Black Children have the Highest Rate of Fatal Maltreatment, and Rates are Increasing

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- Fatal maltreatment is a public health problem. In the United States, about five children die every day due to caregiver abuse or neglect. These estimates are understated, and the actual number is unknown.\(^2,5\)
- Black children comprised 35% of the estimated 1,750 maltreatment fatalities, yet they only comprise 16% of the U.S. child population.\(^1\)
- Neglect (74%) and physical abuse (43%) account for most fatalities.\(^1,3,5\)
- Economic stress and intergenerational trauma contribute to poor mental health and substance use that can exacerbate parental stress.\(^5,6,7\)

Parents carry out about 90% of child fatalities.\(^1\) About 68% of victims are under the age of three.\(^1\)

Fatal Child Maltreatment Can be Prevented

Policy Recommendations

Child maltreatment prevention must involve a **broad public health approach** that focuses on population-level (primary) and secondary (high-risk) prevention strategies.\(^2\) A public health approach should encompass:

- Improving the economic viability of marginalized and low-income families.\(^4,5,6\) For example:
  - Increased federal and state minimum wages and earned income tax credit (EITC) reduced neglect of young children.\(^5,9\)
  - Increased Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits reduced physical abuse.\(^7\)
- A unified vision and prevention strategy that encompasses strong partnerships among early childhood, higher education, child welfare, mental health, religious, healthcare, and civic organizations.\(^2,8\)
- Universal accessibility of home visiting programs.\(^8\)
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