

TRAVIS COUNTY CHILD FATALITY REVIEW TEAM
2003 annual report



center for **child protection**
HELP. HOPE. HEALING.



100% PREVENTABLE DEATHS

A responsible adult can be
a child's best chance.

SOME DAYS IT'S A FAMILY TAXI. TODAY IT'S AN OVEN.

To a mother rushing into a convenience store, three minutes can seem like a second. For a child left in a hot car unattended, three minutes can be a lifetime.

Overheating in cars still resulted in unnecessary deaths in Travis County in 2003. On a 93° day, temperatures inside an enclosed vehicle can reach

125°. Heat stroke can occur at 104° and a body temperature of 107° can cause death.

It's never okay to leave a child in a car unattended. Young children are especially vulnerable to heat, their body temperature increasing five times faster than an adult's. A child's rapidly drying skin is unable to produce sweat to cool the body and reduce its core

temperature. The result is heat stroke, confusion, unconsciousness, organ failure and death.

If you see a child left in a car unattended, act responsibly. Call **911**. We are all accountable for the youngest among us.

The Center for Child Protection exists to make the safety and security of

children a community priority.

To help with a donation, volunteer your time, or for additional information, please call **512-472-1164** or visit www.centerforchildprotection.org

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, please call **1-800-252-5400**, or for non-emergency assistance, dial **211**.

The Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) in Travis County is a multidisciplinary group consisting of law enforcement officials, related public officials, community and child advocacy professionals working together toward a single goal: To prevent senseless and needless deaths of children in Travis County.

This team, formed in 1992, includes: Austin Police Department, Children's Hospital of Austin, City of Austin-Emergency Medical Services, Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Public Safety, Center for Child Protection, Travis County District Attorney's Office, Travis County Medical Examiner, and The Travis County Sheriff's Office. It also includes community professionals in the medical and mental health fields. The team meets every other month to review the circumstances associated with every child fatality, ages 0-17, in the county.

This unique collaboration has a cohesive purpose - to look beyond statistics and identify patterns in child deaths in order to educate the community about how to prevent them. Specifically, the team's goals are to:

- Increase effectiveness of child protection through improved prevention, intervention, investigation, and prosecution;
- Support and enhance cooperation and communication among public and private organizations charged with protecting children;
- Identify the causes of child death;
- Share and exchange information about advances in investigating, preventing, and prosecuting child abuse; and
- Improve public awareness.

By working together, sharing resources, and educating each other and the community, the Child Fatality Review Team hopes to increase public awareness about the causes of death among children.



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NEED 10 GOOD REASONS TO KNOW YOUR LIMITS?

Child deaths as a result of abuse and neglect increased by 300% from 2002. Many died at the hands of a parent, guardian or a household member in the role of caregiver.

These preventable fatalities are too often the result of stress, isolation, and overwork. A few simple tips can make all the difference in protecting the lives of our children:

- If you're angry or frustrated, separate from the child. Place the child in a

crib or other safe place and go to another room. Call a friend or 1-800-4ACHILD.

- Never shake your baby. A moment of frustration can cause permanent injuries such as blindness, mental retardation, even death.
- Know your limits and those of caregivers. Excessive numbers of young children may increase the danger of caregiver stress and loss of control.¹
- Be aware of a child's developmental milestones. Unrealistic expectations

for toilet training, walking and self-sufficiency result in increased frustration for a caregiver.

Children depend on us to keep them safe. As a parent, a relative, a friend, or a neighbor, be aware of any potentially harmful situations and call the numbers below if help is needed. Please. Speak up for our children.

The Center for Child Protection exists to make the safety and security of

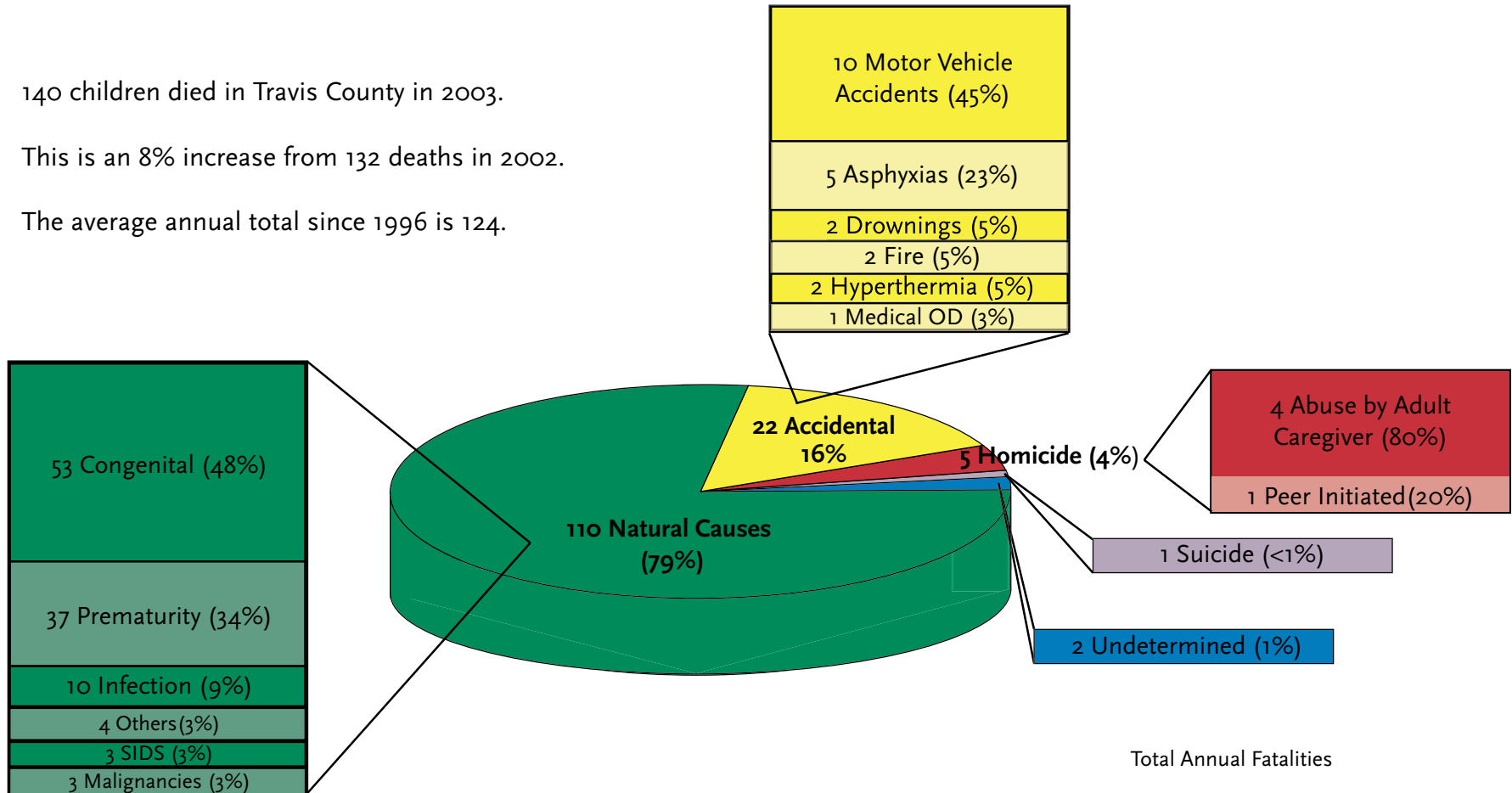
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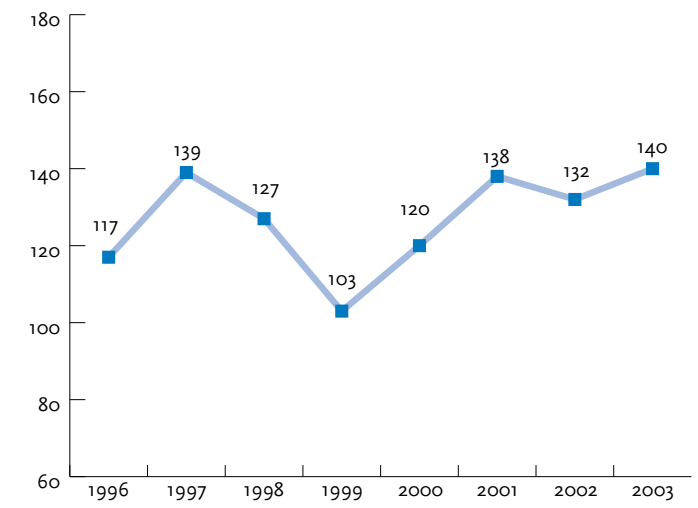
¹ Minimum Standard for Child-Care Homes

- 140 children died in Travis County in 2003.
- This is an 8% increase from 132 deaths in 2002.
- The average annual total since 1996 is 124.



- Congenital anomalies, prematurity and infection were the leading causes of natural child deaths.
- Three fatalities due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in 2003 is a significant decline (63%) from eight in 2002.

Total Annual Fatalities





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SOME CHILD-RELATED ACCIDENTS CAN LEAVE A PERMANENT MARK.

In 2003, asphyxia, positional overlay, unrestrained or improperly restrained children in motor vehicles and other preventable accidents accounted for 16% of child fatalities in our community. These senseless tragedies might have been prevented with a little knowledge, awareness, and the following life-saving actions:

Children at Risk for Asphyxiation

- Always place a sleeping infant on its back on a firm surface free of loose bedding and stuffed toys.
- Avoid sofas or beds pushed against the wall where a baby can become wedged and suffocate.

- Be careful when sleeping with your baby – alcohol and certain medications can cause you to be unaware of changing positions, making you more prone to roll over on top of your child.
- Place cribs away from curtain and blind cords.
- Keep all plastic bags and balloons away from young children.
- Never allow a child under five to eat alone. Carrots, peanuts, hot dogs and grapes can get lodged in the throat, blocking the airway.

Awareness and Patience

- Children drown in unattended, partially-filled bathtubs, buckets, and even open toilets.

- Always lock pool gates and cover hot tubs when not in use.

Motor Vehicle Safety

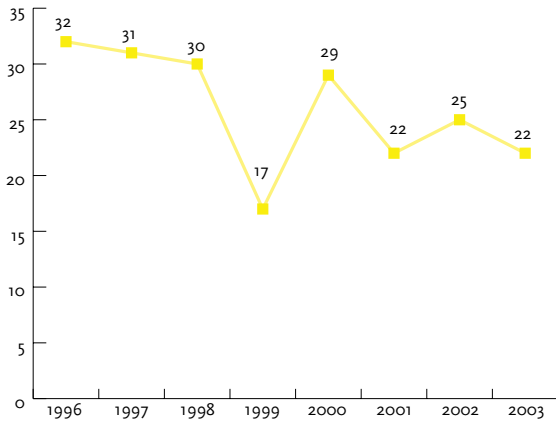
- Always secure your child in an approved, properly installed safety seat appropriate to your vehicle, the child's age, height and weight.
- Children, regardless of age, should never ride in the back of a pick-up truck.
- Always keep infants in rear-facing safety seats until they are at least one year old.
- Practice motor vehicle safety with your teenage children to ensure they develop good driving habits.

No child should be a victim of neglect, unintentional or otherwise. Keep our kids safe by looking out for any potentially harmful situations. Our children need us now.

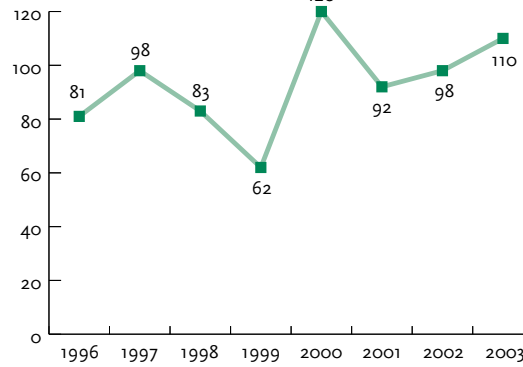
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All Accidents



Natural Causes

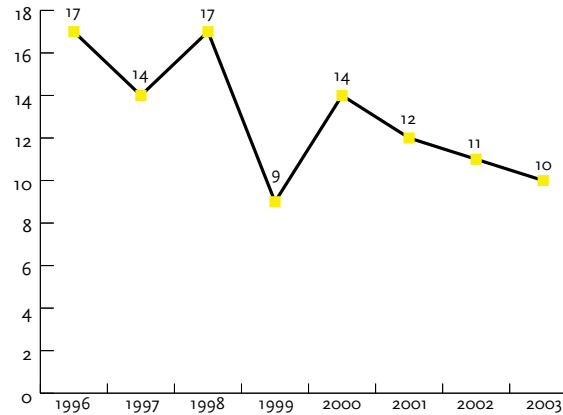


2003 Ethnic Makeup of Child Fatalities

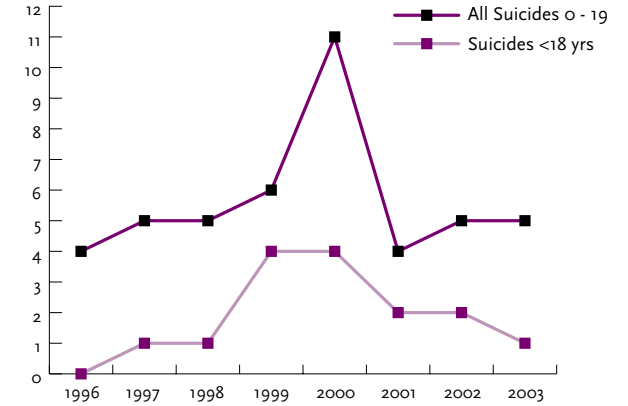
- 25% African American
- 45% Hispanic
- 26% Anglo
- 4% Asian

- Eight of ten motor vehicle accidents involved teenagers.
- Three of ten Motor Vehicle Accidents were unrestrained or unprotected.
- In a single week in June, two children died of hyperthermia in hot cars.

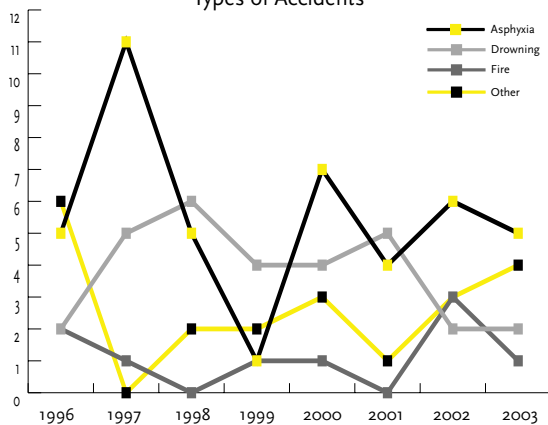
Motor Vehicle Accidents



Suicides



Types of Accidents



Homicides



- Child homicides increased 25% from 2002.
- Four of the five child homicides were the result of abuse perpetrated by parents or caregivers.

2003 Travis County Child Fatality Review Team

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

SHAUNA JACOBSON, COMMANDER
TROY GAY, LIEUTENANT
NICK HERNANDEZ, SERGEANT, TRAFFIC
INVESTIGATIONS
HECTOR REVELES, SERGEANT, HOMICIDE
ABBY RODRIGUEZ, SERGEANT, CHILD ABUSE
JOE STANISH, SERGEANT, HOMICIDE
BRETT WILSON, SERGEANT, CHILD ABUSE
CARA BOYD, DETECTIVE, CHILD ABUSE
KEN CANADAY, DETECTIVE, TRAFFIC
DUSTIN LEE, DETECTIVE, TRAFFIC
KENNETH MURPHY, DETECTIVE, CHILD ABUSE
MELISSA ATWOOD, VICTIM SERVICES SUPERVISOR

AUSTIN / TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

DANNY DANDIGNAC, CLINICAL COORDINATOR

AUSTIN / TRAVIS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION

RICK SCHWERTFEGER, SUPERVISOR

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ROBERT HENDEE, JR., MD
BETH NAUERT, MD
JAY TRACHTENBERG, LMSW (INACTIVE)
MARY FRAN SHANNON, SOCIAL WORKER,
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF AUSTIN

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DEBORAH CONRARDY, RISK DIRECTOR, REGION 7

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

ANGIE McCOWN, VICTIM SERVICES DIRECTOR
NOLAN METZ

CENTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION

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BARBARA JEFFERSON, CLINICAL DIRECTOR
AMANDA VAN HOOZER, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM
SERVICES
KIRSTEN NASH, PROGRAM COORDINATOR
DAN McCLELLAN, VOLUNTEER

TRAVIS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

LARU WOODY, ADA
DAYNA BLAZEY, ADA
GREG CANTRELL, ADA
ANN FORMAN, ADA
LISA WEEDON, LEGAL SECRETARY

TRAVIS COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

ELIZABETH PEACOCK, MD

TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ART CARDENAS, LIEUTENANT, MAJOR CRIMES
STAN ROPER, SERGEANT, MAJOR CRIMES
JIM ANDERSON, DETECTIVE, MAJOR CRIMES
RUSSELL HALVERSON, DETECTIVE, MAJOR CRIMES
ROBERT SPEER, DETECTIVE, MAJOR CRIMES
RUDY WOODS, DETECTIVE, MAJOR CRIMES



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