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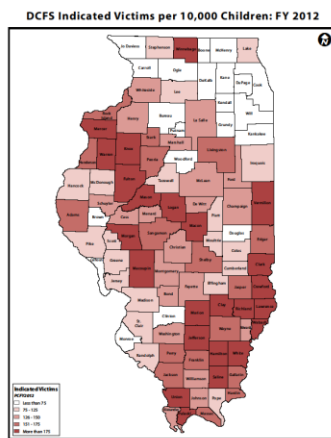
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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTS RISING IN DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS

5.4 percent increase in downstate counties a continuing trend

SPRINGFIELD – A new report from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services shows a 5.4 percent increase in reports of abused and neglected children across downstate Illinois. According to the Child Abuse and Neglect Statistical Report, the state's Child Abuse Hotline received 25,348 reports of suspected abuse or neglect involving downstate children from July through October of this year, compared to 24,053 children during the same period last year.

According to data compiled by Northwestern University from DCFS and the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 91 indicated cases of abuse or neglect statewide last year for every 10,000 Illinois children. 35 downstate counties showed abuse and neglect rates more than double the statewide average:



Northern Illinois: Winnebago;

Quad Cities Region: Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Rock Island, Stark, Warren;

Central Illinois: Adams, Clark, Edgar, Fulton, Livingston, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Mason, Morgan, Shelby, Vermilion;

Southern Illinois: Clay, Crawford, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Marion, Pulaski, Richland, Saline, Union, Wabash, Wayne, White.

Cook County had an abuse and neglect rate of 69 indicated child victims per 10,000 children during the same time period, slightly below the state's average.

(MORE)

The increasing number of abused and neglected children in downstate Illinois follows a decade long trend. Ten years ago (FY 2003), the department received reports of suspected abuse of 61,930 kids across downstate. Last year's total (FY 2012) of 74,102 represents a 20 percent increase. During the same period, reports of suspected child abuse declined in Cook County by 9 percent.

27 percent of allegations were substantiated by DCFS investigators last year, and downstate Illinois accounted for 71 percent of the 29,044 children who were indicated as victims of abuse or neglect.

DCFS encourages anyone who suspects that a child under 18 is being abused or neglected by a parent, relative, or other caregiver to call its toll-free hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873) so that children and their families can get the help they need to ensure children's safety and well-being.

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To view or download the full 20 page Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics Report for October, visit: <http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/docs/canstat.pdf>

To view or download a color map of child abuse and neglect rates by county for FY2012, visit: <http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/index.shtml>

About the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Founded in 1964, DCFS has the primary responsibility of protecting children and strengthening families through the investigation and intervention of suspected child abuse or neglect by parents and other caregivers. Over the last four years, DCFS received more than one million calls to our Child Abuse Hotline, offering and coordinating services wherever needed to help children remain in their homes safely. In instances where children must be removed from the home for their safety and well-being, DCFS makes every effort to return them safely to their homes as quickly as possible. When that simply is not possible, DCFS is equally committed to pursuing adoption by loving families to provide children with the permanent, safe, and nurturing homes they need and deserve to reach their fullest potential. As part of its duties, DCFS licenses and monitors all Illinois child welfare agencies and more than 14,000 day care centers, homes, group homes and day care agencies in the state.

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