

# Technical Notes for 2007 Child Deaths in North Carolina

The child death rate increased by 2.6% in 2007 compared with the 2006 rate. An overall reduction of about 29% on such rate has been observed for the 1990-2007 year-range studied.

The data presented in the report are taken from a closed electronic death data file. Any changes to the file after it has been closed will not be reflected in the report. Also it is inappropriate to compare the statistics presented in this report with statistics presented by the Office Chief of Medical Examiner (OCME) because the source files for each have different closing dates.

## I. Child Deaths by Cause

### Rounding Considerations

The numbers and percentages presented are rounded to the nearest whole number and may not sum to the total due to independent rounding.

### Unintentional Injuries Subcategories

Note that the total number of unintentional injuries is divided into seven subcategories: *motor vehicle injuries, bicycle injuries, injuries caused by fire, drowning, falls, poisoning and other unintentional injuries*. These subcategory numbers are not included in the column total since they were already accounted for in the broad Unintentional Injuries category. The subcategories are kept across all four columns: Average Annual Number 2003-2007, Number in 2006, Number in 2007, and Percent Change.

### Other Unintentional Injuries Subcategory

The most common cause of death in this subcategory was “Other accidental threats to breathing” representing 75% of the 56 deaths reported. The remaining deaths were allocated with the “Exposure to inanimate mechanical forces” (13%), “Accidental exposure to other and unspecified factors” (5%), “Sequelae of external causes of morbidity and mortality” (5%), and “Exposure to animate mechanical forces” (2%).

### All Other Causes of Death Category

For this category about 83% (44 out of 53) of the deaths were allocated to the cause, “Symptoms, signs and abnormal clinical and laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified”. The remaining deaths were grouped with the “Event of undetermined intent” (4%), “Complications of medical and surgical care” (4%), “Mental retardation” (2%), “Disorders of psychological development” (2%), “Systemic connective tissue disorders” (2%), “Dorsopathies” (2%), and “Other soft tissue disorders” (2%).

### Interpreting Percent Change

The Percent Change column is a comparison of the 2007 deaths to the 2006 deaths. Please note that when a category contains a small number of deaths, such as falls, or bicycle injuries, a change of just one death produces a relatively large percent change.

### Notes on Cause of Death Categories

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Since 1999, causes of death have been under the ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases-Tenth Revision) coding system. Coding for 1998 and earlier years were done under the ICD-9 CM (International Classification of Diseases-Ninth Revision) coding system. To maintain consistent reporting, *the standard cause-of-death vocabulary* is kept consistent with the ICD-9 code system. However, the ICD-10 codes differ from those under ICD-9 CM, because of changes in coding rules, changes in category names and ICD numbers, and - importantly - because of changes in the tabulation lists used to produce data. *Consequently, caution should be exercised in comparing cause-o- death across years.* A change in the rates from 1988 to 1999 may reflect changes in the coding system rather than from epidemiological causes.

### II. Child Deaths by Age

Please note that age categories are in unequal increments. Therefore, use caution when making comparisons across groups.

The Infant category includes all children within 365 days of date of birth.

### III. North Carolina Population Data

When the 2000 census results were released, the State Demographer made necessary changes in the estimated population to reflect approximate population for the previous nine years. These changes revealed that the North Carolina population had been underestimated by 3 to 4 percent over the ten year period. The child death rates, 1999 and earlier, shown in the graph have been recalculated using “smoothed” population estimates. With these changes, rates have decreased slightly.

The population figures used in this report are taken from The State Demographer's July 1, 2007 Certified Population Estimates projected from the April 1, 2000 Census.