

2020-2021 Suicide Fatalities of Children Ages 0-18

4,473

U.S. children ages 0 through 18 died by suicide.

129

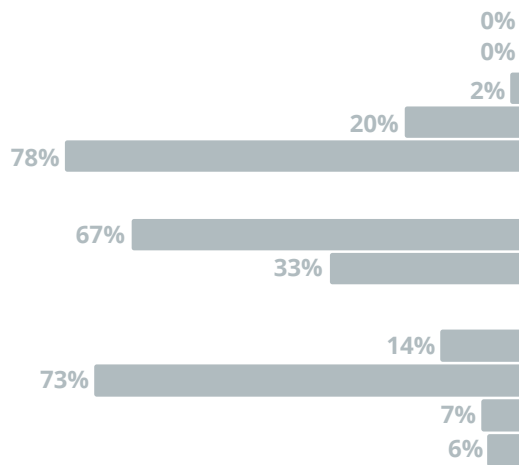
Michigan children ages 0 through 18 died by suicide.

101

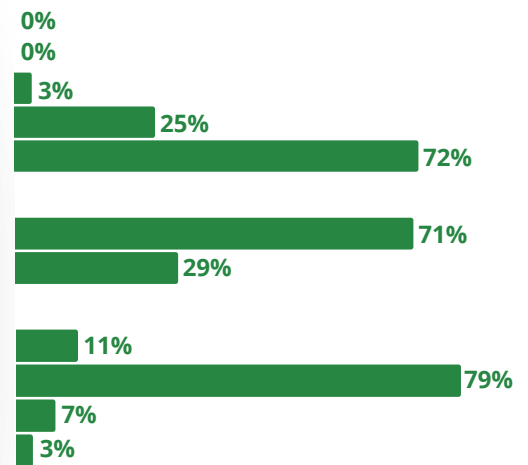
The circumstances leading to 101 fatalities due to suicide were reviewed by local CDR teams.

Child's Demographic Information

Michigan Fatalities



Fatalities Reviewed



Note: Additional groups include American Indian children, Asian or Pacific Islander children, and children of multiple races.

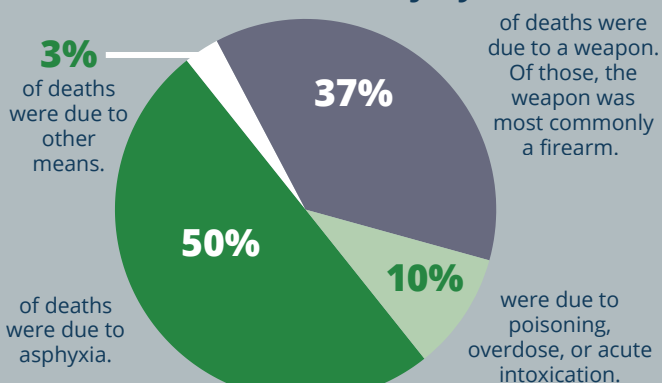
Characteristics of Suicide Fatalities Reviewed by Local CDR Teams

68%

of the children were known to have had a prior disability or chronic illness.

Of the children who were known to have had a prior disability or chronic illness, 96% were known to have had a mental health or substance use disorder.

Mechanism of Injury



Prior Mental Health Services

45%

of children were known to have received prior mental health services of any kind, including outpatient, day treatment/partial hospitalization, and residential services.

29%

of children were known to be receiving mental health services of any kind, including outpatient, day treatment/partial hospitalization, and residential services, at the time of their death.

23%

of children were known to have had an active prescription for medications for mental health illness at the time of their death.

Suicidal Thoughts, Actions, or Intent

46%

of children were known to have ever communicated any suicidal thoughts, actions, or intent to another individual.

44%

of children were known to have exhibited behaviors indicating that they planned or premeditated their own death.

67%

of children were known to have experienced a crisis within 30 days of death.

Child Death State Advisory Team Recommendations

The Michigan Child Death State Advisory Team (SAT) was established to identify and make recommendations on policy and statutory changes pertaining to child fatalities and to guide statewide prevention, education, and training efforts. The SAT reviews Michigan's child mortality data as well as local child death review team findings and recommendations to identify causes, risk factors, and trends in child deaths. The SAT offers the following recommendations to policymakers to prevent suicide deaths:

- Promote the completion of the University of Michigan's [Suicide Prevention with Child Welfare Involved Youth Online Course](#) among professions and organizations that support youth in the child welfare system.
- Increase resources and support to Community Mental Health (CMH) and ensure that they and other local mental health providers are accessible to all youth throughout Michigan.
- Promote the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's [L.E.T.S. Save Lives](#) and [Soul Shop™ Black Churches](#), which are designed to reduce cultural stigma, foster conversations about mental health, support those affected by trauma and suicide in their unique communities, and raise awareness of suicide prevention for individuals who identify as Black or African American.
- Promote state and national resources, such as the University of Michigan's Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention (IFIP) [Safe Firearm Storage Toolkit](#), [Project ChildSafe](#), and [MDHHS Firearm Injury Prevention](#) to ensure Michigan families are aware of, have access to, and consistently utilize safe firearm storage options to reduce youth access to lethal means.

Opportunities for Prevention

Everyone can play a part in preventing suicide. According to #BeThe1To (URL: <https://bit.ly/3LhO1t0>), there are 5 action steps for communicating with someone who may be suicidal:

ASK. Asking the question "Are you thinking about suicide?" communicates that you're open to speaking about suicide in a non-judgmental and supportive way. Asking in this direct, unbiased manner can open the door for effective dialogue and can reduce suicidal ideation. Learn how to have a conversation about mental health.

BE THERE. Being there for someone with thoughts of suicide is life-saving. Increasing someone's connectedness to others and limiting their isolation has shown to be a protective factor against suicide.

HELP KEEP THEM SAFE. Establish immediate safety and eliminate access to lethal means, including firearms.

HELP THEM CONNECT. Help them connect with ongoing supports and establish a safety net. If you're worried about a child, take it seriously and talk to them right away.

FOLLOW UP. Make sure to follow-up with them to see how they're doing. Leave a message, send a text, or give them a call.

Local Initiatives:

- **Gogebic County** held a discussion focused on suicide prevention. High school students receive depression and anxiety screenings, and school counselors provide small group and individual counseling sessions. They would like to provide more trainings about the signs of suicide and planned to host a caregiver night to help caregivers recognize suicide warning signs in children.
- **Ingham County** held a "grief night" with counselors and the faith community in response to several teens who died by suicide in the same park and planned to post information about the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) in the park.

About This Data

The information presented in this brief is based on data gathered through Michigan's local CDR process. Data about deaths reviewed are presented by year of review by the local CDR team, which may not be the same as the year in which the child died. It is important to note that not all child deaths in the state are reviewed. As not every child death is reviewed, Michigan's CDR Program dataset is not population-based and should not be directly compared with vital statistics data, nor should it be used to compute mortality rates. It is recommended that complementary data sources are examined alongside the CDR Program data when making prevention, policy, or practice decisions.

References

- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics. (2023). 2020 and 2021 Michigan resident death files [Unpublished raw data set].
- United States Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Multiple Cause of Death by Single Race 2018-2023 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 2025. Data are compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10-expanded.html>

Contact Us

Additional CDR data, reports, and fact sheets can be found on our [website](#). Please contact the Michigan CDR Program at the Center for Child and Family Health (CCFH) at MPH at MichiganCDR@mphi.org with any questions or requests for additional data.