

Tennessee Department of Children's Services
Child Custody Deaths

Calendar Year 2025 (January 1 st – December 31 st , 2025)			
Custody Deaths*			
Total Number	8		
In 2025, there were a total of 8 custody deaths: • One child died by suicide (unsubstantiated). • One child died from blunt force injuries in an ATV accident (unsubstantiated). • One child died from natural causes related to bacterial meningitis (unsubstantiated). • One child died from respiratory failure (unsubstantiated). • One child died from natural causes associated with a gene mutation (unsubstantiated). • One child died from acute fentanyl and methamphetamine toxicity outside the state of Tennessee (unable to complete). • One child died from multiple gunshot wounds inflicted by a non-caregiver during a Trial Home Visit (unable to complete). • One medically fragile child died from natural causes related to pre-existing medical conditions (unable to complete).			
Classifications**			
	Number	Percent	
Substantiated	0	0%	
Unsubstantiated	5	62%	
Unable to Complete	3	38%	
Pending	0	0%	
		100%	
* 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.			
** 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).			

Posting Date: 7/21/26