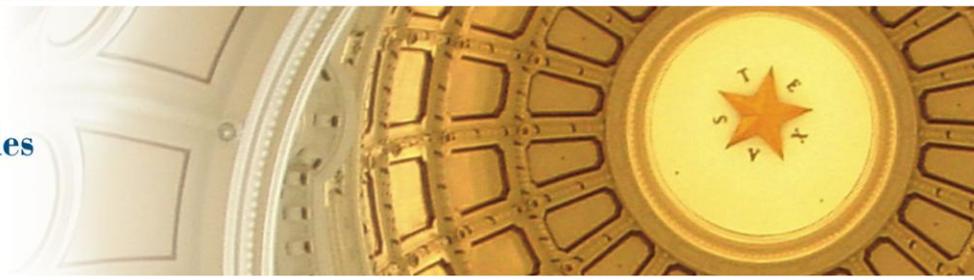




Center *for* Public Policy Priorities



Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths in 2008

14th Annual Title IV-E Roundtable
June 3, 2010

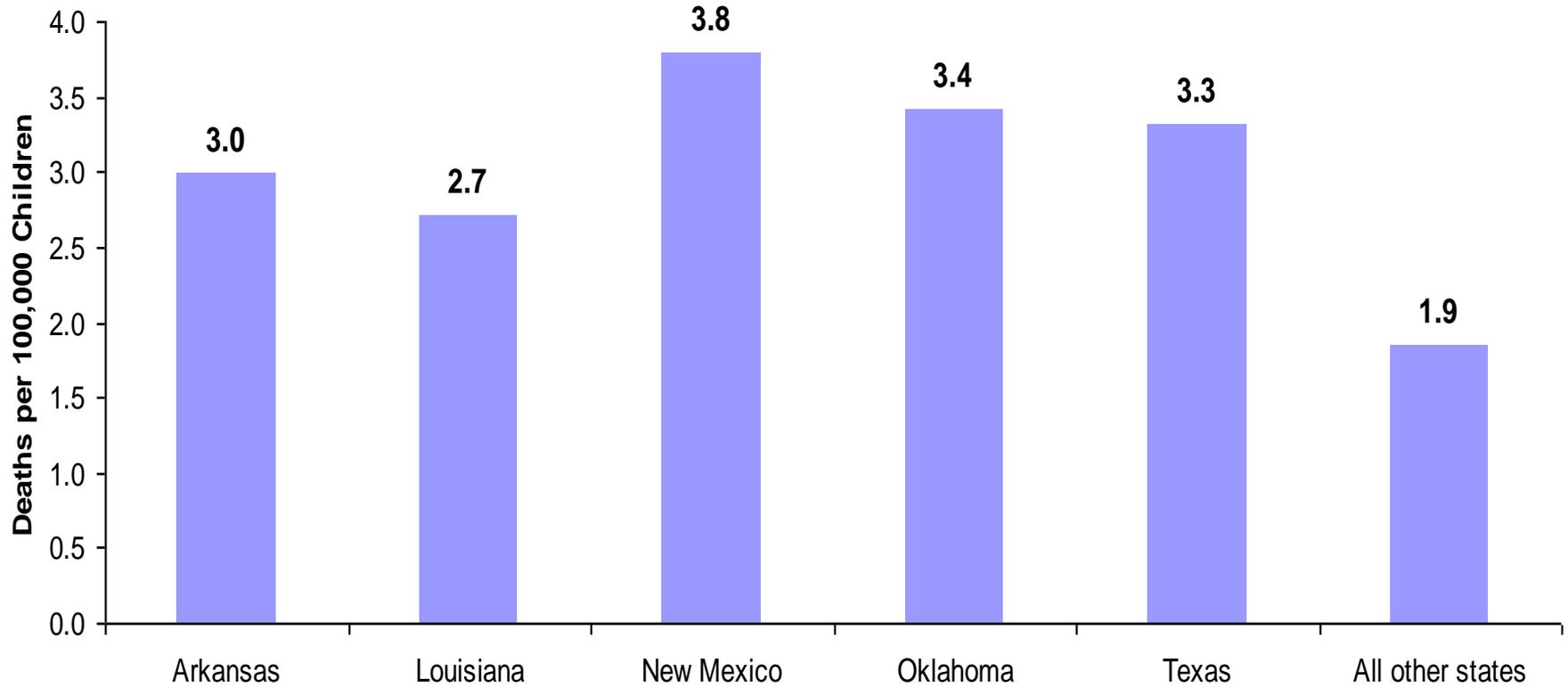
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Overview Of Presentation

- Child abuse and neglect death rates in 2008
 - Based on number of deaths per 100,000 children
- Possible factors related to higher death rates
 - More robust reporting process
 - Difficult family circumstances
 - Lack of prevention
 - Intervention by child protective services (CPS)

Unless otherwise noted, data is from Child Maltreatment 2008 report. Analysis uses a single variable ordinary least squares regression and p-value of .05 for significance. Independent variables are defined as an indicator.

States in Federal Region VI Had a Significantly Higher Child Abuse and Neglect Death Rate in 2008



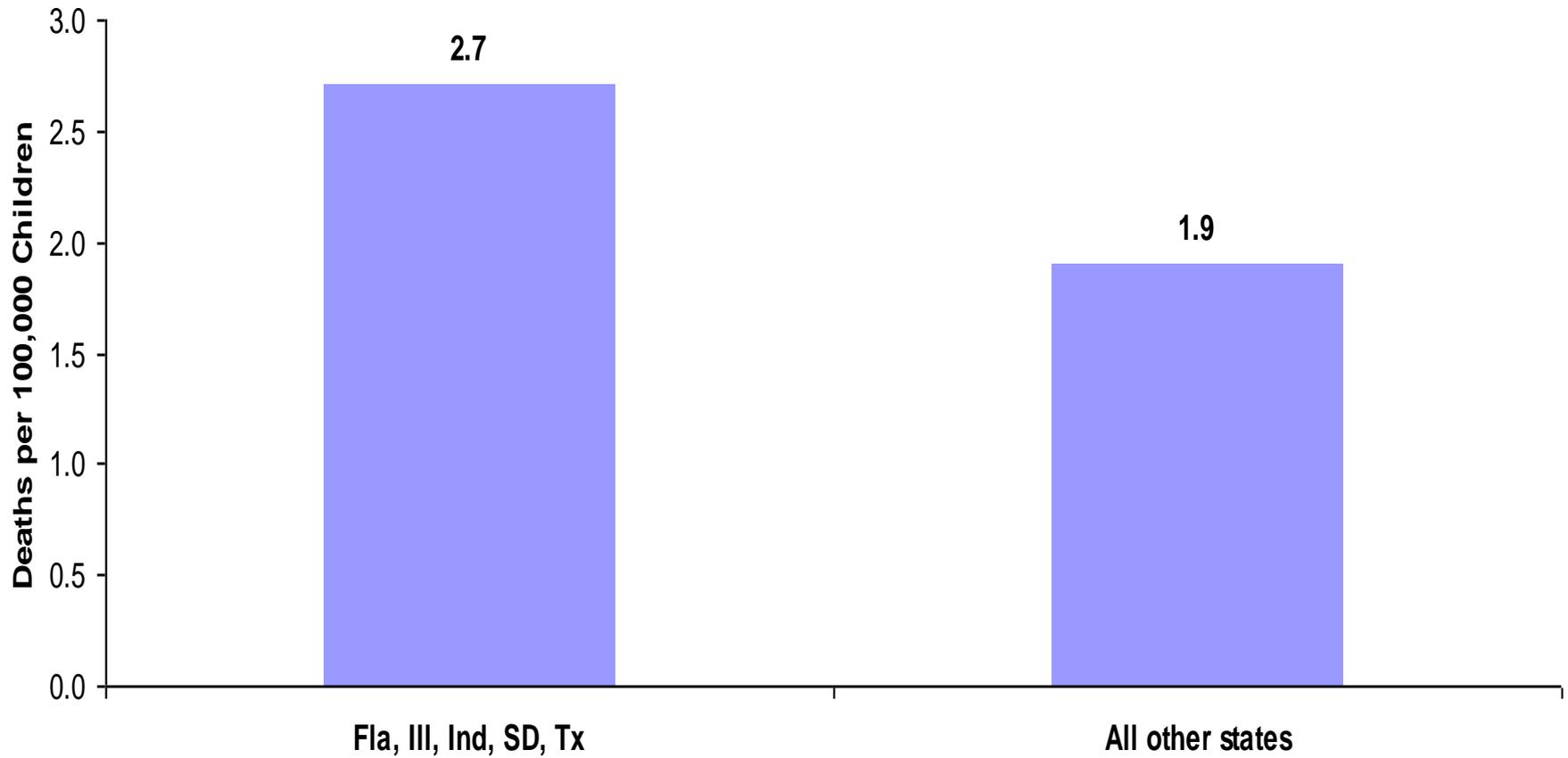
Death rate for all other states is an average rather than a weighted rate. Data is missing from Maryland, Massachusetts and North Carolina

State System for Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths

- Robust system:
 - Include substance abuse in child abuse and neglect definition
 - Arkansas and Texas
 - Special reporting procedures for suspicious child deaths
 - Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas
 - Local involvement with child death reviews
 - Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas
 - Centralized CPS system
 - All Region VI states
- Only Texas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana and South Dakota have all four characteristics

See CPPP report, *Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths in Texas* for data sources. Idaho does not currently have a working child death review process.

States with a Robust Reporting System Had a Significantly Higher Child Abuse and Neglect Death Rate in 2008



Families Facing Difficult Circumstances

- Poverty is a consistent predictor of child abuse and neglect (Sedlack et al, 2010)
 - All states in Federal Region VI ranked high in child poverty in 2008
 - National median is 17% and states in Region VI all have a rate at 23% or above
 - States with child poverty rate above national median have, on average, 1 additional child abuse and neglect death per 100,000 children

Families Facing Difficult Circumstances

- Children with young mothers are more likely to suffer fatal maltreatment (Stiffman 2002)
 - States in Federal Region VI all have high teen birth rates
 - National median is 40 births per 1,000 teens and all states in Region VI have a rate of 53 births per 1,000 teens or higher
 - States with a teen birth rate above national median have, on average, 1 additional child abuse and neglect death per 100,000 children

Lack of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

- Number of at-risk children whose parents receive services
 - National median of 33.3 per 1,000 children receiving services vs. Texas (4.6) and Oklahoma (27.2)
 - Statistical analysis shows no relationship between a prevention rate below national median and a state's child abuse and neglect death rate

Low Rate of Child Welfare Intervention

- Low reporting rate: Number of child abuse and neglect reports per 1,000 children in population
 - National median of 50.1 vs. Louisiana (33.3) and Texas (30.5)
 - Statistical analysis shows no relationship between a reporting rate below national median and a state's child abuse and neglect death rate

Reporting data is missing from Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania,

Low Rate of Child Welfare Intervention

- Low services rate: Percentage of victims who receive postinvestigation services:
 - National median of 58.3% vs. Louisiana (51.5%), New Mexico (40.3%) and Texas (55.3%)
 - Statistical analysis shows no relationship between a services rate below national median and a state's child abuse and neglect death rate

Service data is missing from Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon and, Pennsylvania.

Low Rate of Child Welfare Intervention

- Low removal rate: Percentage of victims who received services and were removed
 - National median of 43% vs. Arkansas (22%), Oklahoma (34%) and Texas (25%)
 - Statistical analysis shows no relationship between a removal rate below national median and a state's child abuse and neglect death rate

Removal and service data is missing from Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon and, Pennsylvania.

Conclusions

- Some states may be underreporting child deaths from abuse and neglect
- States that have high child poverty and teen births have higher child abuse and neglect death rates
 - Does not establish causation. Not everyone who is poor or a teen mom kills their child.
 - Likely intertwined with other factors such as single-parenting, access to resources and support, substance abuse and untreated mental illness

Conclusions

- Greater prevention coverage is not related to a lower child abuse and neglect death rate
 - Only measures quantity, not quality
 - States may define prevention differently
 - True relationship may be masked by other variables or missing data
- Greater number of children coming into state CPS system is not related to a lower child abuse and neglect death rate
 - Only measures quantity, not quality
 - Issue may be more with community support
 - True relationship may be masked by other variables or missing data

Bottom Line

- Number of deaths from child abuse and neglect is very small
- At risk population is very large, so difficult to target programs
- Even assuming poverty and teen births cause child abuse and neglect deaths, need a very large change to appreciably reduce death rate
 - Reduce child poverty by 10% to get 1 less death per 100,000 children
 - Reduce teen births by 25% to get 1 less death per 100,000 children

What Can Be Done?

- Knowledge is power: Increase understanding of circumstances and characteristics affecting child abuse and neglect deaths
 - National standard to improve consistency in cross-state comparisons
 - Look for ways to improve child death review process
 - Data analysis to better identify at-risk population
- Work on better services to support families within CPS system, especially those who receive services with child in the home
 - Nationally, 13% of children who died from abuse or neglect had received family preservation services in past 5 years

References

- Sedlak, A.J., Mettenburg, J., Basena, M., Petta, I., McPherson, K., Greene, A., and Li, S. (2010). *Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4): Report to Congress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.
- Stiffman NM, et al. *Household Composition and Risk of Fatal Child Maltreatment*. *Pediatrics* 109(4):615-621. April 2002.

CPPP Resources

- **Policy page on deaths from abuse and neglect:**
http://cPPP.org/files/4/427_Child_Deaths.pdf
- **Policy page on Legislative Session:** http://cPPP.org/files/4/412_CPS.pdf
- **Policy page on Gates case:** http://cPPP.org/files/4/409_Gates_Final.pdf
- **Policy pages on school outcomes for children in foster care:**
http://cPPP.org/files/4/392_education.pdf;
<http://cPPP.org/files/4/CPPP%20Foster%20Care%20Education%20Policy%20Page%20319.pdf>
- **Policy page on Fostering Connections Act:**
<http://cPPP.org/files/4/newfostercare.pdf>
- **Policy page on CPS workforce issues:**
<http://cPPP.org/files/4/364%20DFPS%20workforce.pdf>
- **Policy page on STAR health program for foster children:**
<http://cPPP.org/files/4/351%20Medicaid%20Managed%20Care%20for%20Foster%20Care.pdf>

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