

1 in 8 U.S. kids will experience serious abuse or neglect

By Karen Kaplan, Los Angeles Times

About 1 in 8 American children will experience some form of maltreatment serious enough to be confirmed by government authorities, new research shows.

Slightly more than 2 percent of kids are victimized during their first year of life, 5.8 percent are mistreated before their fifth birthday, and 12.5 percent experience some form of abuse or neglect before they turn 18, according to a study published Monday in JAMA Pediatrics.

“Confirmed child maltreatment is common, on the scale of other major public health concerns that affect child health and well-being,” the study authors wrote.

The estimates are based on data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System Child Files, which identified nearly 5.7 million children who suffered documented cases of neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse between 2004 and 2011. (The true count of victims is believed to be much higher, since most cases never make it to government officials.)

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