

Clark County, Kentucky

County Extension Service District: 4
Area Development District (ADD): Bluegrass
Area Health Education Center (AHEC): Northeast

This profile uses the most current data to assist Extension Agents in understanding indicators of the prevalence of child maltreatment in their counties. It should be understood that many instances of child maltreatment do not come to the attention of local or state authorities and are, therefore, not included in the data.

The average overall rate of substantiated cases of child maltreatment* in Kentucky between 2003 and 2005 is 17.01 per 1,000 children under the age of 18. However, disparities exist across the Commonwealth in the number of substantiated child maltreatment cases. To create this profile, substantiated cases (according to the Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children and Kids Count) of child physical and sexual abuse and child neglect are used as indicators of child maltreatment. These selected indicators are then compiled by county. Rates of each indicator are divided into five groups (quintiles). These quintiles are numbered 1 through 5, where counties in **Quintile 5 have the highest rate** of a specific indicator, while those in **Quintile 1 have the lowest rate** of that indicator.

Child Maltreatment Rates and Quintiles, 2003–2005

Child Maltreatment Indicators	Quintile	Clark County Average # Cases 2003–2005	Clark County Rates per 1,000	Kentucky Rates per 1,000
Child Maltreatment	3	121.21	14.78	17.01
Physical Abuse	2	14.84	1.81	2.63
Sexual Abuse	2	6.02	.73	1.15
Neglect/Dependency	3	100.34	12.24	13.23

These data sheets were produced by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, Health Education through Extension Leadership (HEEL) Program;
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CHILD MALTREATMENT

CAUTIONS:

These data are intended to assist the County Extension Agents in program planning. The profiles may also be used to help educate local communities about the rate of indicators of prevalence of child maltreatment in their home community. Because *indicators of prevalence* used to compile these data are limited to cases of maltreatment reported to and substantiated by the state children's protective service agency, it does not include cases that were never reported. No one knows the actual prevalence of child maltreatment. There is much debate about which cases get reported. Some experts in the field believe that cases of child maltreatment in all segments of society are under reported. There has been a great deal of discussion in scientific literature about the lack of substantiated cases of child maltreatment in middle and upper income families and the high rate of substantiated cases in low income families. There is also some debate about the definition of "neglect." For example: is it neglectful when parents over-involve their children in numerous out of home activities and spend less time with their children?

It is also difficult to say exactly what these data might mean. For example, if a county has a high rate of reported child maltreatment that could mean the county is vigilant in reporting or it could be that there is actually a high rate of maltreatment.

These data and debates might stimulate interesting and worthwhile discussions in the local community. However, when these data are used there should be a **strong caution** concerning the limitations of the data.

SOURCES

Kentucky Youth Advocates. *Kentucky Kids Count Data Book*. Frankfort, Kentucky. (2004-2006)