The Issue
Childhood bereavement is a critical issue and an increasingly important national priority. The death of a parent, sibling, or other important person in a child’s life is one of the most frequently reported disruptive childhood experiences. Understanding the number of children impacted by death is essential to help every bereaved child find hope and healing.

1 in 13 children in the U.S. will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18

7.7% ~ 5.6M children will be bereaved by age 18

& MORE THAN DOUBLES 13.9M youth will be bereaved by age 25

Childhood Bereavement by State

California
LOWEST concentration
5.9%

West Virginia
HIGHEST concentration
12.4%

Death of a Sibling & Death of a Parent

The CBEM provides separate, independent estimates for youth who will experience the death of a parent or of a sibling.

SIBLING

AGES 0-18
1.3%

AGES 0-25
2.2%

PARENT

AGES 0-18
6.5%

AGES 0-25
11.5%

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Leading Causes of Death

Percentages reflect the proportion of total deaths caused by each of the leading causes for youth and adults in the U.S. according to the CDC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth Ages 0 - 24†</th>
<th>Adults Ages 25 - 60†</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accidents (27.4%)</td>
<td>#1 Cancer (21.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions Related to Birth (16.9%)</td>
<td>#2 Accidents (17.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide (10.5%)</td>
<td>#3 Heart Disease (17.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide (9.7%)</td>
<td>#4 Suicide (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Defects (8.9%)</td>
<td>#5 Liver Disease (4.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why Did Childhood Bereavement Rates Increase?

The increase in projected bereavement due to the death of a parent or sibling from 7.3% to 7.7% for youth under 18 reflects differences in adult mortality (ages 27-46) in 2020 compared to 2015. There are stark differences in mortality rates for this age group contrasting 2015 and 2020 data for the specific death causes below.

Preliminary 2021 mortality data show similar direct and indirect effects of COVID-19, which will likely contribute to a continued rise in bereavement rates in next year’s CBEM reports. The pandemic’s impact on mortality will affect future changes in CBEM rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
<th>2015 # of Adult Deaths</th>
<th>2020 # of Adult Deaths</th>
<th>Increase 2015 vs. 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Causes</td>
<td>138,100</td>
<td>192,500</td>
<td>54,300 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents (includes overdose)</td>
<td>37,500</td>
<td>62,100</td>
<td>24,600 (66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>10,200</td>
<td>10,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>10,600</td>
<td>3,600 (51%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>17,500</td>
<td>19,800</td>
<td>2,300 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>15,400</td>
<td>1,400 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>1,400 (41%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†2021 CBEM results included mortality data from 2015 - 2019 while 2022 CBEM results include data from 2016 - 2020. The 2021 and 2022 CBEM National report results consider deaths among adults age 27-46, or adults most likely to have children 0 to 18 years old.

Sources

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC WONDER.

*Please see the CBEM Technical Appendix for additional information.
‡Age ranges for leading causes of death align with CBEM analyses for youth ages 0 to 25.

For more info about the CBEM and additional national, state, and local data, visit judishouse.org/CBEM

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