

Tennessee Department of Children's Services
Child Custody Deaths

Calendar Year 2020 (January 1 st – December 31 st , 2020)			
Custody Deaths*			
Total Number	12		
<p>In 2020, there were a total of 12 custody deaths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One child died from injuries consistent with non-accidental trauma/physical abuse (substantiated). • One child died from injuries received during a natural disaster (unable to complete). • Five children died of natural causes related to existing medical conditions with no suspicion of abuse or neglect (4 unable to complete; 1 unsubstantiated) • One child's cause of death could not be determined (unsubstantiated). • One child died from aspiration due to a foreign object (unsubstantiated). • One child died from blunt force trauma of the head (substantiated). • One child died from gunshot wounds (unsubstantiated). • One child died from complications of thermal burns due to scalding (substantiated). 			
Classifications**			
	Number	Percent	
Substantiated	3	25%	
Unsubstantiated	4	33%	
Unable to Complete	5	42%	
Pending	0	0%	
		100%	
<p>* A custody death is defined as any child in the state of Tennessee who is in the custody of the Department at the time of his or her death.</p>			
<p>** There are four types of classifications. Substantiated means that there is a preponderance of evidence that abuse or neglect occurred. Unsubstantiated means that there is not enough evidence to sustain the allegation. Pending classification refers to cases that have not yet closed. Finally, Unable to Complete is an investigation that cannot be concluded (Policy 14.7, Section C.6).</p>			

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