

Recommendations

The purpose of the Cuyahoga County Child Fatality Review Board is to decrease the number of preventable child deaths. The Board reviews the deaths of all children less than 18 years old who live in Cuyahoga County. This confidential review is conducted by an interdisciplinary team who identifies the contributing causes, risk factors, and trends. The Board makes data-driven recommendations to protect the health and safety of all children in the community.

Infant Mortality and Disparities:

- Promote the strategies of the Ohio Institute for Equity in Birth Outcomes to eliminate racial disparities and improve birth outcomes in Cuyahoga County.

Prematurity:

- Support the efforts of the March of Dimes in the areas of research and public awareness regarding the causes, risk factors, and lifelong effects of prematurity. Continue to educate women and expectant parents about the warning signs of preterm labor and the importance of a “Life Course Perspective” to decrease the risks of preterm births.
- Support promising and evidence-based practices that decrease preterm births, such as CenteringPregnancy® and the use of progesterone for high-risk women.
- Encourage child and family serving agencies to incorporate interconception care and a reproductive life plan as core components of their programs.
- Promote a seamless system for perinatal services that also addresses the complex needs of many pregnant women by linking them to services for chronic health problems, drug treatment, and mental health counseling.

Birth Defects:

- Encourage programs encompassing a “Life Course Perspective,” that identify and modify medical, social, environmental, and behavioral risks throughout a woman’s life that can impact future pregnancies.

Sleep Related Deaths:

- Continue to educate childbirth instructors and staff at maternity and pediatric hospitals in Cuyahoga County about the importance of role modeling safe sleep in the hospital and educating all caregivers. Encourage the development of hospital safe sleep policies and a review of safe sleep discharge education.
- Increase family serving agencies’ awareness of the components of a safe infant sleep environment by providing staff training on risk factors, local sleep related fatality data, and the most recent American Academy of Pediatrics safe sleep recommendations.
- Partner with family serving agencies to provide safe sleep education to other infant caregivers, such as grandparents, relatives, and friends, with a focus on providing a safe sleep environment in any location.
- Promote the Ohio safe sleep campaign and its educational resources to hospitals and agencies in Cuyahoga County.
- Support the Ohio law that requires hospitals to provide safe sleep education and to assess for a safe sleep environment at home before discharge.

Medically Related Deaths:

- Reinforce the importance of a medical home for children with chronic illnesses.

Unintentional Injuries:

- Support the Greater Cleveland Safe Kids / Safe Communities Coalition in their comprehensive efforts to prevent injuries and educate the community on safety issues that include: child passenger

seats/restraints; teen drivers; pedestrian, bus, and bicycle safety; unintentional poisoning; and fire, water, and sports safety.

- Partner with child/family agencies to disseminate the message stressing the importance of adequate and appropriate adult supervision of children in homes, around water, and in neighborhoods.
- Reinforce the importance of gun safety in the home—unloaded, locked, and out of the reach of children.

Homicide:

- Promote the use of 24-hour parenting hotlines as a safe and confidential resource for parents in crisis.
- Support educational programs that assist parents and guardians in understanding age appropriate behaviors, using alternative methods of discipline, and choosing suitable caregivers.
- Support domestic and teen dating violence education and programs that: help families identify warning signs; outline actions to take, especially for escalating behaviors; provide access to counseling and emergency shelter; and initiate early intervention to limit the effects on children in the home.
- Advocate for community-based safe haven centers for teens, to provide supervised activities and programs after school and on weekends.

Suicide:

- Support school programs for depression awareness, bullying, and suicide prevention that also include resources for assistance.