





# Baltimore City Child Fatality Review

*Baltimore City Council  
Health, Environment, and Technology Committee  
February 16, 2022*



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BaltimoreHealth   
[health.baltimorecity.gov](http://health.baltimorecity.gov)

# Why did this child die, and what can we do to prevent it from happening again?



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# Child Fatality Review

- Multidisciplinary review of every unexpected child death, birth to 17, required by state law
- Action-oriented
  - Prevent child fatalities in children at risk
  - Improve investigation, community response
- Accountability, not blame
  - Identify and rectify gaps in systems
  - Confidential



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# Baltimore City CFR Team

- BCHD\*
- BCDSS\*
- City Schools\*
- MONSE
- MOCFS
- BPD\*
- BCFD
- SAO\*
- DJS
- OCME
- HCAM
- BHSB\*
- UMMC
- JHH
- Center for Hope
- Family League
- Safe Kids Baltimore
- Roberta's House
- Baltimore Healthy Start
- Annie E. Casey



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# Life Course Approach to Prevent Fatalities

CFR makes clear we need to intervene across the life course to prevent fatalities and improve child health and well-being



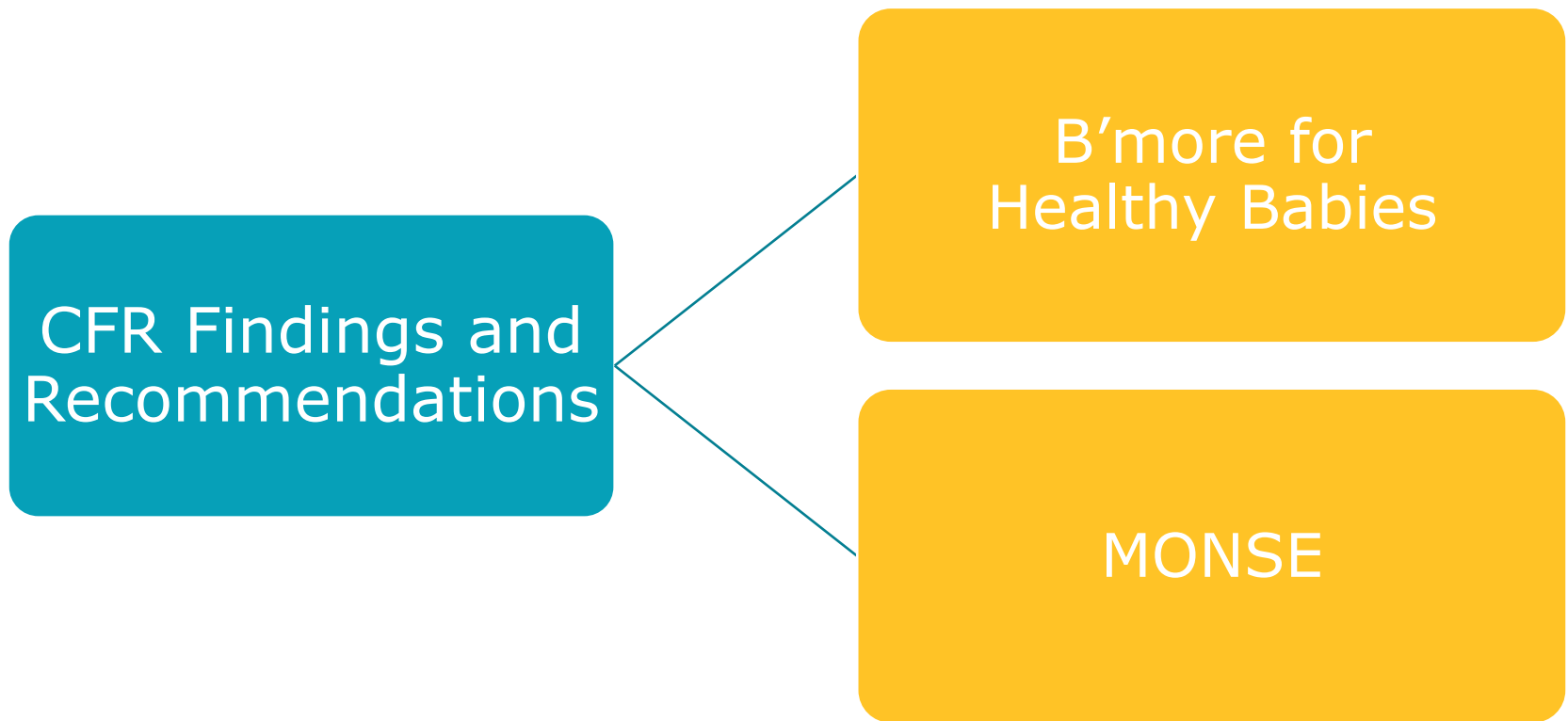
Larger community and social context



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# CFR Action and Accountability Arms



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# New CFR Report

- 5-year findings from 208 fatality cases
- Recommendations for prevention
- Priorities for the next 6 months and 3-5 years intended to spark action

## CHILD FATALITIES IN BALTIMORE CITY, 2016-2020: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTION

A Report of the Baltimore City  
Child Fatality Review Team

December 1, 2021



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# The 208 Child Fatality Victims in Baltimore City

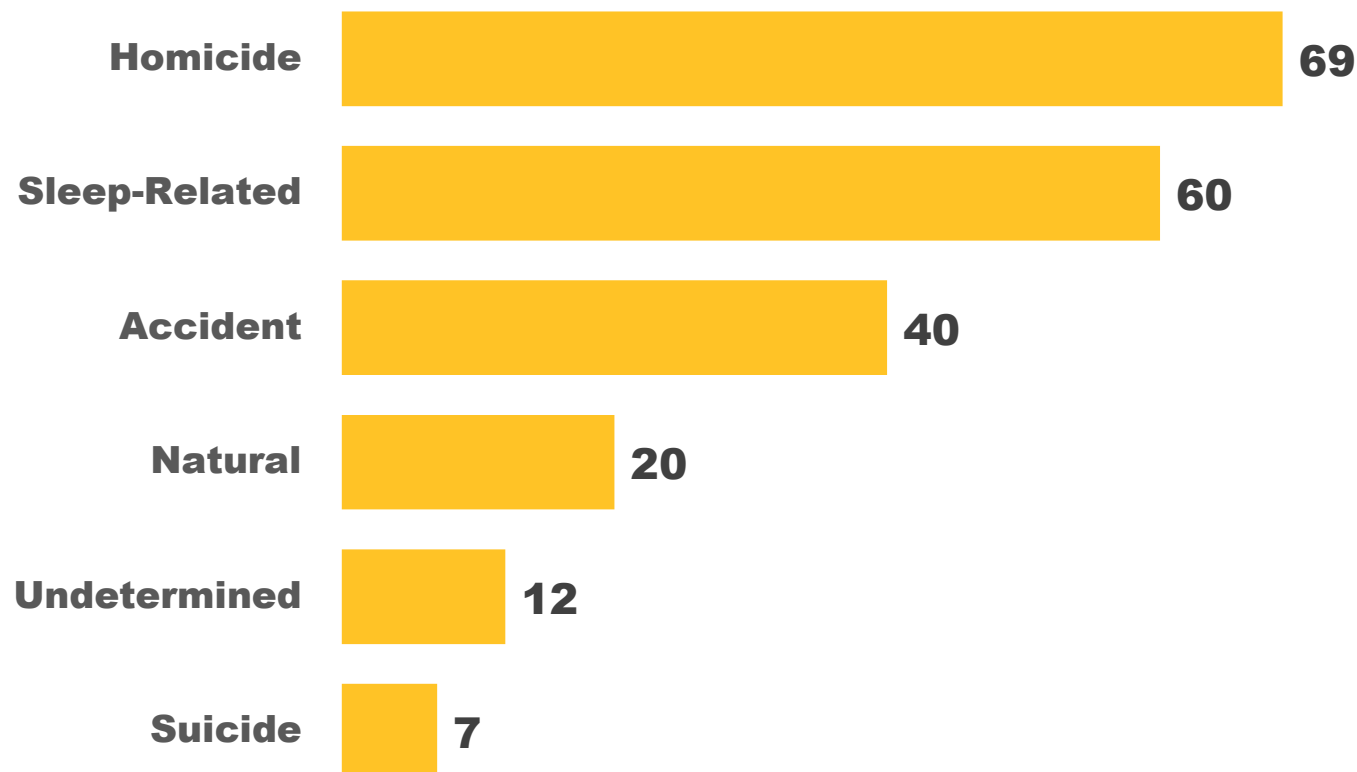


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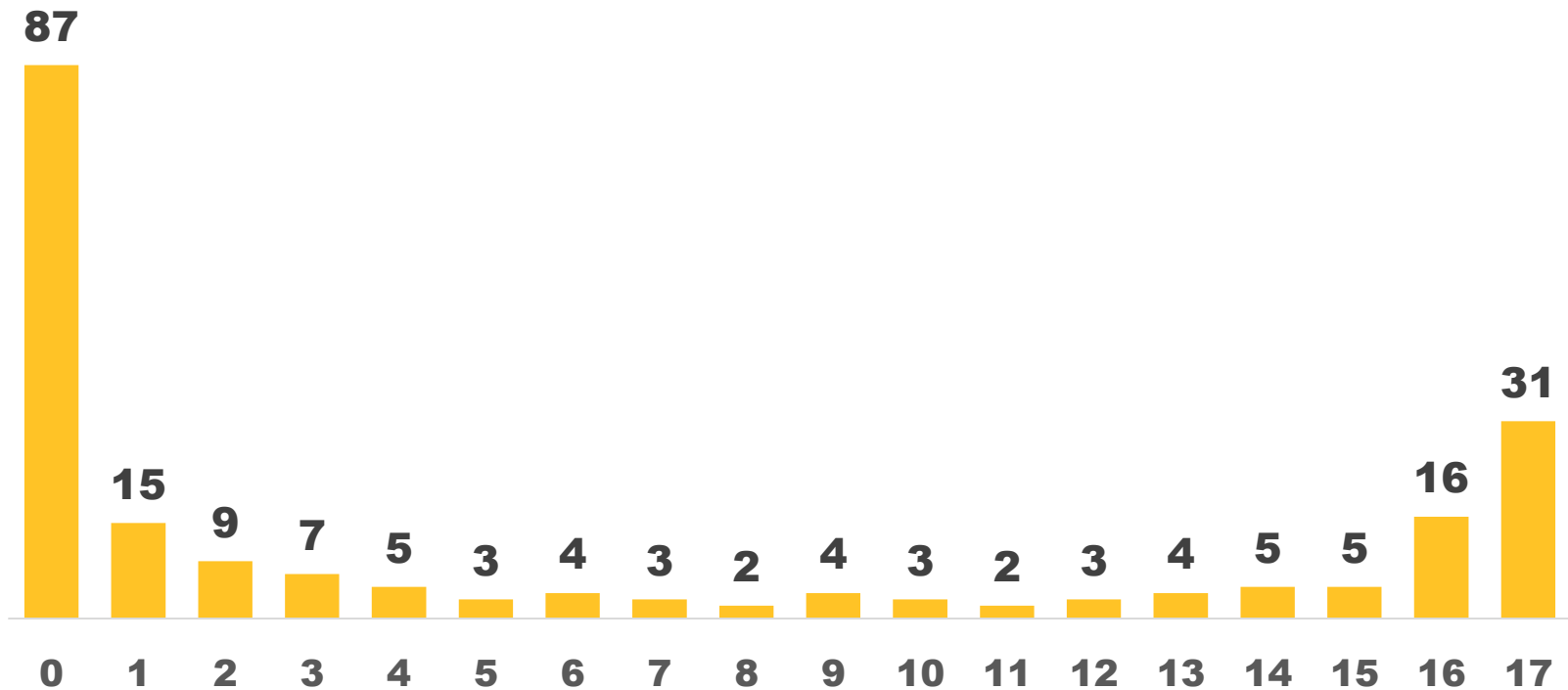
# Homicide Was the Leading Cause of Unexpected Death



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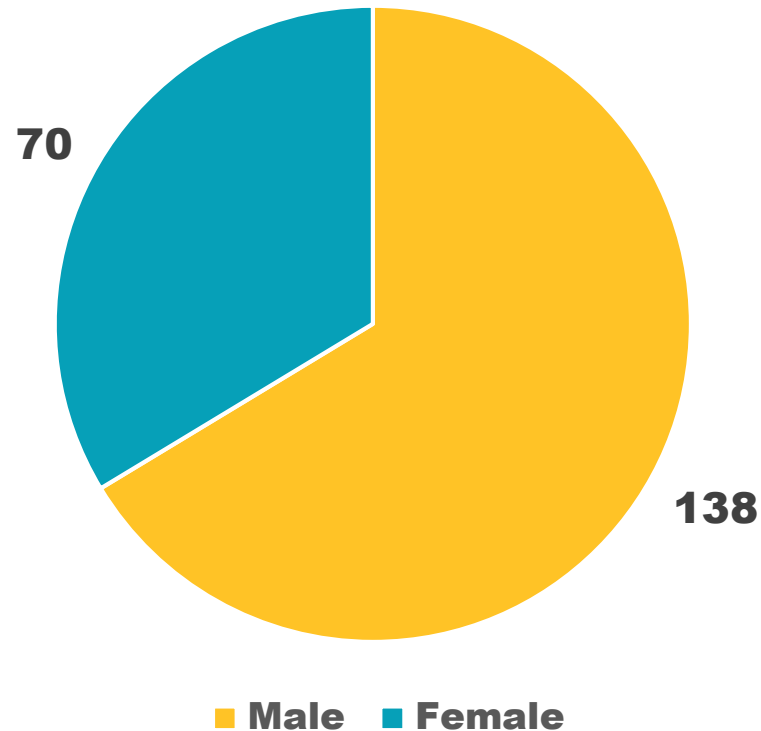
# Infants, Toddlers, and Older Youth Most at Risk



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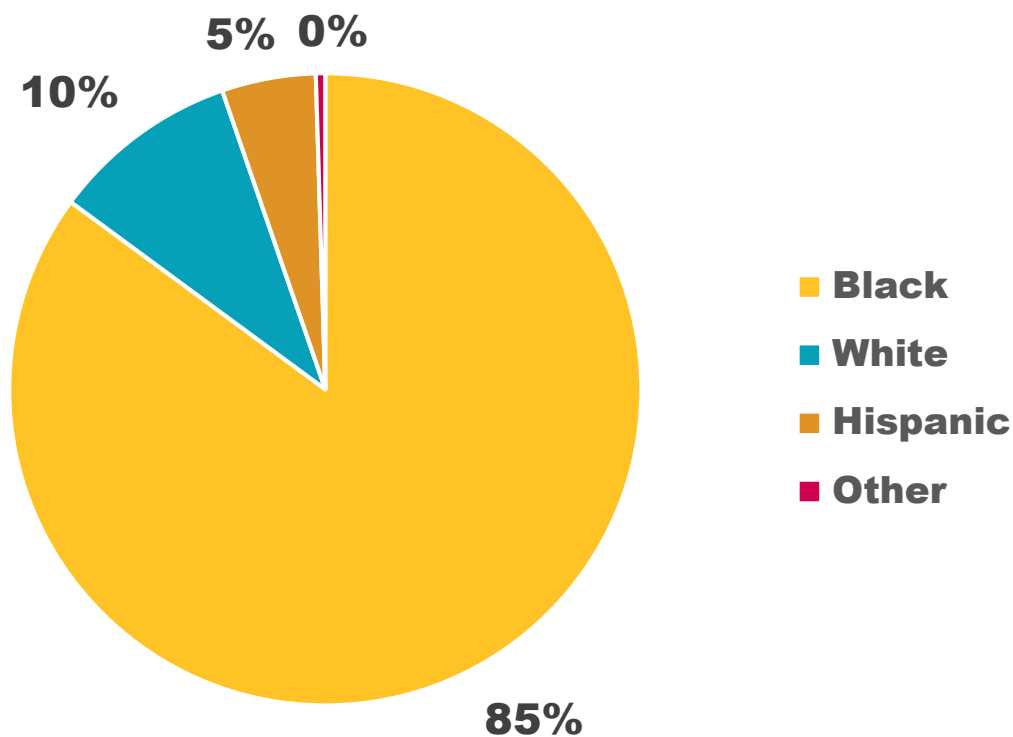
# Boys Twice as Likely to Die as Girls



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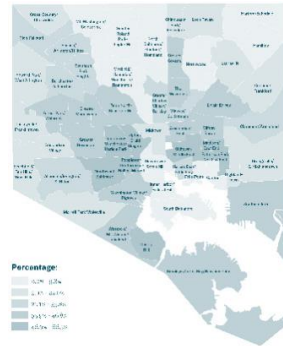
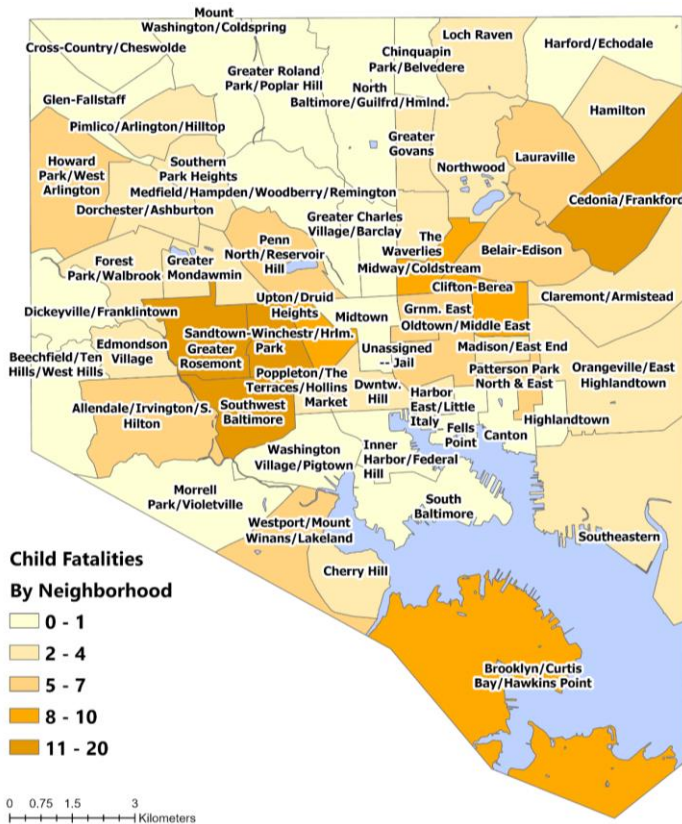
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# Black Families Bear the Burden of High Fatalities



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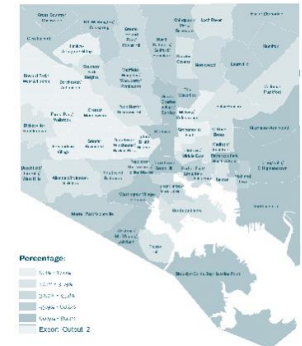
# Patterns Emerge: Poverty, Trauma, and Racism



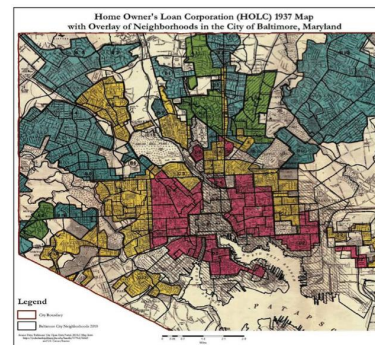
Poverty



Shootings



Racial Diversity



**High number of child fatalities reflect the legacy of redlining in Baltimore City**



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# Major Findings



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# Key CFR Report Findings

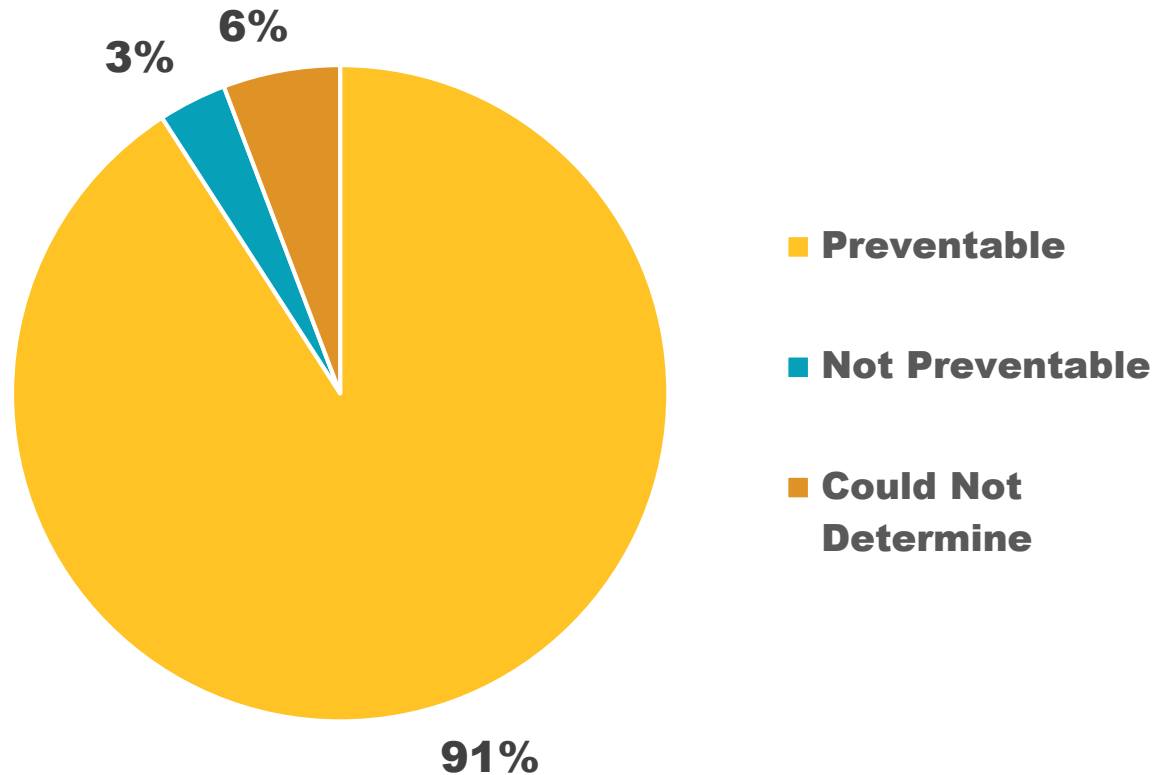
1. Child fatalities are preventable
2. Victims had very high ACE Scores
3. Case review found intergenerational trauma and behavioral health challenges
4. Parent and caregiver behavior plays a huge role in child fatalities



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# 9 out of Every 10 Child Fatalities in Baltimore Were Preventable



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# Child Fatality Victims Had Very High ACE Scores

<b>Adverse Childhood Experience: “Household Dysfunction”</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Caregiver substance use</b>	63%
<b>Caregiver mental illness</b>	56%
<b>Caregiver separation or death</b>	42%
<b>Caregiver domestic violence</b>	35%
<b>Caregiver incarceration</b>	30%



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# Third-Party Homicide— Intergenerational Challenges

## Youth

- 69% charged in the juvenile system
- 27% in substance use disorder treatment

## Caregivers

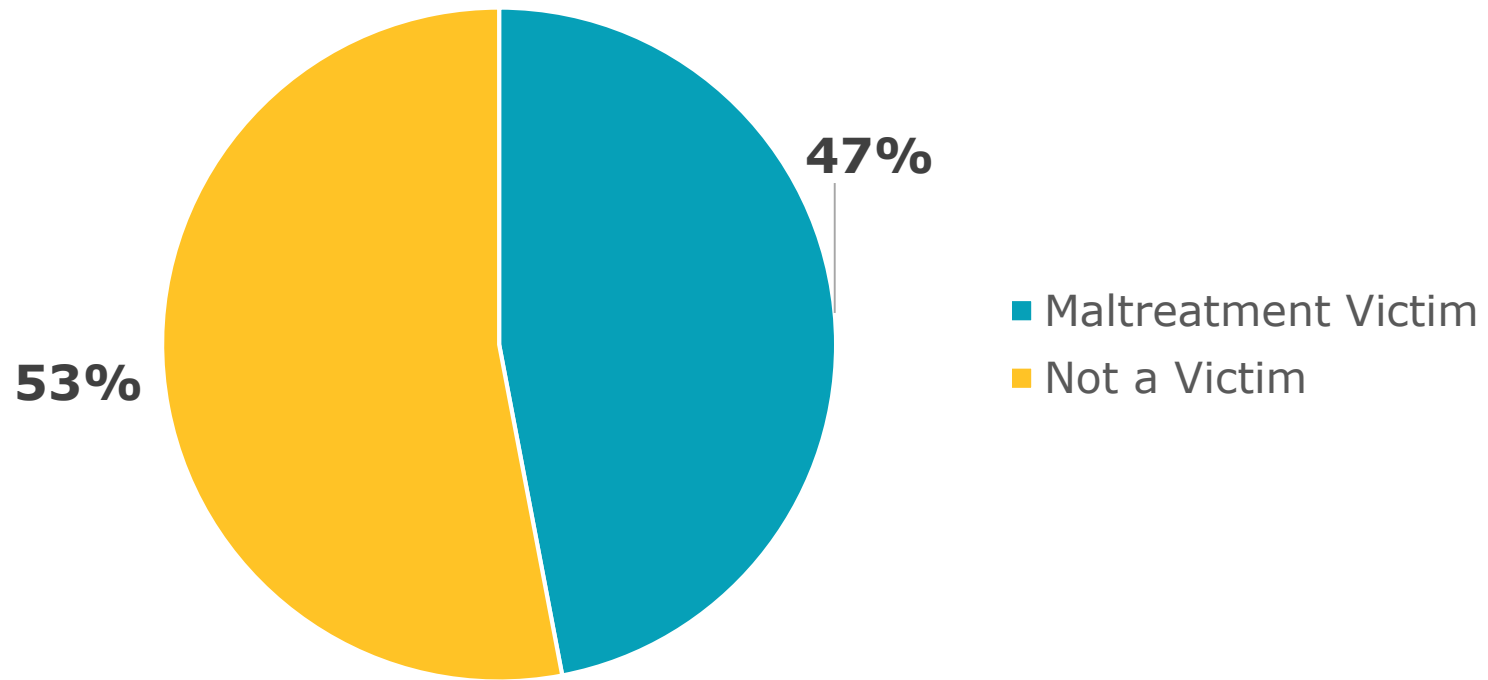
- 71% charged in the adult system (49% for sale of drugs)
- 56% documented to use substances



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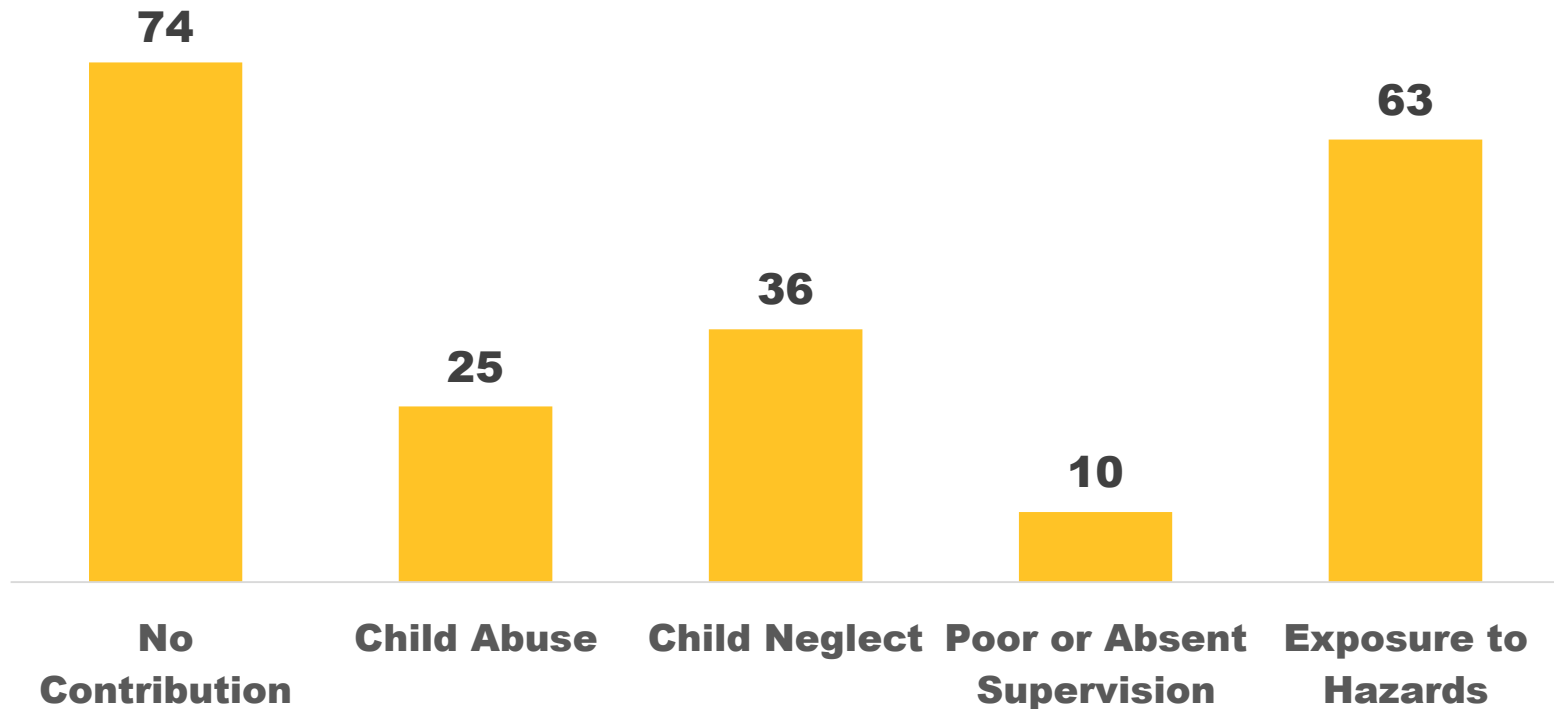
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# Caregivers Are Trauma Victims Themselves



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# In 64% of Fatalities, Caregiver Behavior Contributed to Death



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# Major Action Items



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# Four Primary Areas of Investment

**Supporting parents of children from birth to 18, especially parents involved in substance use or sale**

**City agencies improving systems for identifying children at risk and intervening early**

**Health care agencies and providers prioritizing prevention of child fatality**

**Creating a city where youth have hope and opportunities for a bright future**



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# Priority Recommendations

## Next 6 Months

- Multidisciplinary investigation
- Two-generation drug trade intervention
- Data on school-based risk factors
- SLEEP SAFE campaign expansion
- Prenatal/postpartum care coordination

## 3-5 Years

- Early school intervention
- Re-envisioned family support services
- Integrated data system
- Robust supports for parents using substances
- Legislation on hospital education and referrals
- Social determinants



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# Questions?

- **Rebecca Dineen, MS**  
Assistant Commissioner, Maternal and Child Health
- **Cathy Costa, MSW, MPH**  
Director of Strategic Initiatives, Maternal and Child Health
- **Sinmidele Badero**  
FIMR/CFR/MMR Coordinator



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