



Facts about restraint fatalities in out-of-home care

A study of 79 U.S. child fatalities that occurred due to restraint practices in out-of-home care over a 26-year period (1993-2018) focused on (1) who the children were that died due to physical restraint and (2) how they died. RCCP researchers employed Internet searches of publicly available sources from reputable journalism outlets, advocacy groups, activists, and governmental and non-governmental agencies to discover and compile information about restraint-related fatalities of children and youth up to 18 years of age.

Of the 79 fatalities documented in the study:

Facts About Restraint Fatalities in Out-of-Home Care

- 95%** triggered a regulatory, licensing, or abuse investigation
- 80%** involved a physical restraint and **16%** involved mechanical restraints (straps, boards, other rigid devices, handcuffs, or children wrapped in a carpet, blanket, or mattress)
- 71%** were male
- 60%** were caused by asphyxia, due to various factors such as breathing obstructions, improper positioning
- 54%** occurred in children ages 15-18
- 34%** were Black, **25%** were White, **5%** were Hispanic, and **35%** unknown
- 31%** resulted in civil action
- 30%** resulted in criminal action

Nunno, M. A., McCabe, L. A., Izzo, C. V., Smith, E. G., Sellers, D. E., & Holden, M. J. (2021). A 26-year study of restraint fatalities among children and adolescents in the united states: A failure of organizational structures and processes. *Child & Youth Care Forum*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-021-09646-w>

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