



Children's Justice & Advocacy Report

To promote community responsibility so every Pennsylvania child is protected from child abuse, including sexual abuse.

In the June 13th edition:

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Half of Pennsylvania's 67 counties responded to more reports in 2013.

A total of 26,944 reports of suspected child abuse were screened-in for investigation by ChildLine in 2013.

Statewide 9.8 per 1,000 children were the subject of a child abuse report in 2013. McKean County recorded the highest rate of children, who were the subject of a child abuse report at 22.4 per 1,000 children. Fulton had a rate of 20.1 per 1,000 children followed by Crawford County at 17.9. Slightly more than 7 per 1,000 children living in

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General Protective Services reports exceed 41,000

General Protective Services (GPS) reports are often referred to as the non-abuse or neglect cases. GPS cases trigger an assessment instead of a child abuse investigation by a children and youth agency.

GPS cases are generally considered to involve "non-serious injury or neglect" (e.g., inadequate shelter, truancy, inappropriate discipline, abandonment). However, several years ago the Philadelphia's Community Oversight Board (COB) underscored that GPS reports can also "frequently involve significant risk to the safety and well-being of the children involved."

Last year, ChildLine received 41,386 GPS reports – 2,058 more than 2012.

Child abuse reports increase, substantiated child abuse reports drop (again)

On Friday, Pennsylvania released its [2013 Annual Child Abuse Report](#) revealing that the state will retain its national notoriety as a statistical outlier.

Even before comprehensive mandatory reporting changes take effect later this year; the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) used its press release to underscore that the state received "more reports of suspected child abuse in 2013 than any other year on record." 280 additional reports were received in 2013.

Under current law, ChildLine doesn't record or track GPS cases, so many more GPS reports are made

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Law enforcement referrals tick upward

Approximately a third of the 26,944 child abuse reports (9,273) screened in for investigation by ChildLine were referred to law enforcement for "possible criminal investigation." PA law requires that certain suspected criminal offenses (e.g., sexual abuse, serious bodily injury, aggravated assault) be jointly investigated by law enforcement and a children and youth agency.

In addition, law enforcement only (LEO) reports

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ber of a child's family not living with the child.

Mandated reporters continue to be the catalyst to a child connecting with child protection officials

21,076 or nearly 80 percent of all the child abuse reports screened-in for an investigation were made by a person with a legal mandate to report suspected child abuse.

In July 2012, Governor Tom Corbett signed Senate Bill 449 into law requiring that school employees receive training in recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse. The training required by [Act 126 of 2012](#) is three hours every five years. The training may be a factor in an increase of reports from school employees in 2013 – up from 7,685 in 2012 to 8,317 last year.

According to Table 2A in the Annual report, just over 5 percent of the reports referred by school employees were substantiated as child abuse. Some mandated reporters made fewer reports in 2013 including public and private social service

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90 Pennsylvania children died or nearly-died from child abuse

Pennsylvania's Annual Child Abuse report is a complicated read when trying to measure the degree to which child abuse proved lethal or nearly-lethal to a Pennsylvania child. Those complexities warrant their own study and report in the days ahead.

For now, DPW included 38 fatalities and 52 near-fatalities in its 2013 report, but some of these incidents happened in 2012. Still other incidents that did happen in 2013 were not resolved in time for the printing of this just released report. 71 percent of the 38 fatalities, included in the report,

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5-year child protection trends for PA children

With regard to overall reports, Pennsylvania recorded 1,602 more reports in 2013 when compared with 2009 data - approximately a 6% increase in reports. Even as overall reports increased percentage wise, about 13 percent less (518 in total number) reports were later substantiated as child abuse when 2009 and 2013 data is compared.

There is a 14.5 percent increase in the rate of reabuse with 190 more reports recorded in 2013 as compared to 2009. Reabuse reports are particularly troubling in Pennsylvania, because the state has such a narrow definition of child abuse. Since it is rare, in the first place, for a Pennsylvania child to be determined to be a victim of child abuse, a child becoming a victim again is very

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See Tables 1 and 2 included below for fuller statistical data on the 5-year trends.