



The Incidence of Suicide among Children

PRESENTED BY THE ALABAMA SUICIDE PREVENTION AND RESOURCES
COALITION (ASPARC)

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Suicide among American Children

- Between 1999 and 2015:
1309 Children ages 5 to 12 killed themselves in the U. S.
- The frequency of child suicide increased between 2013 and 2016.
- 33 children under 12 die from suicide in the US each year (2015).
- By age 9, children understand the term “suicide.”



Suicide among American Children

- Suicides among children 5 to 11 years old and children 12 to 14 differ with respect to some key characteristics and risk factors.
- Children in both age groups lived in highly dysfunctional families with constant conflict between relatives and friends.
- Among 5 to 11 year olds, ADD/ADHD were the most common mental illness diagnoses (60% vs. 29%). At any age, these children were very impulsive in responding to frustration.
- Among 12 to 14 year olds, depression, violent mood swings, and boyfriend/girlfriend problems were most common (66% vs. 33%).



Suicide among American Children

- In both groups 75% of suicides were male.
- In both groups females attempted more often.
- In both groups about 30% disclosed their intent to die to another person.
- Among 5 to 11 year olds, 37% of suicides were by African-American children. This is a higher percentage than among any other age grouping.



Suicide among American Children

- It is likely that young black children experience more violence and traumatic stressors and are less likely to receive any treatment for mental health problems.
- 5 to 11 year olds almost always died from hanging/strangulation and suffocation.
- 12 to 14 year olds died from the above, as well as gunshot wounds and other causes.
- Children in both groups almost always died at home.



Suicide in Children

- Labeling self-inflicted death as “suicide” for those under 10 is controversial.
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- 33 children under 12 die from suicide in the US each year (2015).
- By age 9, children understand the term “suicide.”



Children 5-11 vs. Children 12-14

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Alabama Resources

1. Crisis Center of East Alabama – Auburn
 - 334-821-8600 (Sunday –Thursday, 8am-12 midnight & Friday & Saturday/24 hrs)
2. Family Sunshine Center – Montgomery
 - 334-263-0218 (collect calls accepted) (24 hrs)
 - 1-800-650-6522 (24 hrs)
 - 1-800-787-3224 (for the hearing impaired) (24 hrs)
3. The Crisis Center – Birmingham
 - 205-323-7777 (24 hrs)
4. Crisis Services of North Alabama – Hunstville
 - 256-716-1000 (24 hrs)
5. Family Counseling Center of Mobile, Inc. – Mobile
 - 251-431-5111 (24 hrs)

References

- HealthyPlace. (2017). Suicide Information, Resources & Support. Retrieved on February 17, 2018 from <https://www.healthyplace.com/other-info/suicide/suicide-suicidal-thoughts-and-behaviors-toc/>
- Kennebeck, S., & Bonin, L. (2017). Suicidal ideation and behavior in children and adolescents: Evaluation and management. *Up to Date*. Retrieved on February 17, 2018 from <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/suicidal-ideation-and-behavior-in-children-and-adolescents-evaluation-and-management>
- Sheftall, A., Asti, L., Horowitz, L. M., Felts, A., Fontanella, C. A., Campo, J. V., & Bridge, J. A. (2016). Suicide in elementary school school-aged children and early adolescents. *Pediatrics*, *138*, 4.