

Child deaths in Queensland

Key findings 2024–25

In 2024–25, 427 children tragically lost their lives in Queensland. By closely examining the circumstances surrounding each death, we aim to identify patterns, inform policy, and implement preventative measures to safeguard the lives of children in the future. By identifying key trends and areas for further investigation we can better address overlapping risks in children's lives.

The child mortality rate was 35.1 deaths per 100,000 children aged 0–17 years and the infant mortality rate was 4.4 deaths per 1,000 births (rates are averaged over 5 years).

Deaths from natural causes (diseases and morbid conditions) accounted for most child deaths (321 or 75%) (Table 1).

External causes of death accounted for 68 deaths (16%) and included:

- 24 deaths by suicide
- 23 transport-related deaths (16 were motor vehicle crashes, 4 were pedestrian incidents, 2 were e-bicycle incidents, and 1 involved a quad-bike)
- 10 deaths from drowning
- 7 deaths from other non-intentional injuries
- 4 deaths as a result of assault or neglect.

Suicide was the leading external cause of death.

Thirteen deaths were from unexplained causes. This includes deaths categorised as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and undetermined causes.

Twenty-five deaths were pending a cause of death at the time of reporting.

SIDS and undetermined causes, as a group, were the leading cause of death for post-neonatal infants (ages 28–364 days).

Table 1: Child deaths in Queensland, 2024–25^a

	Number	Rate ^b
Deaths of children 0–17 years	427	35.1
Cause of death		
Natural causes	321	25.6
External causes	68	6.6
Transport	23	2.3
Drowning	10	0.8
Other non-intentional injury	7	1.2
Suicide	24	1.9
Fatal assault and neglect	4	0.5
Unexplained causes	13	2.4
SIDS and undetermined causes (infants)	9	0.3
Undetermined causes (1–17 years)	4	0.4
Cause of death pending	25	0.5
Sudden unexpected deaths in infancy (SUDI)		
Sudden unexpected infant deaths	29	0.6
Sex^c		
Female	171	30.8
Male	254	38.7
Age category		
Under 1 year	278	4.4
1–4 years	37	17.6
5–9 years	29	7.6
10–14 years	32	10.0
15–17 years	51	25.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	88	74.5
Non-Indigenous	339	31.0
Known to the child protection system		
Known to child protection ^d	57	59.1

a By date of death registration.

b Five-year average rate per 100,000 population or per 1,000 births for under 1 year and SUDI.

c Excludes indeterminate sex.

d In the 12 months prior to death.

SIDS Sudden infant death syndrome

Trends from 2004 to 2025

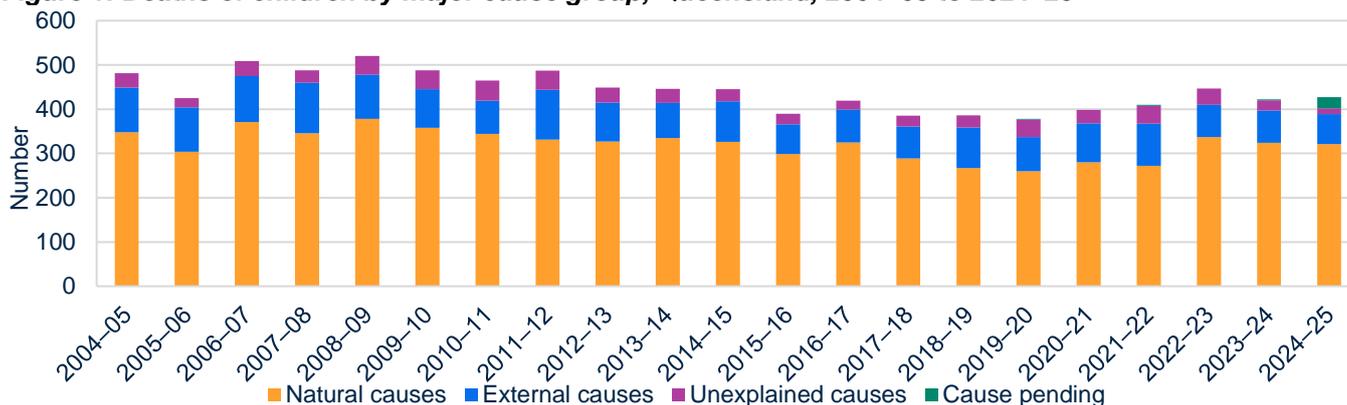
The number of child deaths and mortality rates have generally declined over the 21 years in which the register has existed, driven largely by decreases in deaths from natural causes (Figure 1). The overall child mortality rate has decreased 2.2% per year on average.

The rate of transport-related deaths has decreased 3.7% per year on average, notwithstanding the increased numbers of transport deaths in the previous three years.

Child mortality from suicide showed a slow increasing trend of 1.2% per year on average.

There were decreases in rates of deaths from drowning, other non-intentional injuries, unexplained causes and fatal assault and neglect.

Figure 1: Deaths of children by major cause group, Queensland, 2004–05 to 2024–25



Vulnerable groups

Child mortality does not fall evenly across the population. Structural inequities mean that some groups of children experience greater exposure to harms that compromise their survival and development. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to the child protection system, are consistently and significantly over-represented in child mortality statistics.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were over-represented in child deaths.

Eighty-eight deaths in 2024–25 were of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The mortality rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children was 2.4 times higher than for non-Indigenous children (respectively, 74.5 and 31.0 per 100,000).

Children known to the child protection system experience higher mortality rates than the general child population, particularly in cases involving external causes of death.

Fifty-seven of the 427 children who died in 2024–25 were known to the child protection system, compared to 53 deaths in 2023–24. Ten of the 57 children were in care at the time of their death. Children known to the child protection system had a mortality rate more than 1.5 times the Queensland child mortality rate. For external causes of death, the mortality rate for children known to child protection was more than 3 times the rate for all Queensland children.

Leading causes of death

The leading causes of death vary with age, largely in line with the risks faced by children at each stage of development.

Perinatal conditions and congenital anomalies were the leading causes of death for infants 0–27 days (Table 2). For infants 28–364 days, the leading cause was SIDS and undetermined causes (as a group). Cancers and tumours and transport incidents were among the top three leading causes for each age category from 1–17 years. Suicide was the leading cause of death for children aged 10–14 years and 15–17 years.

Table 2: Leading causes of death by age, 5-year summary

Age category		Leading causes*		
		1	2	3
Infants	0–27 days	Perinatal conditions	Congenital anomalies	SIDS and undetermined causes
	28–364 days	SIDS and undetermined causes	Congenital anomalies	Perinatal conditions
1–4 years		Cancers and tumours	Transport	Drowning
5–9 years		Cancers and tumours	Transport	Nervous system diseases
10–14 years		Suicide	Cancers and tumours	Transport
15–17 years		Suicide	Transport	Cancers and tumours

* In the 5-year period 2020–21 to 2024–25.

SIDS and undetermined causes is the leading non-natural cause of death category in Queensland children aged 0–17 years, followed by transport, suicide and other non-intentional injury (Table 3).

Table 3: Leading causes of death from non-natural causes, 5-year summary

Age category	Top 4 non-natural causes			
	1	2	3	4
0–17 years	SIDS and undetermined causes	Transport	Suicide	Other non-intentional injury

More information

This fact sheet provides summary information from the Queensland Family and Child Commission's *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people Queensland 2024–25*, available at www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sector/child-death/child-death-reports-and-data

Data for prevention activities

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (the Commission) works with researchers and government agencies to raise community awareness and develop prevention programs and policies by identifying risk factors, trends and emerging safety hazards.

The Commission can provide detailed Queensland child death data to researchers and organisations at no cost.

Email: child_death_prevention@qfcc.qld.gov.au

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The Queensland Family and Child Commission (the Commission) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians across the lands, seas and skies where we walk, live and work.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as two unique peoples, with their own rich and distinct cultures, strengths and knowledge. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across Queensland and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.