



What Research Says About Public School, Private School, and Homeschool Child Abuse, Neglect, and Fatalities

Key Points

- 10% to 12% of public and private school children are victims of educator sexual misconduct during grades K-12.¹ This would suggest about 5,460,000 of school-age children in 2022-23² would be victims of school employees by grade 12.
- In addition, there are many thousands of student-on-student sex assaults³ and bullying in institutional schools (public, private) every year.
- The preceding-mentioned abuse occurs despite many laws and regulations controlling public and private schools and the mandatory reporters working in them.
- Over 80% of child abuse and neglect fatalities occur before school age.⁴
- Wicked adults – whether public or private school teachers or other staff, school police officers, or parents – find ways to hide their evil deeds and harm children in spite of laws.
- The limited number of research studies done to date suggest that institutional school students are at slightly higher risk than homeschool children for abuse, neglect, and fatalities.⁵
- Cross-sectional findings suggest that school sector (institutional school compared to homeschooling) “... is a non-issue after considering the role played by demographics (e.g., family structure, years in foster care, large family size, and household poverty) in the maltreatment of children,” shows a key peer-reviewed study.⁶
- The incidences of abuse and neglect for homeschool children are statistically significant only when the children are out in the community or some type of schooling environment, and not at home with their families.⁷
- There is no clear evidence of an increase in reported incidents of abuse or other harm in states that move toward laws recognizing and allowing fuller homeschooling freedom.⁸
- There is no correlation between the degree of state control of homeschooling and abuse and neglect.⁹

Interpretation of Research on Public School, Private School, or Homeschooling

The research study designs to date do not conclusively “prove” or substantiate that type of schooling (school sector; e.g., public school compared to homeschool) causes these things. One hypothesis is that the negative or positive observations might be due to the demographics of the students and families in the studies. See the references in the footnotes regarding limitations and caveats in the studies.

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¹ Jeglic, Elizabeth L.; Calkins, Cynthia; Kaylor, Leah; Margeotes, Krystyn; Doychak, Kendra; Blasko, Brandy; Chesin, Megan; & Panza, Nancy. (2022). The Nature and Scope of Educator Misconduct in K-12. *Sexual Abuse*, 35 (2), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/10790632221096421>

² Back-to-school statistics, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>

³ Ap.org. (2017). AP reveals hidden horror of school sex assaults, <https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/best-of-the-week/2017/schoolhouse-sex-assault/>

⁴ HomeschoolingBackgrounder.com, <https://homeschoolingbackgrounder.com/child-abuse-neglect-fatalities-2016/>

⁵ Ray, Brian D. (2024). Homeschool abuse and neglect research: How many homeschooled kids are abused? <https://www.nheri.org/homeschool-abuse-and-neglect-research/>

⁶ Ray, Brian D.; & Shakeel, M. Danish. (2022). Demographics are predictive of child abuse and neglect but homeschool versus conventional school is a nonissue: Evidence from a nationally representative survey. *Journal of School Choice*, 17(2), <https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2022.2108879>

⁷ Ray & Shakeel, 2022, see above.

⁸ Dills, Angela. (2022). Homeschooling and child safety: Are kids safer at home? *Journal of School Choice*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2022.2113355>

⁹ Ray, Brian D. (2018, March 15). The relationship between the degree of state regulation of homeschooling and the abuse of homeschool children (Students). Retrieved June 3, 2021 from <https://www.nheri.org/degree-of-homeschool-regulation-no-relationship-to-homeschool-child-abuse/>