percent) child deaths were clustered in the Northern Virginia area of the state. Four (14 percent) child deaths occurred in the Greater Richmond area.



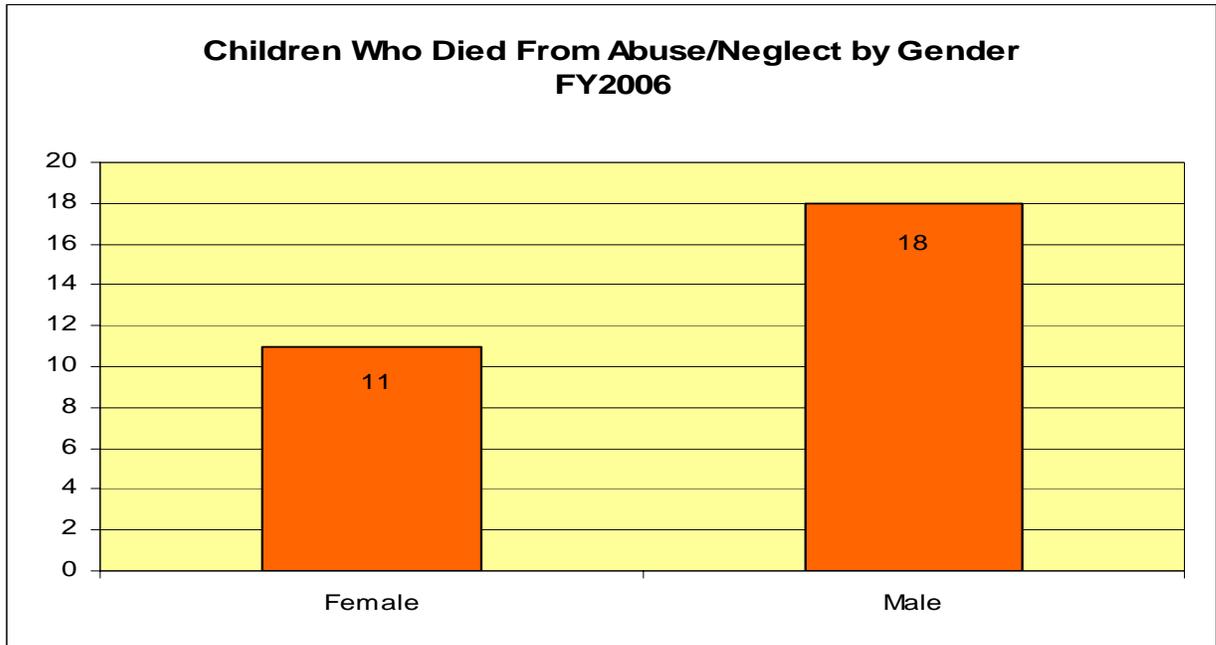
The number of children who died as the result of child maltreatment declined from 38 in FY 2000 to 29 in FY 2006. There have been fewer than 30 child deaths each year since FY 2002.



Children who died from child maltreatment in FY 2006 ranged in age from birth to 16 years. Of the 29 children who died from child maltreatment, 19 (66 percent) were less than one year of age. This is consistent with national data and previous state data that have found young children to be the most vulnerable.

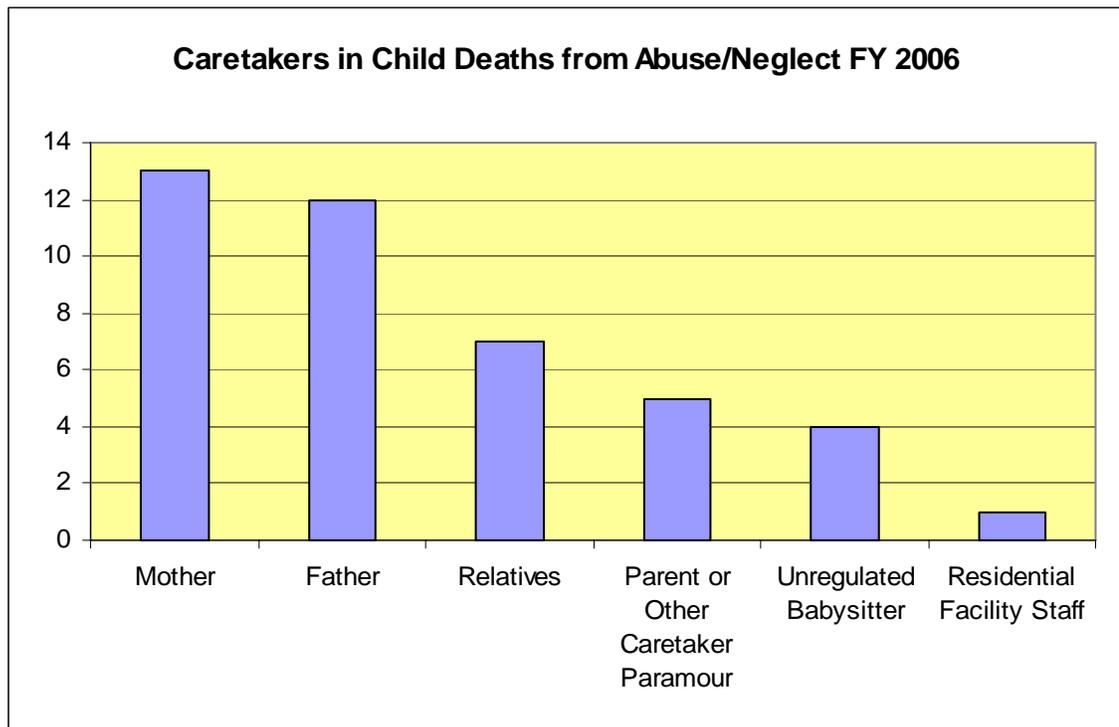


Eleven children who died as a result of child maltreatment were African-American. Seventeen children were white and one child was Hispanic. In FY 2005 and 2006, more white children died as a result of child abuse or neglect than African-American children. However, the rate of child deaths because of child abuse or neglect is higher among African-American children than among white children. This is consistent with national data that shows African-American children to be over-represented in child deaths due to child maltreatment.



There were more deaths among boys (18) than girls (11). This is consistent with national data and previous state data that found boys to have a higher rate of child maltreatment fatalities than girls.

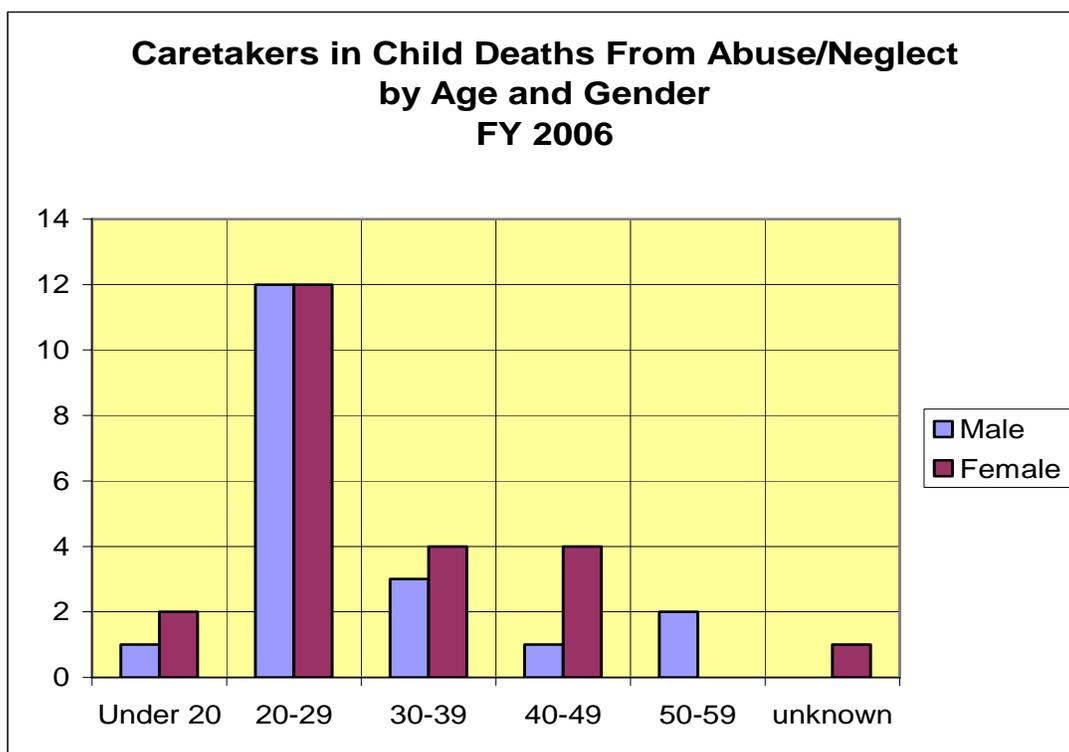
CARETAKERS



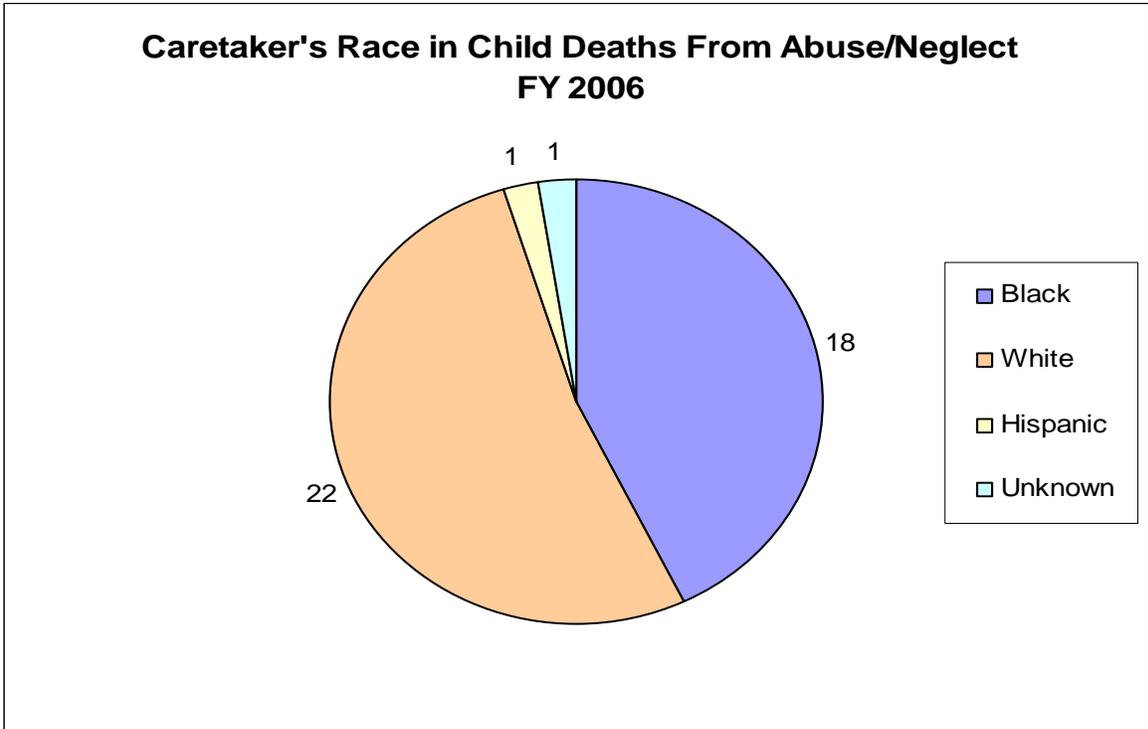
Local departments of social services found 42 caretakers to be responsible for the deaths of 29 because of child abuse/neglect in FY 2006. Some victims were abused by more than one caretaker. Most of these caretakers were related to the victim or resided with the victim. Out of the 42 caretakers, 25 were biological parents, adoptive parents or stepparents. Seven of the 42 caretakers were other relatives of the victims, including grandmothers, uncles, aunts and cousins.

Five of the 42 (12 percent) caretakers were out of family providers including one residential facility staff and four unlicensed babysitters. These five caretakers were responsible for four child deaths. In FY 2005, two unlicensed babysitters were responsible for two child deaths.

Three caretakers were the paramour of a relative caretaker and two caretakers were the paramour of the father of the child. Three of the five paramours were female. These data differ from previous state data and national data that show male paramours to be more likely to abuse children than female paramours. Studies have shown that children living in households with one or more adult males that are unrelated to them are at increased risk of maltreatment, injury or death. Another study has documented that young children who are left alone with caretakers' boyfriends experience a substantially elevated risk of physical abuse.



Of the 42 caretakers found to be responsible for child deaths in FY 2006, 23 were females and 19 were males. There were 12 male and 12 female caretakers between 20 and 29 years of age. Age is unknown for one female caretaker. National data and previous state data found most caretakers to be young adults in their mid-twenties.



Eighteen caretakers were African-American, 22 were white, and one was Hispanic. The race of one caretaker was unknown. This is consistent with previous state data for race of caretakers in child deaths.

TYPES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Eleven (38 percent) children died as a result of child abuse and 15 (52 percent) children died as a result of child neglect. Three (10 percent) children died as a result of both child abuse and neglect.

**Type of Abuse/Neglect in Child Deaths
FY 2006**

Type	Abuse	Neglect
Shaking	6	
Bruises/Bone Fractures	5	
Lack of Supervision		9
Abandonment		1
Drowning/Choking	1	
Asphyxia		
Medical Neglect		3
Malnutrition		1
Other	2	4

All of the children who died from child abuse were birth to age four. Infants being shaken by their caretakers accounted for six of the deaths from child abuse. An additional five children suffered serious injuries inflicted by their caretakers. There were five paramours who physically abused the victims.

Three of the deaths from child neglect involved teenage victims with special needs. One child with behavioral problems was in a group home when he died. Another young man had recently come out of foster care and had known drug abuse problems. The third teenager had diabetes and his mother failed to provide proper care or attention to this disease.

The remaining child deaths from child neglect were very young children, including one death of an abandoned newborn. One child died from lack of supervision due to being mauled by a dog. The father of one infant forgot the baby was in the car. When he discovered the infant, he took the dead child to the babysitter's home and left the child in the backyard.

FAMILIES AND THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Compared to families and caretakers with no previous child welfare involvement, families and caretakers previously known to the child welfare system were more likely to have been abused as a child, been in foster care or other out of home setting. Research substantiates that these factors are associated with child abuse and neglect. These factors are considered in the structured decision making tool for assessing risk of future abuse and neglect that is being piloted in 45 local departments of social services.

Risk Factors in Child Deaths from Abuse/Neglect FY 2006

Risk Factor	Child	Family, including Parents, Siblings and Relatives	Babysitter
Previous/Current CPS involvement	3	5	1
Child's Special Needs	3		

Three children who died from child abuse or neglect had previous or current CPS involvement. One child had been the subject of four prior CPS reports and his death occurred while the family was receiving court ordered services from a local department of social services. The remaining two children were the subjects of a founded CPS investigation and family assessment more than one year earlier but neither family was receiving any child welfare services at the time of the child's death.

The families of five children who died from child abuse or neglect had been involved with CPS for other children or had been victims of child abuse themselves. Two abusers had been in foster care as children. One abuser had sexually abused a child when he was a minor.

The babysitter had been the subject of prior CPS reports regarding her own children and she was operating an unlicensed day care home at the time of the victim's death.

Children with special needs are at a higher risk of child abuse and neglect. This year three children with special needs died from child abuse or neglect and all of them were teenagers. One child with behavioral problems was in a group home when he died. Another young man had recently come out of foster care and had known drug abuse problems. The third teenager had diabetes and his mother failed to provide proper care or attention to this disease.

ACTIONS TAKEN IN FY 2006

Actions taken to assess the problem of child maltreatment fatalities in Virginia and to develop recommendations for prevention during FY 2006 include:

- The State Child Fatality Review Team (Team) completed its review of hyperthermia deaths of children left unattended in automobiles and other motor vehicle related deaths and developed several recommendations to increase awareness of parents about the potentially fatal consequences of leaving children alone in automobiles.
 - In Virginia, 12 incidents resulting in 13 cases of heat-related motor vehicle entrapment deaths were identified among children under the age of 18 between 1988 and 2003. The Team reviewed all 13 child fatalities. Among the 12 incidents, 75 percent occurred when a caretaker left the child unattended in the vehicle or was incapacitated to care for the child in the vehicle. The additional 25 percent occurred when a child gained access to a vehicle of his own volition and without the caretaker's knowledge.
- VDSS and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner continued to support local/regional child fatality review teams, including the Hampton Roads Child Fatality Team.
- VDSS assisted the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner with data collection for the National Violent Death Reporting System.
- The Safe Families Recovery Project expanded to include the Virginia Department of Health. The goal of this effort is to improve and enhance coordination and collaboration to better meet the needs of families in the child welfare system affected by substance use. The group has developed draft guidelines for health care providers and child welfare workers in working with substance using pregnant women.
- CAPC, under the auspices of the GAB met bi-monthly to support and monitor the nine strategies of the Blue Ribbon Plan. A conference was held in 2006 to share and review state level plans that promote positive outcomes for children and families. A Parent Education Work Group met with the Virginia Department of Health to assess evidence-based and promising new prevention approaches and programs.

Actions taken to prevent child maltreatment fatalities in Virginia:

- VDSS continued to pilot SDM in 45 localities to guide child protective services and foster care workers in the safety and protection of children. The SDM model utilizes tools to help CPS and foster care workers make more accurate and reliable assessments of safety issues and long-term risk.
- VDSS conducted a study of founded and unfounded child deaths where the child had been previously known to the child welfare system. Some of the indicators identified included: history of previous reports of child abuse/neglect; second and third reports investigated by different workers within the local department of social services; complaints involving young mothers; chronic problems of substance abuse; screened out reports; in-home services provided with no decrease in risk level; limited contact and coordinator of services between the local department of social services and service provider; lack of adherence to the safety plan; and numerous hospital visits to different facilities. Recommendations for policy changes are still being formulated.
- VDSS' Child Protective Services Unit continued to administer the statewide Healthy Families Program which includes 36 local sites in 85 communities and one state level program. During FY 2006, there were 3,810 families that received Healthy Families services in Virginia. Funding for the Healthy Family Program is provided through a General Assembly appropriation which for FY 2006 was \$ 4,499,800.
- During 2006, VDSS continued to administer the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Program, a combination of the Virginia Family Violence Prevention Program funds (\$500,000) and the Federal Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funds (\$500,000). This program includes 21 prevention programs throughout the State. Two programs have statewide impact on child abuse prevention. A total of 1,746 families received prevention services in Virginia through this program.

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APPENDIX

Table of Cases

**REPORT ON CHILD DEATHS DUE TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT IN VIRGINIA DURING FISCAL YEAR 2006
APPENDIX: TABLE OF FOUNDED INVESTIGATIONS WITH A CHILD DEATH**

LOCALITY	FATALITY DATE	VICTIM AGE, RACE	ABUSER RELATIONSHIP AGE/RACE	ABUSE/NEGLECT	PRIOR ABUSE/NEGLECT	PARAMOUR	SUBSTANCE ABUSE	SUMMARY OF CIRCUMSTANCES
Accomack	3/1/2006	1 mo. B. M.	Father: 22 yrs. B. M.	Physical Abuse: Shaking	None	No	No	The mother left the infant with father. When she returned, mother noticed child was having difficulty breathing. The infant was transported to hospital where shaken baby syndrome was diagnosed. Father was charged with 2nd degree murder.
Albemarle	9/26/2005	7 mos. W. M.	Parents: 25 yrs. W.F. 22 yrs. W. M.	Physical Neglect: Other	In 2003, there were 2 physical neglect reports involving the hygiene of siblings.	No	No	Infant who was sleeping in same bed as parents was found unresponsive lying on the floor between the foot of the bed and the dresser.
Alexandria	9/28/2005	10 mos. W. M.	Babysitter: 22 yrs. B.F.	Physical Neglect: Lack of Supervision	None	No	No	Babysitter allegedly had a migraine headache and took several Tylenol PM tablets and put the child on the floor to take a nap. The babysitter fell asleep and when she woke up, she found the child entangled in a sheet. Babysitter pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter. The daycare home was not licensed.
Alexandria	1/14/2006	8 mos. H. M.	Father: 28 yrs. H. M.	Physical Abuse: Shaking, Bone Fracture	None	No	No	Child brought to hospital because he was having seizures as a result of a head injury. The child was in the care of his father at the time of the injury who gave conflicting accounts of how the child was injured. The autopsy results indicated that the infant died as a result of being shaken and blunt force trauma to the head.
Chesapeake	8/23/2005	4 mos. W. M.	Mother: 27 yrs. W.F.	Physical Abuse: Shaking, Bone Fracture	Child's older sibling was the subject of a prior CPS report and was placed in foster care until the court returned the child to her mother.	No	No	Child was found unresponsive in his bed. Autopsy revealed many injuries, including fractured skull and bruises to face, scalp and a broken arm in the healing stages. Mother was charged with murder.
Chesterfield	10/26/2005	7 mos. W. M.	Babysitters: 40 yrs. W.F. 58 yrs. W.M.	Physical Neglect	None	No	No	Babysitter put child in crib upstairs for a nap. When sitter went upstairs to check on another child noticed the infant was not breathing. The daycare home was dirty, very messy and the child care equipment was in poor condition. The daycare home was not licensed.
Chesterfield	3/31/2006	4 yrs. W. M.	Mother: 25 yrs. W.F. Aunt: 26 yrs. W.F. Uncle: 27 yrs. W.M.	Physical Neglect: Lack of Supervision	One Family Assessment report in 2005 concerning lack of supervision of the victim child with no identified service needs or child safety issues.	No	No	Child found unconscious in the backyard of his aunt and uncle's home with a wire around his neck. He was apparently the victim of an accidental hanging. The child's mother was not at home at the time of the child's death.
Fairfax	1/4/2006	5 days W. F.	Grandmother: 38 yrs. W.F.	Physical Abuse: Shaking	None	No	Yes	Grandmother admitted to shaking the infant.

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Hampton	7/13/2005	4 yrs. B.M.	Aunt: 28 yrs. B. F. Aunt's Boyfriend: 28 yrs. B.M.	Physical Abuse: Shaking Medical Neglect	None	Yes	No	Child was reported missing from the home of his paternal aunt. She had left him in the care of her boyfriend and his mother. Boyfriend took police to child's body that was buried in shallow grave. There were indications of prior abuse to the child. Babysitter and Aunt were charged with child neglect. Aunt's Boyfriend was charged with murder.
Henrico	9/28/2005	10 mos. B. F.	Father: 21 yrs. B.M.	Physical Neglect: Lack of Supervision	None	No	No	The father took his wife to work and forgot the baby was in the car. When he remembered the baby, he found she was dead. He panicked and drove to babysitter's home where he tossed child in her car seat into the sitter's backyard. Autopsy reports cause of death as unknown, but possible smothering or hypothermia.
Henry-Martinsville	12/27/2005	3 mos. W. M.	Parents: 30 yrs. W.F. 28 yrs. W. M.	Physical Neglect	There was one founded CPS report in 2005 for lack of supervision of the child by the father.	No	No	The infant was one of 7 children in the home ages 7years to 3 months. The father found the infant unresponsive and took infant to hospital.
Isle of Wight	1/26/2006	22 mos. W. M.	Father: 43 yrs. W.M. Father's Paramour: 25 yrs. W.F.	Physical Abuse: Bruises Physical Neglect: Other	None	Yes	No	Girlfriend stated that the child fell and hurt his head. She has been charged with felony child neglect and homicide. The father obtained custody in Sept '05; mother's whereabouts is unknown.
Lee	10/30/2005	5 mos.W. F.	Mother: 23 yrs. W.F.	Physical Neglect: Lack of Supervision	None	No	No	Mother had 5 mo. old infant and 3 yr. old sibling in bath tub. She left the infant in a seat that was affixed to the bottom of the tub by a suction cup and took the sibling into another room. When she returned, the baby was lying on her back in eight inches of water.
Norfolk	3/26/2006	7 wks. W. M.	Parents: 25 yrs. W.F. 25 yrs. W. M.	Physical Abuse: Bone Fracture	There was one prior CPS report involving the child's sibling. The investigation was unfounded.	No	No	Infant was found unresponsive by his father. Child was taken to ER and pronounced DOA. The autopsy report revealed healing rib fractures.
Norfolk	10/13/2005	2 mos.B. F.	Mother: 17 yrs. B.F. Grandmother: 46 yrs. B.F.	Physical Abuse: Shaking, Bone Fracture Physical Neglect: Malnutrition	Past history of physical abuse of mother by grandmother. Mother had been placed in foster care.	No	No	Child was in the care of grandmother and found unconscious. The autopsy report concluded the child had skull fractures and was underweight. Infant had not been seen by a physician since her birth.
Norfolk	3/18/2006	9 mos. B. F.	Parents: 31 yrs. B.M 28 yrs. B. F.	Physical Neglect: Lack of Supervision	There were no prior reports concerning this child or sibling; however, as a youth the father was in a founded CPS sex abuse report as the offender/abuser	No	No	Child was put down to sleep on two pillows. Father fell asleep and when he woke up, the baby was face down and not breathing.
Norfolk	3/28/2006	Newborn, B.F.	Mother: age unknown, B.F.	Physical Neglect: Abandonment	Unknown	No	Unknown	The newborn was found at a construction site. The autopsy revealed the abdominal injuries to the infant who was born alive.

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Northumberland	8/4/2005	2 yrs. B. F.	Father: 33 yrs. B.M. Father's Paramour: 31 yrs. B.F. Paramour's son: 13 yrs. B.M.	Physical Abuse: Bruises	None	No	Yes - Father	Father brought his barely breathing child to the sheriff's office. Child was then taken by rescue squad to hospital and pronounced dead. The autopsy results indicated child had been hit so hard that her liver was severely lacerated. There were other bruises and marks on the child. All three caretakers admitted to hitting the child when she misbehaved.
Petersburg	6/8/2006	15 yrs. B. M.	Group Home staff: 30 yrs. B.M.	Physical Neglect: Lack of Supervision	None	No	No	Resident of a group home was injured while allegedly involved in horseplay with another resident, lost consciousness and was transported to the ER when he later died.
Portsmouth	10/14/2005	2 yrs. B. M.	Child's adult cousin: 24 yrs. B.M. Cousin's paramour: 20 yrs. B.F.	Physical Abuse: Bruises	None	No	No	Child was taken to the hospital unconscious and experiencing seizures. He had swelling on his brain, extensive bruising on his face and body. The injuries were caused by blunt force trauma.
Prince William	7/2/2005	2 yrs. W. F.	Adoptive Mother: 33 yrs. W.F.	Physical Abuse	None	No	No	A North Carolina woman admitted to becoming "enraged and angered" at her adopted Russian child and shaking, hitting, kicking and punching her. Child died from extensive internal injuries and blow to the abdominal area.
Prince William	1/31/2006	6 mos. W.M.	Father: 22 yrs. W.M.	Physical Abuse: Other	None	No	No	The infant was taken to hospital by the parents after repeatedly falling out of his crib. The autopsy report indicated cause of death as shaken baby.
Richmond City	7/26/2005	13 yrs. B. M.	Mother: 40 yrs. B.F.	Physical Neglect	There were four prior CPS reports involving neglect and the family was open to CPS services based on a protective order at the time of the child's death. Although the mother was charged with felony neglect, the criminal charges were dropped because the child's cause of death was due to diabetic ketoacidosis that could have been prevented if child had received medical attention.	No	Yes	Child with diabetes was found unresponsive in his bed. The cause of death was diabetic ketoacidosis that was preventable if child had received proper medical care.
Shenandoah Valley	6/19/2006	11 mos. W. F.	Mother: 22 yrs. W.F.	Physical Abuse: Drowning	None	No	No	Mother admitted to leaving child unattended in bathtub.
Stafford	3/31/2006	Newborn, W.F.	Mother: 15 yrs. W.F.	Medical Neglect	None	No	No	A 15-yr. old girl delivered an infant in the basement of her home. The infant allegedly bled to death at birth. Mother placed the infant in a plastic bag in an abandoned car in the yard. The ME's Office has not yet issued a final report as to the cause and manner of death.

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Suffolk	10/3/2004	2 yrs. W. M.	Father: 25 yrs. W.M.	Physical Neglect: Lack of Supervision	None	No	Yes	Child was downstairs alone with the dog that is normally kept outside. The dog mauled the child to death.
Virginia Beach	9/14/2005	9 mos. W. F.	Babysitter: 42 yrs. W.F.	Physical Neglect: Lack of Supervision Physical Abuse: Bruises	There were 5 prior CPS reports involving the abuser and her own children.	No	No	Baby found dead at the home of the babysitter. The cause of death was possible smothering. The provider was unlicensed and had 19 children in her home at the time of the incident.
Virginia Beach	11/4/2005	7 mos. B. M.	Mother's Paramour: 24 yrs. B.M.	Physical Abuse: Shaking	None	Yes	No	The infant was shaken and beaten by the mother's paramour who was charged with 2nd degree murder.
Washington	10/1/2005	16 yrs. W.M.	Father: 56 yrs. W. M.	Medical Neglect	None	No	No	The child had been in foster care as a Child In Need of Services, but been returned home as services were completed. The child died as a result of a drug overdose and the father did not seek treatment for his very obvious symptoms.