



MEMORANDUM

TO: Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: Office of Child and Family Services, Maine DHHS
DATE: May 21, 2025
RE: Follow-Up on Data Requests from 5/14 OCFS Update

Following the May 14 meeting on child fatalities, OCFS is following up to respond to questions from the Committee.

You requested the number of children who have died while in the Department's custody in the last 10 years. The total is 13, or less than 7 percent of those reflected on the dashboard. More than 50 percent of those fatalities were due to natural causes. None of those fatalities were due to homicide or involved an inflicted injury.

Regarding data on unsafe sleep deaths, below is a graphic from the US CDC. This data looks at sudden unexplained infant deaths in aggregate. This includes deaths attributed to sudden infant death syndrome, unknown causes, and accidental suffocation or strangulation in bed.

Unfortunately, the data specific to unsafe sleep causes is not available nationally. OCFS made the independent decision to track unsafe sleep fatalities in their own category. This has helped the Department in making decisions about public health messaging and other preventative efforts.

SUID rates by state, 2018–2022

