



# CIS-2008 Major Findings Supplementary Tables: Previous Case Openings by Primary Substantiated Maltreatment and Risk

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## Introduction

The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2008 (CIS-2008) is the third nation-wide study to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment and the characteristics of children and families investigated by child welfare authorities in Canada. . In addition to the tables presented in the [Major Findings](#) report, the Supplementary Tables Information Sheet Series describes key child, household and investigation characteristics by primary category of substantiated maltreatment including confirmed risk. This Information Sheet examines previous child welfare case openings.

## Findings

There were an estimated 235,842 maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Canada in 2008. An estimated 174,411 investigations were for an incident of maltreatment and an estimated 61,431 were risk-only investigations. At the end of the initial investigation, 49% of maltreatment investigations were substantiated (85,440 investigations) and in 20% of risk investigations, the worker determined there was a significant risk of future maltreatment (12,018 investigations).

As shown in Table 1, the number of previous child welfare case openings varies by primary category of substantiated maltreatment. The majority of substantiated physical abuse investigations (51%), substantiated exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) investigations (57%), substantiated emotional maltreatment investigations (65%), substantiated neglect investigations (70%), and confirmed risk investigations (75%) had at least one previous case opening. Just under half of substantiated sexual abuse investigations (47%) had at least one

previous case opening. Confirmed risk and substantiated neglect investigations were the most likely to have had more than 3 previous case openings.

Table 1.

*Previous case openings by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008<sup>^</sup>*

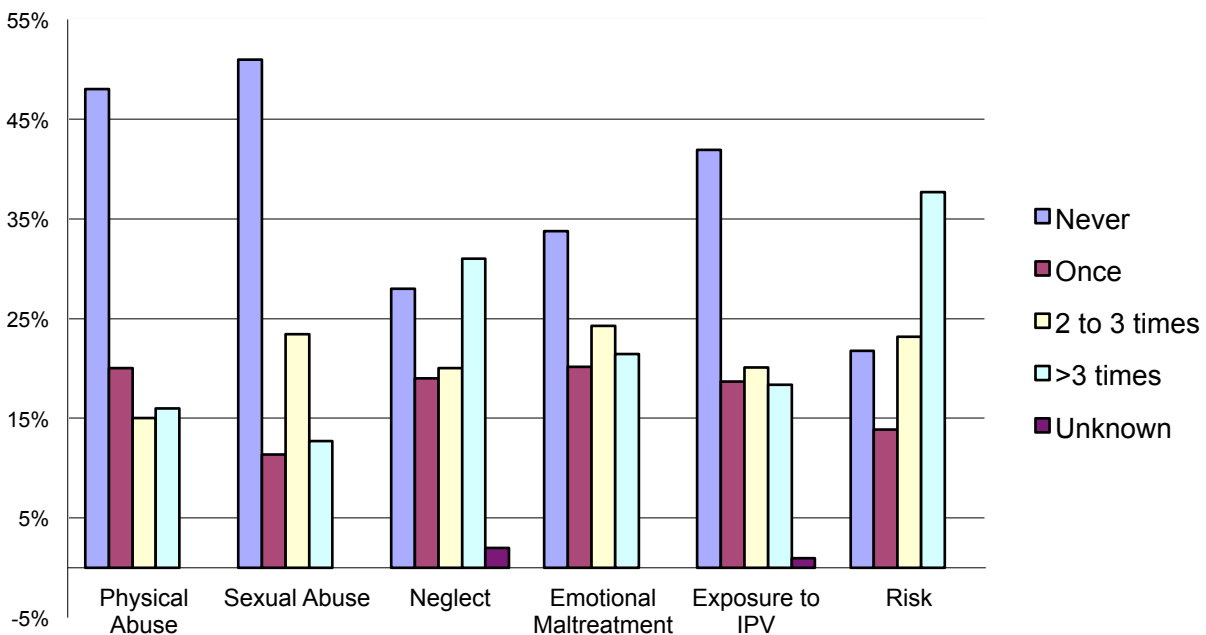
	Primary Category of Maltreatment												Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to IPV		Risk			
Previous Case Openings	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Never	8,189	48	1,329	51	8,100	28	2,504	34	12,260	42	2,637	22	35,019	36
1 time	3,514	20	297	11	5,533	19	1,494	20	5,464	19	1,682	14	17,984	19
2-3 times	2,659	16	610	23	5,856	20	1,802	24	5,885	20	2,815	23	19,627	20
>3 times	2,764	16	332	13	8,951	31	1,591	22	5,377	18	4,570	38	23,585	24
Unknown	-	-	-	-	442	2	-	-	274	1	305	3	1,162	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,203</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,608</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28,882</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7,415</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29,260</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12,009</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>97,377</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>^</sup> Based on a sample of 7,023 substantiated child maltreatment-related investigations with information about previous case openings. Percentages are column percentages, but may not add to 100% because of rounding.  
 - Estimates of less than 100 investigations are not shown, but are included in the total.

Please see Figure 1 for a visual representation of these findings.

Figure 1.

*Previous case openings by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008*



For investigations with a previous child welfare case opening, Table 2 outlines the amount of time that had elapsed since this previous case opening.

Table 2.

*Time since previous case opening by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008<sup>^</sup>*

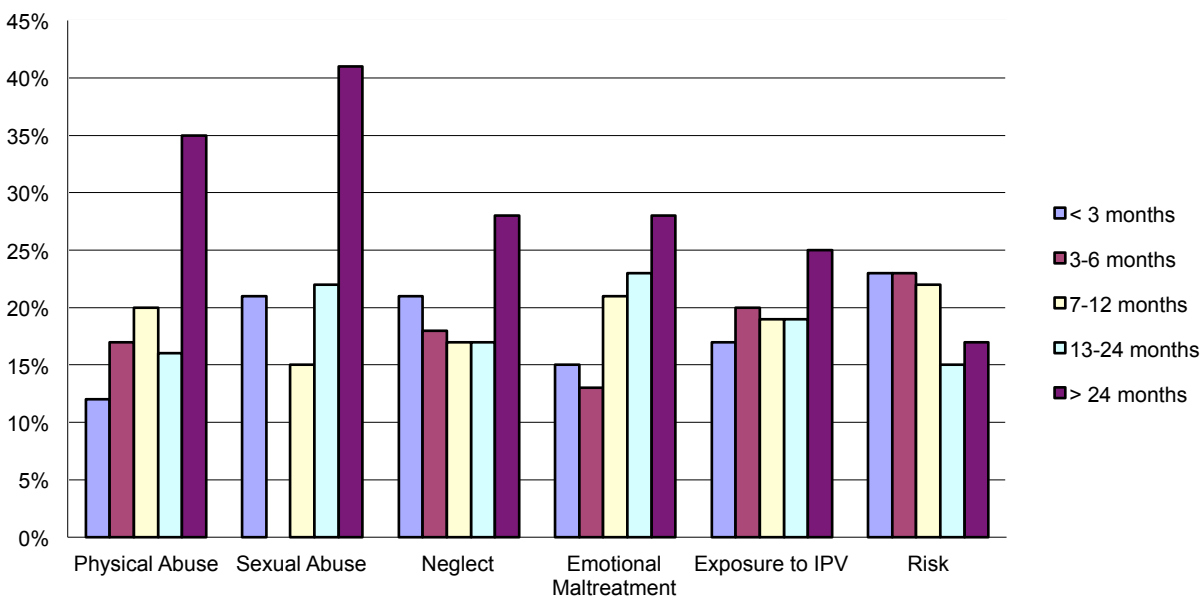
	Primary Category of Maltreatment												Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to IPV		Risk			
Time Since Previous Opening	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<3 months	1,069	12	249	21	4,203	21	751	15	2,822	17	2,046	23	11,140	18
3-6 months	1,506	17	-	-	3,590	18	619	13	3,363	20	2,070	23	11,177	18
7-12 months	1,810	20	175	15	3,488	17	1,024	21	3,210	19	2,020	22	11,727	19
13-24 months	1,427	16	264	22	3,427	17	1,103	23	3,202	19	1,361	15	10,784	18
>24 months	3,093	35	492	41	5,584	28	1,380	28	4,098	25	1,536	17	16,183	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,905</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20,292</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,877</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16,695</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9,033</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>61,011</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>^</sup> Based on a sample of 4,355 substantiated child maltreatment-related investigations with information about time since previous case opening. Percentages are column percentages, but may not add to 100% because of rounding.  
 - Estimates of less than 100 investigations are not shown, but are included in the total.

Less than 12 months had passed since a previous case opening in 68% percent of confirmed risk investigations, 56% of substantiated neglect and substantiated exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) investigations, 49% of substantiated physical abuse and substantiated emotional maltreatment investigations, and 36% of substantiated sexual abuse investigations. Please see Figure 2 for a visual representation of these findings.

Figure 2.

*Time since previous case opening by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008*



## **Background**

Responsibility for protecting and supporting children at risk of abuse and neglect falls under the jurisdiction of the 13 Canadian provinces and territories and a system of Aboriginal child welfare agencies which have increasing responsibility for protecting and supporting Aboriginal children. Because of variations in the types of situations that each jurisdiction includes under its child welfare mandate as well as differences in the way service statistics are kept, it is difficult to obtain a nation-wide profile of the children and families receiving child welfare services. The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) is designed to provide such a profile by collecting information on a periodic basis from every jurisdiction using a standardized set of definitions. With core funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada and in-kind and financial support from a consortium of federal, provincial, territorial, Aboriginal and academic stakeholders, the CIS-2008 is the third nation-wide study of the incidence and characteristics of investigated child abuse and neglect across Canada.

## **Methodology**

The CIS-2008 used a multi-stage sampling design to select a representative sample of 112 child welfare agencies in Canada and then to select a sample of cases within these agencies. Information was collected directly from child welfare workers on a representative sample of 15,980 child protection investigations conducted during a three-month sampling period in the fall of 2008. This sample was weighted to reflect provincial annual estimates.

For maltreatment investigations, information was collected regarding the primary form of maltreatment investigated as well as the level of substantiation for that maltreatment. Thirty-two forms of maltreatment were listed on the data collection instrument, and these were collapsed into five broad categories: physical abuse (e.g., hit with hand), sexual abuse (e.g., exploitation), neglect (e.g., educational neglect), emotional maltreatment (e.g., verbal abuse or belittling), and exposure to intimate partner violence (e.g., direct witness to physical violence). Workers listed the primary concern for the investigation, and could also list secondary and tertiary concerns.

For each form of maltreatment listed, workers assigned a level of substantiation. Maltreatment could be substantiated (i.e., the balance of evidence indicated that the maltreatment had occurred), suspected (i.e., the maltreatment could neither be confirmed nor ruled out), or unfounded (i.e., the balance of evidence indicated that the maltreatment had not occurred).

For each risk investigation, workers determined whether the child was at significant risk of future maltreatment. The worker could decide that the child was at significant risk of future maltreatment (confirmed risk), that the child was not at significant risk of future maltreatment (unfounded risk), or that the future risk of maltreatment was unknown.

A detailed presentation of the study methodology and of the definitions of each variable is available at <http://cwrp.ca/publications/cis-2008-study-methods>.

## **Limitations**

The CIS collects information directly from child welfare workers at the point when they completed their initial investigation of a report of possible child abuse or neglect, or risk of future maltreatment. Therefore, the scope of the study is limited to the type of information available to them at that point. The CIS does not include information about unreported maltreatment nor about cases that were investigated only by the police. Also, reports that were made to child welfare authorities but were screened out (not opened for investigation) were not included. Similarly, reports on cases currently open at the time of case selection were not included. The study did not track longer-term service events that occurred beyond the initial investigation.

Three limitations to estimation method used to derive annual estimated should also be noted. The agency size correction uses child population as a proxy for agency size; this does not account for variations in per capita investigation rates across agencies in the same strata. The annualization weight corrects for seasonal fluctuation in the volume of investigations, but it does not correct for seasonal variations in types of investigations conducted. Finally, the annualization weight includes cases that were investigated more than once in the year as a result of the case being re-opened following a first investigation completed earlier in the same year. Accordingly, the weighted annual estimates represent the child maltreatment-related investigations, rather than investigated children.

Comparisons across CIS reports must be made with caution. The forms of maltreatment tracked by each cycle were modified to take into account changes in investigation mandates and practices. Comparisons across cycles must in particular take into consideration the fact that the CIS-2008 was the first to explicitly track risk-only investigations. In addition, readers are cautioned to avoid making direct comparisons with provincial and First Nations oversampling reports because of differences in the way national and oversampling estimates are derived.

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