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Understanding Child Injury Deaths

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My heart aches every time I learn of a child's death. And, if the death could have been prevented, it adds to my distress. Child injury deaths are the leading cause of death among children aged one to 12 in New York City (NYC). The NYC Child Fatality Review Advisory Team (CFRAT) recently published a report that details injury deaths between 2010 and 2014. I served on this Team for nine years, so follow their work closely.

Here are the key points:

- There were 195 injury deaths during this time (approximately 39 a year) and about half of these (53%) were unintentional.
- Motor vehicle-related injuries were the leading cause of unintentional injury death overall for this age group. In many of these cases, a child was struck by a motor vehicle. Often, it's from cars making left hand turns.
- Fire-related deaths ranks second, with children die from smoke inhalation and thermal burns, followed by suffocation injuries, such as choking, getting trapped in a position where they can't breathe or getting accidentally strangled due to an entanglement – such as a cord.
- Sadly, intentional injury deaths, meaning homicide or suicide, accounted for other reasons children died.
- Deaths due to homicide accounted for 31% of child injury deaths. As we know, homicides among children are usually infants or toddlers, and that held true in this study. Nearly half of these deaths (48%) occurred among babies between the ages of one and two years old.

- Suicides – yes, suicides – made up 27% of injury deaths among children between the ages of nine and 12 years old.

- As in prior years, Black children in NYC die more often from injuries than children who are Asian, Latino or White. More boys die from injury deaths than girls. Fatal injury rates were highest among children from very high poverty areas.

The report also issues recommendations for parents and caregivers, educators, health care providers, clergy and for policy makers. They include:

- Help parents get the support they need. Growing up NYC has a wealth of resources for parents for children ages birth through 12. It's a one stop shop for items regarding education, child development and safety and health.

- Teach children traffic safety. "Cross this Way" a dynamic tool for educating elementary and middle school students about safe choices in New York City's traffic environment.

- Learn how to recognize and report child abuse and neglect. The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is a good resource.

- Recognize risk factors for mental health problems in children, learn how to help a child in crisis and make appropriate referrals. Get training in Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Child injury deaths are PREVENTABLE. Everyone has a responsibility to protect children. To view the entire report click [here](#). To learn more about all child protection issues visit www.nyspcc.org

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