

Contact: Sheila Anderson  
916-244-1927

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## **Sacramento County Child Abuse and Neglect Homicides Down, According to New Study**

*Supervisors take aim at child abuse, declare April  
"Child Abuse Prevention" Month*

SACRAMENTO—Child Abuse and Neglect Homicides are declining according to a 5-year study conducted by the Sacramento County Child Death Review Team (CDRT), a report that was presented today to the Board of Supervisors of Sacramento by the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento (CAPC), which also voted to declare April "Child Abuse Prevention" month.

The 5-year report is a summary of all child fatalities in Sacramento County between 1999 and 2003. The CDRT members review each case and reach consensus on the manner and cause of each death. The goal of the CDRT is to identify how and why children die, in order to facilitate the creation and implementation of strategies to prevent child deaths.

"Thankfully, the CDRT report shows a reduction in child fatalities caused by abuse and neglect — which we believe can be directly attributed to an increase in funding for local child abuse prevention programs," said CAPC executive director Sheila Anderson. "But even one death is too many, so there's still more to be done."

While the average number of deaths due to abuse or neglect was 11.3 from 1997-1999, it was down to 4.6 in 2001-2003.

In the past five years, a heartbreaking 862 children under the age of 18 died in Sacramento County. The three leading causes were perinatal conditions (230), congenital anomalies (163), and Sudden-Infant Death Syndrome [(SIDS) 79].

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The report's other key findings include:

- One quarter of child deaths are preventable
- Children under five years of age continue to represent the majority of child deaths
- African American children are dying in disproportionate numbers compared to other ethnic groups
- A history of substance abuse, prior child abuse, domestic violence, and violent crimes have been directly related to child abuse and neglect deaths
- A history of substance abuse or domestic violence is directly related to sleep-related infant deaths
- Reckless driving is a significant contributing factor in vehicle deaths among teenagers

Among the report's recommendations were:

- Supporting the implementation, continuation, and expansion of public education and awareness campaigns aimed educating parents and caregivers on preventable deaths
- Developing a family violence curriculum that addresses child, elder and domestic violence
- Requiring mandated reporter training for all childcare providers and preschools, and adding a mandated reporter training requirement to all individuals seeking a new or renewed childcare license

- Evaluating the extent to which existing programs, services and resources have effectively targeted the child populations most at risk of dying and provide appropriate and effective services to these children and families
- Conducting an extensive survey of similar California counties to determine what outreach and education strategies have been successful in reducing their county's SIDS rates

The CAPC was formed in 1977 and is the only organization providing prevention, coordination and education to reduce the incidence and impact of abuse neglect and abandonment in Sacramento County. CAPC coordinates the efforts of over 160 agencies and organizations working to address child protective system issues and maximize the effectiveness of the response to child abuse and neglect.

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