



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\***

## ICAN Report Reveals 73% Decrease in Child Homicides In Los Angeles County Since 1989

The Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), co-chaired by Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón, today unveiled a special report by its Multi-Agency Child Death Review Team titled, "Child Homicide by Caretaker - 30 Year Retrospective," documenting a 73% decrease in child homicides by caretakers in Los Angeles County over the past three decades.

The report was released at a news conference with District Attorney Gascón, Deanne Tilton Durfee, ICAN's Executive Director, Bobby D. Cagle, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, and Dr. Carol Berkowitz, chief of the Division of General and Emergency Pediatrics at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center.

Since 1989, nearly 1,000 children have been killed in Los Angeles County by a parent, a parent's adult partner, babysitter or other family member providing childcare, according to the report, which was released on Children's Memorial Day, an annual observance for young lives lost to violence.

"We must work together to end child abuse and neglect, keep children safe and bring hope and inspiration to children and families," District Attorney Gascón said. "I am committed to protecting our most vulnerable victims through prevention and will hold accountable anyone who harms a child."

"This report is unique in the nation, covering 30-plus years of work by the ICAN Child Death Review Team," said Tilton Dufree. "These findings are presented in data and graphs, but each number represents a child's life lost. This motivates us to continue the heartbreaking task of probing into the nature and extent of child abuse fatalities in



order to save other children from such tragic outcomes. The data tells us we have made a difference.”

“As social workers who care deeply for the well-being of the children and families of this county, we want to encourage parents to seek help before their needs or challenges become unmanageable,” Cagle said. “All families need help and there are free resources available through 211 to all residents, regardless of income or immigration status, that can help improve outcomes for families.”

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, ICAN also kicked off the countywide “No Hit Zone” campaign. Los Angeles County will be the first to join the national campaign on the West Coast.

“The ‘No Hit Zone’ program has been successfully piloted at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. We’re hoping all agencies in L.A. County will join us,” Dr. Berkowitz said. “The focus of the program is to help parents practice positive parenting and to reduce the physical violence to which children are frequently subjected. This program, like the Safe Surrender and Safe Sleep programs, are part of the preventive practices approach that have emerged from our Child Death Review Team to help reduce death and serious injury among children.”

According to ICAN’s 30-year retrospective, child homicides peaked in Los Angeles County in 1991 with 61 children killed by caretakers that year. There was a low of eight such deaths recorded in 2017. Preliminary data shows 10 child homicides last year in Los Angeles County.

The report also found:

- More than half of the children killed since 1989 were under the age of 1.
- Two-thirds were under the age of 3.
- African American children are overrepresented as victims.
- Child victims were more likely to be killed by a parent than other caregivers.

The report, which includes the stories of 30 children, whose cases were reviewed by ICAN’s Child Death Review Team, is intended to expand the historical understanding of the realities of fatal child abuse and inspire greater prevention.

To report child abuse, call 911 or the Los Angeles County Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-540-4000.

Click [here](#) to view the report.



Click [here](#) to view a trailer for ICAN's Student Poster Art Contest Award Ceremony.

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### About the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) promotes child safety and well-being by partnering with communities to strengthen families, keeping children at home whenever possible, and connecting them with stable, loving homes in times of need. It is the largest child protective services agency in the nation and is responsible for ensuring the safety of more than two million children across 88 diverse cities in Los Angeles County. Established in 1984 to keep children safe and support families in crisis, it is governed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. DCFS has nearly 9,000 staff across more than 20 offices, specialized bureaus, and administrative services. DCFS is led by Bobby D. Cagle, a former foster child and longtime social worker, who was appointed to the position by the Board of Supervisors in 2017. For more information, visit [www.dcfslacounty.gov](http://www.dcfslacounty.gov).