

Tennessee Department of Children's Services
Child Custody Deaths

Calendar Year 2021 (January 1 st – December 31 st , 2021)			
Custody Deaths*			
Total Number	11		
<p>In 2021, there were a total of 11 custody deaths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One child died from acute fentanyl toxicity (unsubstantiated). • Two children died from gunshot wounds (1 substantiated; 1 unable to complete). • Two children died of natural causes related to existing medical conditions with no suspicion of abuse or neglect (unable to complete) • Four children died from injuries related to blunt force injuries (3 substantiated; 1 unable to complete). • Two children died as a result of suicide (unsubstantiated). 			
Classifications**			
	Number	Percent	
Substantiated	4	36.5%	
Unsubstantiated	3	27%	
Unable to Complete	4	36.5%	
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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