

Childhood bereavement is a critical issue and an increasingly important national priority.

The Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model® (CBEM)¹ approximates rates of bereavement for U.S. youth. Results from the CBEM are updated annually using vital statistics² from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).^{*} The 2026 report reflects 2020 to 2024 data, the five most recent years available.

1 in 10 children



in Missouri will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18.

BY AGE 18

10.1% or ~139K

children **will be** bereaved;
HIGHER than the national average of 9.1%.

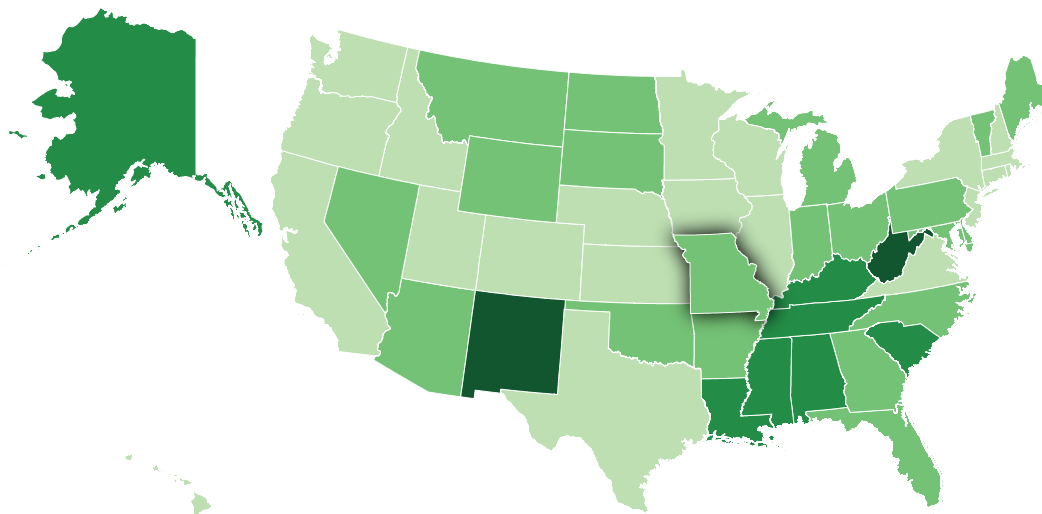


BY AGE 25

~327K

youth **will be** bereaved.
The number **more than doubles**.

Childhood Bereavement Rates by State[†]



CBEM Ranking by State[†]

18th

KEY

6.8% - 8.7%

8.8% - 10.7%

10.8% - 12.7%

12.8% - 14.7%



[†]Bereavement due to parent or sibling death by age 18.

Relationship to the Deceased

CBEM Projected results provide independent estimates of the percentage and number of youth ages 0-17 who will experience the death of a parent or sibling.

Parent



8.7% or 119K

Sibling



1.6% or 21K

CBEM Leading Cause of Death

The CBEM can produce bereavement estimates by cause of death. The tables below reflect the percentages of all bereaved children who will experience bereavement due to the leading causes of death for youth and adults, respectively.

Death of a Sibling (Ages 0 – 17)

Cause of Death	Percentage of Bereaved Children
Accidents	23.8%
Conditions related to birth	24.8%
Birth defects	13.3%
Homicide	8.2%
Suicide	4.4%

Death of a Parent (Ages 26 – 45)

Cause of Death	Percentage of Bereaved Children
Accidents	35.9%
Heart disease	10.7%
Suicide	10.4%
Cancer	8.2%
Homicide	8.1%

Cost of Inaction

Over the past two decades, CBEM data show increasing rates of bereavement nationally. Trends in Missouri are consistent with these patterns, with the most pronounced increases observed among young adult populations. Young adulthood is a time of heightened vulnerability because of independence and changes in support systems,³ making it a critical period for providing structure and resources. These include bereavement support, healthcare continuity, and connections to caring communities. Additionally, financial stability is vital at this age. Social Security benefits are available for bereaved children, and can provide support into young adulthood.

CBEM Projected percentage and number of youth bereaved due to death of a parent or sibling

United States	Age	1999 – 2003 [†]		2020 – 2024 [†]	
Missouri	By age 18	7.4%	105K	10.1%	139K
	By age 25	13.0%	256K	16.9%	327K
United States	By age 18	7.0%	5.0M	9.1%	6.6M
	By age 25	12.6%	12.6M	15.4%	15.9M

[†]These CBEM Projected results indicate children projected to be bereaved in 2003 and 2024 using five years of data to account for suppression and variability.

Call to Action

CBEM Projected results underscore the urgency of addressing childhood bereavement as a public health priority. Reducing barriers to care requires coordinated efforts across systems to ensure that grieving children, young adults, and families can access the support, stability, and services they need. Recommended actions include:



Awareness & Identification

Systematically monitor trends and universally identify bereaved children through coordinated efforts in schools, healthcare, and other service settings.



Policy

Advance policies and funding that strengthen programs and services for bereaved children and families.



Training & Education

Expand grief and trauma training for faith leaders, mentors, school staff, employers, and other community figures.



Programming

Develop and evaluate effective programming that meets the needs of diverse populations.

For additional national, state, and local CBEM data, visit: cbem.judishouse.org