



Ontario incidence studies of reported child abuse and neglect 1993/1998

Outcomes of investigations

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OIS background

Child welfare caseloads are increasing across Canada but the factors driving this increase are poorly understood. This is one in a series of fact sheets highlighting key findings from Ontario-wide studies of child welfare investigations conducted in 1993 and 1998.

The 1993 *Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (OIS 1993)*¹ was the first survey conducted in Canada to examine the characteristics of children and families investigated by child welfare authorities. The 1998 *Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (OIS 1998)*² was conducted as part of the *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS)*.³ *OIS 1993* collected information on a sample of 2,447 child maltreatment investigations conducted by 17 children's aid societies in Ontario. *OIS 1998* was based on a sample of 3,053 child maltreatment investigations. Figures presented here are weighted estimates and do not include maltreated children who were not reported to a children's aid society.

Between 1993 and 1998, the estimated number of child maltreatment investigations increased 44% in Ontario, from 44,900 to 64,800. The number of substantiated cases doubled, from 12,300 in 1993 to 24,400 in 1998. In both the *OIS 1993* and the *OIS 1998*, information was collected about interventions that occurred during the investigation.

Previous CAS contact in 58% of investigations

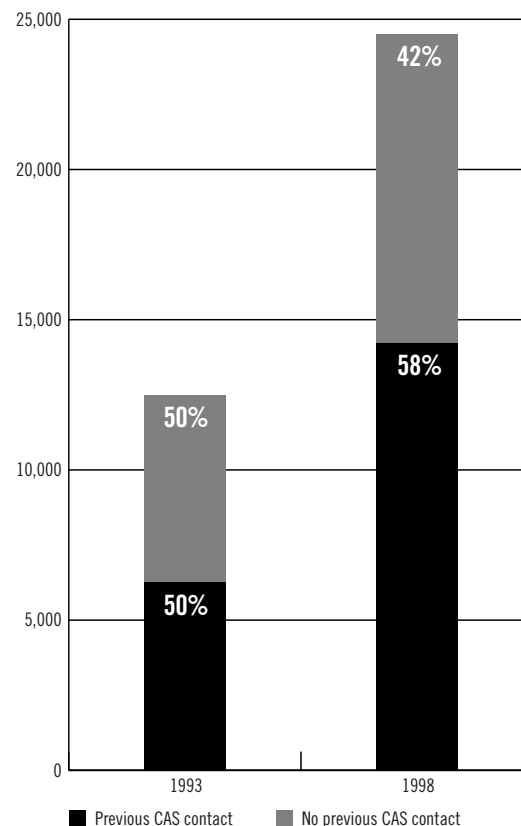
Between 1993 and 1998, there was a significant increase in the number of victims of maltreatment whose families had previous involvement with a children's aid society (CAS). The number of substantiated investigations with families who had previously been involved with a CAS increased 129%, from 6,200 in 1993 to 14,200 in 1998 (Figure 1).

Previous contact does not necessarily mean the child had been previously abused or neglected, as the investigation may have been unsubstantiated or involved a sibling.

Increase in ongoing services

Between 1993 and 1998, the number of substantiated child maltreatment investigations resulting in a decision to

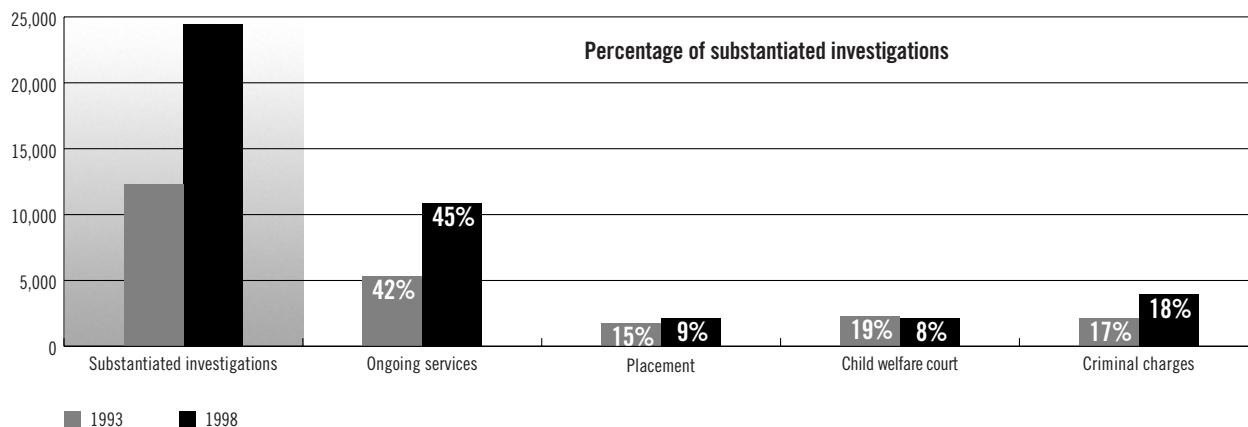
Figure 1
Substantiated child maltreatment investigations with previous CAS contact in Ontario, 1993/1998



Source: *OIS 1993/1998*, Table 5

Figure 2

Outcomes for substantiated child maltreatment investigations in Ontario, 1993/1998



Source: OIS 1993/1998, Table 6

provide ongoing services doubled, from 5,200 to 10,900. In 1998, 45% of all substantiated investigations led to ongoing services (Figure 2).

Placement in care

The *OIS 1993* and the *OIS 1998* also tracked out-of-home placements and court activities during the investigations. During 1993, 1,800 substantiated investigations led to children being placed in out-of-home care, compared to 2,200 in 1998.

Considering the significant increase in cases of substantiated maltreatment, the proportion of victims placed in care actually decreased, from 15% in 1993, to 9% in 1998. It is important to note that since 1998, the number of children placed in care has increased dramatically. After a period of relative stability, the number of children in care has increased from an average of 10,000 on any given day, to over 16,000 in 2002.⁴

Increasing use of criminal courts

The number of investigations resulting in child welfare court proceedings decreased from 2,300 in 1993 to 2,000 in 1998. In contrast, the use of criminal courts increased significantly. The number of investigations leading to criminal charges increased from 2,100 in 1993 to 4,000 in 1998.

- 1 Trocmé, N., McPhee, D., Tam, K.K., & Hay, T. (1994). *Ontario incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect (OIS 1993)*. Toronto: Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse.
- 2 Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., MacLaurin, B., Bartholomew, S., Ortiz, J., Thompson, J., Helfrich, W., & Daciuk, J. (2002). *The 1998 Ontario incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect (OIS 1998)*. Toronto: Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto.
- 3 Trocmé, N., MacLaurin, B., Fallon, B., Daciuk, J., Billingsley, D., Tourigny, M., Mayer, M., Wright, J., Barter, K., Burford, G., Hornick, J., Sullivan, R., & McKenzie, B. (2001). *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect*. Ottawa, ON: National Clearinghouse on Family Violence.
- 4 See Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., Nutter, B., MacLaurin, B., & Thompson, J. (1999). *Outcomes for child welfare services in Ontario*. Toronto: Bell Canada Child Welfare Research Unit, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto; and Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies' Web site: <http://www.oacas.org/resources/casstats.htm>

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This information sheet and the full report, entitled *The changing face of child welfare investigations in Ontario: The 1993 and 1998 Ontario incidence studies of reported child abuse and neglect*, can be downloaded from www.cecw-cepb.ca/infosheets



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