

QUARTERLY CHILD REVIEW RCW
74.13.640 JANUARY –MARCH 2025



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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Executive Summary

This is the Quarterly Child Fatality Report for January through March 2025, provided by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to the Washington State Legislature. RCW 74.13.640 requires DCYF to report on each child fatality review conducted by the agency and provide a copy to the appropriate committees of the Legislature:

- (1) (a) The department shall conduct a child fatality review in the event of a fatality suspected to be caused by child abuse or neglect of any minor who is in the care of the department or receiving services described in this chapter or who has been in the care of the department or received services described in this chapter within Two year preceding the minor's death.
 - (b) The department shall consult with the Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds (OFCO) to determine if a child fatality review should be conducted in any case in which it cannot be determined whether the child's death is the result of suspected child abuse or neglect.
 - (c) The department shall ensure that the fatality review team is made up of individuals who had no previous involvement in the case, including individuals whose professional expertise is pertinent to the dynamics of the case.
 - (d) Upon conclusion of a child fatality review required pursuant to this section, the department shall within 180 days following the fatality issue a report on the results of the review, unless an extension has been granted by the governor. A child fatality review report completed pursuant to this section is subject to public disclosure and must be posted on the public web site, except that confidential information may be redacted by the department consistent with the requirements of RCW 13.50.100, 68.50.105, 74.13.500 through 74.13.525, chapter 42.56 RCW, and other applicable state and federal laws.
- (2) In the event of a near fatality of a child who is in the care of or receiving services described in this chapter from the department or who has been in the care of or received services described in this chapter from the department within Two years preceding the near fatality, the department shall promptly notify OFCO. The department may conduct a review of the near fatality at its discretion or at the request of OFCO.

Introduction

In April 2011, SHB 1105 was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Gregoire. The revised child fatality statute (RCW 74.13) became effective July 22, 2011, and requires the department to conduct fatality reviews in cases where a child's death is suspected to be caused by abuse or neglect. This eliminated conducting formal reviews of accidental or natural deaths unrelated to abuse or neglect. The revised statute also stipulates the agency will conduct reviews of near-fatalities or serious injury cases. The revised statute requires the agency to consult with the Office of Family and Children's Ombuds (OFCO) if it is not clear that the fatality or near fatality was caused by abuse or neglect. The statutory revision allows the department access to autopsy and post-mortem reports for the purpose of conducting child fatality reviews.

Quarter One Report

This report summarizes information from completed reviews of four child fatalities and 12 near-fatalities ¹ completed in the first quarter of 2025. All child fatality reviews can be found on the [Child Fatality & Serious Injury Reports](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/child-fatality) (<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/child-fatality>) page of the DCYF website.

The data in this quarterly report includes fatalities and near fatalities from five of the six regions (DCYF divides Washington state into six regions).

DCYF Region	Number of Reports
Region 1	4
Region 2	0
Region 3	2
Region 4	2
Region 5	4
Region 6	4
Total Fatalities and Near-Fatalities Reviewed During First Quarter 2025	16

This report includes Child Fatality Reviews (exhibit A) and Near Fatality Reviews (data only) conducted following a child’s death or near-fatal injury that was suspicious for abuse and neglect, and the child had an open case or received services from DCYF within the 12 months prior to the child’s death or injury. A critical incident review consists of a review of the case file, identification of practice, policy, or system issues, and recommendations to address any identified issues. A review team consists of a larger multidisciplinary committee, including community members whose professional expertise is relevant to the family history. The review committee members may include legislators and representatives from OFCO.

The following charts provide the number of fatalities and near-fatalities reported to DCYF, the number of reviews completed, and those pending for calendar year 2025. The number of pending reviews is subject to change if DCYF discovers new information by reviewing the case.

For example, DCYF may discover that the fatality or near-fatality was anticipated rather than unexpected, or there was additional DCYF history regarding the family under a different name or spelling.

¹ Near-fatality reviews are not subject to public disclosure and not posted on the public website nor are the reviews included in this report.

Child Fatality Reports for Calendar Year 2025

Year	Total Fatalities Reported to Date Requiring a Review	Completed Fatality Reviews	Pending Fatality Reviews
2025	4	1	3

Child Near-Fatality Reports for Calendar Year 2025

Year	Total Near-Fatalities Reported to Date Requiring a Review	Completed Near-Fatality Reviews	Pending Near-Fatality Reviews
2025	18	1	17

The child fatality reviews referenced in this Quarterly Child Fatality Report are subject to public disclosure and are [posted on the DCYF website](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/child-fatality) (https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/child-fatality).

Near-fatality reports are not subject to public disclosure and are not posted on the public website, nor are the near-fatality reviews included in this report.

Notable First Quarter Findings

Based on the data collected and analyzed from the four child fatalities and 12 near-fatalities reviewed during the first quarter, the following were notable findings:

- Six of the 16 cases referenced in this report were open at the time of the child’s death or near-fatal injury.
- Seven of the 16 cases this quarter were either open or recently closed Family Assessment Response (FAR) cases. Five cases had recent Child Protective Services (CPS) activity. Two were open Child Family Welfare Cases (CFWS) cases. In three cases the most recent child welfare program was Family Voluntary Services (FVS).
- There were 11 critical incidents this quarter where children ingested fentanyl or other opioids.
 - Three of these resulted in the death of the child.
 - All but one of these involved children were under the age of 3 years.
 - Fentanyl/opioid ingestion continues to be the leading cause of near fatal injury in cases reviewed by DCYF.
- The other fatality cases reported this quarter a child dying from inflicted injuries and another in a car accident.
- Ten of the children referenced in this report identified as White. Two children identified as Native American. Three children identified as Black/African American. Two children were Native Hawaiian.
- Substance use was a significant risk factor in 14 of the 16 critical incident cases this quarter.
- Substance use was a significant risk factor in all 11 fentanyl / opioid related cases.
- Prenatal drug exposure was present in 7 of the 16 critical incident cases. Prenatal drug exposure occurred in seven of the 11 fentanyl/opioid ingestion cases.
- Domestic violence was a risk factor in seven cases.
- DCYF received intake reports of abuse or neglect in most of the cases referenced in this report prior to the death or near-fatal injury of the child.
 - In six cases documented in this report, DCYF intake received between two and five intake reports prior to the fatality or near fatality.
 - In six cases documented in this report, DCYF intake received between 6 and 10 prior reports on families prior to the fatality or near fatality.
 - Three cases had between 11 and 17 reports prior to the fatality or near fatality.
 - Two cases had 28 prior intakes on the family before the critical incident occurred.
- Due to the small sample of cases reviewed, no statistical analysis was conducted to determine relationships between variables.

Exhibit A

Child Fatality Reviews

There were four child fatality reviews completed during this quarter. Child fatality reviews are subject to public disclosure and are [posted on the DCYF website](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/child-fatality) (<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/child-fatality>).

Exhibit A contains the following child fatality reviews from the First quarter of 2025:

D.L.

R.L.

D.M

F.A.