

**Attachment I-B****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Fewer Children Victims of Abuse and Neglect in 2007***Annual child maltreatment report released*

The number of children who were maltreated declined between fiscal years 2006 and 2007 according to "Child Maltreatment 2007," an annual report whose release by HHS' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) marks the beginning of National Child Abuse Prevention Month. According to the report, an estimated 794,000 children were determined to be victims of maltreatment in 2007, down from 904,000 victims in 2006.

"While it is too early to say whether this year's decrease reflects a trend, we are encouraged by these numbers," said Curtis L. Coy, HHS acting assistant secretary for children and families. "We know preventing child abuse requires coordination between federal, state and local agencies, and we will continue to work together to protect all children from maltreatment."

Data gathered through the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, which collects information on a voluntary basis from states, show that child protective services agencies received an estimated 3.2 million referrals of possible maltreatment for the year. Of the 794,000 substantiated reports, the majority (59 percent) involved neglect. The estimated number of children who died as a result of maltreatment rose by approximately 200 to 1760, a 15.5 percent increase over last year.

The rate of children who were found to be victims has been decreasing for a number of years. Between 2003 and 2006 the rate fluctuated between 12.2 and 12.0 per 1,000 children compared to 10.6 per 1,000 children for 2007. Data for 2008 and 2009 will be closely monitored to determine if state changes in policy, programs and procedures continue to result in similar trends.

To kick off Child Abuse Prevention Month, HHS' Administration for Children and Families is sponsoring the 17th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect from March 30 - April 4 in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference, whose theme is "Focusing on the Future: Strengthening Families and Communities," is an opportunity for professionals from around the country to learn more about the latest in evidence-based practice, innovations in prevention and program models that work. Experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a key partner with ACF in the effort to prevent child abuse, will be among the participants.

The full report, "Child Maltreatment 2007," is available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm07/index.htm>

Additional information on how to prevent child abuse is available at the Child Welfare Information Gateway: <http://www.childwelfare.gov>.

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