

# Executive Summary

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## The Cuyahoga County Child Fatality Report | 2017 Child Fatalities

This summary includes data points of community interest, and highlights where there was a noteworthy change over 2016 data. For a copy of the full report: [www.protectingourfuture.cuyahogacounty.us](http://www.protectingourfuture.cuyahogacounty.us).



## Protecting Our Future

### Overall Look at 2017

In 2017, there were 188 child deaths in Cuyahoga County; 16 more than in 2016, but less than the 200 that died in 2015. The increase was due to 26 more deaths to children 1- to 17 years old, even though ten fewer infant deaths occurred.

- Prematurity, birth defects and homicide were the top three causes of child death. Prematurity had the largest increase in child deaths, while birth defects had the biggest decrease in 2017.
  - Large racial disparities in child deaths still exist. Black babies died at four times the rate of white babies. Black children 1-to 17 years old died at twice the rate of white children.
  - Cuyahoga County experienced the fewest number of infant deaths ever, but the county infant mortality rate (IMR) of 8.1 per 1,000 live births was still above the preliminary state of Ohio rate of 7.2.
- The majority of the accidental injury deaths were due to motor vehicle accidents and suffocation due to an unsafe infant sleep environment. The 2017 county accidental injury rate was slightly higher than the most recent state and national rate (2016).
  - After dropping in 2015 and 2016, intentional injury deaths (homicides and suicides) were the highest in the past 10 years. The 2017 county suicide rate was almost 50% higher than the 2016 state and national rates, after having been below these rates in recent years.
  - The number of deaths due to abuse and neglect rose to 10, which is 3 higher than the ten-year average. Of the ten deaths, five were due to abuse (blunt trauma) and five were due to neglect.

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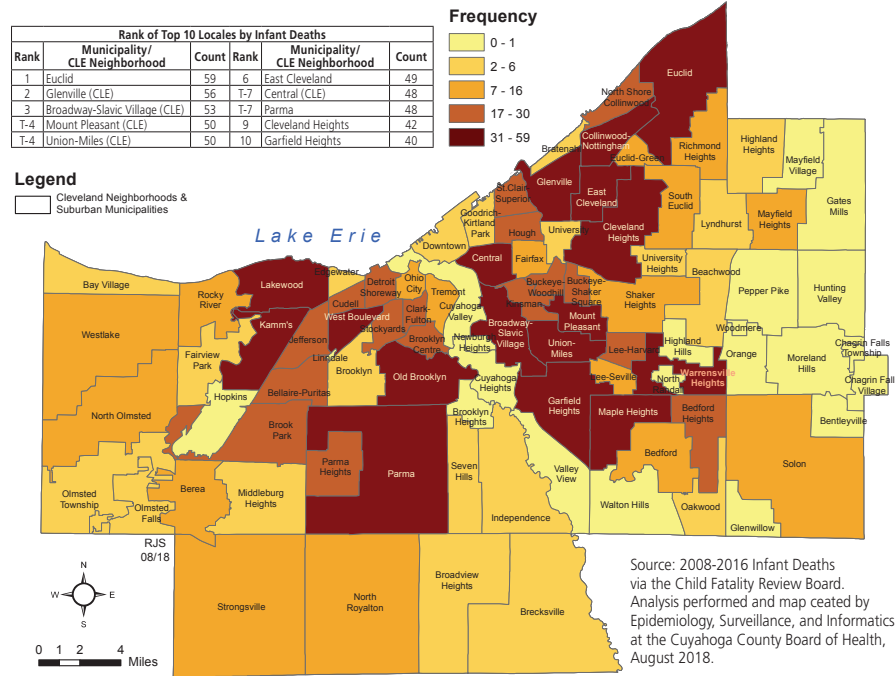
### CHILD FATALITY REVIEW

The purpose of the Cuyahoga County Child Fatality Review Board is to decrease the number of preventable child deaths. The Board reviews the causes and risk factors of deaths for all children less than 18 years old. Recommendations are made to protect the health and safety of all children in the community. Board membership includes people that work for child service, hospital and governmental agencies.

# Infant Mortality

Preventing infant deaths continues to be a challenge for Cuyahoga County. An infant death is any death of a baby who has not reached their first birthday. On average, an infant died every three days in Cuyahoga County in 2017. The majority of the infants that passed away lived in the city of Cleveland.

## Frequency of 2008-2017 Infant Deaths by Neighborhoods and Municipalities in Cuyahoga County, Ohio [n=1,382]



## Infant Mortality

- There were 118 infant deaths, down from 128 in 2016.
- Infants accounted for 63% of all child deaths; the lowest proportion in the past ten years.
- The white IMR for 2017 was 3.5 per 1,000 live births, a 30% decrease, and the lowest rate ever tracked for Cuyahoga County.

## Racial Disparity

- The black IMR was 15.5 per 1,000 live births.
- The black rate was 4.4 times higher than the white rate.

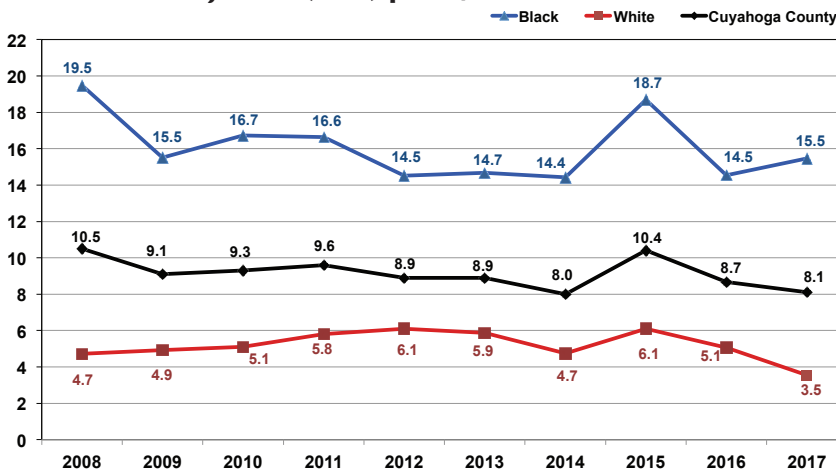
## Prematurity

- 82 infants died due to premature births.
- Prematurity accounted for 70% of all infant deaths.

## Sleep Related

- There were 13 sleep related infant deaths, the lowest number in the past ten years.
- Since 2008, at least one risk factor was noted in all 203 sleep related deaths such as surface sharing, sleeping on the stomach or side or extra bedding (pillow, comforter or blanket).

## Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) per 1,000 Live Births



## Number of Sleep Related Deaths by Type and Presence of Risk Factors

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Totals
<b>Risk Factors Present</b>											
Surface sharing at time of death	11	11	18	9	13	11	10	17	13	13	<b>126</b>
Hazards in sleep area	22	20	28	19	18	16	19	27	21	13	<b>203</b>
<b>Total Number of Risk Factors</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>Crib Availability<sup>1,2</sup></b>											
Yes	16	17	20	14	10	10	15	21	18	11	<b>152</b>
<b>Total Number of Deaths</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>203</b>

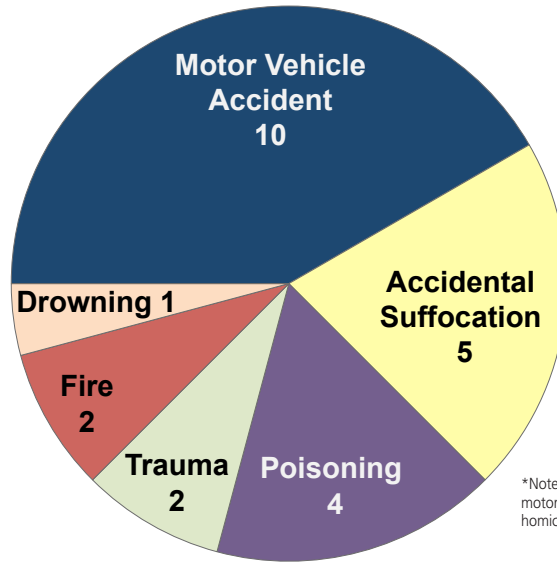
<sup>1</sup> Eight had unknown rib availability. <sup>2</sup> Either a crib, bassinet or portable crib.



# Injury Related Deaths

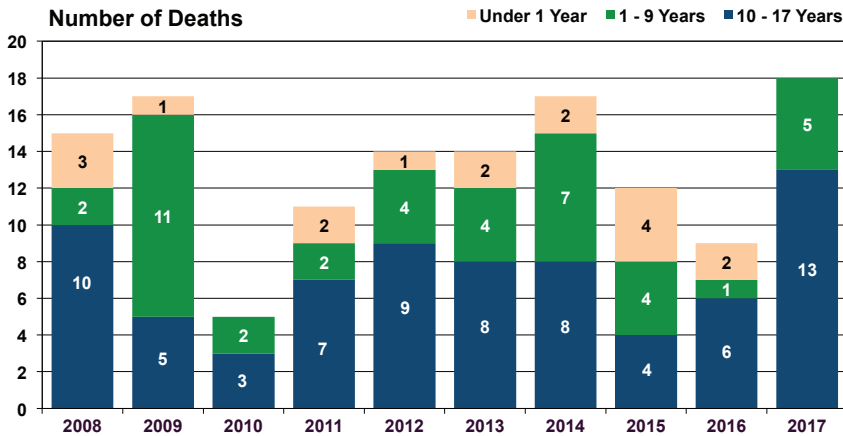
Injury related child deaths include both intentional and unintentional injuries, and account for 69% of the deaths seen in children 1- to 17 years old. The total number of motor vehicle accident deaths hit a ten-year high. Intentional injury deaths include homicide and suicide. In 2017, there was an increase in both homicides and suicides, after having experienced declines in recent years.

**Unintentional Injury Deaths in Cuyahoga County in 2017 [n=24]**

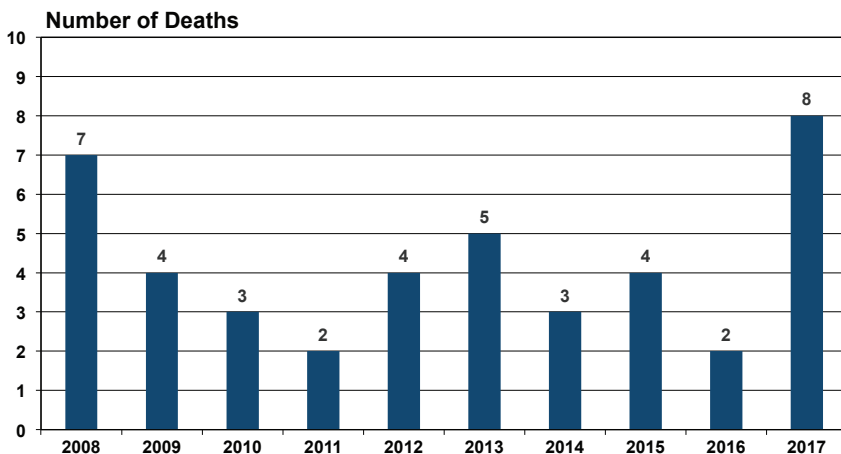


\*Note: One drowning and one motor vehicle accident were ruled as homicides and were not included.

## Total Child Homicide Deaths by Age Group per Year



## Total Child Suicide Deaths per Year



## Motor Vehicle Accidents

- 11 motor vehicle accident deaths in 2017.
- 55% of these deaths were among children 1- to 9 years old, a 100% increase from 2016.

## Homicide

- 2017 had the highest number of homicides in the past ten years.
- 15 of the homicides were black children.
- 12 homicides were gun related.

## Suicide

- Child deaths due to suicide were the highest in the past ten years.
- All of these deaths occurred to children 13- to 17 years old.
- According to the 2017 Cuyahoga County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1 in 9 high school students had attempted suicide within the last year.



# Recommendations and Community Actions

The Cuyahoga County Child Fatality Review Board makes recommendations to protect the health and safety of all children in the community. The recommendations are based on risk factors found during the review process. The full 2017 Child Fatality Report contains 24 recommendations and lists more than 20 organizations and programs working to develop community actions to reduce child death.

## Recommendations

- Support promising and evidence-based practices that decrease preterm births, such as CenteringPregnancy® and the use of progesterone for high-risk women.
- Support the Greater Cleveland Safe Kids / Safe Communities Coalition in their comprehensive efforts to prevent injuries and educate the community on safety issues that include child passenger seats/restraints; teen drivers; and pedestrian, bus, and bicycle safety.
- Support school programs for depression awareness, bullying, and suicide prevention that also include resources for assistance.
- Reinforce among providers that multiple missed appointments for potentially life-threatening conditions (i.e. asthma, diabetes, acute mental health issues) are frequently noted in child fatality case reviews. Providers observing such patterns are in a unique position to assess the situation for barriers to compliance and determine if reporting a suspicion of medical neglect is warranted.

## Community Actions

First Year Cleveland has established three action teams within their mobilization strategy charged with addressing racial disparities that include: 1) engage clinical institutions to assess and address racial biases; 2) gain further understanding from African American families who have experienced a loss; and 3) lead research efforts to better understand the role of race and maternal stress on infant deaths.

Northern Ohio Trauma System, MetroHealth Medical Center, and the Cleveland Peacemakers Alliance started a program to use violence interrupters in the hospital to provide conflict resolution, case management, and referrals to outreach workers.

The Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County promotes the 24-hour Suicide Prevention Hotline, Crisis Text, Crisis Chat, and online behavioral health screenings. There is also a social media campaign that includes targeted ads to youth on Facebook and Twitter.

## Protecting Our Future

The full 2017 Cuyahoga County Child Fatality Report (35 pages) can be viewed and downloaded at:

[www.protectingourfuture.cuyahogacounty.us](http://www.protectingourfuture.cuyahogacounty.us)

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