Child and Youth Deaths in California

Death Rate Among Children/Youth Ages 1-24

Definition: Number of deaths per 100,000 children and youth ages 1-24 (e.g., there were 29.4 deaths per 100,000 California children and youth in 2014-2016).


Death Rate Among Children/Youth, by Race/Ethnicity: 2014-2016

Why This Topic Is Important
The death of any young person is a tragedy. High child and youth death rates also can be an indicator of larger system issues, such as community violence or problems accessing health care. In the U.S., preventable injuries (e.g., from car accidents) are the leading cause of death for young people ages 1-24. For children ages 1-4, the most common cause of unintentional injury-related death is drowning; for 5- to 24-year-olds, it is motor vehicle accidents. Other leading causes of death among children and young adults include suicide, homicide, cancer, heart disease, and birth defects. Nationwide, firearms account for more youth homicides and suicides than any other type of injury.

Death rates from injuries, and overall death rates, generally are higher for boys than girls. Inequities by race/ethnicity also persist, statewide and nationally; e.g., among groups with data, African American/black and American Indian/Alaska Native children and youth have had the highest death rates for many years. Many fatal injuries can be prevented through environmental, behavioral, social, and legislative change.

How Children Are Faring
In 2014-16, the death rate among California children and young adults ages 1-24 was 29.4 per 100,000, compared with 39.4 deaths per 100,000 youth for the nation as a whole. California rates have been on the decline since 2004-06 and have been consistently lower than U.S. rates since 1999-2001 (the first years for which data are available). Across counties with
Firearm Death Rate Among Children/Youth, by Gender and Cause: 2014-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Homicide</th>
<th>Suicide</th>
<th>Unintentional Deaths</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition:** Number of firearm-related deaths per 100,000 children and youth ages 0-24, by gender and cause (e.g., in 2014-2016, there were 6.1 firearm-related homicides per 100,000 male children and youth in California).

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, Death Statistical Master Files; California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates by Race/Ethnicity with Age and Gender Detail 1990-2009; Population Reference Bureau, Population Estimates 2010-2016; CDC WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2016 (Feb. 2019).

Firearm Death Rate Among Children/Youth, by Race/Ethnicity: 2014-2016

**Definition:** Number of firearm-related deaths per 100,000 children and youth ages 0-24, by race/ethnicity and cause (e.g., in 2014-2016, there were 3.8 firearm-related homicides per 100,000 Hispanic/Latino children and youth in California).

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, Death Statistical Master Files; California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates by Race/Ethnicity with Age and Gender Detail 1990-2009; Population Reference Bureau, Population Estimates 2010-2016; CDC WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2016 (Feb. 2019).

Young adults ages 20-24 consistently have the highest death rate (64.8 per 100,000 in 2014-16) when compared with other age groups in California, while children ages 5-14 have the lowest (9.8 per 100,000 in 2014-16). Since 2000-02, African American/black and American Indian/Alaska Native youth have had the highest rates of death among groups with data; in 2014-16, the death rate for African American/black youth in California (58.8 per 100,000) was about twice that for both white (30.7 per 100,000) and Hispanic/Latino youth (28.3 per 100,000), and more than three times that for Asian/Pacific Islander youth (19.1 per 100,000). Both in California and nationwide, unintentional injuries—such as car accidents, drowning, and falls—are the leading cause of death for children and young adults ages 1-24 overall, for all age groups, and for all racial/ethnic groups with the exception of African American/black youth, for whom homicide is the leading cause of death.

In 2016, there were 662 firearm-related deaths among California children and young adults ages 24 and under, with boys and young men accounting for the vast majority (593). Homicide and suicide are the most common causes of firearm-related death across all age, gender, and racial/ethnic groups with data. Overall, the statewide rate of firearm-related deaths among youth (4.7 per 100,000 in 2014-16) has decreased since 2004-06, and has been lower than the national rate since 2008-10. Still, disparities persist among groups; e.g., in 2014-16, African American/black youth died from firearm-related injuries at a rate (20.9 per 100,000) more than four times that for Hispanic/Latino youth (4.7 per 100,000), and more than seven times that for white youth (2.7 per 100,000).

**View references for this text and additional research on this topic:**
https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/49/deaths/summary