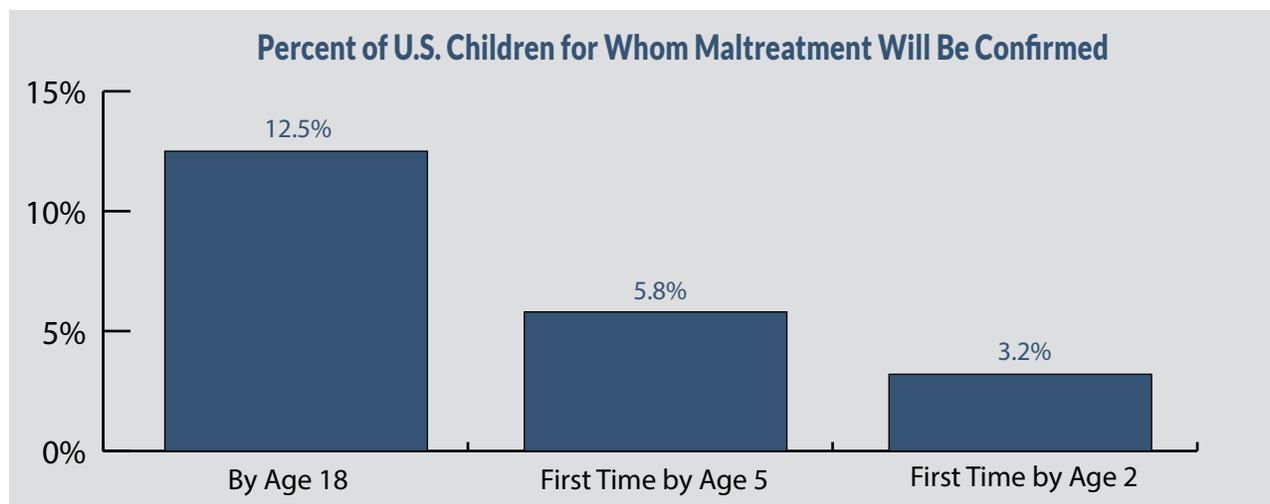




## Maltreatment Will Be Confirmed for 1 in 8 U.S. Children by Age 18

At 2011 rates, 1 in 8 U.S. children from birth to age 18 will experience child maltreatment<sup>1</sup> so persistent or severe that it results in a state-confirmed maltreatment report, according to a recent study published in *JAMA Pediatrics*. Researchers used data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) Child Files and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the confirmed maltreatment of 5,689,900 U.S. children between 2004 and 2011.<sup>2</sup> Their findings indicate that maltreatment will be confirmed for 12.5% of U.S. children (1 in 8) by the time they reach age 18, a rate 14 times greater than the 1 in 100 whose maltreatment is confirmed annually (0.9%).<sup>3</sup> Approximately one quarter of first confirmed reports of maltreatment occurred before age 2 (3.2%), and nearly half before age 5 (5.8%). Additionally, researchers observed disparities in confirmed maltreatment rates by gender and race. Citing child maltreatment as a risk factor for poor mental and physical health—and noting the association of maltreatment histories with an increased likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior and having juvenile records—authors suggested that these findings should inform policies and practices that can reduce maltreatment, improve health, and reduce health disparities.



**Source:**

Wildeman, C., Emanuel, N., Leventhal, J. M., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Waldfogel, J., and Lee, H. (2014). The prevalence of confirmed maltreatment among US children, 2004 to 2011. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 168(8), 706-713. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2014.410.

**Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Researchers defined “confirmed maltreatment” as any report for which Child Protective Services concluded that abuse or neglect had been substantiated or indicated. Almost 80% of cases in the data set consisted of neglect cases, not abuse.
- <sup>2</sup> NCANDS data provided maltreatment information, and CDC data provided population estimates. Estimates of cumulative confirmed maltreatment were developed using synthetic cohort life tables. To prevent inflation of prevalence rates, only the first confirmed report was counted in instances when multiple maltreatment reports were open at the same time and during the same year for a child.
- <sup>3</sup> Previous studies of child maltreatment have measured annual and self-reported maltreatment. Authors noted that two studies recently assessing cumulative risk for maltreatment using retrospective self-reports have indicated that more than 40% of children will experience maltreatment during childhood, a rate approximately three times greater than that of cumulative confirmed cases.

Prepared by the Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) at TASC. CHJ works to support and sustain strong and vibrant communities by promoting policies and practices that stop the cycle of drugs and crime. We conduct research and evaluations, and offer policy analysis, training, and consultation in the fields of health and justice. For more information, visit us online at [www.centerforhealthandjustice.org](http://www.centerforhealthandjustice.org).

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