



Alberta incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect (AIS-2003): Service dispositions for substantiated child maltreatment¹

Bruce MacLaurin, Nico Trocmé, Barbara Fallon, Lisa Pitman, and Megan McCormack

Alberta incidence study background

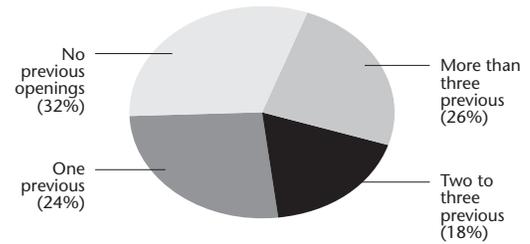
Child welfare caseloads are increasing across Alberta but the critical factors driving this increase are not clearly understood. This is one in a series of fact sheets highlighting key findings from an Alberta-wide study of child welfare investigations conducted in 2003.

The 2003 Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (*AIS-2003*) is the first survey conducted in this province to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment. *AIS-2003* collected information on a sample of 2,653 child maltreatment investigations conducted by 11 child welfare offices in Alberta. Figures presented here are weighted estimates and do not include maltreated children who were not reported to a child welfare authority.

Previous case openings

The majority of substantiated maltreatment investigations conducted during the *AIS-2003* sampling period involved families who had a history of previous child welfare involvement (68% or an estimated 12,185 child investigations). Twenty-six percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involved children whose families had been involved in more than three previous case openings with child welfare agencies while 18% involved families with two to three openings and 24% had a single prior opening (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Previous case openings for substantiated child maltreatment investigations in Alberta in 2003*



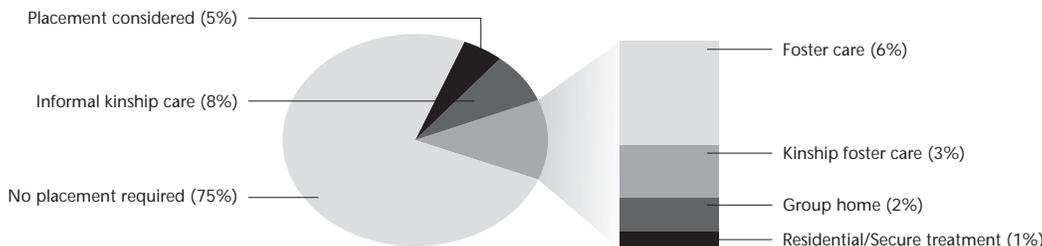
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations

Source: *AIS-2003 Major Findings Report*, Table 5-1(a)

Ongoing services and referrals to services

Fifty-eight percent of substantiated child maltreatment investigations (an estimated 10,369 child investigations) remained open for ongoing child welfare services following the completion of the investigation period. In addition, workers were asked to indicate referrals made for the child or the family that included internal referrals to a specialized service or external referrals made to other agencies. A child or family referral was made for 73% of substantiated child maltreatment investigations and included: in-home parenting support (29%), family or parent counselling (24%), drug or alcohol counselling (20%), and psychiatric or psychological services (20%).

Figure 2: Out-of-home placement for substantiated child maltreatment investigations in Alberta in 2003*



* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations

Source: *AIS-2003 Major Findings Report*, Table 5-4

Placement in care

The *AIS-2003* tracked out-of-home placements that occurred during the initial investigation period. During 2003, 2,092 substantiated child investigations resulted in a formal child welfare placement including traditional family foster care (6%), kinship foster care (3%), group home (2%), and residential/secure treatment (1%) (Figure 2). In addition, 8% of substantiated child investigations, resulted in a placement in informal kinship care.²

Court involvement

Child welfare court applications were made in 12% of all substantiated maltreatment investigations, while referrals to mediation or alternative responses were made in 7% of substantiated child investigations. Fifteen percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations resulted in a police investigation and charges were laid in 3% of all substantiated child investigations.

1 This information sheet is based upon the following peer-reviewed report: MacLaurin, B., Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., McCormack, M., Pitman, L., Forest, N., Banks, J., Shangreux, C., & Perrault, E. (2006). *Alberta incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect, AIS-2003: Final report*, Calgary: University of Calgary.

2 For the purposes of *AIS-2003* informal kinship care has been defined as an informal placement that has been arranged within the family support network (kinship care, extended family, traditional care). The child welfare authority does not have temporary custody.

About the Authors: *Bruce MacLaurin* is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary. *Nico Trocmé* is the Director of the Centre for Research on Children and Families at McGill University. *Barbara Fallon* is an Assistant Professor at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto. *Lisa Pitman* is a Research Analyst—Policy Research and Analysis Branch, Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services. *Megan McCormack* is a School Psychologist in Calgary Alberta.

Suggested citation: MacLaurin, B., Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., Pitman, L., & McCormack, M. (2008). *Alberta incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect (AIS-2003): Service dispositions for substantiated child maltreatment. CECW Information Sheet #64E*. Toronto, ON, Canada: Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto.

CECW information sheets are produced and distributed by the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare to provide timely access to Canadian child welfare research.

The Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare (CECW) is one of the Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official policy of the CECW's funders.

This information sheet can be downloaded from:
www.cecw-cepb.ca/infosheets