

# Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2003 (AIS-2003)

## Major Findings

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## ■ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The 2003 Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2003) reflects a truly provincial effort by a group of over 265 child welfare service providers, researchers, and policy makers committed to improving services for abused and neglected children through research. Core funding for the study was provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada, while funding for oversampling was provided by the Alberta Government.

The AIS-2003 was conducted by a small team of researchers who demonstrated an exceptional ability to keep focused on the objectives of this collective effort while bringing to bear their own expertise. Their energy, commitment and determination contributed greatly to the success of this research and to the quality achieved.

The child welfare workers and managers who participated in the study deserve special recognition for finding the time and the interest to participate in the study while juggling their ever-increasing child protection responsibilities. Although for reasons of confidentiality we cannot list their names, on behalf of the AIS-2003 Research Team we thank the child welfare professionals who participated in the AIS-2003.

Bruce MacLaurin  
AIS-2003 Principal Investigator

Nico Tromé  
AIS-2003 Principal Investigator

## ■ DEDICATION

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This report is dedicated to the children and families served by Alberta child welfare workers. It is our sincere hope that the study contributes to improving their well-being.



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## ■ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2003) is the first province-wide study to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment and the characteristics of the children and families investigated by Alberta child welfare services. The AIS-2003 tracked 2,653 child maltreatment investigations conducted in a representative sample of 11 Child Welfare Service Areas across Alberta in the fall of 2003. Weighted provincial annual estimates were derived based on these investigations. The following considerations should be noted in interpreting AIS-2003 statistics:

- the study is limited to reports investigated by child welfare services and do not include reports that were screened out, cases that were only investigated by the police and cases that were never reported;
- the study is based on the assessments provided by the investigating child welfare workers and were not independently verified;
- all estimates are weighted annual estimates for 2003 presented either as a count of child maltreatment investigations (e.g. 12,300 child maltreatment investigations) or as the annual incidence rate (e.g. 3.1 per 1,000 children);
- because this study is not designed to conduct regional comparisons, variation in rates of maltreatment across Alberta cannot be examined.

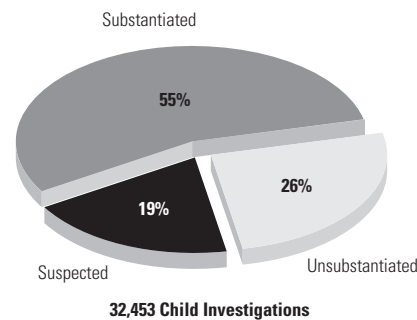
### Investigated and Substantiated Maltreatment

An estimated 32,453 child investigations were conducted in Alberta in 2003. Fifty-five percent of these investigations were substantiated, involving an estimated 17,864 child investigations, an incidence rate of 23.76 substantiated investigations per 1,000 children. In a further 19% of investigations there was insufficient evidence to substantiate maltreatment, however, maltreatment remained suspected by the investigating worker. Twenty-six percent of investigations were unsubstantiated.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This rate of unsubstantiated cases is similar to or lower than rates reported in most jurisdictions and reflects laws that require the public and professionals to report all cases where they suspect maltreatment may have occurred. Most unsubstantiated cases are indeed reports made in good faith, only 2% of reports tracked by AIS 2003 were considered to have been made with malicious intent. (see Table 8-2(a) in AIS-2003 Major Findings Report).

**Figure 1**  
**Child Maltreatment Investigations by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**  
 AIS 2003 estimates based on a sample of 2,653 investigations



**Table 1**  
**Child Maltreatment Investigations by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003\***

	Level of Substantiation			Total
	Substantiated	Suspected	Unsubstantiated	
Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta				
Child Investigations *	17,864	5,998	8,591	<b>32,453</b>
Incidence per 1,000 Children	23.76	7.98	11.42	<b>43.16</b>
Row Percentage	55%	19%	26%	<b>100%</b>

\* Based on a sample of 2,653 child maltreatment investigations.

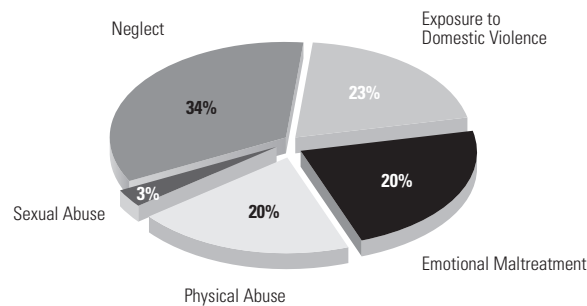
## Categories of Maltreatment

Table 2 presents the primary categories of substantiated maltreatment in Alberta in 2003.

- Neglect was the most common form of substantiated maltreatment in Alberta. Over a third (34%) of all substantiated investigations involved neglect as the primary category of maltreatment, an estimated 6,064 neglect investigations, a rate of 8.06 substantiated investigations per 1,000 children.
- Exposure to domestic violence was the second most frequently substantiated category of maltreatment (an estimated 4,112 substantiated investigations, a rate of 5.46 per 1,000 children).
- Emotional maltreatment was the primary category of substantiated maltreatment in 20% of cases (an estimated 3,647 substantiated investigations, a rate of 4.85 per 1,000 children).

- Physical abuse, as the primary category of substantiated maltreatment, followed closely behind (an estimated 3,503 substantiated investigations, a rate of 4.66 per 1,000 children).
- Sexual abuse cases represented only 3% of all substantiated investigations (an estimated 537 substantiated investigations, a rate of 0.72 per 1,000 children).

**Figure 2**  
**Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**  
 AIS 2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations



**Table 2**  
**Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003\***

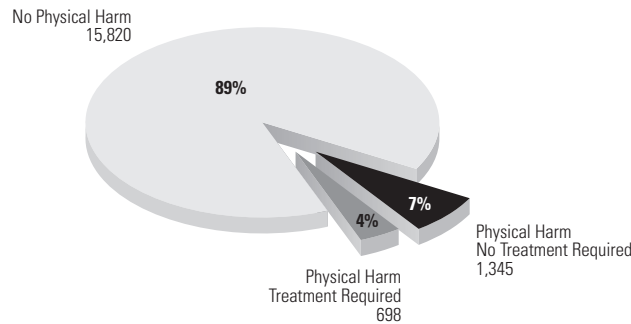
	Primary Category of Substantiated Maltreatment					Total
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence	
Substantiated Child Investigations *	3,503	537	6,064	3,647	4,112	<b>17,864</b>
Incidence per 1,000 Children	4.66	0.72	8.06	4.85	5.46	<b>23.76</b>
Row Percentage	20%	3%	34%	20%	23%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>						
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations.						

## Physical and Emotional Harm

Physical harm was identified in 11% of cases of substantiated maltreatment (Figure 3). In seven percent of cases (an estimated 1,345 substantiated investigations) harm was noted but no treatment was considered to be required. In a further four percent of cases (an estimated 698 child investigations), symptoms were determined to require treatment.

**Figure 3**  
**Physical Harm in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**  
AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations

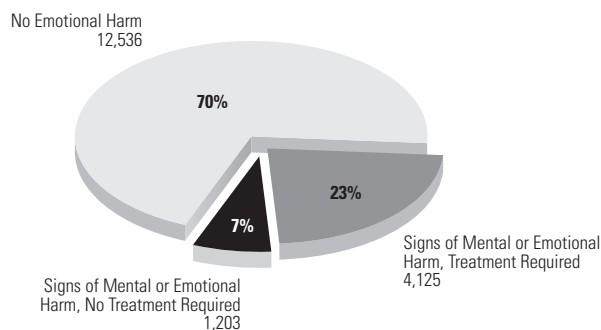
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Information on emotional harm was collected using a series of questions asking child welfare workers to describe emotional harm that had occurred after the maltreatment incidents. Workers were asked to include changes in the child's development, self-regulation, or emotions that they had observed or that had been described to them. In order to rate the severity of mental/emotional harm, workers indicated whether therapeutic intervention (treatment) was required in response to the mental or emotional distress shown by the child. Emotional harm was noted in 30% of all substantiated maltreatment investigations, involving an estimated 5,328 substantiated investigations. In 23% of substantiated cases symptoms were determined to require treatment (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**  
**Emotional Harm in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**  
AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations

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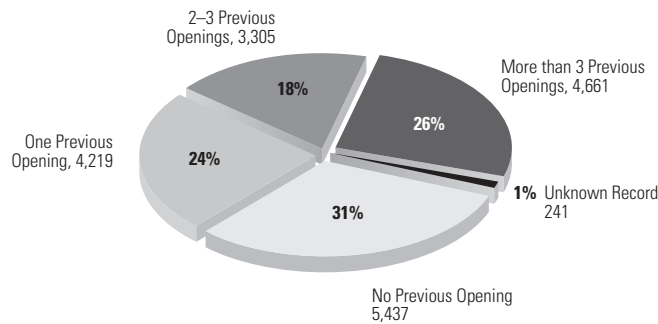
## Service Dispositions

Service dispositions documented by the AIS-2003 include: (1) previous child welfare contact, (2) provision of ongoing child welfare service, and (3) placement of children in out-of-home care. AIS-2003 service disposition statistics should be interpreted with care however, because they track only case events that occurred during the initial child welfare investigation. Additional referrals for services and admissions to out-of-home care are likely to occur for cases kept open after the initial investigation.

### *Previous Case Openings*

Over two-thirds of substantiated investigations (an estimated 12,185 children) had at least one previous case opening. Twenty-six percent had more than three previous case openings (Figure 5).

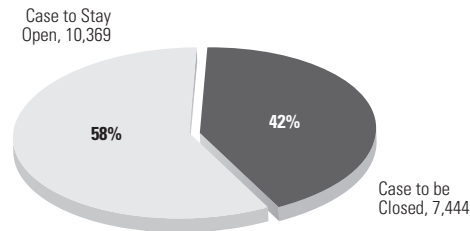
**Figure 5**  
***Previous Case Openings in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003***  
*AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations*



### *Ongoing Child Welfare Services*

An estimated 10,369 (58%) substantiated child maltreatment investigations were identified as remaining open for on-going services while an estimated 7,444 (42%) substantiated investigations were to be closed at the end of the initial investigation period.

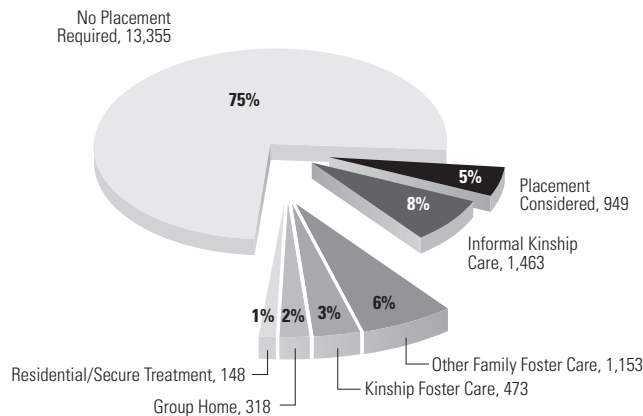
**Figure 6**  
**On-going Child Welfare Services in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta in 2003**  
 AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations



**Admissions to Out-of-Home Care**

Admissions to out-of-home care at any time during the investigation were tracked. Twelve percent of all substantiated child investigations (an estimated 2,092) led to a child being placed in formal child welfare care (kinship foster care, other family foster care, group home or residential/secure treatment) during the initial investigation. An additional eight percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations resulted in children being placed in informal kinship care<sup>2</sup> while placement was considered in a further five percent of substantiated child maltreatment investigations. In total, 20% percent of children experienced a change of residence during or at the conclusion of the initial substantiated maltreatment investigation, 12% in the form of a placement in a child welfare setting (Figure 7).

**Figure 7**  
**Out-of-Home Placements in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**  
 AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations



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.

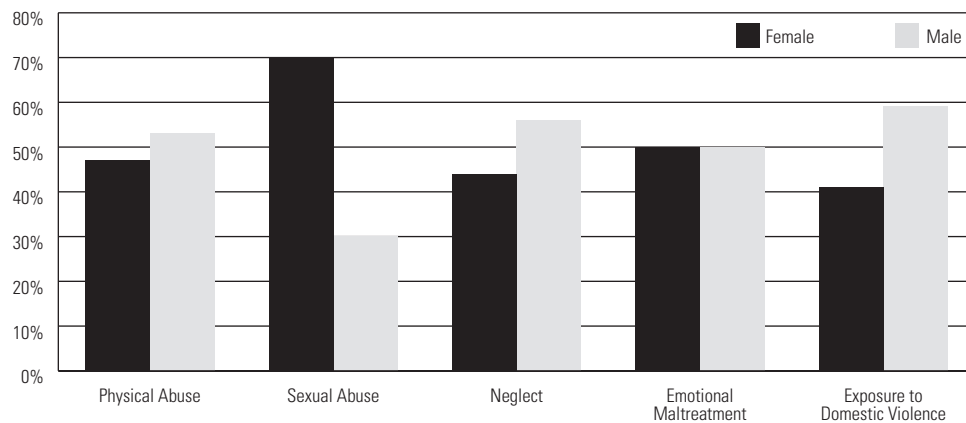
## Child Characteristics

### *Child Sex and Age*

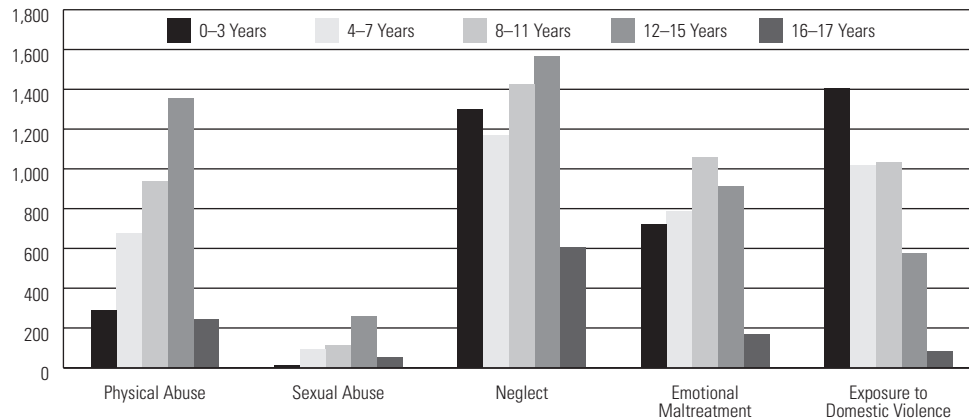
Figure 8 presents the age and sex of children by the primary category of substantiated maltreatment. While overall 46% of victims were girls, girls were a larger proportion of the investigated children in substantiated cases of sexual abuse (70%), whereas boys were more often victims in cases of physical abuse (53%), neglect (56%) and exposure to domestic violence (59%). There was relatively less variation in the age distribution of children in cases of emotional maltreatment in comparison to the other forms of maltreatment. Older children were more often identified as victims of physical abuse and sexual abuse, 72% of physical abuse child investigations (an estimated 2,536 cases) and 80% of sexual abuse child investigations (an estimated 430 cases) were between the ages of 8 and 17, whereas younger children were more often identified in cases of exposure to domestic violence (59% were 7 years old or under, an estimated 2,424 child investigations). For all forms of maltreatment the number of victims decreased after the age of 15.

**Figure 8a**

**Sex of Investigated Children by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**  
 AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations



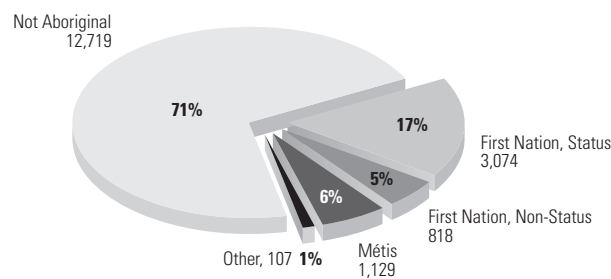
**Figure 8b**  
**Age of Investigated Children by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**  
 AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations



### Aboriginal Heritage

Aboriginal heritage was documented by the AIS-2003 in an effort to better understand some of the factors that bring children from these communities into contact with the child welfare system. Aboriginal children were identified as a key group to examine because of concerns about overrepresentation of children from these communities in the foster care system. Twenty-nine percent of substantiated cases, nearly 5,143 substantiated maltreatment investigations, involved children of Aboriginal heritage (Figure 9). Seventeen percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involved children with First Nations status, six percent involved Métis children, and five percent involved First Nation Non-Status children. Other Aboriginal heritage was identified in one percent of substantiated child maltreatment investigations.

**Figure 9**  
**Aboriginal Heritage of Children in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**  
 AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations



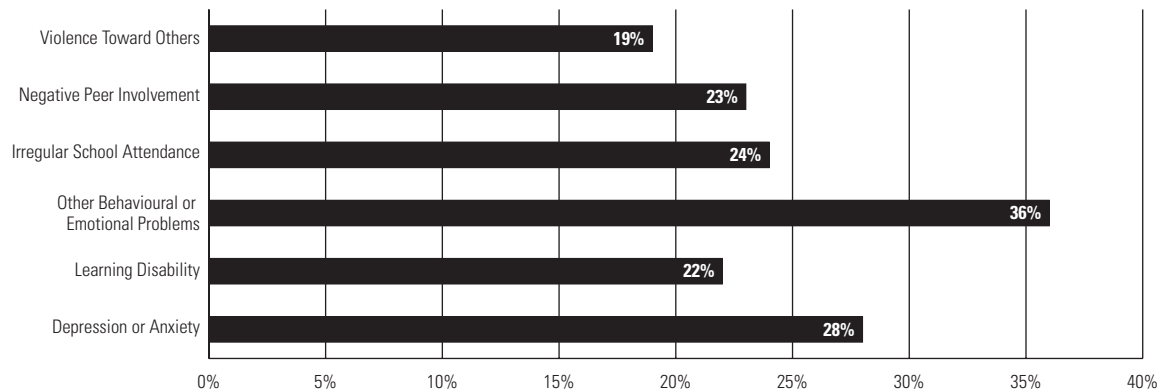
### *Child Functioning Issues*

A number of child functioning issues were tracked by the AIS-2003 by having participating child welfare workers complete a simple checklist of functioning issues that they had noted during the investigation. The three most frequently noted functioning concerns were children were “other behavioural or emotional problems” (e.g. significant behavioural or emotional problems that did not fall under the other categories of classification) (36%), depression or anxiety (28%), and irregular school attendance (24%) (Figure 10).

**Figure 10**

#### ***Child Functioning in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003***

*AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations*

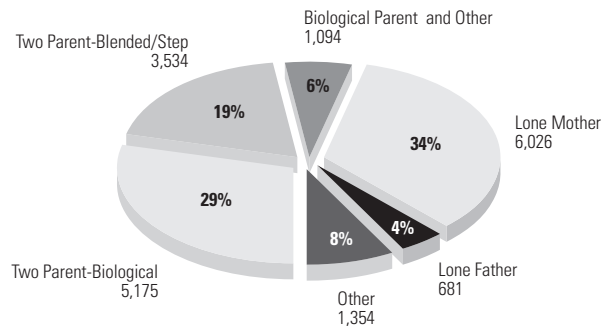


## Household Characteristics

### *Caregiver Descriptions*

Twenty-nine percent of substantiated investigations involved children who lived with their two biological parents, and 19% lived in a two-parent blended family in which one of the caregivers was a step-parent, a common law partner, or an adoptive parent who was not the biological parent of at least one of the children in the family. Six percent of substantiated child investigations involved a biological parent living with another adult who also acted as a caregiver to the child (i.e. grandparent, aunt/uncle). Thirty-eight percent involved children who lived in a family led by a lone parent: 34% by a female parent and four percent by a male parent.

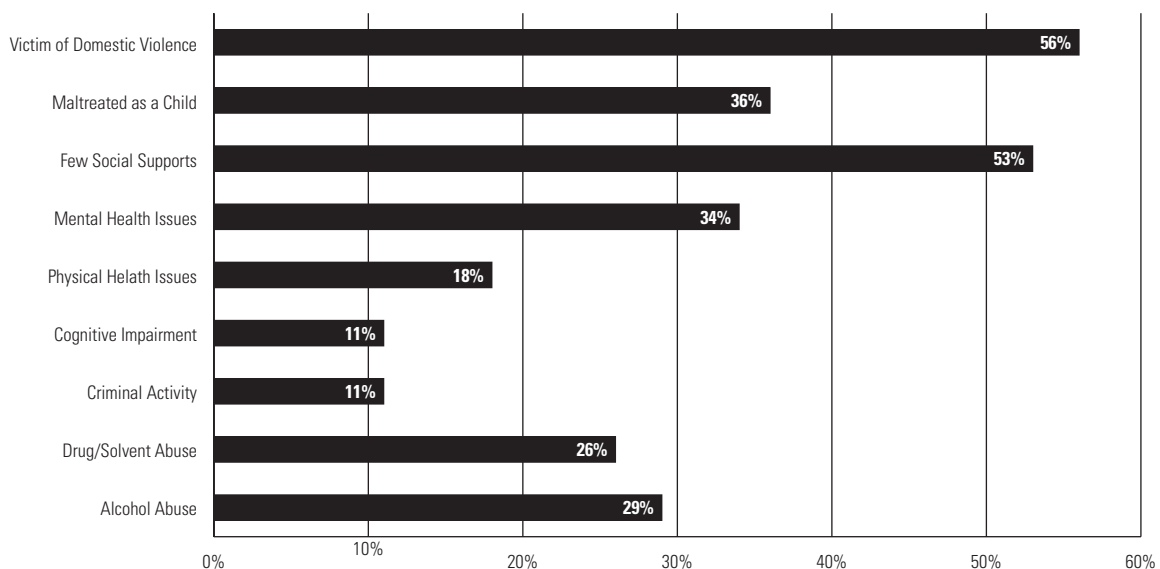
**Figure 11**  
**Caregivers of Children in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**  
 AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations



### Maternal Risk Factors

A number of potential family stressors were tracked by the AIS-2003 by having participating child welfare workers complete a simple checklist of stressors that they had noted during the investigation. The three most frequently noted problems for mothers and other female caregivers were victims of domestic violence (56%), few social supports (53%) and a history of being maltreated as a child (36%) (Figure 12a).

**Figure 12a**  
**Maternal Risk Factors in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**  
 AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations



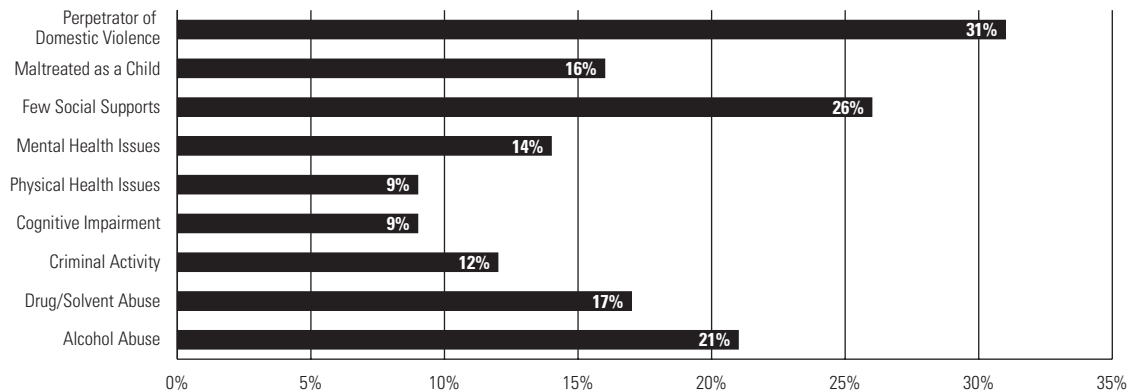
### *Paternal Risk Factors*

For fathers and other male caregivers the most frequently noted problems were perpetrator of domestic violence (31%), few social supports (26%), and alcohol abuse (21%) (Figure 12b).

**Figure 12b**

#### ***Paternal Risk Factors in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003***

*AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations*

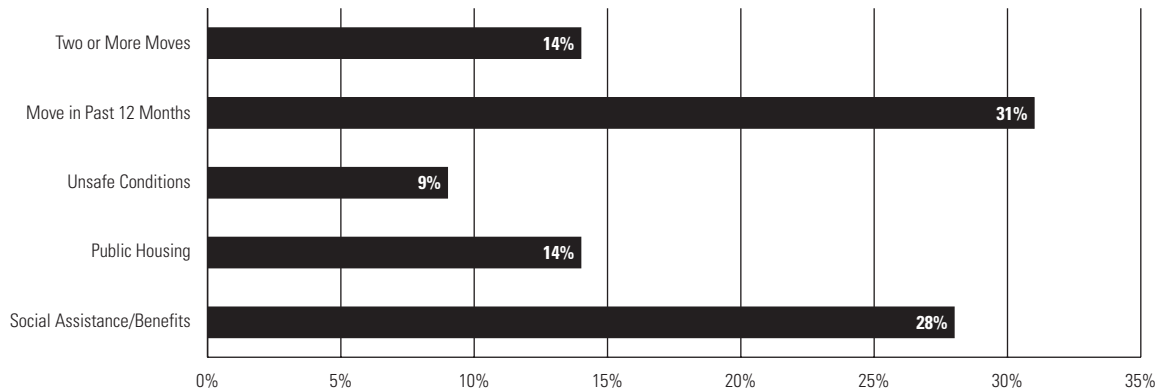


### *Household Risk Factors*

Household risk factors tracked by the AIS-2003 included housing and source of income. Twenty-eight percent of households depended on social assistance or other benefits as their major source of income.<sup>3</sup> Fourteen percent lived in public housing, 9% were considered to be living in unsafe conditions, 31% had moved at least once in the past 12 months, and 14% had moved two or more times (Figure 13).

<sup>3</sup> A direct measure of poverty could not be tracked because in approximately 40% of substantiated child maltreatment investigations, the child welfare worker was unable to estimate family income.

**Figure 13**  
**Household Risk Factors in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**  
AIS-2003 estimates based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated investigations



## Future Directions

The 2003 study provides the first opportunity to examine province-wide data for Alberta. The AIS-2003 dataset will provide researchers across the province with the opportunity to examine in more detail the factors underlying reported and substantiated maltreatment. Given the types of maltreatment being reported, it will be particularly important to examine each category of maltreatment, as well as factors occurring at the level of specific sub-forms of maltreatment. It will also be important to conduct analyses of trends specific to different age groups as well as to specific populations, such as children from Aboriginal backgrounds.

The past five years have brought about dramatic shifts in the delivery of child welfare services in Alberta. Following a review of the *Child Welfare Act* in 2002 the new *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* was introduced on November 1, 2004. This new legislation created a new focus on permanency planning for children and changed the provincial definitions of both child neglect and emotional maltreatment. In recent years many jurisdictions across Canada have examined the implementation of alternative response models to child welfare services. Alberta is leading the way through the development and application of the Alberta response model that were formalized within the *Child, Youth, and Family Enhancement Act*. This provides children and families in Alberta with two pathways for child welfare service: child intervention services or family enhancement services. The AIS-2003 data was collected during the transition phase prior to the full implementation of the new legislation. This provides an excellent baseline of statistical information that can be used in the future to explore the changes that follow the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.



In addition to providing a periodic provincial data collection system, the AIS-2003 also supports provincial efforts to better integrate their administrative information systems. With more integrated information systems, jurisdictions across the province will be in a better position to learn from diversity of policies and programs that have been developed. The continued surveillance of the incidence of child maltreatment and the opportunities to examine trends that emerge over time, will assist policy makers, practitioners, and researchers in preventing future child maltreatment.



## ■ 1. INTRODUCTION

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The following report presents the major descriptive findings from the 2003 Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2003). The AIS-2003 is the first province-wide study to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment and the characteristics of the children and families investigated by child welfare services in Alberta. The estimates presented in this report are primarily based on information collected from child welfare investigators on a representative sample of over 2,600 child welfare investigations conducted across Alberta.

This introduction presents the rationale and objectives of the study, provides an overview of the child welfare system in Alberta, describes the definitional framework used for the study, and outlines the organization of the report.

### Background to the Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2003)

In Canada, most child abuse and neglect statistics are kept on a provincial or territorial basis. However, because of differences among provinces and territories in definitions of maltreatment and in methods for counting cases, it is not possible to aggregate provincial and territorial statistics. The lack of comparability of provincial and territorial data has hindered the ability of governments and social service providers to improve policies and programs that address the needs of maltreated children. National data are also needed to provide a meaningful context for interpreting findings from Canadian and international child maltreatment research.

The 1998 Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect was the first study in Canada to estimate the incidence of child abuse and neglect reported to, and investigated by, the Canadian child welfare system. The CIS-1998 was based on a study design developed by Nico Trocmé for the 1993 Ontario Incidence Study,<sup>4</sup> which in turn had been partially based on the design of the U.S. National Incidence Studies.<sup>5</sup>

The CIS-1998 found that an estimated 135,573 child maltreatment investigations had been conducted in Canada in 1998, an incidence rate of 21.52 investigations per 1,000 children. Almost half (45%) of these reports were substantiated, 22 % of investigations could not be substantiated but

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4 Trocmé N., McPhee D., et al. (1994). *Ontario incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect*. Toronto: Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

5 Sedlack A.J. & Broadhurst D.D (1996). *Executive summary of the third national incidence study of child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

remained suspected, and in 33 % of investigations the worker<sup>6</sup> determined that child maltreatment did not occur. In four percent of the unfounded investigations the allegation was considered to be intentionally false.

Neglect was the most common reason for investigation, an estimated 53,922 child investigations (40%) involved allegations of neglect as the primary reason for investigation. Of these, 21,568 child investigations (43%) were substantiated. Thirty-one percent of investigations involved physical abuse allegations as the primary reason for referral, of these, 14,127 child maltreatment investigations were substantiated. Emotional maltreatment was the primary reason for investigation in 19% of cases, 13,875 were substantiated. Finally, sexual abuse was the primary reason for investigation in 10% of investigations, of which 5,474 investigations were substantiated.

The largest proportion of physical abuse cases were single incidents involving older children and were more likely to involve injuries than were other forms of maltreatment. While sexual abuse cases predominantly involved female victims, the study also drew attention to the large proportion of pre-adolescent male victims of sexual abuse who were being reported to child welfare authorities. Neglect and emotional maltreatment typically involved more complex situations, where children had more emotional and behavioural difficulties noted than for other categories of maltreatment and families were struggling with more housing problems, lower employment rates, isolation, substance abuse, and domestic violence.

Aboriginal children stood out in the study as being a distinct high-risk group, over-represented at every stage of intervention. While five percent of children in Canada were Aboriginal, 17% of children reported to the child welfare system were Aboriginal. Twenty-two percent of substantiated cases of child maltreatment involved Aboriginal children, and 25 % of children admitted to care were Aboriginal.

International comparisons indicated that rates of investigated and substantiated child maltreatment were considerably lower in Canada compared to the United States, but higher than the rates reported in Australia.

Findings from the CIS-1998 have provided much needed information to service providers, policy makers, and researchers seeking to better understand the children and families coming into contact with the child welfare system. The study drew attention to the large number of neglect and emotional maltreatment cases that had not been previously identified as service priorities. A number

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6 The word “worker” is used to describe all the individuals who conduct child protection investigations. These people may be social workers, social service workers or other persons with training in child protection. In some jurisdictions the use of the terms social worker and social service worker indicate that the individual has met licensing requirements within their respective profession, however, not all individuals conducting child maltreatment investigations will fall into these two categories.

of jurisdictions have used findings from the study to assist them in better adapting child welfare policies to address the array of difficulties faced by victims of maltreatment and their families.

Building on the critical success of the CIS-1998, the Alberta Government committed resources and funding to support the development of the Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2003). This Alberta study occurred at the same time as the 2003 cycle of the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect. This work provides essential baseline information that allows policy and research analysts to better understand those children and families who utilized child welfare intervention in Alberta in 2003, and to examine changes in the profile of these families through subsequent cycles of this study.

### ***Funding***

The AIS-2003 is funded in part by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Alberta Government. Funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada was provided to gather information from a nationally representative sample of 63 child welfare service areas (CWSAs) including four from Alberta. The Alberta Government provided additional funding for oversampling from an additional seven CWSAs to provide a sufficient sample to generate provincial estimates of reported child abuse and neglect. A child welfare service area is a geographic or administrative area served by a distinct child welfare office. In Alberta, a CWSA refers to a district or regional office.

The Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2003) applied the CIS-2003 survey instrument, case selection procedures and methodology to collect data at all participating sites in the province and was conducted during the study timelines established by the Canadian Incidence Study (CIS-2003).

In addition to direct funds received from federal and provincial/territorial sources, all participating Alberta sites contributed significant in-kind support, which included not only the time required for child welfare workers to attend training sessions, complete forms, and respond to additional information requests, but also coordinating support from team administrative staff, supervisors, managers and data specialists.

## **Objectives and Scope of the AIS**

The primary objective of the AIS-2003 is to provide reliable estimates of the scope and characteristics of child abuse and neglect investigated by child welfare services across Alberta in 2003. Cases tracked by the AIS-2003 study include substantiated, suspected and unsubstantiated investigations of reported child abuse and neglect, but do not include reports that are screened out before investigation or cases that are investigated only by the police (Figure 1-1). The AIS-2003 is

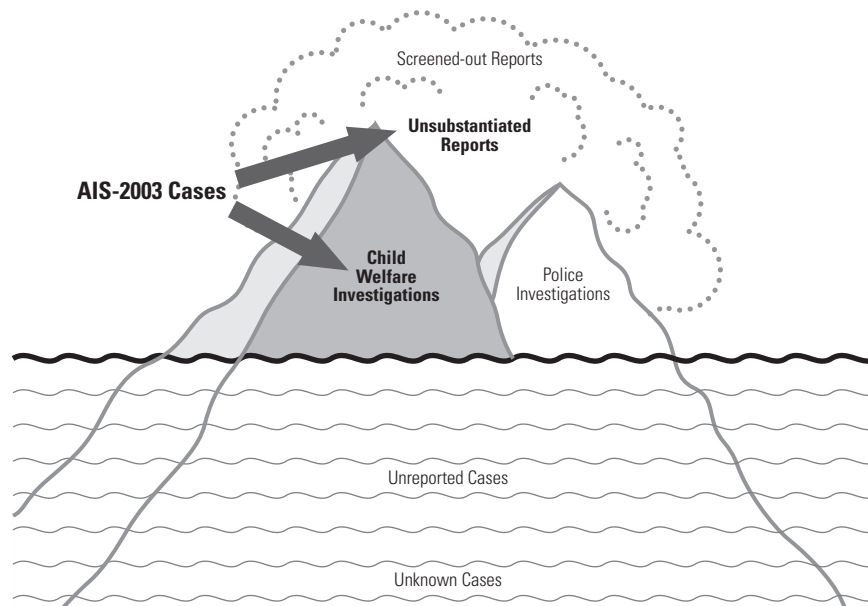
not designed to document unreported cases (see Definitional Framework and Table 1-2 for a detailed presentation of the scope of the study).

Specifically, the AIS-2003 is designed to

1. determine rates of investigated and substantiated physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence as well as multiple forms of maltreatment;
2. investigate the severity of maltreatment as measured by forms of maltreatment, duration, and physical and emotional harm;
3. examine selected determinants of health for investigated children and their families;
4. monitor short-term investigation outcomes, including substantiation rates, out-of-home placement, use of child welfare court, and criminal prosecution; and
5. provide a baseline for comparison with future cycles of the Alberta Incidence Study to examine change over time.

**Figure 1-1**  
**Scope of the Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2003)\***

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\* Adapted from Trocmé, N., McPhee, D. et al. (1994). *Ontario incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect*. Toronto, ON: Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse. and, Sedlak, A., J., & Broadhurst, D.D. (1996). *Executive summary of the third national incidence study of child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## Child Welfare Services in Alberta

Child welfare legislation and services are organized at the provincial level in Alberta. Child protection has traditionally been a mandatory service, directed by provincial child protection statutes. Although all child welfare systems share certain basic characteristics organized around investigating reports of alleged maltreatment, providing various types of counseling and supervision and looking after children in out-of-home care, there is considerable variation in the organization of these service delivery systems. Alleged maltreatment is reported directly to the child welfare offices in each of the 10 regional authorities in this province (See Table 1-1 Child Welfare Authorities in Alberta).

In Alberta, the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* is now the primary piece of legislation promoting the best interests, protection, and well-being of children. This legislation was enacted in 2004 while at the point of data collection the *Child Welfare Act* was still in place.<sup>7</sup> The new legislation formalized a policy and practice shift in this province with the development of the Alberta Response Model. This model approach provides children and families in Alberta with two pathways for child welfare service: child intervention services or family enhancement services. The AIS-2003 data was collected during the transition phase prior to the full implementation of the new legislation as some of the regional authorities had initiated family enhancement approaches in their efforts to better meet the needs of Alberta families.

For Aboriginal people in Alberta, the organization of child welfare services falls under provincial and territorial statutes and regulations, although funding for on-reserve services is provided by the federal government under the *Indian Act*.<sup>8</sup> The structure of aboriginal child welfare services is changing rapidly. A growing number of services are being provided either by fully mandated Aboriginal agencies or by Aboriginal counseling services that work in conjunction with mandated services to reach Aboriginal families living on or off reserve.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 1-1**  
**Regional Authorities in Alberta**

Region 1—Southwest Alberta	Region 6—Edmonton and Area
Region 2—Southeast Alberta	Region 7—North Central Alberta
Region 3—Calgary and Area	Region 8—Northwest Alberta
Region 4—Central Alberta	Region 9—Northeast Alberta
Region 5—East Central Alberta	Region 10—Métis Settlements

7 See Alberta Government, (2004), *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter C-12 and Alberta Government (1984), *Child Welfare Act*.

8 *Indian Act*, R.S.C., 1985, CI-5, s.81.

9 Blackstock, C. (2003). First Nations Child and Family Services: Restoring Peace and Harmony in First Nations Communities. In Kufeldt, K., and McKenzie, B. (Eds.). *Child Welfare: Connecting Research, Policy and Practice*. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, pp. 331–343.

## Definitional Framework for the AIS-2003

Statistics on child abuse and neglect are collected and reported in very different ways.<sup>10</sup> Confusion can easily arise because of variations in the way a particular statistic is calculated. The following discussion and framework are provided to assist readers in interpreting the statistics included in this report.

Child abuse and neglect statistics can be misinterpreted because of two types of problems: confusion about the definitions of child abuse and neglect used, and misunderstanding of the case selection and reporting methods used. Definitional differences can have considerable impact on reported rates. For example, in the *U.S. National Incidence Study-3 (1996)*, estimates of the number of physically neglected children were four times higher when the definition of physical neglect was expanded beyond the Evidence of Harm standard to include cases in which there was substantial risk of harm (Endangerment Standard).<sup>11</sup> Similarly, estimates of the prevalence of child sexual abuse doubled when acts of exposure were included in the cross-Canada sexual abuse survey conducted for the federal Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children and Youth.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately, there is no consensus about definitions of child maltreatment. Definitions have been shown to vary on the basis of differences in legal mandates, professional practices, and social and cultural values. This lack of standards in defining child abuse and neglect has been repeatedly identified as a major obstacle in the development of child maltreatment research and practice.<sup>13</sup> Several jurisdictions have taken steps toward setting more explicit criteria for defining abuse and neglect, although the establishment of completely standardized definitions is constrained by the fact that, in practice, judgments about child maltreatment are shaped by a complex array of changing professional standards and community values.

Beyond differences between research and legal definitions, child welfare agencies and practitioners develop their own standards that do not necessarily reflect governing legislation. Furthermore, even within organizations there is evidence that, in practice, standards are influenced by factors such as neighbourhood characteristics.<sup>14</sup>

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10 Trocmé N., McPhee D., et al.(1994) *Ontario incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect*. Toronto: Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

11 Sedlak A.J. & Broadhurst D.D. (1996). *Executive summary of the third national incidence study of child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

12 Government of Canada. (1984) *Sexual offences against children: Report of the committee on sexual offences against children and youths* (vols 1 & 2). Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing Centre.

13 National Research Council. (1993) *Understanding child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

14 Shor, R. (2000). Child Maltreatment: Differences in perceptions between low income and middle income neighbourhoods. *British Journal of Social Work*; 30, 165–178.



A second source of variation in maltreatment rates arises from differences in the way statistics are collected and reported. Child maltreatment statistics can end up measuring very different things, depending on who collects them and how they are collected. Some rates refer to the number of reported incidents; others refer only to allegations that have been substantiated by a thorough investigation. Some rates are based on annual incidence counts, whereas others measure childhood prevalence. These differences limit direct comparison of maltreatment statistics derived from different data sources. However, unlike the more intractable definitional problems, these issues can be resolved by clearly specifying case selection methods. The following framework (Table 1-2) provides a basis for comparing child maltreatment statistics by considering how they are affected by different case selection methods.

**Table 1-2**  
**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect: Definitional Framework in 2003**

	<b>Definitional Problem</b>	<b>Measures Taken by AIS 2003</b>
<b>Source of Data</b>	Statistics are rarely presented with sufficient detail to allow one to consider all the data collection issues.	AIS-2003 data were collected from child protection workers upon completion of their initial investigation (time depends on provincial, regional, and site practices).
<b>Forms of Maltreatment</b>	Maltreatment statistics vary considerably with respect to the forms of maltreatment included.	The AIS-2003 includes 25 defined forms of maltreatment under five main categories: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence.
<b>Multiple Forms of Maltreatment</b>	Failure to document multiple forms of maltreatment can lead to underestimating some forms of maltreatment.	AIS-2003 documents up to three forms of maltreatment.
<b>Level of Harm</b>	Some statistics only include cases where children have been harmed; others include cases of harm and substantial risk of harm.	AIS-2003 includes cases where children are harmed as well as cases where children are at risk of harm. Physical and emotional harm are documented.
<b>Timeframe</b>	Research on child maltreatment can focus on the annual incidence, which is the number of cases in a single year; or, it can focus on childhood prevalence, which is the number of children maltreated during childhood.	The AIS-2003 measures the annual incidence of investigated maltreatment.
<b>Reporting Year</b>	Rates of reported maltreatment have been increasing steadily as public awareness of child abuse increases. Rates from two different years must be compared accordingly.	The reporting year for the AIS-2003 is 2003. Some data is compared with data from the CIS-1998.
<b>Unit of Analysis</b>	Child welfare investigations can use either a child-based or family-based method of tracking cases. For child-based, each investigated child is counted as a separate investigation, while for family-based investigations, the unit of analysis is the investigated family, regardless of the number of children investigated.	The AIS-2003 counts cases on the basis of child investigations
<b>Duplication</b>	Children investigated several times in a year are often counted as separate investigations. Approximately 20 per cent of investigations in a given year involve children investigated more than once.	The AIS-2003 estimates are not unduplicated. Children who are investigated twice during a year are counted as two separate child investigations.
<b>Age Group</b>	The age group of children investigated by child welfare services varies by province or territory.	AIS-2003 estimates are presented for children under 18 (Newborn to 17 inclusive).
<b>Levels of Identification/Substantiation</b>	The point at which cases are being identified significantly affects child maltreatment estimates, given that many identified cases are not reported, many reported cases are not investigated, and many investigated cases are not substantiated.	AIS-2003 reports on cases investigated by child welfare authorities. A three-tiered definition of substantiation is used: (1) substantiated, (2) suspected, and (3) unfounded. Screened out or uninvestigated reports are not included.

### *Categories and Forms of Maltreatment*

A first area of potential confusion in interpreting child maltreatment statistics lies in inconsistencies in the categories of maltreatment included in different statistics. Most child maltreatment statistics refer to both physical and sexual abuse, but other categories of maltreatment, such as neglect and emotional maltreatment, are not systematically included. There is even less consensus with respect to subtypes or forms of maltreatment.<sup>15</sup> For instance, some child welfare authorities include only intra-familial sexual abuse, the justice system dealing with cases of extra-familial sexual abuse.

The AIS-2003 definition of child maltreatment includes *25 forms of maltreatment* subsumed under *five categories* of maltreatment: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence.<sup>16</sup> This classification reflects a fairly broad definition of child maltreatment and includes several forms of maltreatment that are not specifically stated in some provincial and territorial child welfare statutes (e.g. educational neglect and exposure to family violence).

Documentation of *multiple forms* of maltreatment is also problematic. Many child welfare information systems have the capacity to classify cases only in terms of a single form of maltreatment. Systems that count only one form of maltreatment tend to under-count neglect and emotional maltreatment because these often appear in conjunction with abuse, but are generally considered less severe.<sup>17</sup> The AIS-2003 is able to track up to three categories of maltreatment.

### *Level of Harm*

There is some debate in the child maltreatment literature about defining maltreatment in terms of caregiver maltreating behaviours versus **actual harm** done to children as a result of abuse or neglect.<sup>18</sup> Cases of maltreatment that draw public attention usually involve children who have been severely injured or, in the most tragic cases, have died as a result of maltreatment. In practice, child welfare agencies investigate and intervene in many situations in which children have not yet been physically harmed, but are **at risk of harm**. Many of these children display cognitive and emotional difficulties that are associated with maltreatment, but not necessarily a specific injury that has led to a report. Provincial and territorial statutes cover both children who have suffered from a specific harm

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15 Portwood, S. G. (1999). Coming to terms with a consensual definition of child maltreatment. *Child Maltreatment: Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children*, 4(1), 56–68.

16 Given the expansion of domestic violence investigations, the CIS-2003 no longer treats exposure to domestic violence as a form of emotional maltreatment.

17 Cicchetti, D. (2004). An odyssey of discovery: Lessons learned through three decades of research. *American Psychologist*, 59(8), 731–741.

18 Portwood, S. G. (1999). Coming to terms with a consensual definition of child maltreatment. *Child Maltreatment: Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children*, 4(1), 56–68.

due to abuse or neglect, and children at risk of harm. The level or risk of harm required before an act is considered abusive is based upon the severity of the act. In cases of sexual abuse, for instance, evidence of harm to the child is not considered to be relevant, whereas in cases of physical abuse, especially in cases involving corporal punishment, physical injury is more closely tied to the determination of abuse. The third U.S. National Incidence Study (1996) includes two standards in calculating estimates of maltreatment: a narrow standard based on evidence of harm to the child, and a broader standard that includes cases of children at risk of harm.<sup>19</sup> The AIS-2003 documents both physical and emotional harm; however, definitions of maltreatment used for the study do not require the occurrence of harm.

### *Timeframe*

Maltreatment statistics can also be misinterpreted because of confusion about the *timeframe* to which statistics refer. The most serious source of misunderstanding is the difference between annual incidence and childhood prevalence. For a given population, *childhood prevalence* refers to the number of people maltreated at any point during their childhood, whereas *annual incidence* refers to the number of child maltreatment investigations per 1,000 children in a given year. The relation between the two is complicated and is determined by the duration of maltreatment, the number of separate incidents, and the age at onset. Although this use of the term “incidence” is common in child welfare, it is different from the way in which the term is used by epidemiologists, where incidence refers to the number of new events (e.g. new cases of a disease or disorder in a given population and time period).<sup>20</sup> The AIS-2003 did not track new incidents of maltreatment on already open cases.

The *reporting year* can significantly affect documented rates of maltreatment, since reporting rates change over time. In Ontario, for example, there was a 44% increase in the number of cases of reported maltreatment between 1993 and 1998.<sup>21</sup> The reporting year can also lead to confusion because some jurisdictions use the calendar year, whereas others refer to the fiscal year. AIS-2003 estimates were calculated for the calendar year from January 1 to December 31, 2003.

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19 Sedlack, A. J., & Broadhurst, D. D. (1996). *Executive summary of the third national incidence study of child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

20 Last, J. M. (1995). *A dictionary of epidemiology*, third edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

21 Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., MacLaurin, B., & Copp, B. (2002). *The Changing Face of Child Welfare Investigations in Ontario: Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (OIS 1993/1998)*, Toronto, ON: Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto.

### ***Unit of Analysis***

The ***unit of analysis*** determines the denominator used in calculating maltreatment rates. Some statistics refer to the number of child investigations, but others refer to the number of family investigations. The relation between the two is unclear in some instances, because with ***family-based*** statistics it is difficult to determine how many children have been maltreated, particularly in cases of neglect. The AIS-2003 uses ***child-based*** statistics to be consistent with the way most child service statistics are kept (e.g. health, corrections, education, and foster care).

Some jurisdictions provide child welfare services to families when there is no alleged maltreatment. This is particularly true in Québec, where the mandate of child welfare services explicitly extends to non-maltreatment situations in which children's emotional or behavioural problems are considered to require intervention. These are referred to as ***non-maltreatment*** cases in the AIS-2003 (e.g. services for prenatal counseling and child behaviour problems) and are tracked separately as non-maltreatment case openings. The AIS-2003 reports only on child maltreatment investigations.

Consideration should also be given to the ***age group*** included in the child welfare statistics. As noted earlier, the scope of child welfare investigations varies considerably across Canada because of the differing ages at which children are considered to need protection (see Table 1-1). Where the CIS-2003 reports on children between 0 and 15, the AIS-2003 data are reported for children aged 0 to 17 years as defined by provincial legislation.

### ***Case Duplication***

Most annual child welfare statistics are reported on the basis of the number of investigations, as opposed to the number of investigated children. Some investigations involve children who were previously investigated in the same year. Therefore, statistics based on the number of investigations double count children who are investigated twice in one year. Although each investigation represents a new incident of maltreatment, confusion arises if these investigations are taken to represent an unduplicated count of children. To avoid such confusion, the AIS-2003 uses the term "child investigations" rather than "investigated children," since the unit of analysis is the investigation of the child's suspected maltreatment.

Most frequently child welfare data systems report numbers of investigations as opposed to investigated children. For example the U.S. *National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (2002)* report,<sup>22</sup> states: "In the data presented in this report, a child is counted *every time* he or she is the subject of a substantiated or indicated report" (emphasis added). An estimate of how often maltreated

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22 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (2005). *Child Maltreatment 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

children will be counted more than once can be derived from those jurisdictions that maintain separate investigation and child-based counts. Rates of occurrence during a 12-month follow-up range from 5.2 percent to 31 percent.<sup>23</sup> States reporting duplicated and unduplicated data for the *U.S. National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)*,<sup>24</sup> reports that for substantiated cases of child maltreatment, the recurrence rate is 8.4 percent within six months during 2003. In Québec the recurrence was 8.8 percent of screened-in investigations over a 12-month period.<sup>25</sup>

While all duplicate reports were removed from the AIS sample,<sup>26</sup> it was not possible to develop unduplicated child estimates for the whole year, because the annual investigation statistics used to derive the AIS-2003 annualization weights were investigation-based counts that included children investigated more than once in the given year.

### *Level of Case Identification*

A major source of variation in maltreatment statistics occurs with the *level of identification and substantiation* used. Figure 1-2 provides an illustration of four key stages in the case identification process: detection, reporting, investigation, and substantiation. There is considerable variation in child maltreatment statistics depending on the level of case identification. For example, several jurisdictions screen out a significant number of reports before conducting investigations.

23 For example: Baird, S. C. (1988). Development of risk assessment indices for the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. In T. Tataara (Ed.), *Validation research in CPS risk assessment: Three recent studies*, Occasional Monograph Series No. 2, pp. 84-142;

Coleman, H. D. J. (1995). *A longitudinal study of family preservation program*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Utah, School of Social Work.

Lutrell, J., Hull, S., & Wagner, D. (1995). *The Michigan Department of Social Services Structured Decision Making System: An evaluation of its impact on child protective services*. Paper presented at the Ninth National Roundtable on CPS Risk Assessment, San Francisco.

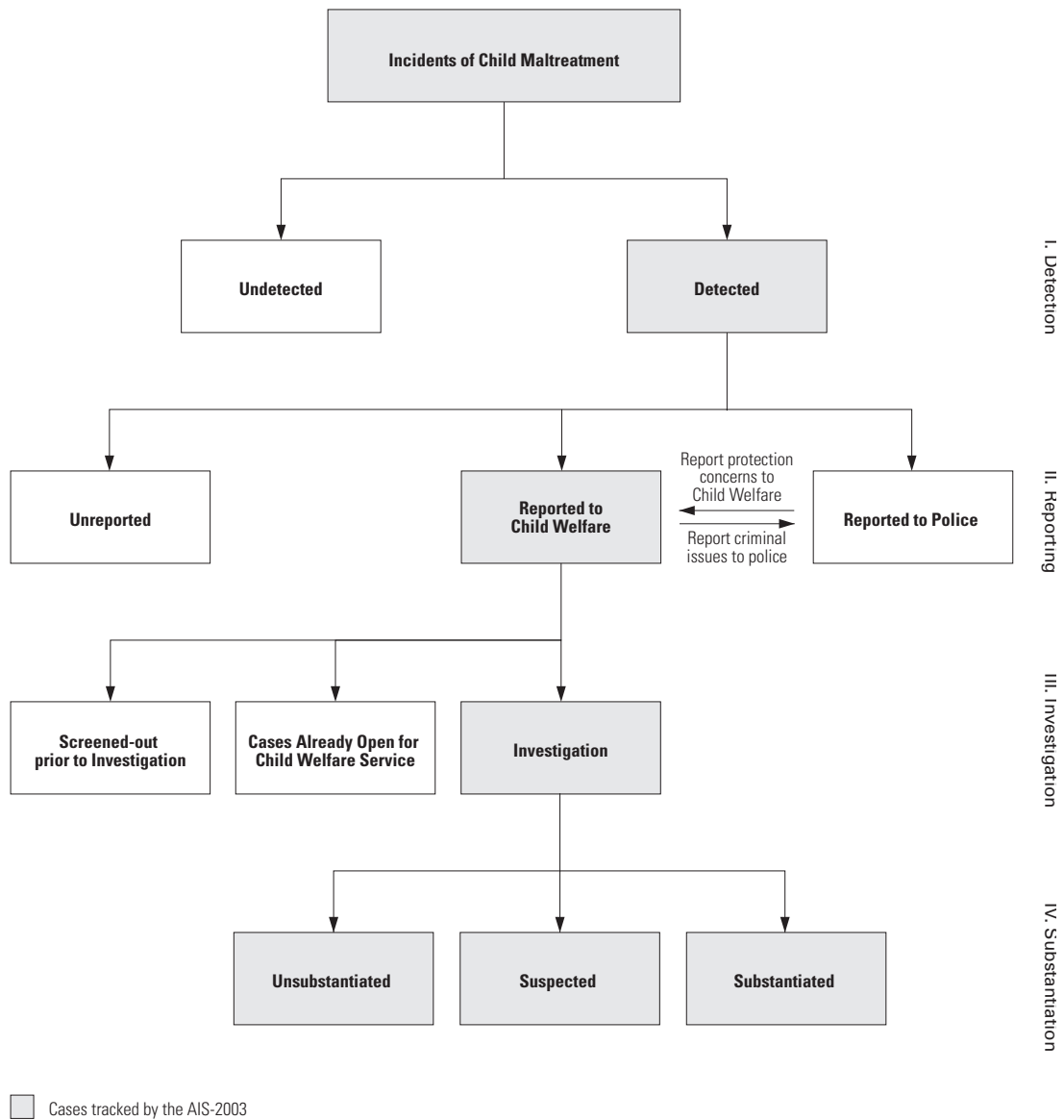
DePanfilis, D., & Zuravin, S. J. (1998). *Rates, patterns, and frequency of child maltreatment recurrences among families known to CPS*. *Child Maltreatment*, 3(1), 27-42.

24 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (2005). *Child Maltreatment 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

25 Hélie, S. (2005). *Fréquence et déterminants de la récurrence du signalement en protection de la jeunesse: Analyse de survie d'une cohorte Montréalaise*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Université du Québec à Montréal, Département de Psychologie.

26 Duplicate cases were screened for and deleted on site on the basis of agency identification numbers, family initials, and date of referral.

**Figure 1-2**  
**Stages of Identification of Incidents of Child Maltreatment AIS-2003\***



\* Figure 1-2 is adapted from the original version prepared for the CIS, Trocmé, N. MacLaurin, B., Fallon, B. et al., *Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect: Final report*. Ottawa, Ontario: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2001.

**Detection** is the first stage in the case identification process. Little is known about the relation between detected and undetected cases. Surveys of adult survivors indicate that some have never disclosed their childhood experiences of abuse.<sup>27</sup>

**Reporting** suspected maltreatment is required by law in all provinces and territories in Canada, as well as in all states in the United States.<sup>28</sup> A number of studies of reporting practices have been conducted in the United States and show that as many as half of the cases of suspected maltreatment detected by professionals working with children are not reported to child welfare services.<sup>29</sup> The AIS-2003 does not document unreported cases.

It is also important to distinguish between cases reported to child welfare services and cases reported to the police. Although there is some overlap between these two groups, many cases involving alleged perpetrators outside the family (for example; a stranger exposing himself to a child) may involve only a police investigation and therefore may not be counted in child welfare investigation statistics. The AIS-2003 documents only cases investigated by child welfare, or cases jointly investigated by the police and child welfare services.

**Investigation** is a third stage in the case identification process and can lead to confusion when child maltreatment statistics are compared. As noted earlier, not necessarily all reports are investigated. Some may be screened out because there is not enough information about the whereabouts of a child to launch an investigation; others may be screened out because they are not considered to be within the defined mandate of the child welfare services. **Screening practices** in Canada can vary from an informal and undocumented process to a structured, formal telephone investigation. Because of these variations in screening procedures across Canada, the AIS-2003 could not track screened-out cases.

27 For example: Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., et al. (1990). Sexual abuse in a national survey of adult men and women: prevalence, characteristics, and risk factors. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14(1),19–28.

Anderson, J., & Martin, J. (1993). *Women's health survey*. Dunedin. Dunedin Public Hospital, Department of Psychological Medicine.

MacMillan, H., Jamieson, E., & Walsh, C. (2003). Reported contact with child protection services among those reporting child physical and sexual abuse: results from a community survey. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 27(12), 1397–1408.

28 Although Yukon does not include mandatory reporting in the *Children's Act*, the *Education Act* and the *Child Care Act* require teachers and daycare providers to report suspicions that a child is in need of protection to the child welfare authority. As well there are protocols and/or policies within various government departments and several non-governmental organizations that require their staff to report abuse/neglect.

29 Zellman G. (1990). Report decision-making patterns among mandated child abuse reporters. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 14(3): 325–336.

Sedlak A.J. & Broadhurst D.D. (1996). *Executive summary of the third national incidence study of child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Sedlak A.J. & Broadhurst D.D. (1996). *Executive summary of the third national incidence study of child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition to reports being screened out, reports received about cases already open for child welfare services may be investigated by the ongoing worker and may not be tracked as new investigations. The AIS-2003 did not track new incidents of maltreatment on already open cases.

**Substantiation** distinguishes cases in which maltreatment is confirmed, following an investigation, from cases in which it is not. Some jurisdictions use a two-tiered substantiation classification system that distinguishes between substantiated and unsubstantiated cases, or verified and not verified cases. The AIS-2003 uses a three-tiered classification system, in which a “suspected” level provides an important clinical distinction in certain cases: those in which there is not enough evidence to substantiate maltreatment, but maltreatment cannot be ruled out.

## Summary of AIS-2003 Definitional Framework

The AIS-2003 provides an estimate of the number of cases (child-based, under age 18) of alleged child maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence) reported to and investigated by child welfare services in Alberta during 2003 (screened-out reports not included). The estimates are broken down in Chapter 3, into three levels of substantiation: substantiated, suspected, and unsubstantiated. With the exception of two tables in Chapter 6, estimates are limited to substantiated cases only. Cases opened more than once during the year are counted as separate investigations (see Table 1-2).

## Organization of Report

The AIS-2003 Final Report presents the major descriptive findings from the AIS-2003. The main body of the AIS-2003 Final Report is divided into nine chapters and eight appendices. Detailed descriptive findings are provided for all of the variables from the AIS-2003 study. Chapter 2 describes the study’s methodology. Chapter 3 presents the estimates of the incidence of reported child maltreatment for each category of maltreatment by level of substantiation. Chapter 4 examines the characteristics of these different categories of substantiated maltreatment in terms of the nature, severity, and duration of injury, and the identity of the alleged perpetrators. Investigation outcomes, provision of services, placement, police involvement, and applications to court are presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 describes child characteristics, including categories of maltreatment by age and sex, and by child functioning. Chapter 7 describes household characteristics, including age and sex of caregivers, income source, housing accommodations, and other selected determinants of health (e.g. caregiver functioning, risk factors, and coping practices). Referral and agency characteristics are described in Chapter 8. The final chapter provides a summary of the key findings of the AIS-2003 as well as outlining directions for further research.



The **Appendices** include:

- Appendix A: List of AIS-2003 Site Researchers
- Appendix B: Glossary of Terms
- Appendix C: CIS Maltreatment Assessment Form
- Appendix D: CIS Cycle II Guide Book
- Appendix E: Case Vignettes
- Appendix F: Worker Information Form
- Appendix G: Variance Estimates and Confidence Intervals
- Appendix H: Supporting Data for Additional Report Findings

## ■ 2. METHODOLOGY

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The AIS-2003 is the first provincial study examining the incidence of reported child abuse and neglect in Alberta. The AIS-2003 captured information about children and their families as they came into contact with child welfare services over a three-month sampling period. Maltreated children who were not reported to child welfare services, screened-out reports, or new allegations on cases currently open at the time of case selection were not included in the AIS-2003 (see Chapter 1 for definitions of reported, non-reported, and screened-out cases).

A multi-stage sampling design was used, first to select a representative sample of 11 child welfare offices across Alberta, and then to sample cases within these offices. Information was collected directly from the investigating child welfare workers and is based on the worker's judgment at the time of investigation. The core AIS-2003 sample of 2,653 child investigations was used to derive provincial estimates of the annual rates and characteristics of investigated child maltreatment in Alberta.

As with any sample survey, estimates must be understood within the constraints of the survey instruments, the sampling design, and the estimation procedures used. This chapter presents the AIS-2003 methodology and discusses its strengths, limitations, and impact on interpreting the AIS-2003 estimates. This chapter describes the AIS-2003 research network; its survey instruments; reliability and validity testing, focus group testing, the sample selection and enlistment strategies; the case selection, entry, and data verification procedures; and the statistical methods used for calculating national estimates.

### Study Organization

The AIS-2003 was conducted as part of the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect, 2003 (CIS-2003), the second national maltreatment incidence study conducted in Canada (see Chapter 1). The study combines funds from the core study, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, with a research grant provided by the Alberta Government (Alberta Children's Services).

### *Study Timeframe*

The AIS-2003 was funded to begin in February 2003. The study was conducted in three phases over two and a half years. During the preparation phase (February 2003 to September 2003), the study instruments developed for the AIS-2003 were reviewed and tested, and the study sites were selected and enlisted. During the case selection phase (September 2003 to June 2004), participating child welfare workers were trained, and survey instruments were completed, collected, and verified. The

final phase of the study (June 2004 to October 2005) involved entering the survey information into the AIS-2003 database, checking for inconsistent and missing information, conducting descriptive analysis, calculating the weighted estimates, and preparing reports.

### ***Project Management Structure***

The AIS-2003 was directed by a team of researchers affiliated with the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary in collaboration with the management team associated with the Centres of Excellence for Child Welfare at the University of Toronto. This included Bruce MacLaurin, Principal Investigator for the AIS-2003, Nico Trocmé, Principal Investigator for the CIS-2003, and Barbara Fallon and Joanne Daciuk, Co-Managers of the CIS-2003. Data verification was completed in the Calgary and Toronto offices while data entry, cleaning and weighting were completed in Toronto. The AIS-2003 Major Findings Report was prepared at the University of Calgary.

### **Ethics Procedures**

The AIS-2003 protocols and procedures were reviewed and approved by the University of Calgary's Ethics Committee and the Public Health Agency of Canada Research Ethics Board prior to the commencement of data collection. Written permission for participating in the data collection process was obtained from the Provincial Director of Child Welfare.

The study utilized a case file review methodology. The case files are the property of the regional authority, therefore the permission of the Chief Executive Officer of the regional authority was required in order to access the case files. Confidentiality of case information and participants, including workers and regional authorities, was maintained throughout the process. No directly-identifying information was collected on the data collection instrument. The *Intake Face Sheet* collects near-identifying information about the children's first name and their age. The tear-off portion of the *Intake Face Sheet* has a space for the service case number assigned by the child welfare office and the research case number assigned by the AIS-2003 study researchers. This tear-off portion also provided space for the first two letters of the family surname. Workers provided the address of the family or postal code for the primary residence. This information was used for verification purposes only. The near-identifying information was stored on site.

The data collection instruments (that contain no directly-identifying information) were scanned into an electronic database. This electronic data was stored on a locked, password protected hard drive in a locked office and on a CD stored in a locked cabinet off-site. Only those University of Calgary or University of Toronto research personnel with security clearance from the Government of Canada had access to this information through password-protected files. All paper data collection instruments are archived in a secure filing cabinets, approved by the RCMP.

The final report contains only provincial estimates of child abuse and neglect and does not identify any participating child welfare office.

## Instruments

The CIS-2003 survey instruments were designed to capture standardized information from child welfare workers conducting investigations. Because investigation procedures vary considerably across Canada (see Chapter 1), a key challenge in designing the CIS-2003 survey instruments was to identify the common elements across jurisdictions that could provide data in a standardized manner. Given the time constraints faced by child welfare workers, the instruments also had to be kept as short and simple as possible.

The CIS-2003 instruments were based on the *Ontario Incidence Study* (1994) and the *U.S. National Incidence Study (1996)*<sup>30</sup> in order to maximize the potential for comparing CIS-2003 findings with findings from these studies. Comparability with previous studies remained a key priority. The data collection instrument was modified from the CIS-1998 form after consultations with the National Steering Committee and focus and pilot testing. Modifications to the data collection instrument were made on a variable-by-variable basis.

### ***Maltreatment Assessment Form***

The main data collection instrument used for the study was the Maltreatment Assessment Form, which was completed by the primary investigating child welfare worker upon completion of each child welfare investigation (see Appendix C). The Maltreatment Assessment Form consisted of an Intake Face Sheet, a Household Information Sheet, and a Child Information Sheet.

Workers completed the Intake Face Sheet for all cases opened during the study period, whether or not a specific allegation of maltreatment had been made. This initial review of all child welfare case openings provided a consistent mechanism for differentiating between cases investigated for suspected maltreatment and those referred for other types of child welfare services (e.g. preventive services).

Basic information about the report or referral as well as identifying information about the child(ren) involved was collected on the Intake Face Sheet. The form requested information on the date of referral, referral source, number of children in the home, age and sex of children, whether maltreatment was suspected or alleged, whether the case was screened out, the family's postal code,

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30 Trocmé, N., McPhee, D. et al. (1994) *Ontario incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect*. Toronto: Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

Sedlak, A.J. & Broadhurst D.D. (1996). *Executive summary of the third national incidence study of child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

and the reason for the referral or screening out. The section of the form containing near-identifying information was left at the office (the case number, first two letters of the family's surname and postal code). The remainder of the form was completed if abuse or neglect was suspected, either by the person(s) making the report or by the investigating worker at any point during the investigation.<sup>31</sup>

The Household Information Sheet was completed only when at least one child in the family was investigated for suspected maltreatment. The household was defined as all the adults living at the address of the investigation. The Household Information Sheet collected detailed information on up to two caregivers. Descriptive information was requested about the contact with the caregiver, caregiver's own history of abuse, other adults in the home, housing, caregiver functioning, case status, and referral(s) to other services. (A copy of the Household Information Sheet can be found in Appendix C)

The third page of the instrument, the Child Information Sheet, was completed for each child who was investigated for maltreatment.<sup>32</sup> The Child Information Sheet documented up to three different forms of maltreatment, and included levels of substantiation, alleged perpetrator(s), and duration of maltreatment. In addition, it collected information on child functioning, physical and emotional harm to the child attributable to the alleged maltreatment, child welfare court activity, out-of-home placement, police involvement, and the caregiver's use of spanking as a form of discipline.

The Maltreatment Assessment Form also included an open comment section for situations in which the categories provided did not adequately describe a case, or when additional detail was of benefit.

A significant challenge for the study was to overcome the variations in the definitions of maltreatment used in different jurisdictions. Rather than anchor the definitions in specific legal or administrative definitions, a single set of definitions corresponding to standard research classification schemes was used. All items on the case selection forms were defined in the CIS-2003 Guide Book (see Appendix D).

### ***Worker Information Form***

A Worker Information Form was used to collect information about the worker(s) completing the investigation. Workers in all AIS-2003 child welfare service areas were asked to complete the forms. Responses were received from 255 workers, 96% of AIS-2003 workers who had participated in the

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31 The CIS Cycle II Guide Book and training sessions emphasized that workers should base their responses to these questions on their clinical expertise rather than simply transposing information collected on the basis of provincial or local investigation standards. The CIS-2003 Cycle II Guide Book, (Appendix D) specifies the following: "Indicate which children were investigated because of suspected child maltreatment.... Only include those cases where in your clinical opinion maltreatment was suspected at some point." (p.6)

32 One Child Information Sheet was attached to the Maltreatment Assessment Form, and additional Child Information Sheets were available in every office.

study. The one-page form included information about the worker's role and position, training, education, and experience (see Appendix F).

### ***Focus and Pilot Testing***

In keeping with the goals of comparability and ease of use, the CIS-2003 data collection instrument was reviewed by a group of experts in October 2002. Several changes to the data collection instrument were suggested. These included the response options for the caregiver and child functioning items, caregiver age and case status. As a result of this meeting two versions of the form were developed for focus testing.

The CIS-2003 National Steering Committee completed a focus test of the two forms in March 2003. The same two versions of the forms were focus tested with child welfare workers from one rural and one urban agency in Ontario and Alberta. Focus testing ensured that modifications to the form would be consistent with standard practices, be easy to read and understand and would maintain comparability with the earlier cycle of the study.

The two versions of the forms were further modified to reflect the focus test results and were then pilot tested with child welfare workers. Pilot testing was conducted with a volunteer sample of workers in two locations. The purpose of the pilot test was threefold: (1) to gain feedback on the instrument, in particular the level of clarity of the items, completion rates, and the relevance of the information requested; (2) to examine case selection procedures, and (3) to assess the reliability of the data collection instrument.

The vast majority of items on the CIS-2003 Maltreatment Assessment Form showed good to excellent test re-test reliability ( $Kappa = 0.66$  to  $1.00$ ). Among the most reliable groups of variables were referral source, form of maltreatment, maltreatment history, child age and gender, case disposition items and indices related to emotional harm. The majority of items related to household and caregiver characteristics also showed substantial to excellent agreement.

A number of items fell slightly below the criterion adopted for acceptable reliability. The presence of unsafe and overcrowded housing, criminal activity of the primary caregiver, any child referral, perpetrator identity (Caregiver A) and several child functioning concerns had Kappa values that fell within a moderate range of agreement ( $0.40$  to  $0.60$ ).<sup>33</sup> For further information about reliability testing, see CIS-2003 Major Findings Report.

Several modifications to the form were made as a result of the focus and pilot testing process. Some items on the form were re-organized, others were collapsed and some items were added. For example, the variables 'maltreated as a child' and 'caregiver in a violent relationship' were moved into the caregiver risk factor section. The household income levels were collapsed from eight to five

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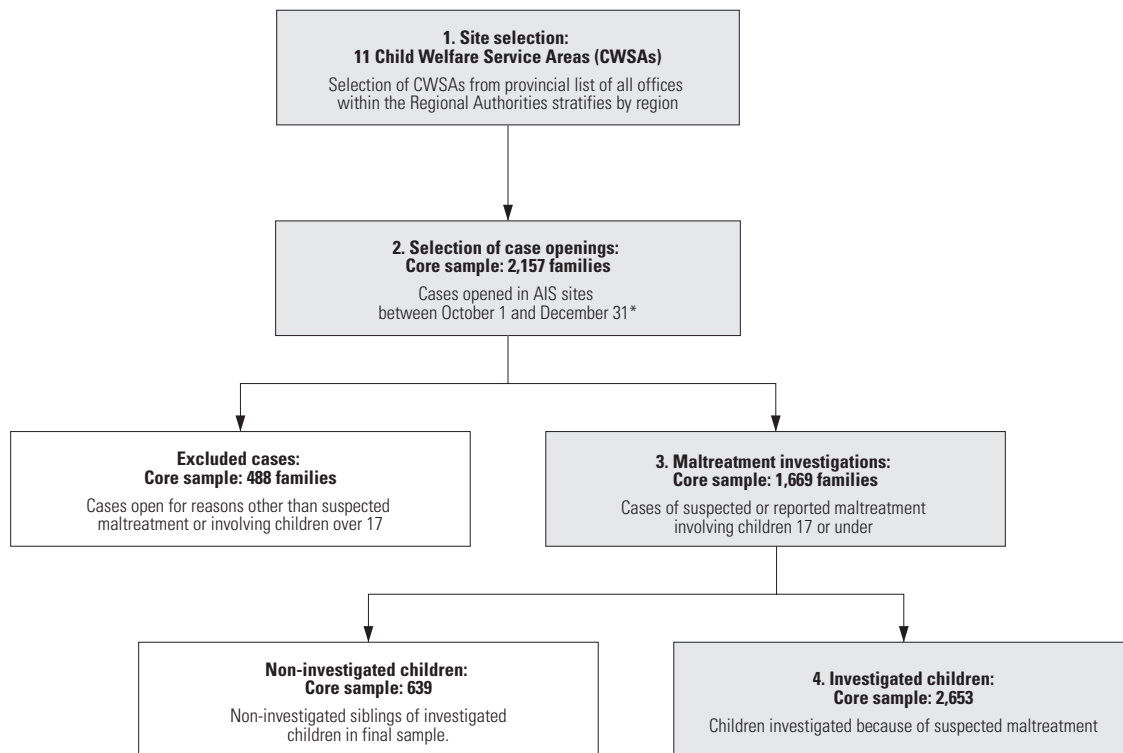
33 Landis, J.R. & Koch, G.G. (1977). The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data. *Biometrics* 33, 159-174.

categories. The housing category was collapsed from eight categories to six categories. Modifications to maltreatment codes were also made as a result of the focus and pilot testing process. Physical abuse categories were anchored to caregiver behaviours. Sexual abuse categories were also updated, with several items made less ambiguous and the category of sex talk was added to include sexual communications including internet contact and exposure to pornography.

### *Sampling*

A stratified cluster design was used to select maltreatment investigations for the AIS-2003. A four-stage sampling process was required to select a provincially representative sample of children investigated because of suspected maltreatment (see Figure 2-1).

**Figure 2-1**  
**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003: Sampling Stages**



\* In one Aboriginal jurisdiction the case selection period was from November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003–January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2004 following a delayed enrolment

In the first stage of the sampling process, child welfare jurisdictions were selected at random from all regions of the province. The primary sampling unit for the study was a study defined Child Welfare Service Area (CWSA). CWSAs were distinct geographic areas served by a designated child welfare authority. In larger cities, this would involve more than ten offices yet was still counted as a single CWSA. CWSAs varied greatly in size. Some smaller rural CWSAs completed a few hundred investigations a year, while some large metropolitan agencies completed several thousand. To ensure adequate representation, Aboriginal agencies were not included in the provincial strata, but were sampled from a separate Aboriginal pan-Canadian stratum.

Eleven CWSAs were selected from the total pool of CWSAs in Alberta. Permission was received from Chief Executive Officer of each participating CWSA for involvement in the study. One CWSA was not able to participate and a replacement CWSA was randomly selected from the remaining pool. Most CWSAs were selected randomly, however, one site was sampled with certainty based on expected case volume and regional representation.

**Table 2-1**  
**Sites and Sample Sizes by Region in Alberta, AIS-2003**

Region	Regional Authorities	Child Population (0-17)*	Number of AIS CWSA	CWSA Child Population (0-17)	Annual CWSA Case Openings**	Case Openings Sampled for CIS
Northern Region	North Central, Northwest & Northeast	95,571	2	22,970	969	254
Edmonton Region	Edmonton & Area	188,486	2	143,347	4,921	1,225
Central Region	Central & East Central	102,829	2	10,900	544	88
Calgary Region	Calgary and Area	221,304	3	192,375	6,310	452
Southern Region	Southwest & Southeast	56,167	2	23,995	538	138
<b>Alberta</b>	10 **	664,357	11	393,587	13,282	2,157

\* Source: Canada. Statistics Canada. *Census of Canada, 2001: Age and Sex for Population, for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Divisions and Census Subdivisions, 2001 Census—100% Data* [computer file]. Ottawa: Ont.: Statistics Canada [producer and distributor], October 22, 2002 (95F0300XCB01006). Census data quality can be found at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/census96/dqindex.html> and <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Reference/dict/appendices/app002.pdf>

\*\* Metis Settlements Region 10 were included in specific Regional Authorities

The second sampling stage involved selecting cases opened<sup>34</sup> in each site over a three-month period. Cases were selected by having investigating workers determine case eligibility using the Intake Face Sheet of the Maltreatment Assessment Form.

<sup>34</sup> In most sites all open cases were included; in one very large CWSA, (>5,000 investigations annually) a random selection of cases were chosen to be included in the study to support high participation rates.



Cases open between October 1, 2003 and December 31, 2003 in the study sites were selected for inclusion in the study.<sup>35</sup> Three months was considered to be the optimum period to ensure high participation rates and good compliance with study procedures. Consultation with service providers indicated that case activity from October to December is considered to be typical of the whole year. However, follow-up studies are needed to systematically explore the extent to which seasonal variation in the types of cases referred to child welfare services may affect estimates that are based on a three-month sampling period.<sup>36</sup>

The third sampling stage involved screening opened cases to identify those cases that met CIS-2003 definitions of investigated maltreatment (see Figure 2-1, Stage 3). Although investigating suspected maltreatment is the core mandate for most child welfare services, situations that are considered to involve children at risk of maltreatment are also given service. These can include children with difficult behaviour problems, pregnant women seeking supportive counseling, or other service requests that do not involve a specific allegation of maltreatment. In order to maximize uniformity in case selection, the Intake Face Sheet of the Maltreatment Assessment Form was completed on all open cases in the core sample. Investigating workers then evaluated each case to determine whether maltreatment was alleged by the referral source or suspected at any point in the investigation process. Workers were asked to use the CIS-2003 definitions of maltreatment, which were generally more inclusive than definitions in many jurisdictions. For the purposes of the Major Findings Report these cases were further screened to include only children 17 and under.

The final case selection stage involved identification of the specific children who had been investigated. Workers were asked to provide additional Child Information Sheets on those children where maltreatment was suspected. The final sample included 2,653 investigated children.

## Case Selection and Processing

Site Researchers were assigned to coordinate site training and case selection at each AIS-2003 office. (see Appendix A for a list of all AIS-2003 Site Researchers). The case selection phase began with a training session, conducted with the principal investigator or research associates, to introduce participating child welfare workers to the AIS-2003 instruments and case selection procedures. After a review of the forms and procedures, trainees completed the Maltreatment Assessment Form for selected case vignettes (see Appendix E for the case vignettes). The completed forms were then discussed and discrepancies in responses reviewed to ensure that items were being properly interpreted. Each worker was given a CIS Cycle II Guide Book, which included definitions for all the items and study procedures (see Appendix D).

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35 Due to later recruitment 1 site collected data from November 1, 2003–January 31, 2004.

36 Seasonal variations would not affect the overall estimates of the number of maltreatment investigations because such variants are adjusted for in the weighting, but they could affect the proportion of cases referred from some sources, such as schools.

Completion of the Maltreatment Assessment Form was recommended to coincide with the written assessments that workers record upon the completion of their investigation. Given that some investigations can take many months to be completed, workers were asked to complete the Maltreatment Assessment Form at the same time as their first assessment report, regardless of whether the entire investigation was yet completed.

Site Researchers visited the AIS-2003 sites on a regular basis to collect forms, respond to questions, and monitor study progress. In some instances five visits to each location were required, however intensive follow-up contact was needed in other sites to support complete data collection. Site Researchers collected the completed Maltreatment Assessment Forms during each site visit and reviewed them for completeness and consistency. Every effort was made to contact workers if there was incomplete information on key variables (e.g. child age or category of maltreatment) or inconsistencies. Site Researchers also ensured that the investigation was part of the sample. Identifying information (located on the bottom section of the Intake Face Sheet, see Appendix C) was stored on site, and non-identifying information was sent to the central data verification locations in Calgary.

### *Data Verification and Data Entry*

Maltreatment Assessment Forms were verified three times for completeness and inconsistent responses: first on site by the Site Researchers, as described above, a second time at the University of Calgary office, and finally at the University of Toronto location prior to data entry. Consistency in form completion was examined by comparing the selected maltreatment codes to the brief case narratives provided by the investigating workers.

Data from Maltreatment Assessment Forms were sent to the CIS-2003 office in Toronto for data entry by scanner using TELEform Elite scanning software, V.8.1. Face Sheet information was entered manually using Microsoft Access 2000. The data were then combined into an SPSS Version 12.0 database. Inconsistent responses, missing responses, and miscodes were systematically identified. Duplicate cases were screened for at the child welfare site and deleted on the basis of agency identification numbers, family initials, and date of referral.

Data entry error rates were examined by re-entering a random sample of forms. Five hundred Maltreatment Assessment Forms were re-scanned by TELEform, and 100 Face Sheets were re-entered manually to determine entry error. Error rates were 2% for TELEform entry and 2% for manual data entry. The TELEform error rate was due to scanning errors in data fields that required a written number rather than a check box. Written fields in all forms were subsequently verified to correct for the scanning errors.

### ***Participation and Item Completion Rates***

The Maltreatment Assessment Form was kept as short and simple as possible to minimize the response burden and ensure a high completion rate. Workers estimated that the form took approximately 10 minutes to complete with some variation by worker. Item completion rates were over 99% on all items.<sup>37</sup>

The participation rate was estimated by comparing actual cases opened during the case selection period (October 1 to December 31, 2003) with the number of cases for which Maltreatment Assessment Forms were completed.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, in some sites differences in the way cases were tracked made it impossible to arrive at a count of case openings from October to December 2003 that corresponded to the cases tracked by the AIS-2003. The overall participation rate in sites where a participation rate could be estimated was 90%, ranging from a low of 75% to a high of 100%. Participation rates below 95% were discussed with the AIS-2003 liaisons for each agency to examine the possibility of skewed sampling. In all cases low participation could be attributed to external events (e.g. staff holidays, staff turnover), and no evidence of systematic bias was found.

### ***Weighting***

The data collected for the AIS-2003 were weighted in order to derive provincial annual incidence estimates. Two sets of weights were applied. First, results were annualized to estimate the annual volume of cases investigated by each study site. The annualization weights were derived by dividing the total number of cases opened by each site in 2003 by the number of cases sampled for the AIS-2003. For example, if 225 cases were sampled over 3 months in a site that opened 1,000 cases over the year, a weight of 4.44 (1,000/225) was applied to all cases in the site. The average annualization weight was 4.48<sup>39</sup> reflecting the fact that cases had been collected over three months out of 12. While this annualization method provides an accurate estimate of overall volume, it cannot account for qualitative differences in the types of cases referred at different times of the year (see Chapter 1).

To account for the non-proportional sampling design, regional weights were applied to reflect the relative sizes of the selected sites. Each study site was assigned a weight reflecting the proportion of the child population of the site relative to the child population in the stratum or region that the site represented. For instance if a site with a child population of 25,000 was randomly sampled to

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37 The high item completion rate can be attributed both to the design of the case selection instrument and to the verification procedures. In designing the form, careful attention was given to maintaining a logical and efficient ordering to questions. The use of check boxes minimized completion time. An “unknown” category was included for many questions to help distinguish between missed responses and unknown responses.

38 Participation rate is the proportion of cases open between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, 2003, for which the Maltreatment Assessment Form was completed.

39 This average excludes one large site where case sampling during the 3 months was conducted, thus over-inflating the annualization weight.

represent a region or province/territory with a child population of 500,000, a regionalization weight of 20 (500,000/25,000) would be applied to cases sampled from that site. Regionalization and annualization weights were combined so that each case was multiplied first by an annualization weight and then by a regionalization weight.

Provincial incidence estimates were calculated by dividing the weighted estimates by the child population (less than one to 17 year olds). The child population figures for AIS-2003 sites in Alberta were determined by using a Government Information Services (GIS) file that produced a custom file for the child populations per CWSA in Alberta.

### ***Duplication***

The AIS-2003 estimates are reported on the basis of the number of child maltreatment investigations conducted during 2003, as opposed to the number of investigated children. Some investigations involve children who had been previously investigated in the same year. Although each investigation represents a new incident of maltreatment, confusion arises if these investigations are taken to represent an unduplicated count of children. The AIS-2003 estimates cannot be unduplicated because the annualization weights are based on duplicated service statistics provided by the study sites.

The AIS-2003 had no precise method for identifying children who were investigated more than once during 2003, unless they were investigated more than once during the October to December study period. An outside estimate of this number can be derived by examining instances in which children had been previously investigated; 44% of maltreatment investigations involved cases closed within 12 months of the current investigation. Because the AIS-2003 did not document when re-opened cases had been previously opened, it was not possible to determine how many of these cases had been opened for an investigation twice within the same calendar year. The 44% percent re-opening rate should therefore be treated as an outside estimate, with the true rate being under 44%.

### **Sampling Error Estimation**

Although the AIS-2003 estimates are based on a relatively large sample of 2,653 investigations, sampling error is primarily driven by variability between the 11 sites. Sampling error estimates were calculated to reflect the fact that the survey population had been stratified and that primary sampling units (or sites) had been selected randomly from each stratum. To calculate the variance, the stratified design allowed the research team to assume that the variability between strata was zero and that the total variance at the national level was the sum of the variance for each stratum. In most instances, two CWSAs, the primary sampling units, were chosen from each strata. Variance estimates were calculated using WesVar 4.2, which computes estimates and their variance estimates from survey data using replication methods.

Standard error estimates were calculated at the  $p < 0.05$  level.<sup>40</sup> For most estimates standard errors were within an acceptable range, with coefficients of variation ranging between 10% and 16%.<sup>41</sup> Coefficients of variation (see Appendix G, Table 3-8) were above 16% in instances involving low frequency events (e.g. where the number of sampled cases was under 100) or in instances involving variables with unusually large variability. Estimates based on events that occurred in fewer than five cases are not included in this report and are marked as blanks in the accompanying tables.

The error estimates do not account for any errors in determining the annual and regional weights, nor do they account for any other non-sampling errors that may occur, such as inconsistency or inadequacies in administrative procedures from site to site. The error estimates also cannot account for any variations due to seasonal effects. The accuracy of these annual estimates depends on the extent to which the sampling period is representative of the whole year.

**Table 2-2**  
**Standard Errors and Coefficients of Variation for Selected Variables ( $p < .05$ ) in 2003**

Variable	Sample Size	Estimated Count or Incidence Rate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation
Primary Substantiated Sexual Abuse (Table 3-3)	46	537	85	34.41
Incidence of Primary Substantiated Emotional Maltreatment (Table 3-3)	314	4.85/1000 children	1.03	21.08
Physical Harm in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations (Table 4-1(a))	192	1,345	237	11.61
Placement in Other Foster Care in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations (Table 5-4)	116	1,153	305	8.52
Males 0–17 Years of Age in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations (Table 6-2)	819	9,637	829	12.78
Positive Toxicology at Birth in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations (Table 6-4(a))	54	491	124	25.31
Unsafe Housing Conditions in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations (Table 7-7)	153	1,685	221	13.13
Referrals from Police in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations (Table 8-1)	316	3,216	210	6.54

<sup>40</sup> This means that 95% of random samples will yield estimates that will lie within one standard error above or below the estimate. In other words, if the study were repeated 100 times, in 95 times the estimates would fall within one standard error of the estimate. For example, 95 out of 100 times the estimate for the number of children admitted to care would be between 3,114 and 6,838 (see Table 2-2).

<sup>41</sup> The coefficient of variation (CV) is the ratio of the standard error to its estimate. Statistics Canada considers CVs under 16 to be reliable, warns that CVs between 16 and 33.3 should be treated with caution, and recommends that CVs above 33.3 not be used.

## Limitations of the AIS-2003

Every effort has been made to make the AIS-2003 a robust and reliable study of reported child maltreatment in Alberta. Several challenges that the research team faced have resulted in limitations to the study. These limitations have been outlined in the preceding two chapters, and are summarized below.

- the AIS-2003 is limited to reports investigated by child welfare services and do not include reports that were screened out, cases that were only investigated by the police and cases that were never reported;
- the study is not designed to conduct regional comparisons, variations in rates of investigated maltreatment across Alberta could not be examined;
- the study is based on the assessments provided by the investigating child welfare workers and could not be independently verified.

## Data Presentation Format

Definitions of the **study variables** are described in the corresponding chapters. For forms of maltreatment and substantiation rates please read the introduction to Chapter 3. In reading the data tables in Chapters 3 to 8, the following points should be noted:

- Data tables in Chapter 3 present estimate counts and incidence rates by level of substantiation for **all forms** of investigated maltreatment.
- Tables in Chapters 4 through 8 primarily present estimate counts for the five **primary categories of substantiated maltreatment**.
- Estimates are not presented when there were insufficient cases sampled to provide a reliable estimate. In such instances one dash (-) appears in the cell.
- All estimates are **weighted annual estimates for 2003** presented either as a count of child maltreatment investigations (e.g. 12,300 child maltreatment investigations) or as the annual **incidence rate** (e.g. 3.1 per 1,000 children).
- The overall sample used to derive data for each table is noted at the bottom of the table along with the number of missing cases. Because of **missing** cases the case count totals at the bottom of each table will vary from one table to the next. Chapter 3 tables provide the full count of estimated child maltreatment investigations.
- Column percentages total 100% for all tables, except when multiple responses were possible (e.g. referral source, child functioning).

### ■ 3. INCIDENCE OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

This chapter presents estimates of the number of child maltreatment investigations conducted in Alberta during 2003. All data are presented in terms of the total number of estimated child investigations, as well as the annual incidence rate of estimated investigations per 1,000 children aged less than one to 17.<sup>42</sup> These figures refer to child investigations and not to the number of investigated families. Thus, if several children in a family had each been reported as abused or neglected, each investigated child counted as a separate child investigation. For children investigated more than once in a year, each investigation is included in the estimates (see Chapter 1, Definitional Framework).<sup>43</sup>

The estimates presented in this chapter are weighted estimates derived from child maltreatment investigations conducted in 2003 in a sample of Alberta's child welfare services. The sampling design and weighting procedures specific to the study should be considered before inferences are drawn from these estimates. The estimates **do not include** (1) incidents that were not reported to child welfare services, (2) reported cases that were screened out by child welfare services before being fully investigated, (3) new reports on cases already open by child welfare services, and (4) cases that were investigated only by the police.

#### Definition of Classifications of Maltreatment

The AIS-2003 definition of child maltreatment includes 25 forms of maltreatment subsumed under five categories: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence (see Section 14, "Forms of Maltreatment," in CIS Cycle II Guide Book in Appendix D). The 25 forms of maltreatment tracked by the AIS are defined in the detailed sections on each of the five categories of maltreatment in this chapter.

Each investigation had a minimum of one and a maximum of three identified forms of maltreatment. In cases involving more than three forms of maltreatment, investigating workers were asked to select the three forms that best described the reason for investigation. More than one form of maltreatment was identified for 31% of child investigations (see Table 3-4). The **primary form** of maltreatment was the form that best characterized the investigated maltreatment. In cases where one form of

42 In Alberta the cut-off age selected for the AIS-2003 is 17 (children under the age of 18) while for the CIS-2003 the cut-off age of 15 (children under the age of 16) was selected because the mandate to investigate varies among provinces and territories in Canada. The reader should take this into consideration when reading the report. All calculations were based on the child population estimates from the 2001 census provided by Custom Services Section, Advisory Services, Statistics Canada Ontario Regional Office.

43 Children investigated more than once during the case selection period (October to December 2003) were only counted as one investigation; however, children investigated more than once over the whole year (2003) were counted as separate cases because the child welfare service statistics used to annualize the AIS estimates did not remove duplicates (see Chapter 1, Definitional Framework).

maltreatment was substantiated and one was not, the substantiated form was automatically selected as the primary form.<sup>44</sup>

For the purpose of this report, most tables will only present the **primary classification of substantiated maltreatment** in order to allow summary comparisons of the five categories of maltreatment tracked by the AIS-2003 (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence). In this chapter, however, Tables 3-5, 3-6, 3-7, 3-8 and 3-9 will present the **primary and secondary forms** of investigated maltreatment in order to provide an exact estimate of the occurrence of the five categories and the 25 individual forms of maltreatment.

## Definition of Levels of Substantiation

The majority of the data in this chapter is presented in terms of the three levels of substantiation specified by workers: substantiated, suspected, and unsubstantiated. The following definition of substantiation was used:

A case is considered **substantiated** if the balance of evidence indicates that abuse or neglect has occurred.

A case is **suspected** if you do not have enough evidence to substantiate maltreatment, but you also are not sure that maltreatment can be ruled out.

A case is **unsubstantiated** if the balance of evidence indicates that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

Unsubstantiated does not mean that a referral was inappropriate or malicious; it simply indicates that the investigating worker determined that the child had not been maltreated (see Malicious Referrals, Chapter 8).

Some jurisdictions only make a distinction between a case that was substantiated and a case that was unsubstantiated, or verified and not verified.<sup>45</sup> The addition of a “suspected” level provides an important clinical distinction between cases in which there is enough conclusive evidence that a case can be deemed substantiated or unsubstantiated and cases in which maltreatment remains suspected at the conclusion of the investigation. It should be noted, however, that the use of the suspected category leads to fewer cases

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44 The CIS classification protocol was modified for the 2003 study to avoid confusion in cases where one form of maltreatment is substantiated and one is not. If the primary investigated form was not substantiated but a secondary form was, the substantiated form was recoded as the primary overall form (this involved 515 cases, 4% of the sample). For example, if physical abuse was unsubstantiated in a case initially classified primarily as physical abuse, but neglect was substantiated, the substantiated neglect was recoded as the primary form of maltreatment. The same protocol was used for the development of the AIS dataset.

45 For the purpose of AIS-2003, child welfare workers were asked to use three levels of substantiation which is similar to the provincial protocols



being classified as substantiated or unsubstantiated. Comparisons with other statistics that use only two levels of substantiation should therefore be made with caution (see Chapter 1).

**Family-Level Substantiation:** In Table 3-2, which presents family-level data, the substantiation level is determined by the highest level of substantiation among all investigated children within a family. For example, if the allegation of maltreatment for the first child was unsubstantiated and the allegations of maltreatment for the second child was substantiated, then the family investigation was deemed to be substantiated (a minimum of one substantiated form of maltreatment for the multiple children who were investigated).

## Total Child Investigations and Overall Rates of Substantiation

Table 3-1 presents the estimated number of child investigations of reported maltreatment in Alberta. An estimated 32,453 child investigations (43.16 investigations per 1,000 children) were conducted in Alberta in 2003. Over half of all investigations (55%, an estimated 17,864 child investigations) were substantiated by the investigating worker (23.76 investigations per 1,000 children).<sup>46</sup> In a further 19% of investigations (an estimated 5,998 child investigations, 7.98 investigations per 1,000 children) there was insufficient evidence to substantiate maltreatment, however, maltreatment remained suspected by the investigating worker. Approximately 26% of investigations (an estimated 8,591 child investigations, 11.42 investigations per 1,000 children) were unsubstantiated.

**Table 3-1**  
**Child Maltreatment Investigations by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

	Level of Substantiation			Total
	Substantiated	Suspected	Unsubstantiated	
Maltreatment Investigations				
Child Investigations*	17,864	5,998	8,591	<b>32,453</b>
Incidence per 1,000 Children	23.76	7.98	11.42	<b>43.16</b>
Row Percentage	55%	19%	26%	<b>100%</b>
<i>Row Percentages</i>				
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>				
* Based on a sample of 2,653 child maltreatment investigations				

## Total Family Investigations and Overall Rates of Substantiation

Table 3-2 presents the estimated number of family investigations. Although the estimates presented in this report are child based, the family based data are presented in this table to provide a basis for

comparing AIS-2003 data with the family-based child maltreatment statistics routinely gathered in many jurisdictions. An estimated 19,906 family maltreatment reports were investigated because of alleged maltreatment in Alberta. Of this number, 55% were substantiated, 18% remained suspected, and 27% were unsubstantiated.

Children living in an investigated family were not all considered to be suspected victims of maltreatment. Children were considered to have been investigated if they were reported for suspected maltreatment, or if concerns about possible maltreatment of that child arose during the investigation.<sup>47</sup> In investigated families there was an average of 2.45 children under the age of 19, and an average of 1.63 children were investigated for each family (see Appendix H, Table 1(a) and Table 1 (b)).

**Table 3-2**  
**Families Involved in Child Maltreatment Investigations by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

	Level of Substantiation			Total
	Substantiated	Suspected	Unsubstantiated	
Maltreatment Investigations				
Family Investigations *	10,898	3,586	5,422	<b>19,906</b>
Row Percentage	55%	18%	27%	<b>100%</b>
<i>Row Percentages</i>				
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>				
* Based on a sample of 1,669 family maltreatment investigations.				

## Categories of Maltreatment

Table 3-3 presents the primary categories of substantiated maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003. Neglect was the most common form of substantiated maltreatment in Canada. Over a third (34%) of all substantiated investigations involved neglect as the primary category of maltreatment, an estimated 6,064 neglect investigations at a rate of 8.06 substantiated investigations per 1,000 children. Exposure to domestic violence was the second most frequently substantiated category of maltreatment (an estimated 4,112 substantiated investigations, a rate of 5.46 per 1,000 children), followed closely by emotional maltreatment (an estimated 3,647 investigations, a rate of 4.85 per 1,000 children) and physical abuse (an estimated 3,503 substantiated investigations, a rate of 4.66 per 1,000 children).

<sup>47</sup> Although in Alberta all children in a family are required to be interviewed as part of a maltreatment investigation, workers were asked to distinguish between children who were interviewed as part of an investigation protocol and children suspected of being maltreated.

Sexual abuse cases represented only three percent of all substantiated investigations (an estimated 537 substantiated investigations, a rate of 0.72 per 1,000 children).

**Table 3-3**  
**Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment					Total
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence	
<b>Substantiated Maltreatment in Alberta</b>						
Substantiated Child Investigations *	3,503	537	6,064	3,647	4,112	<b>17,864</b>
Incidence per 1,000 Children	4.66	0.72	8.06	4.85	5.46	<b>23.76</b>
Row Percentage	20%	3%	34%	20%	23%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>						
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations.						

## Single and Multiple Categories of Maltreatment

Table 3-4 presents the breakdown by category of maltreatment of substantiated cases involving single and multiple categories of maltreatment in Alberta. Because Alberta's case classification system currently tracks single forms of maltreatment, it is likely that the investigating workers who completed AIS-2003 forms were unaccustomed to classifying cases under more than one form, and that the AIS-2003 may therefore underestimate the actual incidence of multiple maltreatment.

**Single Categories of Maltreatment:** In more than half of substantiated investigations (69%), only one category of maltreatment was identified, involving an estimated 12,385 child investigations. Physical abuse was identified as the single category of maltreatment in 12% of investigations; two percent of investigations involved only sexual abuse, 24% involved neglect only, 13% involved only emotional maltreatment and 18% involved allegations of exposure to domestic violence only.

**Multiple Categories of Maltreatment:** Thirty-one percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involved more than one category of maltreatment, an estimated 5,478 child investigations. The most frequently identified combinations were neglect and emotional maltreatment (1,632 investigations), exposure to domestic violence with emotional maltreatment (1,174), physical abuse and emotional maltreatment (666 investigations), exposure to domestic violence and neglect (426) and physical abuse, emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence (375). Relative to other forms of maltreatment, sexual abuse was rarely found in combination with other forms of maltreatment, with the exception of sexual abuse and neglect (169).

**Table 3-4**  
**Single and Multiple Categories of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Substantiated Child Maltreatment		
	Count	Incidence per 1,000 children	% of Substantiated Maltreatment
<b>Single Form of Substantiated Maltreatment</b>			
Physical Abuse Only	2,231	2.97	12%
Sexual Abuse Only	391	0.52	2%
Neglect Only	4,232	5.63	24%
Emotional Maltreatment Only	2,336	3.11	13%
Exposure to Domestic Violence Only	3,195	4.25	18%
<b>Subtotal: Only One Form of Substantiated</b>	<b>12,385</b>	<b>16.47</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>Multiple Categories of Substantiated Maltreatment</b>			
Physical and Sexual	—	—	0%
Physical and Neglect	322	0.43	2%
Physical and Emotional	666	0.89	4%
Physical and Exposure to Domestic Violence	189	0.25	1%
Sexual and Neglect	169	0.22	1%
Sexual and Emotional	—	—	—
Sexual and Exposure to Domestic Violence	—	—	—
Neglect and Emotional	1,632	2.17	9%
Neglect and Exposure to Domestic Violence	426	0.57	2%
Emotional Maltreatment and Exposure to Domestic Violence	1,174	1.56	7%
Physical, Sexual and Neglect	—	0.00	0%
Physical, Sexual and Emotional	—	—	0%
Physical, Sexual and Exposure to Domestic Violence	—	—	1%
Physical, Neglect, Emotional	127	0.17	1%
Physical, Neglect and Exposure to Domestic Violence	73	0.10	0%
Physical, Emotional and Exposure to Domestic Violence	375	0.50	2%
Sexual, Neglect and Emotional	—	—	0%
Sexual, Neglect and Exposure to Domestic Violence	—	—	—
Sexual, Emotional and Exposure to Domestic Violence	—	—	—
Neglect, Emotional and Exposure to Domestic Violence	288	0.38	2%
<b>Subtotal: Multiple Categories</b>	<b>5,441</b>	<b>7.24</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>17,864</b>	<b>23.76</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>			
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations.			

## Physical Abuse

For the purposes of the AIS-2003, cases of investigated maltreatment were classified as physical abuse if the investigated child was suspected to have suffered or to be at substantial risk of suffering physical harm at the hands of his or her caregiver. The physical abuse category includes five forms of abuse:

**Shake, Push, Grab or Throw:** Include pulling or dragging a child as well as shaking an infant.

**Hit With Hand:** Include slapping and spanking but not punching.

**Punch, Kick, or Bite:** Include as well any other hitting with other parts of the body (e.g.: elbow or head).

**Hit With Object:** Includes hitting with a stick, a belt or other object, throwing an object at a child, but does not include stabbing with a knife.

**Other Physical Abuse:** Any other form of physical abuse including choking, strangling, stabbing, burning, shooting, poisoning, and the abusive use of restraints.

The incidence of reported physical abuse is presented in Table 3-5. An estimated 8,881 child investigations (11.81 investigations per 1,000 children) involved physical abuse as the primary or secondary (including both second and third) reason for investigation, and an estimated 6,649 child investigations involved physical abuse as the primary reason for investigation, with an incidence rate of 8.84 investigations per 1,000 children. Physical abuse was substantiated as the primary or secondary reason for maltreatment in 4,011 cases (45% of physical abuse investigations).

An estimated 3,728 child investigations (4.96 investigations per 1,000 children) involved concerns about a child being hit with a hand. Forty-eight percent of these were substantiated. Being shaken, pushed, grabbed or thrown was investigated in 2,828 cases (3.76 child investigations per 1,000 children), 45% of which were substantiated. Being punched, kicked or bitten was investigated in 982 cases, 58% of which were substantiated, and 1,745 investigations involved an allegation of being hit with an object, 51% of which were substantiated. In an estimated 1,397 cases the allegation was classified as other physical abuse, with only 24% of these cases being substantiated.

**Table 3-5**  
**Primary or Secondary Forms of Physical Abuse by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

	Level of Substantiation			Total
	Substantiated	Suspected	Unsubstantiated	
<b>Primary or Secondary Forms of Physical Abuse</b>				
Shake, Push Grab or Throw				
Number of Child Investigations	1,255	744	829	<b>2,828</b>
Row Percentage	45%	26%	29%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	1.67	0.99	1.10	<b>3.76</b>
Hit With Hand				
Number of Child Investigations	1,787	952	989	<b>3,728</b>
Row Percentage	48%	26%	26%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	2.38	1.27	1.31	<b>4.96</b>
Punch, Kick or Bite				
Number of Child Investigations	572	168	242	<b>982</b>
Row Percentage	58%	17%	25%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.76	0.23	0.32	<b>1.31</b>
Hit With Object				
Number of Child Investigations	885	344	516	<b>1,745</b>
Row Percentage	51%	20%	30%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	1.18	0.46	0.68	<b>2.32</b>
Other Physical Abuse				
Number of Child Investigations	336	394	667	<b>1,397</b>
Row Percentage	24%	28%	48%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.45	0.52	0.89	<b>1.86</b>
<b>Total Investigations Involving Physical Abuse as Primary or Secondary Reason for Investigation**</b>				
Number of Child Investigations*	4,011	2,079	2,791	<b>8,881</b>
Row Percentage	45%	23%	31%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	5.33	2.76	3.71	<b>11.81</b>
<b>Total Investigations Involving Physical Abuse as Primary Reason for Investigation</b>				
Number of Child Investigations*	3,503	1,224	1,922	<b>6,649</b>
Row Percentage	53%	18%	29%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	4.66	1.63	2.55	<b>8.84</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>				
* Based on a sample of 894 child maltreatment investigations with information about physical abuse.				
** The total number of investigations involving primary or secondary physical abuse is not equal to the sum of the specific forms of physical abuse because some cases involve multiple forms of physical abuse.				

## Sexual Abuse

The AIS-2003 tracked eight forms or subtypes of sexual abuse, ranging from penetration to sexual exploitation. If several forms of sexual activity were involved, investigating workers were instructed to identify the most intrusive form.<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that the AIS-2003 identified only cases reported to child welfare services; many cases of child sexual abuse that do not involve parents or relatives in the home are investigated only by the police, and child welfare services usually become involved in extra-familial sexual abuse cases only if there are concerns about the parents' ability to protect the child.

The AIS-2003 included eight forms to classify cases of sexual abuse:

**Penetration:** Penile, digital or object penetration of vagina or anus.

**Attempted Penetration:** Attempted penile, digital or object penetration of vagina or anus.

**Oral Sex:** Oral contact with genitals by either perpetrator or by the child.

**Fondling:** Touching or fondling of genitals for sexual purpose.

**Sex Talk:** Verbal or written proposition, encouragement, or suggestion of a sexual nature (include face to face, phone, written and internet contact, as well as exposing the child to pornographic material).

**Voyeurism:** Included activities where the alleged perpetrator observes the child for the perpetrator's sexual gratification.

**Exhibitionism:** Included activities where the perpetrator is alleged to have exhibited himself/herself for his/her own sexual gratification.

**Exploitation:** Included situations where an adult sexually exploits a child for purposes of financial gain or other profit, including pornography and prostitution.

As shown in Table 3-6, an estimated 1,880 child investigations (2.50 investigations per 1,000 children) involved allegations of sexual abuse as either the primary or secondary category of maltreatment. Of this number only 32% were substantiated (598 investigations), 16% remained suspected, and 53% were unsubstantiated. An estimated 1,405 child investigations (1.87 investigations per 1,000 children) involved sexual abuse as the primary reason for investigation.

<sup>48</sup> Workers were asked to identify the most severe form of sexual abuse for the investigation rather than reporting multiple forms for the same incident. For instance, if a child had been a victim of fondling and attempted penetrations by the same perpetrator, this was counted as a single case of attempted penetration. When multiple forms were identified, AIS-2003 Site Researchers would consult with workers and would recode when appropriate. If this consultation was not possible, the original response was maintained.

**Table 3-6**  
**Primary or Secondary Forms of Sexual Abuse by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

	Level of Substantiation			Total
	Substantiated	Suspected	Unsubstantiated	
<b>Primary or Secondary Forms of Sexual Abuse</b>				
Penetration				
Number of Child Investigations	125	50	85	<b>260</b>
Row Percentage	48%	19%	33%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.17	0.07	0.11	<b>0.35</b>
Attempted Penetration				
Number of Child Investigations	–	–	–	<b>112</b>
Row Percentage	–	–	–	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	–	–	–	<b>0.15</b>
Oral Sex				
Number of Child Investigations	81	130	205	<b>416</b>
Row Percentage	20%	31%	49%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.11	0.17	0.27	<b>0.55</b>
Fondling				
Number of Child Investigations	261	181	547	<b>989</b>
Row Percentage	27%	18%	55%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.35	0.24	0.73	<b>1.32</b>
Sexual Talk				
Number of Child Investigations	72	–	120	<b>192</b>
Row Percentage	34%	–	57%	<b>91%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.10	–	0.16	<b>0.26</b>
Voyeurism				
Number of Child Investigations	–	–	–	<b>52</b>
Row Percentage	–	–	–	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	–	–	–	<b>0.07</b>
Exhibitionism				
Number of Child Investigations	–	–	51	<b>94</b>
Row Percentage	–	–	54%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	–	–	0.07	<b>0.12</b>
Exploitation				
Number of Child Investigations	132	–	130	<b>290</b>
Row Percentage	45%	–	45%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.18	–	0.17	<b>0.39</b>
<b>Total Investigations Involving Sexual Abuse as Primary or Secondary Reason for Investigation**</b>				
Number of Child Investigations *	598	296	987	<b>1,880</b>
Row Percentage	32%	16%	53%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.80	0.39	1.31	<b>2.50</b>
<b>Total Investigations Involving Sexual Abuse as Primary Reason for Investigation</b>				
Number of Child Investigations *	537	130	738	<b>1,405</b>
Row Percentage	38%	9%	53%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.72	0.17	0.98	<b>1.87</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>				
* Based on a sample of 208 child maltreatment investigations with information about sexual abuse.				
** The total number of investigations involving primary or secondary sexual abuse is not equal to the sum of the specific forms of sexual abuse because some cases involve multiple forms of sexual abuse.				



An estimated 260 child investigations (0.35 investigations per 1,000 children) involved allegations of penetration; 48% of these investigations (125 investigations) were substantiated, 19% remained suspected, and 33% were unsubstantiated. An estimated 112 child investigations (0.15 investigations per 1,000 children) were for attempted penetration, 37% of which were substantiated. An estimated 416 child (0.55 investigations per 1,000 children) investigations involved allegations of oral sex, 20% of which were substantiated. An estimated 989 child investigations (1.32 investigations per 1,000 children) of touching or fondling of genitals were investigated, 27% of which were substantiated. Sexual talk was investigated in 211 cases, 34% of which were substantiated. Voyeurism was investigated in 52 cases, however, none of these cases were substantiated, and exhibitionism was investigated in another 94 cases, 18% of which were substantiated. Sexual exploitation was investigated in 290 cases, 45% of which were substantiated

## Neglect

Child neglect includes situations in which children have suffered harm, or their safety or development has been endangered as a result of the caregiver's failure to provide for or protect them. In Alberta, the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act states that a child is neglected if the guardian (a) is unable or unwilling to provide the child with the necessities of life, (b) is unable or unwilling to obtain for the child, or to permit the child to permit the child to receive, essential medical, surgical, or other remedial treatment that is necessary for the health or well-being of the child, or (c) is unable or unwilling to provide the child with adequate care or supervision. Nevertheless, all provincial and territorial statutes include neglect or some type of reference to acts of omission, such as failure to supervise or protect, as grounds for investigating maltreatment. The AIS-2003 examines eight forms of neglect:

**Failure to Supervise – Physical harm:** The child suffered or was at substantial risk of suffering physical harm because of the caregiver's failure to supervise and protect the child adequately. Failure to supervise included situations in which a child was harmed or endangered as a result of a caregiver's actions (e.g. drunk driving with a child, or engaging in dangerous criminal activities with a child).

**Failure to Supervise – Sexual Abuse:** The child has been or was at substantial risk of being sexually molested or sexually exploited, and the caregiver knew or should have known of the possibility of sexual molestation and failed to protect the child adequately.

**Permitting Criminal Behaviour:** A child has committed a criminal offence (e.g. theft, vandalism or assault) with the encouragement of the child's caregiver, or because of the caregiver's failure or inability to supervise the child adequately.

**Physical Neglect:** The child has suffered or was at substantial risk of suffering physical harm caused by the caregiver(s)' failure to care and provide for the child adequately. This includes inadequate nutrition/clothing, and unhygienic dangerous living conditions. There must be evidence or suspicion that the caregiver is at least partially responsible for the situation.

**Medical Neglect:** The child required medical treatment to cure, prevent, or alleviate physical harm or suffering, and the child's caregiver did not provide, refused, or was unavailable or unable to consent to the treatment. This included dental services where funding was available.

**Failure to Provide Psychological/Psychiatric Treatment:** The child was at substantial risk of suffering from emotional harm as demonstrated by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive or aggressive behaviour, or a mental, emotional, or developmental condition that could seriously impair the child's development. The child's caregiver did not provide, or refused, or was unavailable or unable to consent to treatment to remedy or alleviate the harm. This category includes failing to provide treatment for school-related problems such as learning and behaviour problems, as well as treatment for infant development problems such as non-organic failure to thrive. Parents awaiting service were not included in this category.

**Abandonment:** The child's parent has died or was unable to exercise custodial rights and did not make adequate provisions for care and custody, or the child was in a placement and the caregiver refused or was unable to take custody.

**Educational Neglect:** Caregivers knowingly allowed chronic truancy (five or more days a month), or failed to enroll the child, or repeatedly kept the child at home. If the child had been experiencing mental, emotional, or developmental problems associated with school, and treatment had been offered but caregivers did not cooperate with treatment, the case was classified under failure to provide treatment as well.

Table 3-7 indicates that child neglect was the most frequently investigated category of maltreatment. An estimated 15,319 child investigations (20.37 investigations per 1,000 children) involved neglect as either the primary or secondary reason for investigation. Forty-eight percent of investigations were substantiated; in a further 17% of cases neglect remained suspected but could not be confirmed, and 35% of investigated neglect was unsubstantiated. Neglect was the primary category of investigation in an estimated 12,296 child maltreatment cases (16.35 investigations per 1,000 children).

Table 3-7 shows that the most common form of investigated neglect was physical neglect. An estimated 6,407 child investigations (8.52 investigations per 1,000 children) of physical neglect were conducted, 47% of which were substantiated, 20% were suspected, and 33% were unsubstantiated. The second most frequently investigated form of neglect was failure to supervise leading to physical

**Table 3-7**  
**Primary or Secondary Forms of Neglect by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

	Level of Substantiation			Total
	Substantiated	Suspected	Unsubstantiated	
<b>Primary or Secondary Forms of Neglect</b>				
Failure to Supervise (Physical)				
Number of Child Investigations	2,469	1,198	1,380	<b>5,047</b>
Row Percentage	49%	24%	27%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	3.28	1.59	1.84	<b>6.71</b>
Failure to Supervise (Sexual)				
Number of Child Investigations	329	118	499	<b>946</b>
Row Percentage	35%	12%	53%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.44	0.16	0.66	<b>1.26</b>
Physical Neglect				
Number of Child Investigations	3,014	1,265	2,128	<b>6,407</b>
Row Percentage	47%	20%	33%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	4.01	1.68	2.83	<b>8.52</b>
Medical Neglect				
Number of Child Investigations	455	182	434	<b>1,071</b>
Row Percentage	42%	17%	41%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.60	0.24	0.58	<b>1.42</b>
Failure to Provide Treatment				
Number of Child Investigations	282	114	178	<b>574</b>
Row Percentage	49%	20%	31%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.37	0.15	0.24	<b>0.76</b>
Permitting Criminal Behaviour				
Number of Child Investigations	317	88	—	<b>433</b>
Row Percentage	73%	20%	—	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.42	0.12	—	<b>0.58</b>
Abandonment				
Number of Child Investigations	1,369	119	1,239	<b>2,727</b>
Row Percentage	50%	4%	46%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	1.82	0.16	1.65	<b>3.63</b>
Educational Neglect				
Number of Child Investigations	704	152	263	<b>1,119</b>
Row Percentage	63%	14%	23%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.94	0.20	0.35	<b>1.49</b>
<b>Total Investigations Involving Neglect as Primary or Secondary Reason for Investigation**</b>				
Number of Child Investigations*	7,295	2,636	5,388	<b>15,319</b>
Row Percentage	48%	17%	35%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	9.70	3.51	7.16	<b>20.37</b>
<b>Total Investigations Involving Neglect as Primary Reason for Investigation</b>				
Number of Child Investigations*	6,065	2,101	4,130	<b>12,296</b>
Row Percentage	49%	17%	34%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	8.07	2.79	5.49	<b>16.35</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>				
* Based on a sample of 1,516 child maltreatment investigations with information about neglect.				
** The total number of investigations involving primary or secondary neglect is not equal to the sum of the specific forms of neglect because some cases involve multiple forms of neglect.				

harm. An estimated 5,047 child investigations (6.71 investigations per 1,000 children), involved supervision issues when children had been harmed or were at risk of physical harm. Of these cases 49% were substantiated. An estimated 2,727 child investigations (3.63 investigations per 1,000 children) involved abandonment as a primary or secondary form of investigated maltreatment, 50% of which were substantiated. Educational neglect was noted in an estimated 1,119 child investigations (1.49 investigations per 1,000 children), almost two-thirds of which (63%) were substantiated.

Medical neglect was investigated in 1,071 cases (1.42 investigations per 1,000 children), and concerns about failure to protect children from sexual abuse were identified in another estimated 946 child investigations (1.26 investigations per 1,000 children), with only 35% of these cases being substantiated. Failure to provide psychological treatment was investigated in 574 cases (0.76 investigations per 1,000 children). Permitting criminal behaviour was a form of maltreatment for an estimated 433 child investigations (0.58 investigations per 1,000 children), with almost three quarters (73%) of these cases being substantiated.

## Emotional Maltreatment

Emotional maltreatment is a difficult category of maltreatment to document because often it does not involve a specific incident or visible injury. In addition, the effects of emotional maltreatment, although often severe, tend to become apparent over time (e.g., impaired cognitive, social, and emotional development). There is considerable variation in the extent to which emotional maltreatment is covered by provincial/territorial child welfare statutes. In Alberta, a child is emotionally injured if there is impairment of the child's mental or emotional functioning or development, and if there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the emotional injury is the result of (a) rejection, (b) emotional, social, cognitive or physiological neglect, (c) deprivation of affection or cognitive stimulation, (d) exposure to domestic violence or severe domestic disharmony, (e) inappropriate criticism, threats, humiliation, accusations or expectations of or toward the child, (f) the mental or emotional condition of the guardian of the child or of anyone living in the same residence as the child, (g) chronic alcohol or drug abuse by the guardian or by anyone living in the same residence of the child. Three forms of emotional maltreatment were tracked by the AIS-2003. A fourth form, exposure to non-intimate partner violence, was added after the start of the study to deal with the relatively large number of such investigations.

**Emotional Abuse:** The child has suffered or was at substantial risk of suffering from mental, emotional, or developmental problems caused by overtly hostile, punitive treatment, or habitual or extreme verbal abuse (threatening, belittling, etc.).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Instances in which children were displaying severe emotional problems requiring treatment and parents refused or did not cooperate with offered treatment, were classified as neglect cases under failure to provide treatment.

**Non-Organic Failure to Thrive:** A child under 3 has suffered a marked retardation or cessation of growth for which no organic reasons can be identified. Failure to thrive cases where inadequate nutrition was the identified cause were classified as physical neglect. Non-organic failure to thrive is generally considered to be a form of psychological maltreatment; it has been classified as a separate category because of its particular characteristics.

**Emotional Neglect:** The child has suffered or is at substantial risk of suffering from mental, emotional, or developmental problems caused by inadequate nurturance/affection. If treatment was offered but caregivers were not cooperative, cases were classified under failure to provide treatment as well.

**Exposure to Non-Intimate Partner Violence:** A child has been a witness to violence occurring between adults in the child's home environment (for example the child's father and an acquaintance), excluding exposure to domestic violence.

There were an estimated 13,675 child investigations (18.18 investigations per 1,000 children) in 2003 for alleged emotional maltreatment as the primary or secondary maltreatment classification (Table 3-8). Forty-eight percent of all investigations were substantiated, 29% were suspected, and 23% were unsubstantiated. Emotional maltreatment was the primary reason for investigation in an estimated 6,550 cases (8.71 investigations per 1,000 children).

Emotional abuse was investigated in an estimated 9,337 cases (12.42 investigations per 1,000 children), 54% of which were substantiated. Emotional neglect was the primary or secondary form of maltreatment in an estimated 5,440 child investigations (7.23 investigations per 1,000 children), 35% of which were substantiated. Exposure to non-intimate partner violence was investigated in 310 cases, 39% of which were substantiated. An estimated 41 cases of non-organic failure to thrive were investigated, none of which were substantiated.

**Table 3-8**  
**Primary or Secondary Forms of Emotional Maltreatment by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

	Level of Substantiation			Total
	Substantiated	Suspected	Unsubstantiated	
<b>Primary or Secondary Forms of Emotional Maltreatment</b>				
Emotional Abuse				
Number of Child Investigations	5,081	2,470	1,786	<b>9,337</b>
Row Percentage	54%	27%	19%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	6.76	3.29	2.37	<b>12.42</b>
Non-Organic Failure to Thrive				
Number of Child Investigations	—	—	—	—
Row Percentage	—	—	—	—
Incidence per 1,000 children	—	—	—	—
Emotional Neglect				
Number of Child Investigations	1,906	2,061	1,473	<b>5,440</b>
Row Percentage	35%	38%	27%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	2.53	2.74	1.96	<b>7.23</b>
Exposure to Non-Intimate Partner Violence				
Number of Child Investigations	122	—	188	<b>310</b>
Row Percentage	39%	—	61%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	0.15	—	0.24	<b>0.39</b>
<b>Investigations Involving Emotional Maltreatment as Primary or Secondary Reason for Investigation**</b>				
Number of Child Investigations*	6,629	3,962	3,084	<b>13,675</b>
Row Percentage	48%	29%	23%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	9.46	5.27	4.10	<b>18.18</b>
<b>Investigations Involving Emotional Maltreatment as Primary Reason for Investigation</b>				
Number of Child Investigations*	3,647	1,666	1,237	<b>6,550</b>
Row Percentage	56%	25%	19%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	4.85	2.22	1.64	<b>8.71</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>				
* Based on a sample of 1,174 child maltreatment investigations with information on emotional maltreatment.				
** The total number of investigations involving primary or secondary emotional maltreatment is not equal to the sum of the specific forms of emotional maltreatment because some cases involve multiple forms of emotional maltreatment.				

## Exposure to Domestic Violence

Although exposure to domestic violence is often categorized as a form of emotional maltreatment, Alberta has developed policies and practices specific to exposure to domestic violence. To facilitate the analysis of this rapidly expanding form of maltreatment it is described in this report as its own category.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** A child has been a witness to violence occurring between the caregivers (or a caregiver and his/her partner). This would include situations where the child indirectly witnessed the violence (e.g. saw the physical injuries on his/her caregiver the next day or overheard the violence).

As can be seen in Table 3-9, exposure to domestic violence was investigated as the primary or secondary form of maltreatment in 8,488 cases, a rate of 11.29 investigations per 1,000 children. Over two thirds (68%) of these cases were substantiated, while in another 21% of cases, exposure remained suspected. Exposure to domestic violence was unsubstantiated in only 11% of cases. Exposure to domestic violence was the primary form of investigated maltreatment in 5,555 cases (7.39 investigations per 1,000 children), 74% of which were substantiated.

**Table 3-9**  
**Primary or Secondary Exposure to Domestic Violence by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

	Level of Substantiation			Total
	Substantiated	Suspected	Unsubstantiated	
<b>Investigations Involving Exposure to Domestic Violence as Primary or Secondary Reason for Investigation</b>				
Number of Child Investigations*	5,738	1,800	950	<b>8,488</b>
Row Percentage	68%	21%	11%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	7.63	2.40	1.26	<b>11.29</b>
<b>Investigations Involving Exposure to Domestic Violence as Primary Reason for Investigation</b>				
Number of Child Investigations*	4,112	877	566	<b>5,555</b>
Row Percentage	74%	16%	10%	<b>100%</b>
Incidence per 1,000 children	5.47	1.17	0.75	<b>7.39</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>				
* Based on a sample of 712 child maltreatment investigations with information on exposure to domestic violence.				

## ■ 4. CHARACTERISTICS OF MALTREATMENT

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Chapter 4 describes the characteristics of maltreatment in terms of nature and severity of harm, the duration of the maltreatment, and the perpetrator's relationship to the victim. The findings are presented in terms of the five primary categories of substantiated maltreatment tracked by the AIS-2003: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence.

The estimates presented in this chapter are weighted estimates derived from child maltreatment investigations conducted in 2003 in a sample of Alberta's child welfare services. The sampling design and weighting procedures specific to the study should be considered before inferences are drawn from these estimates. The estimates **do not include** (1) incidents that were not reported to child welfare services, (2) reported cases that were screened out by child welfare services before being fully investigated, (3) new reports on cases already open by child welfare services, and (4) cases that were investigated only by the police.

### Physical Harm

The AIS-2003 tracked physical harm suspected or known to be caused by the investigated maltreatment. Information on physical harm was collected using two scales, one describing severity of harm as measured by treatment need and one describing the nature of harm.

Physical harm was identified in 11% of cases of substantiated maltreatment (Table 4-1(a)). In seven percent of cases (an estimated 1,345 substantiated investigations) harm was noted but no treatment was considered to be required. In a further four percent of cases (an estimated 698 child investigations), harm was sufficiently severe to require treatment.

**Physical Abuse:** Physical harm was indicated in 35% of investigations where physical abuse was the primary maltreatment, in 29% of cases a physical injury had been documented but was not severe enough to require treatment, in another six percent of cases medical treatment was required, involving an estimated 216 victimized children. The fact that no physical harm was noted in 65% of physical abuse cases may seem surprising to some readers. It is important to understand that most jurisdictions consider that physical abuse includes caregiver behaviours that seriously endanger children, as well as those that lead to documented injuries.

**Sexual Abuse:** Physical harm was identified in nine percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern, with four percent of cases requiring treatment (an estimated 23 cases) and the remaining five percent being minor injuries that did not require treatment.



**Neglect:** Although physical harm was indicated in only 11% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment, most of these cases involved injuries that were severe enough to require medical treatment (seven percent of substantiated neglect cases). As a result, there were more victims of neglect requiring medical treatment (an estimated 428 victims of neglect) than for any other category of maltreatment.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Physical harm was identified in two percent of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Physical harm was identified and required treatment in only one percent of cases of where exposure to domestic violence was the primary form of substantiated maltreatment.

**Table 4-1(a)**  
**Physical Harm by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence							
No Physical Harm	65%	2,291	91%	488	89%	5,402	98%	3,570	99%	4,069	<b>89%</b>	<b>15,820</b>
Physical Harm, No Treatment Required	29%	997	5%	—	4%	234	2%	72	0%	—	<b>7%</b>	<b>1,345</b>
Physical Harm, Treatment Required**	6%	216	4%	—	7%	428	0%	—	1%	—	<b>4%</b>	<b>698</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about physical harm.												
** Based on a sample of 192 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about treatment required for physical harm.												

## Nature of Physical Harm

Investigating workers were asked to document the nature of physical harm that was suspected or known to have been caused by the investigated maltreatment. These ratings are based on the information routinely collected during the maltreatment investigation. While investigation protocols require careful examination of any physical injuries and may include a medical examination, it should be noted that children are not necessarily examined by a medical practitioner. Seven types of injury or health conditions were documented:

**No Harm:** There was no apparent evidence of physical harm to the child as a result of maltreatment.

**Bruises/Cuts/Scrapes:** The child suffered various physical hurts visible for at least 48 hours.

**Burns and Scalds:** The child suffered burns and scalds visible for at least 48 hours.

**Broken Bones:** The child suffered fractured bones.

**Head Trauma:** The child was a victim of head trauma (note that in shaken infant cases the major trauma is to the head not to the neck).

**Fatal:** The child died, and maltreatment was suspected during the investigation as the cause of death. Cases where maltreatment was eventually unsubstantiated were included.

**Other Health Conditions:** The child suffered from other physical health conditions, such as complications from untreated asthma, failure to thrive or a sexually transmitted disease.

Table 4-1(b) presents seven types of physical harm reported in the AIS-2003. At least one type of physical harm was documented in 11% of cases of substantiated maltreatment involving an estimated 2,044 children. Physical harm primarily involved bruises, cuts, and scrapes (seven percent) and other health conditions (four percent of substantiated maltreatment). Less than one percent of physical harm situations involved head trauma, or burns and scalds, or broken bones. Because the AIS-2003 estimates are based on a very small number of cases involving burns and scalds, broken bones and head trauma, the estimates presented in Table 4-1(b) should be interpreted with caution.

During the three-month AIS-2003 case selection period there were no investigations of a child fatality in a study site. Because these tragic events occur relatively rarely in Canada,<sup>50</sup> it is not surprising that no investigated child fatalities were captured by the AIS-2003. Therefore, estimates of the rate of child fatalities cannot be derived from this study.

**Physical Abuse:** Physical harm was most often noted in cases with substantiated physical abuse as the primary maltreatment, where 35% (an estimated 1,213 children) of cases involved at least one type of physical harm and most often involving bruises, cuts and scrapes (31% of physically abused children). More severe injuries were indicated less often: broken bones, head trauma and other health conditions were each indicated in approximately one percent cases with substantiated physical abuse as the primary concern.

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50 Thirty-three children (under age 12) were victims of homicide in Canada in 2003, which represents the lowest rate of child homicide victims in 25 years. Twenty-three of these children were killed by a parent. The average number of child homicides for the preceding 10 years is 49 child homicides per year. See Dauvergne, M. (2004). *Homicide in Canada, 2003*—Catalogue no. 85-002-XPE, Vol. 24, no. 8 Statistics Canada: Ottawa

**Sexual Abuse:** At least one type of physical harm was noted in nine percent (an estimated 49 child investigations) of cases where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern. Investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment and physical harm was reported most often involved bruises, cuts and scrapes (six percent) or other health conditions (three percent).<sup>51</sup>

**Neglect:** At least one type of physical harm was noted in 11% (an estimated 662 child investigations) of cases where neglect was the primary substantiated concern. Cases with neglect as the primary substantiated maltreatment most frequently involved other health conditions (nine percent). An additional two percent of cases involved bruises, cuts and scrapes.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Physical harm was rare in cases where substantiated emotional maltreatment was the primary reason for investigation, and when it was documented it primarily involved a health condition (two percent of substantiated emotional maltreatment).

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Physical harm was rare in cases with substantiated exposure to domestic violence as the primary maltreatment. When it was documented, physical harm primarily involved bruises, cuts or scrapes (one percent of substantiated exposure to domestic violence).

**Table 4-1(b)**  
**Nature of Physical Harm by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003\***

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
No Physical Harm	65%	2,291	91%	488	89%	5,402	98%	3,570	99%	4,069	<b>89%</b>	<b>15,820</b>
Bruises, Cuts, and Scrapes	31%	1,100	6%	—	2%	107	0%	—	1%	—	<b>7%</b>	<b>1,286</b>
Burns and Scalds	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	<b>0%</b>	—
Broken Bones	1%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	<b>0%</b>	—
Head Trauma	1%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	<b>0%</b>	<b>53</b>
Fatality	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	<b>0%</b>	—
Other Health Conditions	1%	—	3%	—	9%	523	2%	66	0%	—	<b>4%</b>	<b>647</b>
<b>At Least One Type</b>												
<b>of Physical Harm</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>1,213</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>2,044</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about physical harm. Columns are not additive as workers may have indicated more than one form of physical harm.												

51 Sexually transmitted diseases were the only specific type of health condition noted in the open-ended question that accompanied this category.

## Medical Treatment for Physical Harm

To estimate the severity of physical harm, investigating workers were asked to indicate whether identified physical harm was severe enough to require medical treatment.

**Medical Treatment Required For Injury:** Indicate whether medical treatment was required as a result of the injury or harm for any of the investigated forms of maltreatment.

Table 4-1(c) presents medical treatment ratings for the six AIS-2003 measures of physical harm. Bruises cuts and scrapes were the most common injury reported, however, only 16% of those cases required medical treatment. In the case of other injuries, medical treatment was generally required. Medical treatment was required in 100% of the cases of substantiated maltreatment that involved burns or scalds, 100% of cases involving broken bones, 83% of cases involving head trauma, and 59% of cases involving other health conditions.

**Table 4-1(c)**  
**Medical Treatment Required in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations by Nature of Physical Harm in Alberta, in 2003**

	Bruises, Cuts, and Scrapes		Burns and Scalds		Broken Bones		Head Trauma		Other Health Conditions	
Medical Treatment not Required	84%	1,078	0%	—	0%	—	17%	—	41%	267
Medical Treatment Required	16%	208	100%	—	100%	—	83%	—	59%	380
<b>Total Child Investigations with Physical Harm Noted*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,286</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>647</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>										
* Based on a sample of 192 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about the nature of physical harm and medical treatment										

## Emotional Harm

Information on emotional harm was collected using a series of questions asking child welfare workers to describe emotional harm that had occurred after the maltreatment incidents. Workers were asked to include changes in the child's development (regression, withdrawal), self-regulation (sleep patterns, elimination), or emotions (child crying, clinging, or anxious) that they had observed or that had been described to them. These maltreatment-specific descriptions of emotional harm are not to be confused with the general child functioning ratings that are presented in Chapter 7.

Table 4-2 presents emotional harm identified during the child maltreatment investigations. In order to rate the severity of mental/emotional harm, workers indicated whether therapeutic intervention

(treatment) was required in response to the mental or emotional distress shown by the child. Emotional harm was noted in 30% of all substantiated maltreatment investigations, involving an estimated 5,328 substantiated investigations. In 23% of substantiated cases symptoms were severe enough to require treatment.

**Physical Abuse:** Emotional harm was noted in 29% of cases where physical abuse was the primary maltreatment; in 21% of cases symptoms were severe enough to require treatment.

**Sexual Abuse:** Emotional harm was noted in 25% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern. In 25% of cases where sexual abuse was the primary maltreatment, harm was sufficiently severe to require treatment. Although a relatively large proportion of sexually abused children displayed symptoms of harm requiring treatment, these cases only account for an estimated 136 out of the 4,125 substantiated maltreatment cases where emotional harm was believed to require therapeutic intervention (three percent). It should also be noted that the AIS-2003 only tracked harm that could be associated with observable symptoms. It is likely that many sexually abused children may be harmed in ways that were not readily apparent to the investigating worker.

**Neglect:** Emotional harm was identified in 33% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment; in 23% of cases harm was sufficiently severe to require treatment.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Emotional harm was identified in 38% of investigations where substantiated emotional maltreatment was the primary concern, and was sufficiently severe to require treatment in 34% of cases. While it may appear surprising to some readers that no emotional harm had been documented for such a large proportion of emotionally maltreated, it is important to understand that the determination of emotional maltreatment is based on parental behaviour and/or the child's symptoms.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Emotional harm was identified in 20% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment; in 15% of cases harm was sufficiently severe to require treatment.

**Table 4-2**  
**Emotional Harm by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
No Emotional Harm	71%	2,490	75%	401	67%	4,069	62%	2,274	80%	3,302	<b>70%</b>	<b>12,536</b>
Signs of Mental or Emotional Harm*	8%	274	0%	—	10%	599	4%	150	5%	180	<b>7%</b>	<b>1,203</b>
Emotional Harm, Treatment Required**	21%	739	25%	136	23%	1,397	34%	1,222	15%	631	<b>23%</b>	<b>4,125</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,065</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,646</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,113</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about emotional harm.												
** Based on a sample of 492 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about emotional harm and treatment requirements												

## Duration of Maltreatment

Duration of maltreatment was documented on a three-point scale:

- 1) Single incident
- 2) Multiple incidents for less than six months
- 3) Multiple incidents for more than six months

Given the length restrictions for the Maltreatment Assessment Form, it was not possible to gather additional information on the frequency of maltreatment in order to distinguish between long-term situations with infrequent maltreatment and long-term situations with frequent maltreatment. Workers could also note if the duration of the maltreatment was unknown.

Table 4-3 shows that 43% of substantiated investigations (an estimated 7,765 child investigations) involved situations that had been ongoing for more than six months, 21% involved multiple incidents that had occurred over a period of less than six months, and 23% of investigations involved single incidents. Duration of maltreatment could not be determined in 13% of cases.

**Physical Abuse:** Maltreatment was indicated as a single incident in 37% of cases where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern, as multiple incidents over a period of less than six months in 12% of abuse cases, and as multiple incidents over a period longer than six months in 35% of these cases.

**Sexual Abuse:** Maltreatment was indicated as a single incident in 24% of cases where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern, as multiple incidents over a period of less than six months in 49% of sexual abuse cases, and as multiple incidents over a period longer than six months in 24% of these cases.

**Neglect:** Single incidents of neglect occurred in only 20% of cases where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment. Neglect involved multiple incidents over a period of less than six months in 29% of these cases, and multiple incidents over more than six months in 41% of cases.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** As with neglect, emotional maltreatment investigations involved more chronic than single incident cases. Only nine percent of cases involving emotional maltreatment as the primary category of substantiated maltreatment involved a single incident, 20% involved incidents over a period of less than six months and 56% of these cases occurred over a period of more than six months.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Twenty-eight percent of cases of with exposure to domestic violence as the primary substantiated maltreatment were single incident cases, 12% involved multiple incidents over less than six months, and 46% over more than six months.

**Table 4-3**  
**Duration of Maltreatment by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
Single Incident	37%	1,291	24%	132	20%	1,221	9%	322	28%	1,135	<b>23%</b>	<b>4,101</b>
Less Than Six Months	12%	410	49%	261	29%	1,752	20%	739	12%	495	<b>21%</b>	<b>3,657</b>
More Than Six Months	35%	1,234	24%	127	41%	2,456	56%	2,037	46%	1,911	<b>43%</b>	<b>7,765</b>
Unknown	16%	569	3%	—	10%	605	15%	550	14%	571	<b>13%</b>	<b>2,311</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,034</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,648</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,834</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,582 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about duration of maltreatment.												

## Perpetrator

The perpetrator refers to the person or persons who are considered to have abused or neglected the child. Perpetrator information was collected either through the caregiver questions on the Household Information Sheet or through an open ended question that was subsequently recoded into the following classifications:

**Biological Mother/Biological Father:** The biological parent of all children in the family.

**Stepfather/Stepmother or Common Law Partner:** Partner of the child(ren)'s biological parent, but is not the biological parent of at least one child in the family.

**Adoptive Parents/Foster Family:** Includes adoptive parents and foster family.

**Other Relative:** Any other relative, adult or child, who had contact with the investigated child (e.g. grandparent, aunt/uncle, sibling).

**Family Friend:** Friend of the caregiver(s) living with the child.

**Parent's Boyfriend/Girlfriend:** Parent's partner not in a caregiving role.

**Child's Friend (peer):** Another child considered a friend or peer.

**Babysitter:** An individual of any age in a babysitting role to the child.

**Teacher:** Includes teachers but not other school personnel (e.g. caretakers).

**Other Professional:** Includes recreation, health, and social service professionals.

**Other Acquaintance:** An individual known to the child's family.

As shown in Table 4-4(a), most substantiated investigations involved allegations against parents: biological mothers (60%), biological fathers (43%), stepfathers/common-law partners (15%), and stepmothers/common-law partners (three percent). It should be noted that in many instances, non-familial allegations of abuse are investigated by the police, not by a child welfare service.<sup>52</sup> At least one parent was a perpetrator in 93% of maltreatment investigations (see Appendix H, Table 3). Other than parents, other relatives were the most frequently identified perpetrators (six percent). Only six percent of all substantiated maltreatment investigations involved a non-family member as the alleged perpetrator. Less than one percent involved allegations against a teacher or another professional working with the child.

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<sup>52</sup> Trocmé, N. & Brison, R. (1998). Homicide and injuries due to assault and to abuse and neglect. In: Beaulne G (ed.). *For the safety of Canadian children and youth: from data to preventive measures*. Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada.



**Physical Abuse:** Perpetrators in cases with physical abuse at the primary substantiated concern were fairly evenly split between female and male caregivers, with female caregivers being investigated in 52% of cases (49% biological mothers and 3% stepmothers), and male caregivers in 48% of cases (32% biological fathers and 16% stepfathers). This distribution is somewhat biased by the fact that 26% of physical abuse victims were living in lone female-parent families (see Table 7-1). The alleged roles of mothers and fathers in two-parent families are somewhat different, with fathers being perpetrators in 97% of substantiated physical abuse, and mothers in 3% of substantiated physical abuse (see Appendix H, Table 4).

Five percent of cases where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern involved other relatives as perpetrators. Daycare provider or teachers and parents boyfriends or girlfriends were the non-familial figures most frequently reported as the perpetrators in investigations where substantiated physical abuse was the primary concern.

**Sexual Abuse:** In contrast to physical abuse cases, non-parental figures were most often the perpetrators in cases where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment. Non-parental relatives represented the largest group of perpetrators (40%), followed by biological fathers (11%), and step-fathers (four percent). Regarding non-relatives, other acquaintances (17%), and other professionals (12%) were identified as the alleged perpetrator in cases where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment.

It is important to note that many sexual abuse allegations involving non-family members are investigated by the police alone, and child welfare services are only involved if there are concerns about the ongoing protection of the child or if other children may be at risk of abuse.

**Neglect:** Biological mothers were considered to be perpetrators in 83% and biological fathers in 37% of cases where neglect was the primary substantiated concern. The over-representation of biological mothers in this category should be interpreted with caution, given that 34% of substantiated neglect investigations involved lone female-parent families (see Table 7-1). Fathers/stepfathers were considered to be perpetrators in 48% of cases of substantiated neglect.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Biological fathers/stepfathers were considered perpetrators in 55% and mothers/stepmothers in 79% of investigations where substantiated emotional maltreatment was the primary concern.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Biological fathers/stepfathers were considered to be responsible for exposure to domestic violence in 86% of child maltreatment investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated concern. Biological mothers/stepmothers were considered to have failed to protect their child(ren) from exposure to domestic violence in 85% of

these cases. It should be noted that the concept of perpetrator in cases of exposure to domestic violence should be interpreted with caution. Child welfare investigations focus primarily on the question of the parent's ability to protect a child from exposure to the violence rather than identifying the perpetrator of the violence.<sup>53</sup>

**Table 4-4(a)**  
**Identified Perpetrator (Relatives) by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence							
<b>Relatives</b>												
Biological Mother	49%	1,728	0%	—	83%	5,014	73%	2,676	33%	1,349	<b>60%</b>	<b>10,767</b>
Biological Father	32%	1,123	11%	60	37%	2,263	46%	1,668	62%	2,566	<b>43%</b>	<b>7,680</b>
Stepfather	16%	573	4%	—	11%	673	9%	320	24%	999	<b>15%</b>	<b>2,587</b>
Stepmother	3%	89	0%	—	1%	81	6%	221	3%	106	<b>3%</b>	<b>497</b>
Foster Family/ Adoptive Parents	3%	117	0%	—	1%	—	1%	—	0%	—	<b>1%</b>	<b>180</b>
Other Relative	7%	254	40%	215	4%	218	5%	166	4%	162	<b>6%</b>	<b>1,015</b>
<b>Child Investigations with at Least One Relative Perpetrator</b>												
	<b>93%</b>	<b>3,258</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>5,890</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>3,587</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>4,072</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>17,103</b>
<b>Child Investigations with at Least One Non-Relative Perpetrator</b>												
	<b>5%</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1,097</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>												
	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about alleged perpetrators. Columns are not additive as maltreatment may have involved more than one perpetrator.												

<sup>53</sup> For the purposes of this report, caregivers who were identified in the Caregiver Functioning Checklist as victims of domestic violence were not coded as perpetrators of exposure.

**Table 4-4(b)**  
**Identified Perpetrator (Non-Relatives) by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Emotional Neglect	Exposure to Domestic Maltreatment	Violence							
<b>Non-Relatives</b>												
Family Friend	0%	—	5%	—	2%	128	1%	—	0%	—	1%	237
Parent's Boyfriend/ Girlfriend	1%	50	11%	61	2%	106	3%	98	5%	184	3%	499
Child's Friend (Peer)	0%	—	1%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—
Babysitter/ Babysitter's Family	1%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	57
Day Care Provider	3%	91	2%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	1%	124
Teacher	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—
Other Professional	0%	—	12%	63	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	80
Other Acquaintance	0%	—	17%	91	0%	—	0%	—	2%	96	1%	213
Stranger	0%	—	2%	—	1%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—
Unkown	0%	—	2%	—	1%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—
<b>Child Investigations with at Least One Non-Relative Perpetrator</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1,097</b>
<b>Child Investigations with at Least One Relative Perpetrator</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>3,258</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>5,890</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>3,587</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>4,072</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>17,103</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about alleged perpetrators. Columns are not additive as maltreatment may have involved more than one perpetrator.												

## ■ 5. SERVICE DISPOSITIONS

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Six service dispositions were documented by the AIS-2003 Maltreatment Assessment Form: (1) previous child welfare contact; (2) provision of ongoing child welfare services; (3) referrals to other services; (4) placement of children in out-of-home care; (5) application to child welfare court; and (6) police involvement and criminal charges for child maltreatment and for domestic violence. The data presented in this chapter should be interpreted with care because tables present only case events that occurred during the initial child welfare investigation. Additional referrals for services, admissions to out-of-home care, court applications, and criminal charges are likely to occur for cases kept open after the initial investigation. It should also be noted that investigation intervention statistics presented in this chapter apply only to child welfare cases open because of alleged maltreatment. Children referred to child welfare services for reasons other than child maltreatment (e.g. behavioural or emotional problems, see Chapter 2) may have been admitted to care or been subject to child welfare court proceedings, but were not tracked by the AIS-2003.

The estimates presented in this chapter are weighted estimates derived from child maltreatment investigations conducted in 2003 in a sample of Alberta's child welfare services. The sampling design and weighting procedures specific to the study should be considered before inferences are drawn from these estimates. The estimates **do not include** (1) incidents that were not reported to child welfare services, (2) reported cases that were screened out by child welfare services before being fully investigated, (3) new reports on cases already open by child welfare services, and (4) cases that were investigated only by the police.

The tables in this chapter present information for each of the specific child welfare interventions in terms of the number of child investigations and the primary form of substantiated maltreatment.

### Previous Case Openings and Time Since Case Was Last Closed

#### *Previous Case Openings*

Tables 5-1(a) and (b) show the following case information: the numbers of previous child welfare contacts and the amount of time since the most recent child welfare contact. The data are presented by primary category of substantiated maltreatment.

Sixty-eight percent of investigations (an estimated 12,185 children) of substantiated maltreatment had previous case openings. Twenty-six percent had more than three previous case openings.

**Physical Abuse:** Cases where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment had the lowest rate of previous case openings. In 48% of cases where substantiated physical abuse was the primary maltreatment, the family had one or more previous case openings (an estimated 1,681 child investigations).

**Sexual Abuse:** Fifty-three percent of cases where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern, involved children whose family had at least one previous case opening (an estimated 286 investigations).

**Neglect:** Investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment had the highest rate of previous case openings: 81% (an estimated 4,897 child investigations).

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Seventy-four percent of cases where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern, involved children whose family had at least one previous case opening (an estimated 2,715 investigations).

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** An estimated 63% of children where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated concern involved children whose family had at least one previous case opening (an estimated 2,606 investigations).

**Table 5-1(a)**  
**Previous Case Openings by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
No Previous Openings	47%	1,653	43%	230	18%	1,123	26%	926	37%	1,505	<b>31%</b>	<b>5,437</b>
One Previous Opening	13%	446	10%	56	25%	1,506	29%	1,067	28%	1,144	<b>24%</b>	<b>4,219</b>
2–3 Previous Openings	16%	556	21%	115	18%	1,109	21%	769	18%	756	<b>18%</b>	<b>3,305</b>
More than 3 Previous Openings	19%	679	22%	115	38%	2,282	24%	879	17%	706	<b>26%</b>	<b>4,661</b>
Unknown Record	5%	170	4%	–	1%	–	0%	–	0%	–	<b>1%</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,646</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,863</b>

**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003**  
\* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about previous child welfare contacts

### *Time Since Case Was Last Closed*

For cases with a previous child welfare service history, Table 5-1(b) illustrates the time passed since the family last had a case open. Although 31% of substantiated maltreatment investigations had no previous case history, 44% had previous histories that had been closed within 12 months of the AIS-2003 investigation, while another 23% had previous histories that had been closed for more than 12 months.

**Physical Abuse:** Twenty-nine percent of child maltreatment investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern had previous histories and had been closed within 12 months.

**Sexual Abuse:** Forty-four percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment had been closed within 12 months of the current investigation.

**Neglect:** Fifty-nine percent of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern had previous histories and had been closed within 12 months.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Forty-eight percent of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern had been closed within the past 12 months.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Thirty-four percent of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated concern had been closed within the past 12 months.

**Table 5-1(b)**  
**Time Since Case Was Last Closed by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
No Previous Contact**	47%	1,653	43%	230	18%	1,123	26%	926	37%	1,505	<b>31%</b>	<b>5,437</b>
<b>Time Since Most Recent Closing</b>												
Less than 3 Months	3%	118	26%	137	17%	1,026	12%	430	6%	251	<b>11%</b>	<b>1,962</b>
3–6 Months	12%	409	7%	—	18%	1,067	23%	842	18%	742	<b>17%</b>	<b>3,099</b>
7–12 Months	14%	491	11%	57	24%	1,467	13%	496	10%	416	<b>16%</b>	<b>2,927</b>
13–24 Months	8%	286	4%	—	12%	725	12%	449	8%	328	<b>10%</b>	<b>1,809</b>
More than 24 Months	11%	376	6%	—	10%	596	14%	498	21%	870	<b>13%</b>	<b>2,372</b>
Unknown	5%	170	3%	—	1%	60	1%	—	0%	—	<b>2%</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,646</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,857</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,109 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about previous case opening(s).												
** Totally may be different from Table 5-1(a) due to missing responses												

## Ongoing Child Welfare Services

Investigating workers were asked whether the investigated case would remain open for ongoing child welfare services after the initial investigation. Workers completed these questions on the basis of the information available at that time or upon completion of the intake investigation. An estimated 10,369 (58%) substantiated child maltreatment investigations were identified as remaining open for ongoing services while an estimated 7,444 (42%) of substantiated investigations were to be closed.

**Physical Abuse:** Forty-two percent (an estimated 1,466) of all cases where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment remained open for ongoing child welfare services, while the remaining 58% (2,038 cases) were closed following the initial investigation.

**Sexual Abuse:** Thirty-seven percent of cases that indicated sexual abuse as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 197 cases) remained open for ongoing services, while the remaining 63% (340 cases) were closed at the completion of the investigation.

**Neglect:** Seventy percent of cases where neglect was identified as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 4,236 cases) remained open for ongoing child welfare services – the highest percentage of the five primary categories of substantiated maltreatment.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Sixty-six percent (an estimated 2,412) of cases where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated maltreatment were indicated as remaining open for ongoing services.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Fifty-one percent of cases that identified exposure to domestic violence as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 2,058) remained open following the end of the initial investigation.

**Table 5-2**  
**Ongoing Child Welfare Services by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
Case to Be Closed	58%	2,038	63%	340	30%	1,828	34%	1,236	49%	2,002	<b>42%</b>	<b>7,444</b>
Case to Stay Open	42%	1,466	37%	197	70%	4,236	66%	2,412	51%	2,058	<b>58%</b>	<b>10,369</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,648</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,060</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,813</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,581 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about case status												

## Referrals to Support Services (Child and Family)

The AIS-2003 tracked referrals made to programs designed to offer services beyond the parameters of “ongoing child welfare services.” Workers were asked to indicate all applicable referral classifications identified for the family or child. This included referrals made internally to a specialized program provided by a child welfare office as well as referrals made externally to other agencies or services. A referral selection was meant to indicate that a formal referral had been made, not whether the child or family had actually started to receive services.

Sixteen referral categories were tracked:

**Parent Support Program:** Any group program designed to offer support or education (e.g. Parents Anonymous, parenting instruction course, Parent Support Association).

**In-Home Parenting Support:** Home based support services designed to support families, reduce the risk of out-of-home placement, or reunify children in care with their family.

**Other Family/Parent Counseling:** Include programs for family therapy/counseling or couple counseling (e.g. family service bureau, mental health centre).

**Drug/Alcohol Counseling:** Addiction programs (any substance) for caregiver(s) or children.

**Welfare/Social Assistance:** Referral for social assistance to address financial concerns of the household.

**Food Bank:** Referral to any food bank.

**Shelter Services:** Regarding family violence or homelessness.

**Domestic Violence Services:** Referral for services/counseling regarding domestic violence, abusive relationships, or the effects of witnessing violence.

**Psychiatric/Psychological Services:** Child or parent referral to psychological or psychiatric services (trauma, high-risk behaviour, or intervention).

**Special Education Referral:** Any specialized school program to meet a child’s educational, emotional, or behavioural needs.

**Recreational Program:** Referral to a community recreational program (e.g. organized sports leagues, community recreation, Boys and Girls Clubs).

**Victim Support Program:** Referral to a victim support program (e.g. sexual abuse disclosure group).



**Medical/Dental Services:** Any specialized service to address the child's immediate medical or dental health needs.

**Child/Day Care:** Any paid child/day care services, including staff-run and in-home services.

**Cultural Services:** Services to help children or families strengthen their cultural heritage.

**Other Child/Family Referral:** Any other child or family-focused referral.

Table 5-3 details the breakdown of other service referrals and the primary form of substantiated maltreatment.

A minimum of one referral was made in 73% of substantiated maltreatment cases, an estimated 13,019 investigations.

The most common type of referral was for in-home parenting support (29%), followed by other family/parent counseling (24%), drug and alcohol counseling (20%), and psychiatric/psychological services (20%). Child-focused referrals were made less frequently with cultural services (six percent) being the child specific service that was most frequently referred to.

**Physical Abuse:** Sixty-six percent of all cases with physical abuse as the primary substantiated maltreatment had at least one referral (an estimated 2,322 cases).

The most frequent referrals for cases where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment included: other family or parent counseling (27%), in-home parenting support (24%), and parent support groups (16%).

**Sexual Abuse:** A minimum of one referral was made in 71% of all cases with sexual abuse as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 380 cases). In cases of sexual abuse the referral pattern was slightly different from other forms of maltreatment with other family or parent counseling (41%), psychiatric or psychological referrals (16%) and victim support program and in home parenting support (12%) being used the most often.

**Neglect:** At least one service referral was made in 73% of all cases with neglect as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 4,406 cases). The most commonly used referral categories in cases of neglect were in-home parenting support (34%), drug and alcohol counseling (25%), psychiatric or psychological counseling (24%), and parent support groups (18%).

**Emotional Maltreatment:** A minimum of one service referral was made in 81% of all cases with emotional maltreatment as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 2,937 cases). The

most common referral types were: in-home parenting support (35%), other family or parent counseling (24%), psychiatric/psychological services (22%) and drug and alcohol counseling (21%).

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** At least one referral was made in 72% of all cases with domestic violence as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 2,974 cases). The most common referrals were domestic violence services (51%), other family or parent counseling (32%), in-home parenting support (23%), drug and alcohol (21%), and psychiatric/psychological services (19%).

**Table 5-3**  
**Referrals to Support Services by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
In Home Parenting Support	24%	854	12%	66	34%	2,045	35%	1,290	23%	960	<b>29%</b>	<b>5,215</b>
Parent Support Group	16%	565	4%	—	18%	1,070	14%	504	9%	351	<b>14%</b>	<b>2,513</b>
Other Family/ Parent Counseling	27%	948	41%	218	16%	944	24%	872	32%	1,333	<b>24%</b>	<b>4,315</b>
Drug/Alcohol Counseling	13%	437	11%	61	25%	1,494	21%	761	21%	874	<b>20%</b>	<b>3,627</b>
Welfare/Social Assistance	2%	78	0%	—	13%	801	6%	224	5%	218	<b>7%</b>	<b>1,321</b>
Food Bank	2%	78	4%	—	16%	957	4%	133	6%	225	<b>8%</b>	<b>1,413</b>
Shelter Services	—	—	2%	—	5%	307	3%	118	7%	300	<b>4%</b>	<b>782</b>
Domestic Violence Services	11%	389	3%	—	4%	239	18%	639	51%	2,114	<b>19%</b>	<b>3,398</b>
Psychiatric/ Psychological Services	15%	514	16%	83	24%	1,431	22%	803	19%	765	<b>20%</b>	<b>3,596</b>
Special Education Referral	1%	46	0%	—	1%	63	0%	—	1%	—	<b>1%</b>	<b>170</b>
Recreational Program	3%	91	3%	—	6%	347	2%	60	4%	170	<b>4%</b>	<b>682</b>
Victim Support Program	1%	32	12%	63	2%	121	1%	45	5%	191	<b>3%</b>	<b>452</b>
Medical/Dental Services	4%	130	3%	—	8%	470	3%	92	3%	105	<b>5%</b>	<b>814</b>
Child/Daycare	2%	78	0%	—	4%	266	3%	107	7%	275	<b>4%</b>	<b>726</b>
Cultural Services	7%	230	1%	—	6%	379	7%	256	3%	136	<b>6%</b>	<b>1,006</b>
Other	7%	228	11%	60	9%	535	13%	485	11%	463	<b>10%</b>	<b>1,771</b>
<b>At Least One Referral Noted</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>2,322</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>4,406</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>2,937</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>2,974</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>13,019</b>
<b>No Family or Child Referral</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>1,181</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>1,138</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>4,844</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations **</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,863</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,175 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about referrals												
** Column totals are more than the total number of children for whom at least one referral was made because there can be several different referrals made for a child or his/her family.												

## Out-of-Home Placement

Admissions to out-of-home care at any time during the investigation were tracked. If there were multiple placements, workers were asked to indicate the setting where the child had spent the most time. The following placement classifications were used:

**No Placement Required:** No placement was required following the investigation.

**Placement is Being Considered:** At this point of the investigation, an out-of-home placement is still being considered.

**Informal Kinship Care:** An informal placement has been arranged within the family support network (kinship care, extended family, traditional care), the child welfare authority does not have temporary custody.

**Kinship Foster Care:** A formal placement has been arranged within the family support network (kinship care, extended family, customary care), the child welfare authority has temporary or full custody and is paying for the placement.

**Other Family Foster Care:** Includes any family based care, including foster homes, specialized treatment foster homes, and assessment homes.

**Group Home Placement:** An out-of-home placement required in a structured group living setting.

**Residential/Secure Treatment:** Placement required in a therapeutic residential treatment centre to address the needs of the child.

As shown in Table 5-4, 12% of all substantiated child investigations (an estimated 2,092) led to a child being placed in formal child welfare care (kinship foster care, other family foster care, group home or residential/secure treatment) during the initial investigation. An additional eight percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations resulted in children placed in informal kinship care, while placement was considered for a further five percent of substantiated child maltreatment investigation. In total, 20% percent of children experienced a change of residence during or at the conclusion of the initial substantiated maltreatment investigation.

**Physical Abuse:** Placement in child welfare care (kinship foster care, other family foster care, group home or residential/secure treatment) occurred in 10% of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment. Of these, other family foster care was noted most frequently (seven percent). An additional three percent of these substantiated investigations resulted in children being placed in informal kinship care.

**Sexual Abuse:** Seventeen percent of cases where sexual abuse was identified as the primary substantiated maltreatment led to a child being placed in child welfare care (kinship foster care, other family foster care, group home or residential/secure treatment). No children in this category were placed in informal kinship care placements.

**Neglect:** Child victims of neglect experienced the greatest rate of placement with an estimated 32% of children being moved to a placement outside of their home. A child welfare placement (kinship foster care, other family foster care, group home or residential/secure treatment) occurred for 18% of all investigations that indicated neglect as the primary substantiated maltreatment, primarily in other foster family care (nine percent). A child placement in informal kinship care occurred for an additional 14% of the substantiated neglect investigations, while placement was considered for an additional six percent.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Placement in child welfare care (kinship foster care, other family foster care, group home or residential/secure treatment) occurred in 11% of cases that identified emotional maltreatment as the primary substantiated maltreatment. An additional 12% of these investigations led to children being placed in informal kinship care, while placement was considered for a further eight percent of cases.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Children exposed to domestic violence experienced the lowest rates of placement. Only four percent of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment resulted in child welfare placement (kinship foster care, other family foster care, group home or residential/secure treatment). Placements in informal care occurred for an additional two percent of these cases while placement was considered for an additional four percent.

**Table 5-4**  
**Out-of-Home Placement by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	Total
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence							
No Placement Required	84%	2,950	78%	420	62%	3,749	69%	2,539	90%	3,697	<b>75%</b>	<b>13,355</b>
Placement Considered	3%	106	5%	—	6%	347	8%	282	4%	186	<b>5%</b>	<b>949</b>
Informal Kinship Care	3%	105	0%	—	14%	839	12%	445	2%	74	<b>8%</b>	<b>1,463</b>
Child Welfare Placement:												
Kinship Foster Care	1%	—	0%	—	5%	313	4%	144	0%	—	<b>3%</b>	<b>473</b>
Other Family Foster Care	7%	232	4%	—	9%	563	6%	202	3%	133	<b>6%</b>	<b>1,153</b>
Group Home	2%	86	5%	—	3%	158	1%	—	1%	—	<b>2%</b>	<b>318</b>
Residential/Secure Treatment	0%	—	8%	—	1%	96	0%	—	0%	—	<b>1%</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,498</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,065</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,859</b>

**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003**

\* Based on a sample of 1,583 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about placement.

## Child Welfare Court Involvement and Mediation/Alternative Response

Application to child welfare court can be made for an order of supervision (child remaining in the home), temporary wardship (for a set time period), or permanent wardship. The AIS-2003 tracked the number of applications made or being considered during the initial investigation, but did not track the types of applications. Workers were also asked to report on whether or not they had made a referral to a mediation or alternative response. Because applications may have been made at a point following the AIS-2003 study period, the AIS-2003 child welfare court involvement figures should be treated as underestimates of the true rate of court involvement. Child welfare court status was tracked in terms of three possible worker responses:

**Application Made:** An application to child welfare court was submitted.

**Application Considered:** The child welfare worker was considering whether or not to submit an application to child welfare court.

**No Application Considered:** Child welfare court involvement was not considered.

As shown in Table 5-5, 12% of all substantiated child investigations (an estimated 2,181) resulted in an application to child welfare court during or at the completion of the initial investigation. In an additional 10% of substantiated maltreatment investigations, an application to child welfare court was

considered. A referral to mediation or an alternative response was made for seven percent of all substantiated maltreatment investigations.

**Physical Abuse:** Applications to child welfare court were made in eight percent of cases where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern (an estimated 288 investigations) while applications were considered for an additional eight percent. Referrals to mediation or alternative response were made in seven percent of investigations where substantiated physical abuse was the primary maltreatment.

**Sexual Abuse:** Applications to child welfare court were made in 16% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern. In an additional six percent of these investigations an application to child welfare court was considered during the initial investigation.

**Neglect:** Applications to child welfare court were most frequently made in investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment (16%). Applications to court were considered in an additional nine percent of substantiated neglect investigations. Referrals to either mediation or other alternative responses were made for three percent of investigations with neglect as the primary substantiated maltreatment.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** An application to child welfare court was made in 13% and considered in an additional 13% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was identified as the primary substantiated concern. A referral to mediation or alternative response was made in 10% of cases with substantiated emotional maltreatment as the primary maltreatment.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** An application to child welfare court was made in nine percent of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment, while an application was considered in an additional nine percent. Referrals to mediation or alternative response were made in 10% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment.

**Table 5-5**  
**Applications to Child Welfare Court and Mediation/Alternative Response**  
**by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence	Total						
No Court Considered	84%	2,951	78%	422	75%	4,530	74%	2,698	82%	3,355	<b>78%</b>	<b>13,956</b>
Application Considered	8%	264	6%	—	9%	568	13%	486	9%	378	<b>10%</b>	<b>1,728</b>
Application Made	8%	288	16%	84	16%	967	13%	464	9%	378	<b>12%</b>	<b>2,181</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,065</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,648</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,865</b>
No Mediation/ Alternative Response	93%	3,235	100%	537	97%	5,815	90%	3,268	90%	3,678	<b>93%</b>	<b>16,533</b>
Referral to Mediation/ Alternative Response	7%	254	0%	—	3%	197	10%	379	10%	428	<b>7%</b>	<b>1,258</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations**</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,489</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,012</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,106</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,791</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about Child Welfare Court.												
** Based on a sample of 1,581 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about Mediation/Alternative Response												

## Police Involvement and Criminal Charges

In many jurisdictions in Alberta there are detailed protocols between child welfare and police services, resulting in rising levels of co-operation. This co-operation includes cases of physical and sexual abuse as well as cases of domestic violence. Most jurisdictions require police to report adult domestic violence cases to the child welfare authorities if children are living in the family. The AIS-2003 captured information about police involvement in adult domestic violence cases as well as in all other child maltreatment investigations.

As with the other interventions during investigations described in this chapter, the AIS-2003 tracked only events that occurred during the initial child welfare investigation; it is therefore possible that police decided to lay charges or became involved in some cases after the AIS-2003 information forms had been completed. It should be noted further that the police also investigate many non-familial child maltreatment cases that do not involve child welfare services.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> See for example Trocmé, N. & Brison, R. (1998). Homicide and injuries due to assault and to abuse and neglect. In: Beaulne G (ed.), *For the safety of Canadian children and youth: from data to prevention measures*. Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada.

As illustrated in Table 5-6, 15% of substantiated child maltreatment investigations involved a police investigation related to the maltreatment in addition to a child welfare investigation (an estimated 2,645 investigations). Criminal charges were laid in three percent of substantiated child maltreatment investigations and were considered for an additional two percent.

**Physical Abuse:** A police investigation for child maltreatment occurred in 21% of cases where physical abuse was identified as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 735 investigations). Charges were laid in six percent and considered for an additional three percent at the end of the initial child welfare investigation period. The police investigated but did not lay charges in 12% of cases that indicated physical abuse as the primary substantiated maltreatment.

**Sexual Abuse:** Forty percent of all cases that indicated sexual abuse as the primary substantiated maltreatment involved a police investigation for child maltreatment (an estimated 213 investigations). Charges were laid for 21% of cases where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment category, while charges were considered for an additional seven percent. The police investigated but did not lay charges for 12% of cases that indicated sexual abuse as the primary substantiated maltreatment.

**Neglect:** Thirteen percent of all cases with neglect as the primary substantiated maltreatment resulted in a police investigation for child maltreatment (an estimated 767 investigations). Charges were laid for four percent of cases where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment category. The police investigated but did not lay charges in nine percent of cases that indicated neglect as the primary substantiated maltreatment.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** A police investigation for child maltreatment was conducted in 13% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was identified as the primary substantiated concern (an estimated 491 investigations). Charges were laid in one percent and considered in two percent. The police investigated but did not lay charges 10% of cases when substantiated emotional maltreatment was the primary investigation concern

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Ten percent of all cases that identified exposure to domestic violence as the primary concern resulted in a police investigation for maltreatment (an estimated 439 investigations). The police investigated but did not lay charges in 10% of cases when substantiated exposure to domestic violence was the primary investigation concern. It is important to note that many cases of exposure to domestic violence included police investigations specific to the domestic violence, but not to the question of a child's exposure to the violence as a form of maltreatment.



**Table 5-6**  
**Police Involvement and Criminal Charges by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence							
No Police Investigation	79%	2,768	60%	324	87%	5,298	87%	3,156	90%	3,672	<b>85%</b>	<b>15,218</b>
Police Investigation, No Charges Laid	12%	421	12%	61	9%	557	10%	372	10%	411	<b>10%</b>	<b>1,822</b>
Police Investigation, Charges Considered	3%	114	7%	—	0%	—	2%	96	0%	—	<b>2%</b>	<b>291</b>
Police Investigation, Charges Laid	6%	200	21%	113	4%	185	1%	—	0%	—	<b>3%</b>	<b>532</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>6,065</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,863</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about police investigations and police charges.												

## ■ 6. CHILD CHARACTERISTICS

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This chapter provides a description of children investigated for reported maltreatment with respect to their age, sex, functioning, and Aboriginal heritage in terms of the five primary categories of maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence).

The estimates presented in this chapter are weighted estimates derived from child maltreatment investigations conducted in 2003 in a sample of Alberta's child welfare agencies. The sampling design and weighting procedures specific to the study should be considered before inferences are drawn from these estimates. The estimates **do not include** (1) incidents that were not reported to child welfare services, (2) reported cases that were screened out by child welfare services before being fully investigated, (3) new reports on cases already open by child welfare services, and (4) cases that were investigated only by the police.

### Age and Sex of Investigated Children

Table 6-1 presents the age and sex of investigated children and the incidence of investigations by age and sex. The incidence of substantiated maltreatment was similar for males (25.01 per 1,000 boys) and females (22.43 per 1,000 girls). As with investigations there was some variation by age and sex in incidence rates with incidence rates being highest for females 14 years of age (33.34 per 1,000 girls) and highest for 9-year-old males (41.14 per 1,000 males).<sup>55</sup> Rates of maltreatment were similar by sex for 4 to 7 year olds, while males were more often represented in the 0–3 and 8–11 year old group and females more often in the adolescent group. For age and sex information for substantiated child maltreatment in Alberta in 2003, please see Appendix H, Table 6-1.

Table 6-2 presents the age and sex of children by the primary substantiated categories of maltreatment.

**Physical Abuse:** Fifty-three percent of cases where physical abuse was the primary substantiated category (an estimated 1,864) involved males and 47% involved females (an estimated 1,639). The larger proportion of males is particularly noteworthy in the 0–3, 4–7, and 8–11 year old groups. Males in these categories represent about 60% while females represent approximately 40%. By adolescence, this trend is reversed as 58% of substantiated investigations involved females aged 12–15 compared to 42% for males.

**Sexual Abuse:** Seventy percent of cases where sexual abuse was indicated as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 376) involved female children, while 30% (an estimated

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<sup>55</sup> Incidence rates refer to population statistics specific to age groups and sex classification.

**Table 6-1**  
**Child Age and Sex in Investigated and Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003\***

		Investigated Maltreatment*		Substantiated Maltreatment**	
		Number of Investigations	Incidence Per 1,000 Children	Number of Substantiated Cases	Incidence Per 1,000 Children
<b>0-17</b>	<b>All Children</b>	<b>32,455</b>	<b>43.16</b>	<b>17,864</b>	<b>23.76</b>
	Females	15,163	41.36	8,225	22.43
	Males	17,292	44.87	9,638	25.01
<b>0-3 Years</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>3,267</b>	<b>44.98</b>	<b>1,568</b>	<b>21.59</b>
	<b>Males</b>	<b>3,832</b>	<b>50.84</b>	<b>2,161</b>	<b>28.67</b>
	< 1 Year				
	Females	934	52.81	450	25.45
	Males	1,098	60.43	728	40.07
	1 Year				
	Females	659	36.26	267	14.69
	Males	772	40.79	468	24.73
	2 Years				
	Females	958	52.55	485	26.60
	Males	1,042	54.10	426	22.12
3 Years					
Females	716	38.60	366	19.73	
Males	920	48.38	539	28.35	
<b>4-7 Years</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>3,375</b>	<b>43.21</b>	<b>1,773</b>	<b>22.70</b>
	<b>Males</b>	<b>3,762</b>	<b>45.41</b>	<b>1,978</b>	<b>23.87</b>
	4 Years				
	Females	636	34.32	375	20.24
	Males	843	42.36	298	14.97
	5 Years				
	Females	766	38.77	366	18.52
	Males	1,002	48.43	752	36.35
	6 Years				
	Females	1,145	57.60	641	32.24
	Males	836	39.80	488	23.23
7 Years					
Females	828	41.53	391	19.61	
Males	1,081	50.86	440	20.70	
<b>8-11 Years</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>3,055</b>	<b>35.60</b>	<b>1,588</b>	<b>18.50</b>
	<b>Males</b>	<b>5,228</b>	<b>58.01</b>	<b>2,974</b>	<b>33.00</b>
	8 Years				
	Females	709	34.23	392	18.92
	Males	1,221	56.71	647	30.05
	9 Years				
	Females	825	38.69	469	21.99
	Males	1,487	66.43	921	41.14
	10 Years				
	Females	579	26.84	357	16.55
	Males	1,428	62.98	678	29.90
11 years					
Females	942	42.43	370	16.67	
Males	1,092	46.39	728	30.93	
<b>12-15 Years</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>4,221</b>	<b>48.62</b>	<b>2,651</b>	<b>30.53</b>
	<b>Males</b>	<b>3,636</b>	<b>39.90</b>	<b>2,020</b>	<b>22.17</b>
	12 Years				
	Females	1,023	46.97	670	30.76
	Males	1,165	51.01	602	26.36
	13 Years				
	Females	1,337	62.58	781	36.56
	Males	1,019	45.71	631	28.30
	14 Years				
	Females	1,091	50.38	722	33.34
	Males	647	28.42	327	14.36
15 Years					
Females	770	34.96	478	21.70	
Males	805	34.65	460	19.80	
<b>16-17 Years</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>1,245</b>	<b>28.79</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>14.91</b>
	<b>Males</b>	<b>1,044</b>	<b>22.74</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>11.00</b>
	16 Years				
	Females	785	36.30	408	18.87
	Males	584	25.29	299	12.95
17 Years					
Females	460	21.27	237	10.96	
Males	250	10.96	206	9.03	

**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003**  
\* Based on a sample of 2,653 child maltreatment investigations with information about child age and sex.  
\*\* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about child age and sex.

161) involved males. The proportion of females to males in cases of substantiated sexual abuse is higher for the 0–3, 4–7, 12–15 and the 16–17 age categories while there is a higher percentage of males in the 8–11 age category (61%). Seventy-seven percent of child victims of the 12–15 year old group were females compared to 23% males.

**Neglect:** Fifty-six percent of cases with neglect as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 3,391) involved male children, while 44% (an estimated 2,674) involved females. The proportion of males is higher for the 0–3 (55%), 4–7 (52%) and the 8–11 (72%) age ranges, while there is a higher percentage of females in the 16–17 (54%) age categories.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Fifty percent of cases with emotional maltreatment identified as the primary substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 1,836) involved female children, while 50% involved males (an estimated 1,810). The proportion of males is higher for the 0–3 (62%) and the 8–11 (58%) age group, while there is a higher percentage of females in the 12–15 (65%) and 16–17 (65%) age categories.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Fifty-nine percent of cases with exposure to domestic violence indicated as the primary substantiated maltreatment involved male children (an estimated 2,411), while 41% involved females (an estimated 1,700). The proportion of males is higher for the 0–3 (59%), 4–7 (56%), and the 8–11 (68%) age group, while there is a higher percentage of females in the 16–17 (81%) age category.

## Child Functioning

Child functioning was documented on the basis of a checklist of problems that child welfare workers were likely to be aware of as a result of their investigation. The child functioning checklist (see Appendix C, Maltreatment Assessment Form) was developed in consultation with child welfare workers and researchers to reflect the types of concerns that may be identified during an investigation. The checklist is not a validated measurement instrument for which population norms have been established.<sup>56</sup> The checklist documents only problems that child welfare workers became aware of during their investigation and therefore undercounts the occurrence of child functioning problems.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, it provides an important estimate of the types of concerns that are identified during child maltreatment investigations.

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<sup>56</sup> A number of child functioning measures with established norms exist; however, these are not consistently used in child welfare settings and could not be feasibly used in the context of the AIS.

<sup>57</sup> Although child welfare workers assess the safety of children, they do not routinely conduct a detailed assessment of child functioning. Items on the checklist included only issues that workers happened to become aware of during their investigation. A more systematic assessment would therefore likely lead to the identification of more issues than noted by workers during the AIS.

**Table 6-2**  
**Age and Sex of Investigated Children by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment						Total
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence		
<b>0–3 Years</b>	<b>289</b>	–	<b>1,300</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>1,405</b>	<b>3,729</b>	
Female	40% 117	100% –	45% 590	38% 273	41% 574	42% 1,568	
Male	60% 172	0% –	55% 710	62% 448	59% 831	58% 2,161	
<b>4–7 Years</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>1,171</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>1,019</b>	<b>3,749</b>	
Female	39% 264	90% 84	48% 561	52% 412	44% 451	47% 1,772	
Male	61% 414	10% –	52% 610	48% 376	56% 568	53% 1,977	
<b>8–11 Years</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>1,424</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>1,031</b>	<b>4,563</b>	
Female	38% 361	39% –	28% 406	42% 449	32% 329	35% 1,589	
Male	62% 576	61% 70	72% 1,018	58% 608	68% 702	65% 2,974	
<b>12–15 Years</b>	<b>1,356</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>4,671</b>	
Female	58% 784	77% 200	51% 793	65% 594	49% 280	57% 2,651	
Male	42% 572	23% 61	49% 773	35% 320	51% 294	43% 2,020	
<b>16–17 Years</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1,150</b>	
Female	46% 113	62% –	54% 324	65% 108	81% 66	56% 645	
Male	54% 130	38% –	46% 280	35% 58	19% –	44% 505	
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>6,065</b>	<b>3,646</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>17,862</b>	
<b>Total Female</b>	<b>47%</b> <b>1,639</b>	<b>70%</b> <b>376</b>	<b>44%</b> <b>2,674</b>	<b>50%</b> <b>1,836</b>	<b>41%</b> <b>1,700</b>	<b>46%</b> <b>8,225</b>	
<b>Total Male</b>	<b>53%</b> <b>1,864</b>	<b>30%</b> <b>161</b>	<b>56%</b> <b>3,391</b>	<b>50%</b> <b>1,810</b>	<b>59%</b> <b>2,411</b>	<b>54%</b> <b>9,637</b>	

**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003**  
\* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about child age and sex.

Investigating workers were asked to indicate problems that had been confirmed by a formal diagnosis and/or directly observed, as well as issues that they suspected were problems but could not fully verify at the time of the investigation.<sup>58</sup> The 6-month period before the investigation was used as a reference point where applicable. Child functioning classifications that reflect physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural issues were documented with a checklist that included the following categories:

**Depression or Anxiety:** Feelings of depression or anxiety that persist for most of every day for two weeks or longer, and interfere with the child's ability to manage at home and at school.

<sup>58</sup> This report refers to both confirmed and suspected problems as "indicated."

**ADD/ADHD:** Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder included: distractibility; impulsivity; hyperactivity. These behaviours are very noticeable, occur over a long period of time in many situations, and are troublesome to others.

**Negative Peer Involvement:** Child has been involved in high-risk peer activities, such as gang activities, graffiti or vandalism.

**Alcohol Abuse:** Problematic consumption of alcohol (consider age, frequency and severity).

**Drug/Solvent Abuse:** Included prescription drugs, illegal drugs and solvents.

**Self-Harming Behaviour:** Child has engaged in high-risk or life-threatening behaviour such as suicide attempts, physical mutilation or cutting.

**Violence Towards Others:** Child has displayed aggression and violence toward other children or adults.

**Running (one incident):** Child has run away from home (or other residence) on one occasion, for at least one overnight period.

**Running (multiple incidents):** Child has run away from home (or other residence) on more than one occasion for at least one overnight period.

**Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour:** Child has been involved in inappropriate sexual behaviour.

**Other Emotional or Behavioural problem:** The child has significant emotional or behavioural problems other than those described above.

**Learning Disability:** A child has identified learning deficits in one or more areas of mental functioning (e.g. language usage, numbers, speech, reading, work comprehension).

**Specialized Education Services:** Child has been involved in special education program for learning disability, special needs, or behaviour problems.

**Irregular School Attendance:** Child has shown irregular attendance and truancy (more than 5 days/month).

**Developmental Delay:** Child has delayed intellectual development. Typically it is diagnosed when a child does not reach his/her developmental milestones at expected times. It includes speech and language development, fine and gross motor skills and or personal and social skills.

**Physical Disability:** The child has a long-lasting condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting or carrying. This includes sensory disability conditions such as blindness, deafness or a severe vision or hearing impairment that noticeably affects activities of daily living.

**Substance Abuse Related Birth Defect:** Child has a diagnosis or indication of birth defect(s) related to substance abuse by the biological parent (e.g. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)/Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE), cocaine addiction or solvent abuse).

**Positive Toxicology at Birth:** The child, at birth, tested positive for the presence of drugs or alcohol.

**Other Health Condition:** Child has ongoing physical health condition (e.g. chronic disease, and frequent hospitalization).

**Psychiatric Disorder:** Child has diagnosis of psychiatric disorder by a psychiatrist (e.g. conduct disorder, anxiety disorder).

**Youth Criminal Justice Act Involvement:** Child has been involved in charges, incarceration, or alternative measures with the youth justice system.

**Other:** Any other child or family focused referral.

Table 6-3(a) and 6-3(b) have been organized to reflect the types of problems associated with either physical, emotional and/or cognitive health, or behaviour-specific concerns. In 66% of substantiated child maltreatment investigations (an estimated 11,711), at least one child functioning issue was indicated by the investigating worker.

Table 6-3(a) presents child functioning characteristics that affect the physical, emotional, and cognitive health of children by the primary category of substantiated maltreatment. In 47% of substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 8,411) at least one child functioning issue was reported regarding the physical, emotional, and/or cognitive health of the child. Depression or anxiety was the most frequently reported category (28% of substantiated maltreatment), and learning disability the second most common (22% of substantiated maltreatment). Fifteen percent indicated developmental delay, while 14% involved placement in specialized education services. Substance abuse related birth defects, self-harming behaviours, psychiatric disorder, and other health conditions were noted in 10%, seven percent, six percent, and five percent of substantiated cases, respectively.

The behavioural functioning classifications are presented in Table 6-3(b) by primary category of substantiated maltreatment. In 57% of the investigations (an estimated 10,181) at least one behavioural functioning issue was reported. The type of behavioural functioning concern noted most frequently was “other behavioural or emotional problem” (36% of substantiated maltreatment), followed by irregular school attendance (24%), negative peer involvement (23%) and violence toward

others (19%). ADD/ADHD was noted in 18% of substantiated maltreatment. It is important to note that these ratings are based on the initial intake investigation and do not capture behaviours that may become concerns after that time.

**Physical Abuse:** The six most often indicated child functioning issues in cases where physical abuse was identified as the primary substantiated maltreatment were “other behavioural emotional problems” (42%), depression or anxiety (34%), negative peer involvement (34%), violence toward others (32%), irregular school attendance (21%), and learning disabilities (21%). Overall, a physical, emotional, or cognitive health issue was reported in 49% of these physical abuse investigations, involving an estimated 1,702 child investigations. A behavioural issue was indicated in 67% of investigations (an estimated 2,334 child investigations).

**Sexual Abuse:** The five most often reported child functioning issues indicated in cases where sexual abuse was indicated as the primary substantiated maltreatment were: inappropriate sexual behaviour (53%), “other behavioural emotional problems” (40%), negative peer involvement (29%), depression or anxiety (28%) and learning disability (26%). Running away from home was noted in 16% of these cases. Overall, a physical, emotional, or cognitive health issue was reported in 42% of these substantiated sexual abuse investigations, involving an estimated 226 child investigations, and a behavioural issue was indicated in 72% (an estimated 384 child investigations).

**Neglect:** The five most often indicated child functioning issues in cases where neglect was identified as the primary substantiated maltreatment were “other behavioural or emotional problems” and irregular school attendance which were both noted in 38% of cases, negative peer involvement (30%), learning disability (28%), and depression or anxiety (26%). Overall, a physical, emotional, and/or cognitive health issue was reported in 53% of these cases, involving an estimated 3,198 investigations. A behavioural issue was indicated in 64% of investigations (an estimated 3,852 child investigations).

**Emotional Maltreatment:** The five most often indicated child functioning concerns in cases where emotional maltreatment was indicated as the primary substantiated maltreatment were “other behavioural or emotional problems” (45%), depression or anxiety (35%), learning disability (25%), ADD/ADHD (24%), and irregular school attendance (20%). Overall, a physical, emotional, or cognitive health issue was reported in 56% of cases involving an estimated 2,046 child investigations. A behavioural issue was indicated in 61% (an estimated 2,225) of these investigations.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** The five most often indicated child functioning concerns in cases indicating exposure to domestic violence as the primary substantiated maltreatment were “other behavioural or emotional problems” (20%), depression or anxiety (18%), ADD/ADHD, learning disability, and irregular school attendance, all noted in 11% of cases. Overall, a physical, emotional,



or cognitive health issue was reported in 30% of these emotional maltreatment investigations, involving an estimated 1,239 child investigations. A behavioural issue was indicated in 34% (an estimated 1,386) of these investigations.

**Table 6-3(a)**  
**Child Functioning (Physical, Emotional, and Cognitive) by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
<b>Physical, Emotional, and Cognitive Health</b>												
Developmental Delay	11%	389	15%	79	23%	1,374	16%	585	6%	265	<b>15%</b>	<b>2,692</b>
Learning Disability	21%	735	26%	137	28%	1,718	25%	920	11%	439	<b>22%</b>	<b>3,949</b>
Physical Disability	2%	66	0%	—	5%	295	5%	184	0%	—	<b>3%</b>	<b>550</b>
Substance Abuse Related												
Birth Defect	4%	127	10%	51	16%	967	15%	561	4%	145	<b>10%</b>	<b>1,851</b>
Other Health Condition	4%	131	4%	—	6%	387	5%	176	4%	156	<b>5%</b>	<b>872</b>
Specialized Education												
Services	16%	571	19%	102	18%	1,062	15%	545	6%	262	<b>14%</b>	<b>2,542</b>
Depression or Anxiety	34%	1,191	28%	152	26%	1,590	35%	1,293	18%	745	<b>28%</b>	<b>4,971</b>
Self-harming Behaviour	7%	230	12%	62	9%	550	9%	326	1%	51	<b>7%</b>	<b>1,219</b>
Psychiatric Disorder	6%	201	12%	62	6%	360	12%	438	1%	—	<b>6%</b>	<b>1,083</b>
Positive Toxicology at Birth	1%	—	1%	—	5%	281	4%	133	1%	—	<b>3%</b>	<b>491</b>
<b>Any Physical, Emotional or Cognitive Health Issue</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>1,702</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>3,198</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>2,046</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>1,239</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>8,411</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>		<b>3,504</b>		<b>537</b>		<b>6,064</b>		<b>3,647</b>		<b>4,112</b>		<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about Child Functioning. Total is less than the sum of Any Physical, Emotional or Cognitive Health Issues plus Any Behavioural Issue because of multiple responses for Child Functioning categories.												

**Table 6-3(b)**  
**Child Functioning (Behavioural) by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
<b>Behavioural Functioning</b>												
Negative Peer Involvement	34%	1,190	29%	154	30%	1,820	17%	617	9%	386	23%	4,167
Alcohol Abuse	15%	516	15%	82	14%	876	5%	166	2%	79	10%	1,719
ADD/ADHD	19%	652	18%	96	18%	1,068	24%	892	11%	430	18%	3,138
Drug/Solvent Abuse	11%	395	13%	70	16%	968	5%	168	2%	84	9%	1,685
Violence Towards Others	32%	1,108	14%	77	19%	1,149	19%	679	10%	398	19%	3,411
Running	13%	457	16%	88	15%	878	10%	357	2%	90	11%	1,870
Irregular School Attendance	21%	750	24%	131	38%	2,313	20%	736	11%	431	24%	4,361
Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour	9%	325	53%	286	11%	685	4%	127	3%	115	9%	1,538
Youth Criminal Justice Act Involvement	5%	156	10%	54	8%	470	3%	104	1%	—	5%	812
Other Behavioural/Emotional Problems	42%	1,471	40%	217	38%	2,313	45%	1,646	20%	818	36%	6,465
<b>Any Behavioural Issue</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>2,334</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>3,852</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>2,225</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>1,386</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>10,181</b>
<b>Any Child Functioning Issue</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>2,464</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>4,465</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>1,775</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>11,711</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>		<b>3,504</b>		<b>537</b>		<b>6,064</b>		<b>3,647</b>		<b>4,112</b>		<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about Child Functioning. Total is less than the sum of Any Physical, Emotional or Cognitive Health Issues plus Any Behavioural Issue because of multiple responses for Child Functioning categories.												

## Aboriginal Heritage of Investigated Children

Aboriginal heritage was documented by the AIS-2003 in an effort to better understand some of the factors that bring children from these communities into contact with the child welfare system.<sup>59</sup>

Aboriginal children were identified as a key group to examine because of concerns about overrepresentation of children from these communities in the foster care system.<sup>60</sup> The AIS-2003 tracked the Aboriginal status of each investigated child.

<sup>59</sup> The AIS-2003 collected information about eight other ethno-cultural groups, but the number of cases sampled for most groups was too low to allow for inclusion in this report.

<sup>60</sup> See Armitage A. (1993). Family and child welfare in first nation communities. In: Wharf B (ed). *Rethinking child welfare in Canada*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 131–170.

McKenzie, B., Seidl, E. et al. (1995). Child welfare standards in First Nations. In: B.Galaway IB, Hudson J (eds.), *Child welfare in Canada: Research and policy implications*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Press, 54–65.

Twenty-nine percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involved children of Aboriginal heritage (Table 6-4). Seventeen percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involved children identified with First Nations Status, while six percent involved Métis children and five percent involved children with First Nations Non-Status.

**Physical Abuse:** Fifteen percent of cases where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children of Aboriginal heritage. Nine percent of these substantiated physical abuse cases involved children with First Nations Status. Three percent involved Métis children, while two percent involved children with First Nations Non-Status. One percent involved children with other aboriginal status.

**Sexual Abuse:** Twelve percent of cases that indicated sexual abuse as the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children of Aboriginal heritage. Five percent of these substantiated physical abuse cases involved children with First Nations, while three percent each involved Métis children and children with First Nations Non-Status. One percent involved children with other aboriginal status.

**Neglect:** Forty-one percent of cases where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children of Aboriginal heritage. Twenty-five percent of these cases involved children with First Nations Status, eight percent were Métis children, seven percent involved children with First Nations Non-Status and one percent involved children with other aboriginal status.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Twenty-three percent of cases that indicated emotional maltreatment as the primary substantiated concern involved children of Aboriginal heritage. Thirteen percent of these cases involved children with First Nations Status, five percent were children with First Nations Non-Status or Métis children.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Thirty percent of cases where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children of Aboriginal heritage. This included children with First Nations Status (18%), Métis children (8%), children with First Nations Non-Status (3%), and children with other aboriginal status (1%).

**Table 6-4**  
**Aboriginal Heritage of Investigated Children by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	Total
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence							
Not Aboriginal	85%	2,996	88%	472	59%	3,589	77%	2,795	70%	2,867	<b>71%</b>	<b>12,719</b>
First Nations Status	9%	326	5%	—	25%	1,504	13%	482	18%	735	<b>17%</b>	<b>3,074</b>
First Nations, Non-Status	2%	55	3%	—	7%	427	5%	172	3%	148	<b>5%</b>	<b>818</b>
Metis	3%	111	3%	—	8%	496	5%	182	8%	324	<b>6%</b>	<b>1,129</b>
Inuit	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	<b>0%</b>	—
Other	1%	—	1%	—	1%	—	0%	—	1%	—	<b>1%</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,646</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,862</b>

**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003**

\* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about Aboriginal status of investigated child.

## Service Dispositions for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Children

Data comparing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children are presented in Table 6-5. Aboriginal children experienced higher rates of ongoing service, child welfare court intervention and placement than non-Aboriginal children.

**Ongoing Services:** Sixty-nine percent of substantiated child maltreatment investigations involving Aboriginal children received ongoing services (an estimated 3,328 investigations). In comparison 53% of substantiated investigations involving non-Aboriginal children remained open for services (an estimated 5,989 investigations).

**Child Welfare Court Application:** Nineteen percent of substantiated child maltreatment investigations involving Aboriginal children (an estimated 936 investigations) resulted in a child welfare court application. In comparison, 11% of substantiated child maltreatment investigations involving non-Aboriginal children resulted in a child welfare court application. In all, 28% of substantiated investigations involving Aboriginal children were either considered for child welfare court or were the subject of a court application.

**Placement:** Aboriginal children experienced higher rates of informal and child welfare placement at the conclusion of a substantiated child maltreatment investigations. Fourteen percent of investigations involving Aboriginal children experienced an informal kinship care placement

compared with six percent of investigations involving non-Aboriginal children. Twenty-three percent of substantiated investigations involving non-Aboriginal children experienced child welfare placements while nine percent of investigations involving Aboriginal children experienced child welfare placements.

**Table 6-5**  
**Service Dispositions for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Children in Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	Total
	%	Number of Child Investigations	%	Number of Child Investigations		
Case to Stay Open for Ongoing Services	69	3,328	53	5,989	<b>58</b>	<b>9,317</b>
<b>Child Welfare Court</b>						
Court Application Considered	9	439	10	1,170	<b>10</b>	<b>1,609</b>
Court Application Made	19	936	11	1,194	<b>13</b>	<b>2,130</b>
<b>Placement</b>						
No Placement	59	2,880	80	9,026	<b>74</b>	<b>11,906</b>
Placement Considered	4	194	6	629	<b>5</b>	<b>823</b>
Informal Kinship Care	14	672	6	658	<b>8</b>	<b>1,330</b>
Child Welfare Placement	23	1,100	9	963	<b>13</b>	<b>2,063</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>		<b>4,846</b>		<b>11,281</b>		<b>16,127</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>						
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about Aboriginal status of investigated child.						

## ■ 7. HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

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Chapter 7 provides an overview of the characteristics of the households of investigated children tracked by the AIS-2003. Household characteristics include household composition, age of caregivers, sibling information, housing information, source of household income, and parental functioning and family stressors. For the purpose of the AIS-2003, a household was defined as the primary residence of the child when the investigation was initiated. The findings are presented by the primary substantiated category of maltreatment.

The estimates presented in this chapter are weighted estimates derived from child maltreatment investigations conducted in 2003 in a sample of Alberta's child welfare services. The sampling design and weighting procedures specific to the study should be considered before inferences are drawn from these estimates. The estimates **do not include** (1) incidents that were not reported to child welfare services, (2) reported cases that were screened out by child welfare services before being fully investigated, (3) new reports on cases already open by child welfare services, and (4) cases that were investigated only by the police.

### Parents and Caregivers in the Home

The AIS-2003 gathered information on up to two of the child's caregivers.<sup>61</sup> For each listed caregiver, investigating workers were asked to choose the category that best described the relationship between the caregiver and the children in the home. If a caregiver was a biological parent to one child and a step-parent to another child in the family, workers were asked to use "step-parent" to describe that caregiver.<sup>62</sup> If recent household changes had occurred, investigating workers were asked to describe the situation at the time the referral was made.

Table 7-1 describes the parents and other caregivers looking after investigated children by primary category of substantiated maltreatment. Twenty-nine percent of substantiated investigations involved children who lived with their two biological parents, and 19% lived in a two-parent blended family in which one of the caregivers was a step-parent, a common-law partner, or an adoptive parent who was not the biological parent of at least one of the children in the family. Six percent of substantiated

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61 The two caregiver limit was required to accommodate the form length restrictions set for the Household Information Sheet. The caregiver information usually corresponded to the parents and/or step parent living in the home; if there was only one caregiver living in the home and a second living outside the home, information was gathered on both of these, but is not reported here.

62 This compromise was needed because the Household Information Sheet served as a common information source for all the children in the family. A much more extensive set of questions would have been required had the AIS-2003 gathered child-specific caregiver information, leading to a significantly longer form. Child-specific information on the caregiver-child relationship is available for caregivers who were investigated as alleged perpetrators (see Chapter 4).

child investigations involved a biological parent living with another adult who also acted as a caregiver to the child (i.e. grandparent, aunt/uncle). Thirty-eight percent involved children who lived in a family led by a lone parent: 34% by a female parent and four percent by a male parent. In comparison, the 2001 census showed that families led by female parents represented 18% of families with children under the age of 17, whereas 78% of the families were led by two-parents.<sup>63</sup> Eight percent of substantiated investigations involved households with a composition other than the households previously described.

**Physical Abuse:** Sixty-one percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern involved children who lived in two-parent households: 34% involved two biological parents and 27% involved a two-parent blended family. Twenty-six percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern involved children in a female-parent household and two percent in a male-parent household.

**Sexual Abuse:** Seventy percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern involved children who lived in two-parent households: 37% with two biological parents and 33% with a two-parent blended family. Nine percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children in a female-parent household and only one percent in a male-parent household.

**Neglect:** Forty-one percent of all substantiated neglect investigations involved lone-parent families<sup>64</sup> – 34% female-parent households and seven percent male-parent households – whereas only 23% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children from households with two biological parents, and 17% involved two-parent blended families. It should be noted that lone parent families are also at risk of living in poverty and that poverty, as opposed to family structures, could be the factor placing these families at such a high risk for alleged maltreatment.

63 Canada. Statistics Canada. *Census of Canada, 2001: Age groups of children at home and family structure for census families in private households for Census Divisions and subdivisions* [computer file]. Ottawa: Ont.: Statistics Canada [producer and distributor], October 22, 2002 (95F0313XCB01064).

64 See Source of Income section in this chapter and the following:

Chamberland, C., Bouchard, C. et al. (1986). Conduites abusives envers les enfants: Réalités canadiennes et américaines. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 8(4):391–412.

Drake, B. & Pandey, S. (1996). Understanding the relationship between neighbourhood poverty and specific types of child maltreatment. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 20(11): 1003–18.

Garbarino, J. & Sherman, D. (1980). High-risk neighbourhoods and high-risk families: The human ecology of child maltreatment. *Child Development*, 51(1):188–98.

Mayer M. (1995). *Contextes écologiques d'incidence de trois types de mauvais traitements à l'égard des enfants signalés dans la région de Montréal*. Montréal: Université de Montréal, Sciences humaines appliquées.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Forty-seven percent of substantiated emotional maltreatment involved children who lived in two-parent households: 29% with two biological parents and 18% with a two-parent blended family. Thirty-eight percent of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern involved children in a female-parent household and three percent in a male-parent household.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Fifty percent of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children living in two parent households: 32% with two biological parents and 18% with two parent blended family. Forty percent of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children living in a female-parent household and two percent in a male-parent household.

**Table 7-1**  
**Household Structure by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
Two Parent-Biological	34%	1,191	37%	202	23%	1,425	29%	1,039	32%	1,318	<b>29%</b>	<b>5,175</b>
Two Parent-Blended/Step	27%	930	33%	176	17%	1,004	18%	669	18%	755	<b>19%</b>	<b>3,534</b>
Biological Parent and Other	2%	78	4%	—	11%	663	3%	124	5%	206	<b>6%</b>	<b>1,094</b>
Lone Mother	26%	911	9%	—	34%	2,058	38%	1,388	40%	1,621	<b>34%</b>	<b>6,026</b>
Lone Father	2%	79	1%	—	7%	417	3%	115	2%	67	<b>4%</b>	<b>681</b>
Other	9%	314	16%	85	8%	497	9%	312	3%	146	<b>8%</b>	<b>1,354</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,113</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,864</b>

**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003**  
\* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about household structure

## Age of Primary Caregiver(s)

Investigating workers were asked to indicate the age of up to two caregivers for each household. Ten age groups were captured on the Household Information sheet, enabling the workers to provide estimation of the caregiver's age (see Appendix C, Maltreatment Assessment Form). Table 7-2(a) shows the age distribution of "female caregivers" (estimated 15,826 substantiated child maltreatment investigations) and Table 7-2(b) the age distribution of "male caregivers" (estimated 10,060 substantiated child maltreatment investigations). The categories of female and male caregivers include biological parents, common-law partners, step-parents, foster parents and adoptive parents.



Of the substantiated investigations involving children living with a female caregiver, over two thirds (67%) lived with a female caregiver who was over 30 and one third (33%) with a mother aged 30 and under. With regard to male caregivers, 81% of children lived with a father who was over 30 years old and 19% with a father aged 30 and under.

**Physical Abuse:** In 2,503 (79%) of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment female caregivers were over 30 years of age, and in four percent of cases they were age 25 and under. In 93% of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment and involved children living with their male caregivers, the male caregivers were over 30 years of age, and in two percent of cases they were 25 or less.

**Sexual Abuse:** In 82% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment and children were living with their female caregivers, the female caregivers were over 30, and in only eight percent of cases they were age 25 and under. In 90% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment and children lived with their male caregivers, the male caregivers were over 30, and in four percent the male caregivers were under 25.

**Neglect:** Ten percent of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children living with mothers age 25 and under. Most of the investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children living with female caregivers over 30 (67%). With regard to male caregivers, in three percent of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern the male caregivers were age 25 and under, and in 88% of cases they were over 30.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** In 68% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated category children lived with their female caregivers, over age 30, and in 10% of cases female caregivers were 25 and under. For male caregivers, 78% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated maltreatment the male caregiver was over 30, and in five percent the male caregiver was age 25 and under.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** In 54% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment and children lived with their female caregivers, the female caregivers were over 30, and in 19% of cases they were 25 and under. For male caregivers, 60% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children living with male caregivers over 30, and 14% lived with male caregivers aged 25 and under.

**Table 7-2(a)**  
**Age of Female Caregivers\*\*\* by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
Less than 19	0%	—	0%	—	2%	82	1%	—	1%	—	1%	145
19–21	0%	—	2%	—	3%	168	3%	106	5%	219	3%	519
22–25	4%	115	6%	—	5%	255	6%	189	13%	527	7%	1,112
26–30	17%	529	10%	—	23%	1,124	22%	695	27%	1,089	22%	3,482
31–40	58%	1,841	76%	352	51%	2,523	53%	1,730	45%	1,781	52%	8,227
Over 40	21%	662	6%	—	16%	817	15%	484	9%	350	15%	2,341
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,164</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,969</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,244</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,989</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15,826</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,405 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about mother's age.												
** Includes biological mothers, stepmothers, female common-law partners, adoptive mothers and foster mothers living with the child.												

**Table 7-2(b)**  
**Age of Male Caregivers\*\*\* by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
Less than 19	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—
19–21	0%	—	0%	—	0%	—	2%	—	2%	—	1%	86
22–25	2%	—	4%	—	3%	91	3%	50	12%	278	5%	475
26–30	5%	117	6%	—	9%	276	17%	339	26%	570	13%	1,330
31–40	58%	1,358	70%	311	61%	1,872	46%	892	39%	868	53%	5,301
Over 40	35%	825	20%	87	27%	838	32%	634	21%	479	28%	2,863
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,338</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,087</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,949</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10,060</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 851 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about father's age.												
** Includes biological fathers, stepfathers, male common-law partners, adoptive fathers and foster fathers living with the child.												

## Number of Siblings in the Household

Investigating workers were asked to provide non-identifying information on all children 17 years of age and under, who were living in the home at the time of the investigation. As shown in Table 7-3, in 25% of substantiated child maltreatment investigations no siblings 17 years of age or under were noted to be living at home, 35% had one sibling, 23% had two siblings (i.e. three children in the family), and 17% had three or more siblings (i.e. four or more children in the family).

**Physical Abuse:** Twenty-four percent of children in investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern had no siblings 19 years of age or under living with them at the time of the investigation. Thirty-two percent had one sibling, 24% had two siblings, and 20% had three or more siblings.

**Sexual Abuse:** In 27% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment the child had no siblings 19 years of age or under living in the home. Fifty-three percent had one sibling, six percent had two siblings, and 14% had three or more siblings.

**Neglect:** In 29% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern the child had no siblings 19 years of age or under living in the home. Thirty-three percent had one sibling, 21% had two siblings, and 17% had three or more siblings.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** In 24% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern the child had no siblings 19 years of age or under living in the home. Forty-three percent had one sibling, 25% had two siblings, and nine percent had three or more siblings.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** In 21% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment the child had no siblings 19 years of age or under living in the home. Thirty-three percent had one sibling, 25% had two siblings, and 21% had three or more siblings.

**Table 7-3**  
**Siblings of Children in Child Maltreatment Investigations by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
No Sibling	24%	854	27%	146	29%	1,771	24%	856	21%	844	<b>25%</b>	<b>4,471</b>
One Sibling	32%	1,120	53%	287	33%	1,985	43%	1,576	33%	1,362	<b>35%</b>	<b>6,330</b>
Two Siblings	24%	830	6%	—	21%	1,257	25%	895	25%	1,038	<b>23%</b>	<b>4,052</b>
Three Siblings	12%	427	1%	—	7%	446	7%	265	10%	427	<b>9%</b>	<b>1,570</b>
Four or More Siblings	8%	273	13%	68	10%	605	2%	55	11%	440	<b>8%</b>	<b>1,441</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,864</b>

**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003**

\* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about number of siblings

## Number of Siblings Investigated

In addition to identifying all the children under the age of 17 in the household, investigating workers were asked to indicate all children who were also subject to investigation. Sixty-five percent of substantiated investigations involved children with at least one additional sibling who was also the subject of investigation, 10% had siblings who were not investigated, and 25% had no siblings (see Table 7-4).

**Physical Abuse:** In 54% percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment, the child had at least one additional sibling who was also the subject of investigation. Twenty-two percent had siblings who were not investigated, and 24% had no siblings.

**Sexual Abuse:** In 56% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern, the child had at least one sibling who was also the subject of investigation. Seventeen percent had siblings who were not investigated, and 27% had no siblings.

**Neglect:** Sixty-three percent of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children with at least one additional sibling who was also the subject of investigation. Eight percent had siblings who were not investigated, and 29% had no siblings.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** In 66% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern the child had at least one sibling who was also the subject of investigation. Eleven percent had siblings who were not investigated, and 23% had no siblings.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** In 76% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern the child had at least one sibling who was also the subject of investigation. Three percent had siblings who were not investigated, and 21% had no siblings.

**Table 7-4**  
**Investigated Siblings by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
No Sibling	24%	854	27%	146	29%	1,771	23%	856	21%	844	<b>25%</b>	<b>4,471</b>
One Sibling, Not Investigated	13%	440	6%	—	4%	233	5%	178	2%	74	<b>5%</b>	<b>957</b>
One Sibling, Investigated	19%	680	47%	255	29%	1,752	38%	1,399	31%	1,289	<b>30%</b>	<b>5,375</b>
Two or More Siblings, None Investigated	9%	314	11%	56	4%	272	6%	208	1%	—	<b>5%</b>	<b>891</b>
Two or More Siblings, At Least One Other Investigated	35%	1,216	9%	—	34%	2,036	28%	1,007	45%	1,864	<b>35%</b>	<b>6,172</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,648</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,866</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about Investigated Siblings												

## Source of Income

Investigating workers were requested to choose the income source that best described the primary source of the household income. Income source was designated by investigating workers in terms of five possible classifications:

**Full Time Employment:** A caregiver is employed in a permanent, full-time position.

**Part Time/Seasonal Employment/Multiple Jobs:** Family income is derived primarily from part-time employment (less than 30 hours/week), full-time or part-time positions for temporary periods of the year, or several part-time temporary jobs. Neither caregiver is employed in a permanent, full-time position.

**Employment Insurance (EI)/Social Assistance/Other Benefit:** Family income is derived primarily from employment insurance, social assistance or other benefits (e.g. long-term disability, pension, or child support).

**Unknown:** Source of income was not known.

**No Source:** There is no reliable source of income for the family. Income may be earned through illicit activities. Caregiver(s) may work at temporary jobs, but these are not predictable and cannot be relied on for financial budgeting.

Table 7-5 shows the source of income for the households of children with substantiated maltreatment as tracked by the AIS-2003. Fifty-two percent of investigations involved children in families that derived their primary income from full-time employment. Twenty-eight percent involved children whose families received benefits/EI/social assistance as their primary source of income. In an additional 13% families relied on part-time/multiple jobs/seasonal employment. In five percent of substantiated investigations the source of income was unknown by the workers, and in two percent of cases no reliable source of income was reported.

**Physical Abuse:** Seventy-five percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children from families with full-time employment, and 12% involved families receiving benefits/EI or social assistance as the primary source of income. Seven percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children from families with part-time/multiple jobs/seasonal employment as the primary source of income.

**Sexual Abuse:** Full-time employment was reported as the primary source of income in 69% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern, benefits/EI or social assistance in 18% of cases, and the income source was unknown in nine percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern.

**Neglect:** In contrast to abuse cases, 34% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern involved families that relied on full-time employment as their primary source of income. Forty-two percent involved families that were receiving some form of benefits/EI or social assistance, and a further 15% involved families relying on part-time/seasonal employment or multiple jobs as their primary source of income.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Full-time employment was reported as the primary source of income in 58% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern, benefits/EI or social assistance in 23%, and part-time/seasonal employment/multiple jobs in 10%.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Full-time employment was reported as the primary source of income in 53% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated concern, benefits/EI or social assistance in 26%, and part-time/seasonal employment/multiple jobs in 18% of investigations.

**Table 7-5**  
**Household Source of Income by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence							
Full-Time Employment	75%	2,601	69%	369	34%	2,025	58%	2,094	53%	2,169	<b>52%</b>	<b>9,258</b>
Part-time/Multiple Jobs/ Seasonal Employment	7%	255	4%	—	15%	943	10%	362	18%	727	<b>13%</b>	<b>2,310</b>
Benefits/Unemployment/ Social Assistance	12%	422	18%	99	42%	2,527	23%	851	26%	1,072	<b>28%</b>	<b>4,971</b>
Unknown	6%	220	9%	—	7%	413	4%	150	3%	144	<b>5%</b>	<b>973</b>
No Source of Income	0%	—	0%	—	2%	122	5%	190	0%	—	<b>2%</b>	<b>317</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,030</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,829</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,580 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about household income												

## Housing

Investigating workers were asked to select the housing accommodation category that best described the investigated child's household living situation. The types of housing included:

**Own Home:** A purchased house, condominium, or townhouse.

**Rental Accommodation:** A private rental house, townhouse or apartment.

**Public Housing:** A rental unit in a public housing complex (i.e. rent-subsidized, government-owned housing), a house, townhouse or apartment on a military base, or band housing.

**Shelter/Hotel:** A homeless or family shelter, SRO hotel (single room occupancy), or motel accommodation.

**Unknown:** Housing accommodation was unknown.

**Other:** Any other form of shelter.

In addition to housing type, investigating workers were asked to indicate whether the investigated child lived in unsafe housing conditions where children were at risk of injury or impairment from their living situation (e.g. broken windows, insufficient heat, parents and children sharing single room). Workers also noted the number of family moves in the 12 months before the investigation.

At the time of the study, 59% of all substantiated investigations involved children living in rental accommodations (45% private rentals and 14% public housing), 27% involved children living in purchased homes, four percent in other accommodations, and two percent in shelters or hotels. In eight percent of substantiated investigations, workers did not have enough information to describe the housing type (Table 7-6). According to the 2001 census, 74% of families with never married children living a home, owned their home, 25% rented their home and one percent lived in Band housing.<sup>65</sup>

Housing conditions were described as safe in 85% of substantiated maltreatment investigations and unsafe in nine percent (Table 7-7). In six percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations housing conditions were unknown.

Forty-four percent of investigations involved families that had not moved in the previous 12 months, whereas 31% had moved at least once (Table 7-8). In 25% of substantiated investigations, whether the family has recently moved was unknown to the workers.

**Physical Abuse:** Forty percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children who were living in purchased homes, 34% were living in private market rentals, and 11% in public housing complexes (Table 7-6).

One percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children living in unsafe housing conditions (Table 7-7). Fifty-eight percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children who had not moved in the previous 12 months, and 19% involved children whose families had moved at least once in the past twelve months (Table 7-8).

**Sexual Abuse:** Forty-eight percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern involved children who were living in purchased homes, 37% were living in private market rentals, and four percent in public housing complexes (Table 7-6).

One percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children living in unsafe housing conditions. Sixty-three percent involved children who had not moved in the previous 12 months, and 21% involved children whose families had moved at least once (Table 7-8).

**Neglect:** Only 16% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern involved children living in purchased homes. In 47% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment they were living in private market rentals, and in 19% in public housing complexes (Table 7-6).

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65 Canada. Statistics Canada. *Census of Canada 2001: Household type and structural type of dwelling for census families* [computer file]. Ottawa: Statistics Canada [producer and distributor], October 22, 2002 (97F00006XCB01007).



Twenty percent of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern involved children living in unsafe housing conditions (Table 7-7). Thirty-seven percent involved children who had not moved in the previous 12 months, and 40% of investigated children had moved at least once (Table 7-8).

**Emotional Maltreatment:** In 32% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern children were living in purchased homes, 43% were living in private market rentals, and 13% in public housing complexes (Table 7-6). Seven percent of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern involved children living in unsafe housing conditions (Table 7-7). Forty-six percent involved children who had not moved in the previous 12 months, and 28% had moved at least once (Table 7-8).

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** In 24% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern children were living in purchased homes, 52% were living in private market rentals, and 13% in public housing complexes (Table 7-6). Four percent of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved children living in unsafe housing conditions (Table 7-7). Thirty-eight percent involved children who had not moved in the previous 12 months, and 34% had moved at least once (Table 7-8).

**Table 7-6**  
**Housing Type by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
Own Home	40%	1,385	48%	259	16%	997	32%	1,181	24%	1,004	<b>27%</b>	<b>4,826</b>
Rental Accomodation	34%	1,210	37%	196	47%	2,860	43%	1,568	52%	2,155	<b>45%</b>	<b>7,989</b>
Public Housing	11%	389	4%	—	19%	1,174	13%	460	13%	524	<b>14%</b>	<b>2,569</b>
Shelter/Hotel	1%	—	0%	—	3%	144	0%	—	2%	83	<b>2%</b>	<b>264</b>
Other	4%	126	3%	—	7%	421	3%	115	3%	114	<b>4%</b>	<b>792</b>
Unknown	10%	367	8%	—	8%	468	9%	313	6%	231	<b>8%</b>	<b>1,424</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,648</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about housing type												

**Table 7-7**  
**Housing Conditions by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
Safe Conditions	94%	3,287	95%	512	73%	4,398	89%	3,226	92%	3,778	<b>85%</b>	<b>15,201</b>
Unsafe Conditions	1%	—	1%	—	20%	1,201	7%	268	4%	176	<b>9%</b>	<b>1,684</b>
Unknown	5%	182	4%	—	7%	465	4%	153	4%	158	<b>6%</b>	<b>978</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,863</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about housing conditions												

**Table 7-8**  
**Family Moves Within the Last Twelve Months by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
No Moves in Last												
Twelve Months	58%	2,010	63%	337	37%	2,221	46%	1,696	38%	1,537	<b>44%</b>	<b>7,801</b>
One Move	14%	506	14%	74	13%	818	21%	753	22%	923	<b>17%</b>	<b>3,074</b>
Two or More Moves	5%	170	7%	—	27%	1,610	7%	250	12%	509	<b>14%</b>	<b>2,597</b>
Unknown	23%	817	16%	86	23%	1,414	26%	948	28%	1,143	<b>25%</b>	<b>4,408</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,063</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,862</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about family moves												

## Caregiver Functioning and Family Stressors

Concerns related to caregiver functioning and family stressors were examined by investigating workers using a checklist of 10 items that were asked about each caregiver. Where applicable, the reference point for identifying concerns about caregiver functioning was the previous six months.<sup>66</sup> The checklist included:

66 Most items were rated on a 4 point scale differentiating “confirmed,” “suspected,” “no” and “unknown” caregiver functioning issues. A caregiver functioning or family stressor was classified as confirmed if a problem had been diagnosed, observed by the investigating worker or another worker, or disclosed by the caregiver. An issue was classified as suspected if investigating workers’ suspicions were sufficient to include the concern in their written assessment of the family or in transfer summary to a colleague. For the purposes of the present report, the categories of confirmed and suspected have been collapsed. A comparison of the ratings will be completed in subsequent analyses.

**Alcohol Abuse:** The use of alcohol poses a problem for the household.

**Drug/Solvent Abuse:** At least one caregiver abuses prescription drugs, illegal drugs or solvents.

**Criminal Activity:** At least one caregiver is absent due to incarceration, or is involved in criminal activity (drug dealing, theft or prostitution). This did not include a criminal history for domestic violence.

**Cognitive Impairment:** The cognitive ability of at least one caregiver is known to or suspected to have an impact on the quality of care giving provided in the household.

**Mental Health Issues:** At least one caregiver is known or suspected to have mental health problems.

**Physical Health Issues:** At least one caregiver is known or suspected to have a chronic illness, frequent hospitalizations, or a physical disability.

**Few Social Supports:** At least one caregiver is known or suspected to be socially isolated or lacking in social supports.

**Maltreated as a Child:** Either caregiver is known or suspected to have suffered maltreatment as a child.

**Victim of Domestic Violence:** During the past six months the caregiver was a victim of domestic violence including physical, sexual or verbal assault.

**Perpetrator of Domestic Violence:** During the past six months the caregiver was a perpetrator of domestic violence.

**Other:** Any other issue/concern describing caregiver functioning.

Table 7-9(a) presents caregiver functioning issues that were noted by investigating workers for female caregivers. Table 7-9(b) presents caregiver functioning issues that were noted by investigating workers for male caregivers.<sup>67</sup> At least one caregiver functioning issue for female caregivers was identified in 82% of substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 14,714) investigations. The most frequently noted concerns for female caregivers were victim of domestic violence (56%), few social supports (53%), maltreated as a child (36%) and mental health issues (34%). At least one functioning concern for male caregivers was noted in 48% of substantiated maltreatment investigations (8,513 investigations). The most frequently noted concerns male caregivers were perpetrator of domestic violence (31%), few social supports (26%), alcohol abuse (21%), drug or solvent abuse (17%), maltreated as a child (16%), and mental health issues (14%).

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<sup>67</sup> Female caregiver functioning table and male caregiver functioning table includes only caregivers in the home where the child maltreatment investigation occurred.

**Physical Abuse:** At least one caregiver functioning issue was identified in 69% of investigations involving female caregivers and where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment. The most frequently noted functioning issues for female caregivers in physical abuse investigations were a lack of social supports (41%) and being a victim of domestic violence (39%). The next most common functioning issues were a childhood history of maltreatment (30%) and mental health issues (25%). Involvement in criminal activity for female caregivers was noted in only two percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern.

At least one functioning issue for male caregivers was identified in 45% of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern. Twenty-six percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern noted few social supports for male caregivers, 23% noted perpetrator of domestic violence, 15% noted maltreatment as a child and 12% noted drug/solvent use.

**Sexual Abuse:** Thirty-seven percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved at least one functioning issue for female caregivers. The three most frequently noted issues were: few social supports (22%), victim of domestic violence (15%) and maltreated as a child (12%).

In 38% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment at least one male caregiver functioning issue was noted. In 23% of investigations alcohol abuse by a male caregiver was noted, 16% of cases noted male caregivers with few social supports, criminal activity was noted in 12% of cases and perpetrator of domestic violence was noted in 11% of cases.

**Neglect:** Eighty-two percent of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern involved at least one functioning issue for the female caregiver. Fifty-seven percent noted few social supports, 42% noted the female caregiver was a victim of domestic violence, 39% involved a childhood history of maltreatment and alcohol abuse, 36% involved drug/solvent abuse and 35% involved a mental health issue.

In 44% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment at least one functioning issue for male caregivers was noted: in 28% of investigations few social supports were noted, alcohol and drug/solvent abuse was noted for male caregivers in 22% of investigations and 21% of cases noted perpetrator of domestic violence for male caregivers.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Eighty-nine percent of female caregivers in investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern experienced at least one functioning issue: in 61% of investigations, female caregivers were noted as being a victim of domestic violence; 58% noted few social supports and 45% involved a childhood history of maltreatment.

In 51% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern at least one functioning issue was noted for male caregivers. In 35% of cases noted perpetrator of domestic violence, 30% noted few social supports, in 20% of cases a history of childhood maltreatment for the male caregiver was noted, and 17% noted alcohol abuse by a male caregiver.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Ninety-five percent of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated concern involved at least one functioning issue for female caregivers. In 91% of investigations female caregivers were noted as a victim of domestic violence; 58% involved female caregivers with few social supports and 38% noted female caregivers experiencing mental health issues.

**Table 7-9(a)**  
**Female Caregiver Functioning\*\*\* by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
Alcohol Abuse	14%	488	5%	—	39%	2,355	30%	1,109	31%	1,260	<b>29%</b>	<b>5,239</b>
Drug/Solvent Abuse	13%	449	3%	—	36%	2,205	27%	993	24%	970	<b>26%</b>	<b>4,633</b>
Criminal Activity	2%	79	1%	—	17%	1,025	13%	476	9%	370	<b>11%</b>	<b>1,955</b>
Cognitive Impairment	11%	372	10%	52	25%	1,528	18%	664	11%	436	<b>11%</b>	<b>3,052</b>
Mental Health Issues	25%	877	11%	58	35%	2,093	42%	1,535	38%	1,564	<b>34%</b>	<b>6,127</b>
Physical Health Issues	12%	433	7%	—	22%	1,356	21%	771	14%	580	<b>18%</b>	<b>3,178</b>
Few Social Supports	41%	1,441	22%	118	57%	3,471	58%	2,112	58%	2,384	<b>53%</b>	<b>9,526</b>
Maltreated as a Child	30%	1,046	12%	63	39%	2,390	45%	1,657	33%	1,344	<b>36%</b>	<b>6,500</b>
Victim of Domestic Violence	39%	1,369	15%	79	42%	2,566	61%	2,227	91%	3,749	<b>56%</b>	<b>9,990</b>
Perpetrator of Domestic Violence	11%	377	0%	—	14%	841	19%	686	33%	1,335	<b>18%</b>	<b>3,239</b>
Other Concerns	1%	—	5%	—	2%	90	2%	89	2%	62	<b>2%</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>Investigations Where at Least One Female Caregiver Functioning Issue was Noted</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>2,423</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>4,946</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>3,228</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>3,918</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>14,714</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>		<b>3,503</b>		<b>537</b>		<b>6,065</b>		<b>3,647</b>		<b>4,112</b>		<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about female caregiver functioning												
** Column Totals for Table 7-9 are more than the total number of children for whom at least one parental or family stressor was noted because there can be several different stressors noted for a child's family.												

In 55% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated concern at least one functioning issue was noted for male caregivers. Perpetrator of domestic violence was noted for male caregivers in 51% of investigations, alcohol abuse by a male caregiver was noted in 31% of investigations, and 24% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved male caregivers who had few social supports.

**Table 7-9(b)**  
**Male Caregiver Functioning\*\*\* by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
Alcohol Abuse	11%	401	23%	125	22%	1,324	17%	611	31%	1,262	<b>21%</b>	<b>3,723</b>
Drug/Solvent Abuse	12%	403	7%	—	22%	1,317	14%	516	17%	691	<b>17%</b>	<b>2,967</b>
Criminal Activity	8%	280	12%	66	12%	700	15%	547	14%	557	<b>12%</b>	<b>2,150</b>
Cognitive Impairment	5%	172	3%	—	15%	914	8%	291	5%	222	<b>9%</b>	<b>1,613</b>
Mental Health Issues	11%	383	4%	—	19%	1,124	10%	346	15%	595	<b>14%</b>	<b>2,471</b>
Physical Health Issues	8%	296	6%	—	10%	626	10%	380	6%	251	<b>9%</b>	<b>1,585</b>
Few Social Supports	26%	894	16%	84	28%	1,672	30%	1,096	24%	975	<b>26%</b>	<b>4,721</b>
Maltreated as a Child	15%	528	10%	55	16%	992	20%	736	13%	520	<b>16%</b>	<b>2,831</b>
Victim of Domestic Violence	6%	222	1%	—	7%	397	9%	323	23%	936	<b>11%</b>	<b>1,881</b>
Perpetrator of Domestic Violence	23%	804	11%	60	21%	1,242	35%	1,259	51%	2,078	<b>31%</b>	<b>5,443</b>
Other Concerns	2%	71	5%	—	0%	—	2%	66	0%	—	<b>1%</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Investigations Where at Least One Male Caregiver Functioning Issue was Noted</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>1,559</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>2,658</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>1,843</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>2,251</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>8,513</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>		<b>3,504</b>		<b>537</b>		<b>6,064</b>		<b>3,648</b>		<b>4,111</b>		<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about male caregiver functioning												
** Column Totals for Table 7-9 are more than the total number of children for whom at least one parental or family stressor was noted because there can be several different stressors noted for a child's family.												

## Custody/Access Dispute

Table 7-10 presents information on whether there was an ongoing child custody/access dispute at the time of the child maltreatment investigation. For a worker to indicate yes, there had to have been a court application made or pending. In 90% of substantiated investigations there was no custody or

access dispute. Seven percent of substantiated investigations involved a custody or access dispute and in three percent of cases whether there was a custody/access dispute was unknown.

**Physical Abuse:** Eighty-nine percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment did not involve a custody/access dispute. Eight percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment involved a custody/access dispute.

**Sexual Abuse:** Ninety-five percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern did not involve a custody/access dispute. One percent did involve a custody/access dispute.

**Neglect:** Ninety-three percent of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern did not involve a custody/access dispute. Five percent did involve a custody/access dispute.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Eighty-nine percent of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern did not involve a custody/access dispute. Eight percent did involve a custody/access dispute.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Eighty-seven percent of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment did not involve a custody/access dispute. Eight percent did involve a custody/access dispute.

**Table 7-10**  
**Custody Disputes by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
No Custody Dispute	89%	3,106	95%	510	93%	5,625	89%	3,230	87%	3,563	<b>90%</b>	<b>16,034</b>
Custody Dispute	8%	275	1%	—	5%	285	8%	300	8%	346	<b>7%</b>	<b>1,211</b>
Unknown	3%	122	4%	—	2%	155	3%	117	5%	202	<b>3%</b>	<b>618</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,065</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,863</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information on custody disputes.												

## ■ 8. REFERRAL AND CHILD WELFARE OFFICE CHARACTERISTICS

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Chapter 8 describes referral and child welfare office characteristics, including referral sources, malicious and unsubstantiated referrals, previous investigations, office size and structure, and investigating workers' professional training and years of experience. As with the previous chapters, the tables are presented in terms of the estimated number of child maltreatment investigations in Alberta in 2003, by primary category of substantiated maltreatment.

The estimates presented in this chapter are weighted estimates derived from child maltreatment investigations conducted in 2003 in a sample of Alberta's child welfare services. The sampling design and weighting procedures specific to the study should be considered before inferences are drawn from these estimates. The estimates **do not include** (1) incidents that were not reported to child welfare services, (2) reported cases that were screened out by child welfare services before being fully investigated, (3) new reports on cases already open by child welfare services, and (4) cases that were investigated only by the police.

### Source of Referral

Table 8-1 presents the different categories of non-professionals and professionals who referred cases of substantiated maltreatment. Each independent contact with the child welfare office regarding a child/children or family was counted as a separate referral. The person who actually contacted the child welfare office was identified as the referral source. For example, if a child disclosed an incident of abuse to a schoolteacher, who made a report to child welfare services, the school was counted as a referral source. However, if both the schoolteacher and the child's parent called, both would be counted as referral sources.

The Maltreatment Assessment Form included 18 pre-coded referral source categories and an open "other" category. Referral sources were collapsed into 12 categories reflected in Table 8-1.

#### *Non-Professional Referral Sources*

**Parent:** This includes parents involved as a caregiver to the reported child, as well as non-custodial parents.

**Child:** A self-referral by any child listed on the Intake Face Sheet of the AIS-2003 Maltreatment Assessment Form.

**Relative:** Any relative of the child in question. Workers were asked to code "other" for situations in which a child was living with a foster parent and a relative of the foster parent reported maltreatment.



**Neighbour/Friend:** This category includes any neighbour or friend of the children or his/her family.

**Anonymous:** A caller who is not identified.

**Other referral source:** Any other source of referral.

*Professional Referral Sources*

**Community Agencies:** This includes social assistance worker (involved with the household), crisis service/shelter worker (includes any shelter or crisis services worker) for domestic violence or homelessness, community recreation centre staff (refers to any person from a recreation or community activity programs), day care centre staff (refers to a childcare or day care provider), and community agency staff.

**Health Professional:** This includes referrals that originate from a hospital made by either a doctor, nurse or social worker rather than a family physician's office, public health nurse (nurses involved in services such as family support, family visitation programs and community medical outreach), and physician (any family physician with a single or ongoing contact with the child and/or family).

**School:** Any school personnel (teacher, principal, teacher's aide etc.)

**Mental Health Professional/Agency:** Includes family service agencies, mental health centres (other than hospital psychiatric wards), and private mental health practitioners (psychologists, social workers, other therapists) working outside of a school/hospital/child welfare/Youth Justice Act setting.

**Other Child Welfare Services:** Includes referrals from mandated Child Welfare service providers from other jurisdictions or provinces.

**Police:** Any member of a Police Force, including municipal, provincial/territorial or RCMP.

Sixty-eight percent of all referrals of substantiated maltreatment (an estimated 12,050 investigations) were made by professionals through their contact with children. The largest source of referrals was school personnel, who referred an estimated 4,065 substantiated investigations to child welfare services, representing 23% of all substantiated investigations. Police referred 18% of substantiated investigations, and community agencies referred another 12%. Non-professional community sources referred 30% of substantiated investigations.<sup>68</sup> An estimated 2,106 substantiated investigations (12%) were referred to child welfare services by parents. Relatives accounted for eight percent of referrals for substantiated investigations, neighbours/family friends for six percent, and children themselves for four percent.

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<sup>68</sup> Because Table 8-1 documents up to three sources of referral per investigation, categories will add up to more than 100%.

**Table 8-1**  
**All Referral Sources (Non-Professional, and Professional) by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
<b>Non-Professional Referral Sources</b>												
Parent	14%	486	31%	167	11%	662	12%	429	9%	362	<b>12%</b>	<b>2,106</b>
Child	10%	363	5%	—	4%	266	1%	—	1%	—	<b>4%</b>	<b>742</b>
Relative	5%	166	3%	—	11%	641	7%	258	7%	269	<b>8%</b>	<b>1,351</b>
Neighbour/Friend	4%	137	1%	—	9%	531	11%	394	2%	71	<b>6%</b>	<b>1,138</b>
Other Referral Sources	3%	90	3%	—	6%	392	3%	112	6%	228	<b>5%</b>	<b>836</b>
Anonymous	1%	—	0%	—	3%	192	1%	—	1%	—	<b>2%</b>	<b>303</b>
Any Non-Professional Referral Source	33%	1,153	40%	216	35%	2,095	29%	1,073	18%	744	<b>30%</b>	<b>5,281</b>
<b>Professional Referral Source</b>												
Police	12%	426	12%	64	8%	489	16%	582	40%	1,655	<b>18%</b>	<b>3,216</b>
School Personnel	37%	1,289	7%	—	23%	1,365	27%	971	10%	400	<b>23%</b>	<b>4,065</b>
Health Professional	5%	171	10%	51	9%	569	7%	257	4%	166	<b>7%</b>	<b>1,214</b>
Mental Health Professional	2%	51	3%	—	1%	82	8%	285	1%	55	<b>3%</b>	<b>490</b>
Other Child Welfare Service	4%	131	5%	—	8%	481	3%	97	10%	408	<b>6%</b>	<b>1,143</b>
Community Agency	7%	260	22%	118	12%	714	12%	430	15%	609	<b>12%</b>	<b>2,131</b>
Any Professional Referral	66%	2,313	59%	317	60%	3,606	69%	2,521	80%	3,293	<b>68%</b>	<b>12,050</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>		<b>3,503</b>		<b>538</b>		<b>6,064</b>		<b>3,647</b>		<b>4,112</b>		<b>17,864</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about referral source												

**Physical Abuse:** School personnel referred 37% of all investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment, parents referred the second largest number (14%) followed by police who referred 12%, and the child who referred 10%.

**Sexual Abuse:** Parents were the most common source of referral for all investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern, being responsible for referring 31% (an estimated 167 investigations). Community agencies and police accounted for most of the remaining referrals of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern (22% and 12% respectively).

**Neglect:** School personnel were the most common source of referral in investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern. School personnel referred 23% of investigations, community agencies referred 12%, and parents and relatives each referred 11%.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** School personnel were the most common source of referral for investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern, being responsible for referring 27% (an estimated 971 investigations). Police referred 16% of these investigations and parents and community agencies each referred 12%.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Police referrals accounted for 40% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment. The role of the police in these cases can be accounted for by the fact that police are often the first to intervene in domestic violence cases.

## Unsubstantiated and Malicious Reports

In Alberta, child welfare statutes require that professionals and members of the public report suspected maltreatment. To ensure that investigations are carried out by trained child welfare professionals in a thorough yet minimally intrusive manner, those reporting are not expected to attempt to verify their suspicions prior to reporting. After an investigation, 26% of cases tracked by the AIS-2003 were found to be unsubstantiated (Table 3-1). Although most of these referrals were made in good faith, in some instances the allegations appeared to have been made with malicious intent, by a person who knew the allegation was false. Investigating workers classified such referrals as “malicious.”

Table 8-2(a) illustrates unsubstantiated and malicious reports for investigated children by primary category of maltreatment and by level of substantiation, and Table 8-2(b) provides a breakdown of malicious referrals by source of referral and by level of substantiation. Most unsubstantiated reports were considered to have been made in good faith, but two percent of all allegations of maltreatment (an estimated 603 investigations) were judged to have been intentionally false. In another six percent of cases, the investigating worker was unable to determine whether or not an unsubstantiated report had been made in good faith.

**Primary Categories of Maltreatment:** Most of the reports that were judged to be malicious involved allegations of physical abuse (three percent) and emotional maltreatment (three percent). Two percent of sexual abuse allegations and two percent of neglect allegations were considered to be malicious. Only one percent of allegations of exposure to domestic violence allegations were deemed malicious.

**Table 8-2(a)**  
**Unsubstantiated and Malicious Reports by Primary Category of Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence							
Substantiated Reports	53%	3,503	38%	537	50%	6,064	56%	3,647	74%	4,112	<b>56%</b>	<b>17,863</b>
Suspected Reports	18%	1,224	9%	129	18%	2,101	25%	1,666	16%	877	<b>19%</b>	<b>5,997</b>
Unsubstantiated												
Non-Malicious Reports	18%	1,208	34%	471	24%	2,894	10%	674	7%	395	<b>18%</b>	<b>5,642</b>
Unsubstantiated												
Malicious Reports	3%	178	2%	—	2%	178	3%	162	1%	63	<b>2%</b>	<b>603</b>
Unsubstantiated Reports, Malicious Intent Unknown	7%	467	17%	239	7%	794	6%	402	2%	108	<b>6%</b>	<b>2,010</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>6,580</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,398</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,031</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,551</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,555</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>32,115</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 2,645 child maltreatment investigations												

**Source of Referral:** Table 8-2(b) shows unsubstantiated and malicious referrals for investigated children by referral source. Parents, relatives and neighbours were considered to be responsible for more than half of all malicious referrals; an estimated 364 children were subjected to unnecessary maltreatment investigations as a result of referrals from these three sources. Although reports from professionals were rarely judged to have been intentionally false (one percent, or an estimated 134 investigations), these reports nonetheless accounted for the largest group of unsubstantiated malicious referrals. Other referral sources constituted the fourth largest group of malicious referrals, involving an estimated 82 child maltreatment investigations.

**Table 8-2(b)**  
**Unsubstantiated and Malicious Reports of Child Maltreatment by Referral Source Category in Alberta, in 2003**

	Referral Source Category													
	Parent		Child		Relative		Neighbour/ Friend		Professional or Service		Other		Anonymous	
Substantiated Reports	60%	2,106	56%	741	51%	1,351	50%	1,138	59%	12,049	48%	836	31%	302
Suspected Reports	23%	802	22%	288	17%	462	17%	380	18%	3,703	19%	327	11%	110
Unsubstantiated Non-Malicious Reports	6%	206	12%	167	13%	340	17%	396	19%	3,859	25%	432	32%	321
Unsubstantiated Malicious Reports	4%	133	1%	—	4%	111	5%	120	1%	134	5%	82	6%	56
Unsubstantiated Reports, Malicious Intent Unknown	7%	265	9%	122	15%	388	11%	264	3%	783	3%	60	20%	201
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,512</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,652</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,298</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,528</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,737</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>990</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>														
* Based on a sample of 2,645 child maltreatment investigations with information about malicious intent and referral source														

## Child Welfare Office Size

The AIS-2003 sampled investigations from 11 sites across Alberta. In Alberta, child welfare services are organized in terms of a limited number of large administrative units that cover several municipalities, whereas other provinces may use much smaller administrative units that correspond to a single municipal boundary. The following two tables provide a description of the types of child maltreatment investigations by office size and level of urbanization.

Child welfare office size is categorized in terms of the 2003 annual case openings:

**Small agencies/offices:** Less than 350 case openings per year.

**Medium agencies/offices:** Between 350 and 950 annual case openings.

**Large agencies/offices:** Between 951 and 2000 annual case openings.

**Very Large agencies/offices:** More than 2000 case openings per year.

Table 8-3 presents child maltreatment investigations in terms of the size of the offices where the investigations were conducted. More than 10,654 substantiated investigations (60%) were conducted by very large offices, eight percent were conducted by large offices, 20% by medium offices and 12% by small offices.

**Physical Abuse:** Sixty-five percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment were conducted by very large sites: Fourteen percent were conducted by medium offices. Small agencies conducted 12% of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment and large offices investigated 9%.

**Sexual Abuse:** Very large offices conducted 47% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern. Thirty-seven percent of investigations were conducted by medium offices, nine percent by small offices and large offices conducted seven percent of investigations.

**Neglect:** Forty-nine percent of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment were investigated by very large offices, 25% by medium offices, 19% by small offices and seven percent by large offices.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Very large child welfare offices conducted 59% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern, 25% of these investigations were conducted by medium offices and nine percent by small offices. Large agencies offices conducted seven percent of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Seventy-four percent of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment were investigated by very large offices, 12% by medium offices, eight percent by large offices and six percent by small offices.

**Table 8-3**  
**Relative Size of Child Welfare Office by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	Total
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
Small (< 350)	12%	437	9%	51	19%	1,133	9%	330	6%	219	<b>12%</b>	<b>2,170</b>
Medium (350–949)	14%	490	37%	198	25%	1,544	25%	916	12%	506	<b>20%</b>	<b>3,654</b>
Large (950–2,000)	9%	317	7%	—	7%	441	7%	255	8%	335	<b>8%</b>	<b>1,383</b>
Very Large (>2,000)	65%	2,259	47%	252	49%	2,946	59%	2,146	74%	3,051	<b>60%</b>	<b>10,654</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,861</b>

**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003**  
\* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about size of agency/office from which the investigation originated.

## Urban and Rural Service Area

The 11 AIS-2003 child welfare service areas were sampled to provide a representative sample of both urban and rural areas across Alberta. The AIS-2003 sites were categorized into one of three service area classifications:

**Large Metropolitan Service Area:** Providing child welfare services to densely populated urban settings, including suburban sites within a metropolitan site.

**Mixed Urban/Rural Service Area:** Providing child welfare services to sites with a wide population density range.

**Primarily Rural Service Area:** Providing child welfare services primarily to sparsely populated areas.

Table 8-4 presents child investigations by child welfare services based on population density. Large metropolitan service areas investigated 59% of substantiated maltreatment cases (an estimated 10,654 investigations). Mixed urban/rural areas conducted 38% of substantiated investigations, and primarily rural child welfare services conducted three percent.

**Physical Abuse:** Large metropolitan service areas conducted 65% of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment, and mixed urban/rural service areas conducted 35% of these investigations. Rural service areas conducted none of the investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern.

**Sexual Abuse:** Large metropolitan service areas conducted 47% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment, and mixed urban/rural service areas conducted 51% of these investigations. Rural service areas conducted two percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment.

**Neglect:** Large metropolitan service areas conducted 49% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern. Mixed urban/rural service areas conducted 47% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern and rural service areas conducted four percent.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Large metropolitan service areas conducted 59% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern, and mixed urban/rural service areas conducted 38% of these investigations. Rural service areas conducted three percent of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Large metropolitan service areas conducted 74% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment, and mixed

urban/rural service areas conducted 23% of these investigations. Rural service areas conducted three percent of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated concern.

**Table 8-4**  
**Urban/Rural Location of Child Welfare Office by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect	Emotional Maltreatment	Exposure to Domestic Violence							
Large Metropolitan Service Area	65%	2,259	47%	252	49%	2,946	59%	2,146	74%	3,051	<b>59%</b>	<b>10,654</b>
Mixed Urban and Rural Service Area	35%	1,244	51%	276	47%	2,863	38%	1,388	23%	956	<b>38%</b>	<b>6,727</b>
Primarily Rural Service Area	0%	—	2%	—	4%	254	3%	113	3%	104	<b>3%</b>	<b>480</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,063</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,861</b>

**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003**

\* Based on a sample of 1,584 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about the location of the agency/office from which the investigation originated.

## Worker Position, Experience, and Education

Child maltreatment investigations tracked by the AIS involved 265 child welfare workers. Workers in all 11 of the AIS sites were asked to complete professional background information forms. Responses were received from 255 workers (96%). The collected information included workers' position at the office, educational experience, and number of years of experience as child welfare workers.

Table 8-5 shows the position of workers investigating reported maltreatment by primary category of substantiated maltreatment. Forty-two percent of substantiated investigations were conducted by intake workers with specialized investigation caseloads, and 41% were conducted by generalists with a mixed caseload of investigations, and cases for which they were providing ongoing services such as counseling, case management, and supervision. Workers in other positions, such as supervisors and night-duty workers, conducted 17% percent of investigations.

**Physical Abuse:** Intake specialists investigated 55% of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment, generalists 30%, and other workers 15% percent.



**Sexual Abuse:** Thirty-three percent of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment were conducted by intake workers (173 substantiated investigations), generalists conducted 47% (247 substantiated investigations) and other workers conducted 20% of substantiated sexual abuse investigations.

**Neglect:** Intake workers investigated 33% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern; generalists conducted 48% of these investigations and other workers conducted 19%.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Intake workers conducted 33% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern while generalists conducted 47% and other workers 20% of these investigations.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Intake workers conducted 51% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment while generalists conducted 35% of these investigations and other workers conducted 14%.

**Table 8-5**  
**Job Position of Investigating Worker by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
Intake and Investigation												
Specialists	55%	1,687	33%	173	33%	1,705	33%	1,093	51%	1,866	<b>42%</b>	<b>6,524</b>
Generalists with Mixed Intake and Ongoing Service Caseloads	30%	916	47%	247	48%	2,525	47%	1,556	35%	1,261	<b>41%</b>	<b>6,505</b>
Other	15%	453	20%	106	19%	992	20%	636	14%	526	<b>17%</b>	<b>2,713</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,056</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,222</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,653</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15,742</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,431 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about investigating worker's job position.												

## Years of Child Welfare Experience

Table 8-6 presents child maltreatment investigations in terms of the investigator's years of child welfare experience. Fifty-five percent of substantiated investigations (or an estimated 9,334 investigations) were conducted by workers who had more than 4 years of child welfare experience and 30% having more than 6 years of experience. Workers with 1–4 years of child welfare experience conducted 42% percent of substantiated investigations.

**Physical Abuse:** Workers with more than 4 years' experience conducted 58% of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment and workers with 1–4 years of experience conducted 39% of these investigations. Only three percent of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated concern were conducted by workers with less than one year of child welfare experience.

**Sexual Abuse:** Workers with over 4 years' experience conducted 82% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern. Workers with 1–4 years of child welfare experience conducted 18% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated concern.

**Neglect:** In 59% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated maltreatment, workers with more than 4 years' experience were involved, in 37% of cases workers with 1–4 years of child welfare experience were involved and in four percent of cases workers had less than 12 months of experience.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Workers with more than 4 years of experience conducted 54% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated maltreatment, those with 1–4 years of experience conducted 44% of these investigations while those with less than 12 months of experience conducted only two percent of investigations.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Workers with more than 4 years of experience conducted 46% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated concern, workers with 1–4 years of child welfare experience conducted 52% of these cases while workers with less than 12 months of experience only conducted two percent of these investigations.

**Table 8-6**  
**Years of Child Welfare Experience for Investigating Worker by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment											
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence		Total	
<1 Year	3%	106	0%	—	4%	255	2%	88	2%	58	<b>3%</b>	<b>507</b>
1 to 2 Years	5%	159	1%	—	6%	334	6%	204	7%	250	<b>6%</b>	<b>953</b>
3 to 4 years	34%	1121	17%	86	31%	1849	38%	1296	45%	1665	<b>36%</b>	<b>6,017</b>
5 to 6 Years	36%	1211	29%	144	28%	1661	18%	598	18%	663	<b>25%</b>	<b>4,277</b>
More than 6 Years	22%	735	53%	265	31%	1803	36%	1214	28%	1040	<b>30%</b>	<b>5,057</b>
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,332</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,902</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,676</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,811</b>

**Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003**

\* Based on a sample of 1,491 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about worker's years of child welfare experience.

## Educational Background

Table 8-7 presents substantiated child maltreatment investigations in terms of the investigator's highest completed professional degree. Forty-three percent of substantiated cases were investigated by workers with a Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW), 30% by workers with a bachelors of arts or science degree (BA or BSc), 17% by workers with a college diploma or certificate, and five percent by workers with a Masters of Social Work (MSW) or a Masters of Science (MSc).

**Physical Abuse:** Workers with a BSW conducted 46% of investigations where physical abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment, workers with a bachelor's degree conducted 27%, 20% by workers with a college diploma or certificate, while workers with an MSc conducted four percent and workers with an MSW conducted three percent of these investigations.

**Sexual Abuse:** Workers with a bachelor of arts or science degree (BA or BSc) conducted 51% of investigations where sexual abuse was the primary substantiated maltreatment. Workers with a BSW conducted 32% of these investigations, workers with a college degree or certificate conducted 13% and workers with an MSW investigated four percent.

**Neglect:** Workers with a BSW conducted 35%, while workers with a BA/BSc conducted 30% of investigations where neglect was the primary substantiated concern. Workers with a college degree or certificate conducted 24%, workers with and MSc conducted nine percent and workers with an MSW conducted two percent of these investigations.

**Emotional Maltreatment:** Workers with a BSW conducted 40% while workers with a BA/BSc conducted 42% of investigations where emotional maltreatment was the primary substantiated concern, followed by workers with a college degree or certificate (9%), MSW (6%) and workers with an MSc (3%).

**Exposure to Domestic Violence:** Workers with a BSW conducted 57% while workers with a BA/BSc conducted 19% of investigations where exposure to domestic violence was the primary substantiated maltreatment, followed by workers with a college degree or certificate (13%), MSW (9%) and workers with an MSc (2%).

**Table 8-7**  
**Highest Completed Educational Level of Investigating Worker by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

	Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment										Total	Total
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to Domestic Violence			
MSW	3%	108	4%	—	2%	102	6%	201	9%	367	5%	802
BSW	46%	1,571	32%	172	35%	2,081	40%	1,391	57%	2,229	43%	7,444
MSc	4%	136	0%	—	9%	535	3%	113	2%	80	5%	864
BA/BSc	27%	902	51%	271	30%	1,758	42%	1,470	19%	750	30%	5,151
College Diploma or Certificate	20%	668	13%	70	24%	1,459	9%	313	13%	489	17%	2,999
<b>Total Child Investigations*</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,385</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,935</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,488</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,915</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,260</b>
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect</b>												
* Based on a sample of 1,507 substantiated child maltreatment investigations with information about worker's highest educational level.												

## ■ 9. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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The Final Report for the Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2003) presents the study's methodology, the incidence estimates for all forms of reported maltreatment, and descriptions of key case characteristics. This concluding chapter summarizes the report's major findings and examines future directions for research.

### Summary of Major Findings

The results presented in this report are based on information collected directly from child welfare workers for 2,653 child maltreatment investigations that were conducted during the months of October to December 2003, in 11 randomly selected sites across Alberta. The findings are presented in six sections: (1) estimates of the incidence of reported child maltreatment by type of maltreatment and level of substantiation; (2) characteristics of the different forms of maltreatment in terms of the nature, severity and duration of injury, and the identity of the alleged perpetrators; (3) outcomes of investigations, provision of services, placement, police involvement and applications to court; (4) child characteristics, including forms of maltreatment by age and gender, and child functioning; (5) caregiver characteristics, including age and gender, income and income source, housing accommodations and other key determinants of health; and (6) child welfare referral and agency characteristics.

### Incidence of Abuse and Neglect

- An estimated 32,453 child maltreatment investigations involving children 0–17 were conducted in Alberta in 2003, a rate of 43.16 investigations per 1,000 children.
- Fifty-five percent of child maltreatment investigations, or an estimated 17,864 investigations, were substantiated by the investigating worker (23.76 per 1,000 children). In a further 19% of investigations there was insufficient evidence to substantiate maltreatment; however, maltreatment remained suspected by the investigating worker. Twenty-six percent of investigations (8,591 investigations) were unsubstantiated.
- An estimated 3,503 child investigations (20% of all substantiated maltreatment) involved physical abuse as the primary concern. This is an incidence rate of 4.66 substantiated investigations per 1,000 children.
- An estimated 537 substantiated investigations (three percent) involved sexual abuse as the primary reason for investigation, or approximately 0.72 substantiated investigations per 1,000 children.

- Neglect was the most frequently investigated category of substantiated maltreatment. An estimated 6,064 substantiated investigations (34% of maltreatment) involved neglect as the primary reason for investigation. This represents more than 8 substantiated investigations per 1,000 children.
- Emotional maltreatment was the primary reason for investigation in an estimated 3,647 child investigations (20% or 4.85 substantiated maltreatment investigations per 1,000 children).
- Witnessing domestic violence the primary concern for investigation in 4,112 substantiated investigations (23% of cases). This equals 5.46 substantiated maltreatment investigations per 1,000 children.

### *Characteristics of Maltreatment*

- Some form of physical harm was documented in 11% of substantiated child maltreatment investigations. In four percent of investigations (698 substantiated child investigations), harm was sufficiently severe to require treatment. In a further seven percent of investigations (1,345 child investigations), harm was noted but no treatment was considered to be required.
- Physical harm primarily involved bruises, cuts, and scrapes (seven percent of substantiated maltreatment) or other health conditions (four percent of maltreatment). Physical harm was noted more frequently in cases when physical abuse was the primary form of substantiated maltreatment.
- Emotional harm was indicated if workers noticed changes in the child's development, self-regulation or emotional state. Emotional harm was noted in 30% of all substantiated maltreatment (5,328 investigations), and in 23% of substantiated maltreatment investigations symptoms were determined to require some intervention.
- Forty three percent of all substantiated maltreatment involved situations that had been ongoing for greater than six months, while 21% involved multiple events occurring for less than 6 months. Twenty three percent of maltreatment cases were identified as a single event.
- Most investigations involved allegations against parents: mothers (60%), fathers (43%), stepfathers/common-law partners (15%) or stepmothers/common-law partners (three percent). Other than parents, relatives were the most frequently identified perpetrators (six percent). Only four percent of all maltreatment investigations involved suspected non-familial members as the alleged perpetrator: two percent of investigations focused on a parent's boyfriend/girlfriend, and one percent involved allegations against an other acquaintance. It should be noted that in many instances, non-familial allegations of abuse are investigated by the police, not by a child welfare authority.

### *Outcomes of Investigations*

- More than two-thirds of all substantiated child maltreatment investigations had a previous case opening with child welfare while 26% of substantiated investigations had a record of more than three previous case openings.
- An estimated 10,369 substantiated child maltreatment investigations (58%) were identified as remaining open for ongoing services, while 42% of investigations were to be closed. This rate of ongoing services was highest for substantiated neglect investigations (70%) and emotional maltreatment (66%).
- At least one referral to a program designed to offer services beyond the parameters of ongoing child welfare services was made in 73% of substantiated investigations, involving an estimated 13,019 children. Twenty-nine percent of substantiated child investigations involved a referral to an in-home parent support program, and 24% involved a referral to some form of family or parent counseling. Referrals to drug and alcohol counseling and psychiatric/psychological counseling were each made in 20% of all substantiated child investigations. Child-focused referrals were made less frequently with cultural services (6%) being the service that was most frequently utilized.
- An estimated 2,092 children (12% of substantiated child investigations) were placed in formal child welfare care (kinship foster care, other family foster care, group home or residential/secure treatment), during the initial intake investigation. An additional eight percent of substantiated child investigations resulted in the child moving to informal kinship care, while placement was considered for an additional five percent of children. Almost a third of all substantiated neglect investigations resulted in a child being placed outside of their home in either formal or informal care.
- Applications to child welfare court were made in an estimated 2,181 substantiated child investigations (12% of substantiated child investigations) and were being considered in an additional 10% of substantiated child investigations.
- Fifteen percent of substantiated child investigations involved a police investigation related to the child maltreatment in addition to the child welfare investigation. Criminal charges were laid in three percent of substantiated child investigations and considered for another two percent.

### *Child Characteristics*

- The overall incidence rate per thousand children was slightly higher for boys (25.01 per 1,000 children) than for females (22.43 per 1,000 children), but the gender distribution varies by age group.
- Rates of investigation were generally lower for children over the age of 15, as the incidence rate was 14.91 per 1000 children for females and 11.00 for males. Incidence rates were highest for females 14 years of age (33.34 per 1000 girls) and nine year old boys (41.14 per 1000 boys).

- A minimum of one child functioning issue was indicated by the investigating worker in two-thirds of all substantiated child investigations (an estimated 11,711 child investigations).
- At least one behavioural child functioning issues was reported in 57% of substantiated child investigations and these specific concerns included other behavioural or emotional issues (36%), irregular school attendance (24%), negative peer involvement (23%) and violence toward others (19%).
- A child functioning issues related to the child's physical, emotional or cognitive health was identified in 47% of all substantiated maltreatment investigations and most frequently indicated depression or anxiety (28%), learning disability (22%), while developmental delay (15%) and placement in specialized educational services (14%).
- Twenty-nine percent of all substantiated child investigations involved children of Aboriginal heritage. This included children with First Nations Status (17%), Métis children (6%) and children with First Nations Non-Status (5%).
- A comparison of service dispositions for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children found that Aboriginal children had higher rates of placement, child welfare court applications, and cases remaining open for ongoing services.

### *Household Characteristics*

- Twenty-nine percent of substantiated child investigations involved children who lived with their two biological parents, and 19% lived in a two-parent blended family where one of the caregivers was a stepparent, a common-law partner, or an adoptive parent who was not the biological parent of at least one of the children in the family.
- Forty percent of all substantiated child investigation occurred for children living in a family led by a lone-parent (34% by a female-parent and six percent by a male-parent). In comparison, 22% of families with at least one child under the age of 14 were led by a lone-parent according to 1996 Census information.
- Of those substantiated investigations involving children living with a mother, 67% lived with a mother who was over 30, and 33% of children lived with a mother under 30. Of substantiated investigations involving children living with a father, 81% lived with a father who was over 30, and 19% with a father under the age of 30.
- Just over half of all substantiated child investigations (52%) involved children living in a family that derived their primary income from full-time employment. Twenty-eight percent of substantiated child investigations involved families receiving benefits, Employment Insurance or social assistance as their primary source of income. Thirteen percent of families relied on part-time employment, multiple jobs, or seasonal employment.



- Fifty-nine percent of substantiated child investigations involved children living in rental accommodations (45% private market rentals and 14% public housing), 27% involved children living in purchased homes, four percent in other accommodations and two percent in shelters or hostels. According to the 1996 census, 28% of families with never-married children living at home rented their home, while 72% owned their home.
- A parental/family stressor was identified in 82% of substantiated child investigations for female caregivers (an estimated 14,714 substantiated child maltreatment investigations). The most frequently noted concerns were: victim of domestic violence (56%), few social supports (53%), maltreated as a child (36%), and mental health issues 34%.
- A parental/family stressor was identified in 48% of substantiated child investigations for male caregivers (an estimated 8,513 substantiated child maltreatment investigations). The most frequently noted concerns were: perpetrator of domestic violence (31%), few social supports (26%), alcohol abuse (21%), drug or solvent abuse (17%) and maltreated as a child (16%).

### *Referral and Agency Characteristics*

- Over two-thirds of all referrals for substantiated maltreatment (68%) were made by professionals through their contact with children. The largest source of referrals was school personnel who referred an estimated 4,065 children to child welfare authorities, representing 23% of all substantiated child referrals. Police referred 18% of substantiated child investigations while community agencies referred another 12%
- Non-professional community sources referred 30% of all substantiated child investigations. This included referrals from parents (12%), relatives (8%), neighbours and friends (6%) and child self-referrals (4%).
- While most unsubstantiated reports were considered to have been made in good faith, two percent of all allegations of maltreatment involving an estimated 603 investigated children were judged to have been intentionally false. In another six percent of child investigations, the investigating worker was unable to determine whether or not an unsubstantiated report had been made in good faith.
- Large metropolitan child welfare services conducted 59% of all substantiated child investigations in Alberta in 2003. Mixed urban/rural offices conducted 38% of substantiated maltreatment investigations while small, primarily rural offices conducted three percent.
- Forty-two percent of substantiated child investigations were conducted by intake workers with specialized investigation caseloads. A further 41% were conducted by generalists with a mixed work load of investigations and ongoing cases. Workers in other positions (supervisors, night duty workers) conducted 17% of the substantiated maltreatment.

- Over half (55%) of substantiated child investigations, involving 9,334 child investigations, were conducted by workers who had more than four years of child welfare experience, with 30% having more than six years of experience. Workers with between one and four years of experience conducted 42% of all substantiated child investigations.
- Less than half of all substantiated child investigations were conducted by workers with a BSW (43%) or a MSW (5%). Thirty percent of substantiated child investigations were conducted by workers with a BA or BSc., while an additional 17% were completed by workers with a college diploma or certificate.

## Further Research

The 2003 study provides the first opportunity to examine province-wide data for Alberta. The AIS-2003 dataset will provide researchers across the province with the opportunity to examine in more detail the factors underlying reported and substantiated maltreatment. Given the types of maltreatment being reported, it will be particularly important to examine each category of maltreatment, as well as factors occurring at the level of specific sub-forms of maltreatment. It will also be important to conduct analyses of trends specific to different age groups as well as to specific populations, such as children from Aboriginal backgrounds.

The AIS-2003 is a rich dataset of 2,653 child maltreatment investigations, with information on child and family characteristics, forms and severity of maltreatment and outcomes of investigation. It is a large provincial dataset that is available for research purposes. The dataset lends itself particularly well to three major lines of inquiry: (1) exploring the characteristics of different forms of reported maltreatment; (2) determining factors that influence outcomes of investigations (substantiation, child welfare court, criminal charges, placement in out-of-home care and provision of services); and (3) comparing the AIS to other independent datasets on child maltreatment.

The past five years have brought about dramatic shifts in the delivery of child welfare services in Alberta. Following a review of the *Child Welfare Act* in 2002 the new *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* was introduced on November 1, 2004. This new legislation created a new focus on permanency planning for children and changed the provincial definitions of both child neglect and emotional maltreatment. In recent years many jurisdictions across Canada have examined the implementation of alternative response models to child welfare services. Alberta is leading the way through the development and application of the Alberta response model that were formalized within the *Child, Youth, and Family Enhancement Act*. This provides children and families in Alberta with two pathways for child welfare service: child intervention services and family enhancement services. The AIS-2003 data was collected during the transition phase prior to the implementation of the new legislation. This provides an excellent baseline of statistical information that can be used in the future to explore the changes that follow the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*. Plans are currently

being developed for the next cycle of the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect to be conducted in 2008. Conducting a second cycle of the Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect at that time will support a critical analysis of the impact and utility of this legislation and practice.

In addition to providing a periodic provincial data collection system, the AIS-2003 also supports provincial efforts to better integrate their administrative information systems. With more integrated information systems, jurisdictions across the province will be in a better position to learn from diversity of policies and programs that have been developed. The continued surveillance of the incidence of child maltreatment and the opportunities to examine trends that emerge over time, will assist policy makers, practitioners, and researchers in the prevention of future child maltreatment.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **OIS 1998 Research Associates**

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AIS-2003 Site Researchers provided training and data collection support at 11 AIS sites. Their enthusiasm and dedication to the study were critical in ensuring its success.

The following is a list of Site Researchers who participated in the AIS-2003.

**Jennifer Banks**

Faculty of Social Work  
University of Calgary

**Nathalie Forest**

Faculty of Social Work  
University of Calgary

**Bruce MacLaurin (AIS-2003 Principal Investigator)**

Faculty of Social Work  
University of Calgary

**Megan McCormack**

Faculty of Social Work  
University of Calgary

**Ellen Perrault**

Faculty of Social Work  
University of Calgary

**Corbin Shangreux**

First Nations Child & Family Caring Society

## APPENDIX B

### Glossary of Terms

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The following is an explanatory list of terms used throughout the Major Findings Report for the Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2003).

**Age group:** The age range of children included in the AIS-2003 sample. Unless otherwise specified, all data are presented for children between newborn and 17 years of age. The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS-1998) and (CIS-2003) both present data for children between newborn and 15 years of age. Caution should be used when comparing these reports.

**AIS-2003:** *Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003.*

**Annual Incidence:** The number of child maltreatment investigations per 1000 children in a given year.

**Case Duplication:** Children who are subject of an investigation more than once in a calendar year are counted in most child welfare statistics as separate “cases” or “investigations.” As a count of children, these statistics are therefore duplicated.

**Case Openings:** Cases that appear on office statistics as openings. These may be counted on a family basis or a child basis. Openings do not include referrals that have been screened-out.

**Categories of Maltreatment:** The five key classifications categories under which the 25 forms of maltreatment were subsumed: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence.

**Child Maltreatment Investigations:** Case openings that meet the AIS-2003 criteria for investigated maltreatment (see Figure 1-1, Chapter 1, AIS-2003 Major Findings Report)

**Childhood Prevalence:** The proportion of people maltreated at any point during their childhood.

**CIS-2003:** *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003.*

**CWSA:** A child welfare service area, which is a geographic area served by a distinct child welfare office. In Alberta, a child welfare service area refers to a child welfare district or regional office. In some cases several offices serve the same geographic area and in these instances, all child welfare offices sharing the same geographic boundaries are counted as a single child welfare service area.

**Definitional Framework:** The AIS-2003 provides an estimate of the number of cases (child-based, age under 18) of alleged child maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional maltreatment) reported to and investigated by Alberta child welfare services in 2003 (screened-out reports not

included). The estimates are broken down by three levels of substantiation (substantiated, suspected, unsubstantiated). Cases opened more than once during the year are counted as separate investigations.

**Forms of Maltreatment:** Specific types of maltreatment (e.g., hit with an object, sexual exploitation, or exposure to domestic violence) that are classified under the five AIS-2003 Categories of Maltreatment. The AIS-2003 captured 25 forms of maltreatment.

**Level of Identification and Substantiation:** There are four key levels in the case identification process: detection, reporting, investigation, and substantiation (see Figure 1-1, Major Findings Report). *Detection* is the first stage in the case identification process. Little is known about the relationship between detected and undetected cases. *Reporting* suspected child maltreatment is required by law in all provinces and territories in Canada. The AIS-2003 does not document unreported cases. *Investigated* cases are subject to various screening practices, which may vary across sites. The AIS-2003 did not track screened-out cases, nor did it track new incidents of maltreatment on already opened cases. *Substantiation* distinguishes between cases where maltreatment is confirmed following an investigation, and cases where maltreatment is not confirmed. The AIS-2003 uses a three tiered classification system, in which a *suspected* level provides an important clinical distinction for cases where maltreatment is suspected to have occurred by the investigating worker, but cannot be substantiated.

**NIS:** U.S. *National Incidence Study of Report Child Abuse and Neglect*.

**Non-maltreatment cases:** Cases open for child welfare services for reasons other than suspected maltreatment (e.g., prevention services, parent-child conflict, services for young pregnant women, etc.).

**Reporting year:** The year in which child maltreatment cases were opened. The reporting year for the AIS is 2003.

**Screened-out:** Referrals that are not opened for an investigation.

**Two-parent Blended Family:** A family in which one of the caregivers was identified as a step-parent, a common-law partner, or an adoptive parent who was not the biological parent of at least one of the children in the family.

**Unit of Analysis:** The denominator used in calculating maltreatment rates. In the case of the AIS-2003 the unit of analysis is the child investigation.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Maltreatment Assessment Form**

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The Maltreatment Assessment Form consists of three pages:

- Intake Face Sheet;
- Household Information Sheet; and
- Child Information Sheet



Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect – Cycle II

Étude canadienne sur l'incidence des cas signalés de violence et de négligence à l'égard des enfants – Cycle II

Funded by Health Canada and supported by the Provincial and Territorial Governments of Canada with additional funding from



**CIS Maltreatment Assessment**

INTAKE FACE SHEET (Please complete this face sheet for all cases)

CIS OFFICE USE ONLY

	-		-		
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1. Date referral was received: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]      2. Date case opened: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

3. Date CIS Maltreatment Assessment form was filled out: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

4. Source of allegation/referral (Fill in all that apply)
- Custodial parent     Neighbour/Friend     Public health nurse     Mental health professional     Police  
 Non-custodial parent     Social assistance worker     Physician     Other child welfare service     Community agency  
 Child (subject of referral)     Crisis service/Shelter     School     Day care centre     Anonymous  
 Relative     Hospital     Community/Recreation centre     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please describe referral and investigated maltreatment

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CIS OFFICE USE ONLY


This shaded area to be filled only by the Investigating worker

CIS OFFICE USE ONLY	6. a) List first names of all children in the home (19 years and under)	b) Age	c) Gender of child	d) Children	
Referred	Investigated				
<input type="checkbox"/>		[ ] [ ]	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		[ ] [ ]	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/>		[ ] [ ]	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		[ ] [ ]	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Was child maltreatment alleged by the referral or suspected during the assessment period?  Yes  No

8. Was an assessment/investigation initiated?

Yes ⇒ Complete the remainder of the CIS Maltreatment Assessment

No ⇒ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CIS OFFICE USE ONLY


Assessment worker's name: \_\_\_\_\_

First two letters of Family surname: [ ] [ ]

(Other Family surname, if applicable): [ ] [ ]

Case number: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

CIS OFFICE USE ONLY

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Postal code: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] - [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

or address: \_\_\_\_\_

This information will remain totally confidential, and no identifying information will be used outside of your own agency.  
 This tear-off portion of the instrument will be destroyed at this location following the coded entry of this data by one of our researchers.  
 Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto 246 Bloor St. W., Toronto ON M5S 1A1 • tel: 416-978-2527 • fax: 416-978-7072  
 11/09/03



**PROCEDURES**

1. The **Intake Face Sheet** should be completed on every case that you assess/investigate, even if there is no suspected maltreatment.
2. The entire **CIS Maltreatment Assessment** form (*Intake Face Sheet, Household Information Sheet and the Child Information Sheet(s)*) should be completed for cases where maltreatment was alleged or suspected at any point during the assessment/investigation.

**Note:** Currently open/active cases with new allegations of child maltreatment are not included in the CIS.

**COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS**

To ensure accuracy and minimize response time, the **CIS Maltreatment Assessment** should be completed when you complete the standard written assessment/investigation report for the child maltreatment investigation.

Unless otherwise specified, all information *must* be completed by the investigating worker.

Complete *all* items to the best of your knowledge. To increase accuracy of data scanning please avoid making marks beyond the fill in circles.

Thank you for your time and interest.

**COMMENTS**

Comments: **Intake information**

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Comments: **Household information**

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Comments: **Child information**

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This information will remain totally confidential, and no identifying information will be used outside of your own agency.  
This tear-off portion of the instrument will be destroyed at this location following the coded entry of this data by one of our researchers.  
Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto 246 Bloor St. W., Toronto ON M5S 1A1 • tel: 416-978-2527 • fax: 416-978-7072

**CIS Maltreatment Assessment: Household Information**

CIS OFFICE USE ONLY

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<p><b>1. Caregiver A in the home</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Biological parent   <input type="radio"/> Common-law partner   <input type="radio"/> Foster parent</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Adoptive parent   <input type="radio"/> Step-parent   <input type="radio"/> Grandparent</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other:</p>	<p><b>1. Caregiver B</b>   <input type="radio"/> No other caregiver</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Caregiver in home   <input type="radio"/> Caregiver not in home</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Biological parent   <input type="radio"/> Common-law partner   <input type="radio"/> Foster parent</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Adoptive parent   <input type="radio"/> Step-parent   <input type="radio"/> Grandparent</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other:</p>																																																																																																																								
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Drug/solvent abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																																																																																																																					
Criminal activity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																																																																																																																					
Cognitive impairment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																																																																																																																					
Mental health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																																																																																																																					
Physical health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																																																																																																																					
Few social supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																																																																																																																					
Maltreated as a child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																																																																																																																					
Victim of domestic violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																																																																																																																					
Perpetrator of domestic violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																																																																																																																					
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																																																																																																																					
<p><b>10. Other adults in the home</b> <small>(Fill in all that apply)</small></p> <p><input type="radio"/> None   <input type="radio"/> Grandparent</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Children &gt;19   <input type="radio"/> Other:</p>	<p><b>15. Unsafe housing conditions</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes   <input type="radio"/> No   <input type="radio"/> Unknown</p>	<p><b>19. Case will stay open for on-going child welfare services</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes   <input type="radio"/> No</p>																																																																																																																							
<p><b>11. Caregiver(s) outside the home</b> <small>(Fill in all that apply)</small></p> <p><input type="radio"/> None   <input type="radio"/> Father   <input type="radio"/> Mother</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Grandparent   <input type="radio"/> Other:</p>	<p><b>16. Home overcrowded</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes   <input type="radio"/> No   <input type="radio"/> Unknown</p>	<p><b>20. Referral(s) for any family member</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> No referral made <small>(Fill in all that apply)</small></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Parent support group   <input type="radio"/> Psychiatric/psychological services</p> <p><input type="radio"/> In-home parenting support   <input type="radio"/> Special education placement</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other family/parent counselling   <input type="radio"/> Recreational services</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Drug/alcohol counselling   <input type="radio"/> Victim support program</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Welfare/social assistance   <input type="radio"/> Medical/dental services</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Food bank   <input type="radio"/> Child/day care</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Shelter services   <input type="radio"/> Cultural services</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Domestic violence services   <input type="radio"/> Other:</p>																																																																																																																							
<p><b>12. Child custody dispute at this time</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes   <input type="radio"/> No   <input type="radio"/> Unknown</p>	<p><b>17. Approximate number of moves in past 12 months</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> 0   <input type="radio"/> 1   <input type="radio"/> 2   <input type="radio"/> 3 or more</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Unknown</p>																																																																																																																								
<p><b>13. Household income estimated</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> &lt;\$15,000   <input type="radio"/> \$15-24,999   <input type="radio"/> \$25-40,000</p> <p><input type="radio"/> &gt;\$40,000   <input type="radio"/> Unknown</p>	<p><b>18 a) Case previously opened</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Never   <input type="radio"/> 1 time   <input type="radio"/> 2-3 times</p> <p><input type="radio"/> &gt;3 times   <input type="radio"/> Unknown</p> <p><b>b) If yes, how long since previous opening</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> &lt;3 mo   <input type="radio"/> 3-6 mo   <input type="radio"/> 7-12 mo</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 13-24 mo   <input type="radio"/> &gt;24 mo</p>																																																																																																																								
<p><b>14. Housing</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Own home   <input type="radio"/> Rental</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Public housing   <input type="radio"/> Shelter/Hotel</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Unknown   <input type="radio"/> Other:</p>																																																																																																																									

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### CIS Maltreatment Assessment: Child Information

**First name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **21. Sex**    Male    Female

**22. Age**  
 <1    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10    11    12    13    14    15    16    17    18    19

**23. Aboriginal status**    Not Aboriginal    First Nation status    First Nation non-status    Métis    Inuit    Other:

24. Child functioning <small>(Are you aware if any of the following apply to this child at this point in time?)</small>				
	Confirmed	Suspected	No	Unknown
Depression/anxiety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ADD/ADHD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative peer involvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alcohol abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drug/solvent abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-harming behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Violence toward others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running (One incident)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running (Multiple incidents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inappropriate sexual behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other behav./emotional problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special education services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Irregular school attendance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developmental delay	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance abuse related birth defects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive toxicology at birth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other health conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Psychiatric disorder	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth Criminal Justice Act involvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**25. Maltreatment Codes**

<b>Physical abuse</b> 1 - Shake, push, grab or throw 2 - Hit with hand 3 - Punch, kick or bite 4 - Hit with object 5 - Other physical abuse	<b>Sexual abuse</b> 6 - Penetration 7 - Attempted penetration 8 - Oral sex 9 - Fondling 10 - Sex talk 11 - Voyeurism 12 - Exhibitionism 13 - Exploitation	<b>Neglect</b> 14 - Failure to supervise: physical harm 15 - Failure to supervise: sexual abuse 16 - Permitting criminal behaviour 17 - Physical neglect 18 - Medical neglect 19 - Failure to provide psych. treatment 20 - Abandonment 21 - Educational neglect	<b>Emotional maltreatment</b> 22 - Emotional abuse 23 - Non-organic failure to thrive 24 - Emotional neglect 25 - Exposed to domestic violence
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<b>Insert Maltreatment Codes in the boxes below</b> <small>(Enter primary form of maltreatment first)</small> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<b>26. Alleged perpetrator</b> <small>(Fill in all that apply)</small> 1st <input type="radio"/> 2nd <input type="radio"/> 3rd <input type="radio"/> Caregiver A: _____ Caregiver B: _____ Other: _____	<b>27. Substantiation</b> <small>(Fill in only one per column)</small> 1st <input type="radio"/> 2nd <input type="radio"/> 3rd <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Substantiated <input type="radio"/> Suspected <input type="radio"/> Unfounded
1st <input type="radio"/> 2nd <input type="radio"/> 3rd <input type="radio"/> <b>28. Was maltreatment a form of punishment?</b> <input type="radio"/> Not applicable (unfounded) <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Unknown	<b>27a. If unfounded, was the report a malicious referral?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown	<b>31. Physical harm</b> a) Medical treatment required <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No / N/A no harm b) Health or safety seriously endangered by suspected or substantiated maltreatment <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No / N/A no harm c) History of undetected or misdiagnosed injuries <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown
1st <input type="radio"/> 2nd <input type="radio"/> 3rd <input type="radio"/> <b>29. Duration of maltreatment</b> <small>(Fill in only one per column)</small> <input type="radio"/> Not applicable (unfounded) <input type="radio"/> Single incident <input type="radio"/> Less than six months <input type="radio"/> More than six months <input type="radio"/> Unknown	<b>32. Mental or emotional harm</b> a) No current signs, but mental or emotional harm is probable <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No b) Child shows signs of mental or emotional harm <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No c) Child requires therapeutic treatment <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<b>34. Placement during investigation</b> <input type="radio"/> No placement required <input type="radio"/> Placement considered <input type="radio"/> Informal kinship care <input type="radio"/> Kinship foster care <input type="radio"/> Other family foster care <input type="radio"/> Group home <input type="radio"/> Residential/secure treatment
1st <input type="radio"/> 2nd <input type="radio"/> 3rd <input type="radio"/> <b>30. Physical harm</b> <small>(Fill in all that apply)</small> <input type="radio"/> No Harm <input type="radio"/> Bruises/Cuts/Scrapes <input type="radio"/> Burns and scalds <input type="radio"/> Broken bones <input type="radio"/> Head trauma <input type="radio"/> Fatal <input type="radio"/> Other health condition:	<b>33. Physician/nurse conducted a physical examination of the child as part of the investigation</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<b>35. Child welfare court</b> <input type="radio"/> No court considered <input type="radio"/> Application considered <input type="radio"/> Application made <b>a) Referral to mediation/alternative response</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
		<b>36. Previous reports</b> a) Child previously reported to child welfare for suspected maltreatment <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown b) If yes, was the maltreatment substantiated? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown
		<b>37. Police involvement in child maltreatment investigation</b> <input type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> Charges being considered <input type="radio"/> Investigation only <input type="radio"/> Charges laid
		<b>38. Police involvement in adult domestic violence investigation</b> <input type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> Charges laid <input type="radio"/> Investigation only <input type="radio"/> Unknown <input type="radio"/> Charges being considered <input type="radio"/> N/A
		<b>39. Caregivers use spanking as a form of discipline</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown

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## **APPENDIX D**

### **AIS/CIS-2003 Guide Book**

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# THE CANADIAN INCIDENCE STUDY OF REPORTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CYCLE II GUIDEBOOK

## BACKGROUND

The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-- *CIS-Cycle II* -- is the second national study of child abuse and neglect investigations in Canada. Results from *CIS-Cycle I* (conducted in 1998) and its precursor the 1993 Ontario Incidence Study have been widely disseminated in conferences, reports, books and journal articles (see Centre of Excellence <http://www.cccw-ccpb.ca/Pubs/PubsCIS.html> and Health Canada websites [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsps/cm-vee/cis\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsps/cm-vee/cis_e.html)) and have had an impact on the development of child welfare services and policies across Canada.

CIS Cycle II is funded by Health Canada. Additional funding has been provided by Bell Canada, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, and the Provinces of Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and Prince Edward Island with significant in-kind support provided by every participating jurisdiction. The project is managed by a team of researchers at the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work, and Laval University in Québec.

## OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the CIS-Cycle II is to provide reliable estimates of the scope and characteristics of reported child abuse and neglect in Canada. Specifically, the study is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- produce national estimates of the incidence of investigated abuse and neglect in Canada in 2003;
- examine changes between 1998 to 2003 investigations of abuse and neglect;
- enhance our understanding of the types and severity of reported child maltreatment;
- collect information to help develop programs and policies for at risk children and youths, and to assist in the targeting of resources for children at risk of abuse;
- explore the role of selected determinants of health (e.g. physical and social environments, social support, income, social status, healthy child development, and personal coping practices) on the incidence and characteristics of child abuse and neglect.

*CANADIAN INCIDENCE STUDY-CIS II I*

### **SAMPLE**

Fifty-seven Child Welfare Service Areas (CWSA) across Canada were randomly<sup>1</sup> selected from the total number of child welfare offices and agencies. A minimum of one CWSA was chosen from each province and territory. Provinces were allocated additional CWSAs based on the provincial proportion of the Canadian child population and on oversampling funds provided in Alberta, Quebec, Ontario and Prince Edward Island.

Information will be collected on all child maltreatment investigations opened during the three-month period between October 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003.

### **CIS MALTREATMENT ASSESSMENT**

The *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* form was designed to collect information from child welfare investigators on the results of their investigations. It consists of three yellow legal sized pages with the "Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect: CIS Maltreatment Assessment: Cycle II" clearly marked on the front sheet.

The *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* is made up of: an *Intake Face Sheet*, a *Comment Sheet* (which is on the back of the Intake Face Sheet), a *Household Information* sheet and a *Child Information* sheet (please refer to *Frequently Asked Question # 2*). The form is designed to be completed in ten minutes.

The *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* examines a range of family, child, and case status variables. This includes household demographics, caregiver profile, source of referral, health determinants, outcomes of the investigation on a child-specific basis (including up to three forms of maltreatment), nature of harm, duration of maltreatment, identity of alleged perpetrator, placement in care, child welfare and criminal court involvement.

### **TRAINING**

Training sessions will be held during September and early October 2003 for all workers involved in the study. Your Site Researcher will visit your agency/office prior to the data collection period and will continue to make regular visits during the data collection process. These on-site visits will allow the Site Researcher to collect forms, enter data, answer questions, and resolve any instrumental problems that may arise. If you have any questions about the study, please contact your Site Researcher (see contact information on the inside of the front cover of the *CIS Guide Book*).

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times during data collection and analysis.

To guarantee client confidentiality, all near identifying information (located at the bottom of the *Intake Face Sheet*) will be coded at your agency/office. Near identifying information is data, which could potentially identify a family (e.g. agency/office case file number; the first two letters of the family name; and the first names of the children in the family). This information is required to for purposes of data verification only. This tear-off portion of the *Intake Face Sheet* will be

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<sup>1</sup> Because of differences in data collection methods, the eight CWSAs in Quebec were not randomly selected.

stored in a locked area at your agency/office until the study is completed, and then it will be destroyed.

The completed *CIS Maltreatment Assessments* (with all identifying information removed) will be sent to the University of Toronto site for data entry and will then be kept under double lock (a locked RCMP approved filing cabinet in a locked office at the University of Toronto). Access to the forms, for any additional verification purposes, will be restricted to select research team members authorized by Health Canada.

Published analyses will be conducted at the national level only and at the provincial level in Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and Prince Edward Island. If requested by a site, specific data will be made available for an internal summary report; however, this information will not be externally shared. Worker or team specific data will not be made available to anyone, under any circumstances.

## COMPLETING THE CIS MALTREATMENT ASSESSMENT

The *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* should be completed by the investigating worker when she/he is writing the standard investigation report. In most jurisdictions this report is required within 4 to 12 weeks of the date the case was opened.

It is essential that all items on the *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* be completed. Use the "Unknown" response if you are unsure. Please be sure that all items are completed. If the categories provided do not adequately describe a case, indicate the specific nature of the case in the available space, or use the additional information section on the *Comment Sheet*. If you have any questions during the study you are encouraged to contact your Site Researcher. The number is listed on the inside cover of *CIS-Cycle II Guide Book*.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### #1 What cases should I complete a CIS Maltreatment Assessment on?

You should complete a *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* for all cases opened during the case selection period (October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003). Generally, if your agency/office counts the case in its official opening statistics reported to a Ministry or government office, then the case is included in the sample and a *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* should be completed, unless your Site Researcher indicates otherwise.

### #2 Should I complete a form on only those cases where abuse is suspected?

You should complete an *Intake Face Sheet* and the tear-off portion of the instrument for all cases opened during the data selection period at your agency office (e.g. pre-natal counseling, child/youth behaviour problems, request for services from another office or agency, and where applicable, screened out cases).

If maltreatment was suspected at any point during the investigation, and the case was opened for assessment investigation (not screened out) then you should complete the remainder of the *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* (both *Household Information* and *Child Information* sheets).

CANADIAN INCIDENCE STUDY-CIS II 3

Maltreatment may be alleged by the person(s) making the report, or by any other person(s), including yourself, during the investigation. For example, complete a *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* if a case was initially referred for parent/adolescent conflict, but later had suspicions regarding abuse and maltreatment during the investigation.

**#3 Should I complete a CIS Maltreatment Assessment on screened out cases?**

The procedures for screening cases vary considerably across Canada. While the CIS will not try to capture informally screened out cases, we will gather face sheet information on screened out cases that are formally counted as case openings by your agency/office. If in doubt, please contact your Site Researcher.

**#4 When should I complete the CIS Maltreatment Assessment?**

You should complete the *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* at the same time that you prepare the assessment/investigation report for your agency or office (usually within the first two months of a case being opened). For some child maltreatment investigations, you may find that this does not allow enough time to document the outcome of the full assessment, however, please complete the form to the best of your abilities.

**#5 Who should complete the CIS Maltreatment Assessment if more than one person works on the investigation?**

The *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* should be completed by the worker who conducts the intake assessment and prepares the assessment or investigation report. The worker with primary responsibility for the case should complete the *CIS Maltreatment Assessment*, if several workers investigate a case.

**#6 What should I do if more than one child is investigated?**

The *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* primarily focuses on the household, however, the *Child Information* sheet is specific to the individual child being investigated. Complete one child sheet for each investigated child. In jurisdictions where all children are automatically investigated, only include those children for whom maltreatment was actually suspected. Additional pads of *Child Information* sheets are available in your training package.

**#7 Will I receive training for the CIS Maltreatment Assessment?**

All workers who complete investigations in your agency/office will receive training prior to the start of the data collection period. If a worker is unable to attend the training session or is hired after the start of the Canadian Incidence Study, he/she should contact the Site Researcher regarding any specific questions about the form. Your Site Researcher's name and contact number is on the inside cover of the *CIS Guide Book*.

**#8 What should I do with the completed forms?**

Give the completed *CIS Maltreatment Investigation Form* to your local Agency/Office Contact Person. All forms will be reviewed by the Site Researcher during a site visit, and should he/she have additional questions they will contact you during this visit. Your Agency/Office Contact Person is listed on the *CIS Guide Book* cover.

**4 CYCLE II: CANADIAN INCIDENCE STUDY**



**#9 Is this information confidential?**

The information you provide is confidential, and no identifying information will leave your agency/office. Your Site Researcher will code and enter any near identifying information from the bottom portion of the tear-off portion of the **Intake Sheet** of the **CIS Maltreatment Assessment**, and then destroy that portion of the sheet when the CIS concludes. Please refer to the section the previous section on Confidentiality.

**DEFINITIONS: INTAKE FACE SHEET**

Sections that are shaded require the clinical judgment of the investigating worker. Other information (18a, 18b, 19, 36a) may be completed by an agency/office clerical staff or Site Researcher.

**QUESTION 1: DATE THAT REFERRAL WAS RECEIVED**

This date refers to the day that the referral source made initial contact with your agency or office.

**QUESTION 2: DATE THE CASE WAS OPENED IF NOT AT TIME OF REFERRAL**

The date the case was opened.

**QUESTION 3. DATE CIS MALTREATMENT ASSESSMENT WAS COMPLETED**

Please complete the date that the **CIS Child Maltreatment Assessment Form** was completed.

**QUESTION 4: SOURCE OF ALLEGATION/REFERRAL**

Please fill in all sources of referral that are applicable for each case. This refers to separate and independent contacts with the Child Welfare agency or office. When a young person tells a school principal of abuse and the school principal reports this to Child Welfare you would fill in the circle for this referral as "School". There was only one contact and referral in this case. If a second source (neighbour) contacted Child Welfare and also reported a form of maltreatment, then you would also fill in the circle for "Neighbour/friend". Please use this section to fill in all sources of referral.

**Custodial parent:** Includes parent identified in Section (1) of "Caregiver A or B".

**Non-custodial parent:** Contact from an estranged spouse (e.g. individual reporting the parenting practices of her/his spouse).

**Child:** A self-referral by any child listed on the **Intake Face Sheet** of the **CIS Maltreatment Assessment**.

**Relative:** Any relative of the child in question. If child lives with foster parents, and relative of the foster parents report maltreatment, please specify under "Other".

**Neighbour/friend:** Includes any neighbour or friend of the children or his/her family.

**Social assistance worker:** Refers to a Social Assistance Worker involved with the household.

**Crisis service/shelter:** Includes any shelter or crisis service for domestic violence or homelessness.

CANADIAN INCIDENCE STUDY-CIS II 5

**Hospital:** Referral originates from a hospital and is made by either a doctor, nurse or social worker rather than a family physician, or nurse.

**Public health nurse:** Includes nurses involved in services such as family support, family visitation programs and community medical outreach.

**Physician:** A report from any family physician with a single or ongoing contact with the child and/or family.

**School:** Any school personnel, (teacher, principal, teacher's aide, etc.).

**Community/Recreation centre:** Refers to any form of recreation and community activity programs (e.g. organized sports leagues or Boys and Girls Clubs).

**Mental health professional/agency:** Includes family service agencies, mental health centres (other than hospital psychiatric wards), and private mental health practitioners (psychologists, social workers, other therapists) working outside of a school/hospital/Child Welfare/YJA setting.

**Other child welfare services:** Includes referrals from mandated Child Welfare service providers from other jurisdictions or provinces.

**Day care centre:** Refers to a child care or day care provider.

**Police:** Any member of Police Force, municipal, provincial/territorial or RCMP.

**Community agency:** Any other community agency or service.

**Anonymous:** A caller who is not identified.

**Other:** Please specify the source of referral in the section provided (e.g. foster parent, store clerk, etc.)

#### **QUESTION 5: DESCRIBE REFERRAL AND INVESTIGATED MALTREATMENT**

Provide a short description of the referral, including, as appropriate:

the investigated maltreatment and major investigation results (e.g. type of maltreatment, substantiation, injuries);

other reasons for referral, if not maltreatment (e.g. adoption home assessment, request for information);

#### **QUESTION 6: LIST ALL CHILDREN IN THE HOME**

Please include biological, step, adoptive and foster children.

**A) List the first of the names of the children:** List the first name of all children who are currently living in the home.

**B) Age of all children in the home:** Indicated the age of all the children in the home. Use 0 for children less than 1.

**C) Sex of all children in the home:** Indicate the sex of all the children in the home.

**D) Subject of referral or investigation:** Indicate which children were investigated because of suspected child maltreatment (abuse or neglect). In jurisdictions that require that all children be

routinely interviewed for an investigation, only include those cases where in your clinical opinion maltreatment was suspected at some point (e.g. include three siblings ages 5 to 12 in a situation of suspected chronic neglect, but do not include the 3 year old brother of a 12 year old girl who was sexually abused by someone who does not live with the family and has not had access to the younger sibling).

**QUESTION 7: WAS CHILD MALTREATMENT ALLEGED BY THE REFERRAL OR SUSPECTED AT ANY OTHER POINT?**

Indicate if child maltreatment was suspected at any point prior to the referral. If you or a co-investigating worker suspected child maltreatment at any point during the referral or the investigation, or child maltreatment was alleged by the referral please fill in "Yes".

**QUESTION 8: WAS AN ASSESSMENT/INVESTIGATION COMPLETED?**

If yes, and the case was opened for assessment and investigation, complete the remainder of the CIS Maltreatment Assessment (Household and Child information sheets).

If no, please specify why (e.g. youth older than investigation mandate, no maltreatment alleged, insufficient information).

**TEAR-OFF PORTION OF COMMENT SHEET**

The potentially identifying information on the tear-off section will be kept securely at your agency/office, for purposes of verification. It will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study<sup>2</sup>.

**ASSESSMENT WORKER'S NAME**

This refers to the person completing the form. When more than one individual is involved in the investigation, the individual with overall case responsibility should complete the *CIS Maltreatment Assessment*.

**FIRST TWO LETTERS OF FAMILY SURNAME**

Use the reference name used for your agency/office filing system. In most cases this will be the primary caregiver's last name. If another name is used in the agency/office, please include it under "Alternate Surname". For example, if a parent's surname is "Thompson", and the two children have the surname of "Smith", then put "TH" and "SM". Use the first two letters of the family name only. Never fill in the complete name.

**CASE NUMBER**

This refers to the case number used by your agency/office.

**POSTAL CODE OR ADDRESS**

Although the postal code may be difficult to find, this is useful information that may allow us to

<sup>2</sup> If a new protocol for keeping potentially identifying information is approved by your agency/office, some of this information may be used for follow-up research. At no time will any near-identifying information be available for other purposes.

examine critical community level characteristics. If it is not available, please provide the current address for the family. This information will not leave your office/agency.

## **DEFINITIONS: COMMENT SHEET**

### **COMMENT SECTIONS**

Should the *CIS Maltreatment Assessment* fail to capture any information about the child maltreatment investigation, please provide your additional comments under the three comment sections: **Intake Information, Household Information, and Child Information.**

## **DEFINITIONS: HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION SHEET**

### **IDENTITY OF CAREGIVER (A) AND CAREGIVER (B)**

The *Household Information* sheet will focus on the immediate household of the child(ren) who have been referred to child welfare. This household is made up of all adults and children living at the address of the investigation. Provide information for Caregiver (A) and Caregiver (B) for questions 1-12 if there are two adults/caregivers living in the household. Complete information on Caregiver (A) if there is only one caregiver in the household.

If you have a unique circumstance that does not seem to fit the categories provided, please write a note in the comment sections on the *Comment Sheet*.

### **QUESTION 1: CAREGIVER A/B IN THE HOME**

Choose one category only. Identify the relationship between the caregiver and the children in the home. If a caregiver is both a biological and step-parent for different children in the household, please check "Step-parent" only.

In the event that there is only one caregiver residing in the household, and there is another significant caregiver residing outside of the home, then check "Other Adult (not in household)" and complete Caregiver (B) information on that individual.

### **QUESTION 2: SEX**

Identify if caregiver is male or female.

### **QUESTION 3: AGE**

Indicate the caregiver's age range. If you are not certain of an individual's age range, please provide your best estimate.

### **QUESTION 4: PRIMARY INCOME SOURCE**

We are interested in estimating the primary source of the caregiver's income. Please choose the category that best describes the caregiver's source of income. Note that this is a caregiver specific question and does not include income from the second caregiver.

*Full time:* Individual is employed in a permanent, full-time position.

*Part time (Less than 30 hours/week):* Refers to a single part time position.

*Multiple jobs:* Caregiver has more than one part-time or temporary position.

*Seasonal:* This indicates that the caregiver works at either full or part time positions for temporary periods of the year.

*Employment insurance:* Caregiver is temporarily unemployed and receiving Employment Insurance Benefits.

*Social assistance:* Caregiver receives social assistance benefits at this point in time.

*Other benefit:* Refers to other forms of benefits or pensions (e.g., family benefits, long term disability insurance, child support payments).

*Unknown:* Check if you do not know the caregiver's source of income.

*None :* if drugs, prostitution, or other illegal activity please specify in comments section.

#### QUESTION 5: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Select the category that best describes the caregiver's education level. Use provincial or territorial definitions for elementary and secondary levels.

*Elementary or less:* Caregiver attended some or all of elementary school.

*Some secondary:* Please check this category if caregiver attended high school, but did not complete.

*Completed secondary:* Please check this category if caregiver completed high school.

*College/University:* Caregiver attended College or University or other post secondary technical school, and has partially or totally completed a degree or diploma.

*Unknown:* Check if you do not know the educational level of the caregiver.

#### QUESTION 6: ETHNO-RACIAL GROUP

Examining the ethno-racial background can provide valuable information regarding differential access to child welfare services. Given the sensitivity of this question, this information will not be published out of context. This section uses a checklist of ethno-racial categories used by Statistics Canada in the 1996 Census (Long Questionnaire).

Please check the ethno-racial category that best describes the caregiver and identify the primary language spoken at home by that individual. Select "Other" if you wish to identify two ethno-racial groups, and specify.

*A) If Aboriginal:* Is the caregiver residing "on" or "off" reserve.

*B) Aboriginal caregiver status:* If First Nations please indicate if the caregiver has formal Indian or treaty status (i.e. registered with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs).

#### QUESTION 7: PRIMARY LANGUAGE

Please identify the primary language of the caregiver: English, French or Other and specify.

**QUESTION 8: CONTACT WITH CAREGIVER IN RESPONSE TO INVESTIGATION**

Would you describe the caregiver as being overall cooperative or non-cooperative with the child welfare investigation? Please check "Not Contacted" in the case that you had no contact with the caregiver.

**QUESTION 9: CAREGIVER RISK FACTORS**

These questions pertain to Caregiver A and/or Caregiver B, and are to be rated as "Confirmed", "Suspected", "No" or "Unknown". Please fill in "Confirmed" if problem has been diagnosed, observed by you or another worker, or disclosed by the caregiver. Use the "Suspected" category if your suspicions are sufficient to include in a written assessment of the household or a transfer summary to a colleague. Fill in "No" if you do not believe there is a problem and "Unknown" if you are unsure or have not attempted to determine if there was such a caregiver functioning issues. Where applicable, use the past six months as a reference point.

*Alcohol abuse:* Use of alcohol poses a problem for household.

*Drug/solvent abuse:* Abuse of prescription drugs, illegal drugs, or solvents.

*Criminal activity:* Absent due to incarceration, involved in criminal activity (e.g. drug dealing, theft, prostitution, etc.).

*Cognitive impairment:* Cognitive ability of caregiver(s) has an impact on the quality of care giving provided in the household.

*Mental health issues:* Any mental health diagnosis or problem.

*Physical health issues:* Chronic illness, frequent hospitalizations, or physical disability.

*Few social supports:* Social isolation or lack of social supports.

*Maltreated as a child:* Indicate whether the caregiver suffered maltreatment as a child.

*Victim of domestic violence:* During the past six months the caregiver was a victim of domestic violence, include physical, sexual and verbal assault.

*Perpetrator of domestic violence:* During the past six months the caregiver was perpetrator of domestic violence.

*Other:* Identify other issues/concerns that describe caregiver functioning.

**QUESTION 10: OTHER ADULTS IN THE HOME**

Please fill in all categories that describe adults (excluding Caregiver A of B) who lived in the house at the time of the referral to child welfare. Note that children in the home have already been described on the **Intake Face Sheet**. If recent changes in household, describe the situation at the time of the referral. Please fill in all that apply.

**QUESTION 11: CAREGIVER OUTSIDE THE HOME**

Identify any other caregivers living outside of the home who provide care to any of the children in the household, including a separated parent who has some access to the child(ren). Please fill in all that apply.

**QUESTION 12: CHILD CUSTODY DISPUTE AT THIS TIME**

Specify if there is an ongoing child custody/access dispute at this time (court application has been made or is pending).

**QUESTION 13: HOUSEHOLD INCOME ESTIMATED**

Please provide an estimate of the family income. This is critical information to examine the effects of child poverty. Use the "Unknown" category only if you cannot provide any estimate of this figure.

**QUESTION 14: HOUSING**

These questions address the housing accommodations and conditions related to household (e.g. safety of housing and frequency of moves).

*Type of Housing:* Indicate the housing category that best describes the living situation of this household.

*Own home:* A purchased house, condominium, or townhouse.

*Rental:* A private rental house, townhouse or apartment.

*Public housing:* A unit in a public rental-housing complex (i.e. rent subsidized, government owned housing), a house, townhouse or apartment on a military base, or band housing.

*Shelter/Hotel:* A homeless or family shelter, SRO hotel (single room occupancy), or motel accommodations.

*Unknown:* Housing accommodation is unknown.

*Other:* Specify any other form of shelter.

**QUESTION 15: UNSAFE HOUSING CONDITIONS**

In your opinion, are children at risk for injury or impairment in this living situation (e.g. broken windows, insufficient heat, parents and children sharing single room)? Please check "Unknown" only if you have not been to the home or residence.

**QUESTION 16: HOME OVERCROWDED**

Indicate if household is made up of multiple families and/or overcrowded.

**QUESTION 17: APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MOVES WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS**

Indicate the number of family moves within the past twelve months.

**QUESTION 18: CASE STATUS INFORMATION**

Describe case status at the time that you are completing the form.

*A) Case previously opened:* Has this family previously had an open file with Child Welfare? Please respond if there is documentation, or if you are aware that there have been previous openings. Please estimate the number of previous openings. This would relate to case openings for any of the children identified as living in the home (listed on the **Intake Face Sheet**).

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*B) If yes, how long since previous opening:* How many months between the time the case was last closed and this current opening?

**QUESTION 19. CASES WILL STAY OPEN FOR ONGOING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

At the time you are completing the *CIS Maltreatment Investigation Form*, do you plan to keep the case open to allow ongoing child welfare services?

**QUESTION 20: REFERRAL(S) FOR ANY FAMILY MEMBER**

Indicate referrals that have been made to programs designed to offer services beyond the parameters of "ongoing child welfare services". Include referrals made internally to a special program provided by your agency/office as well as referrals made externally to other agencies/services. Note whether a referral was made and is part of the case plan, not whether the young person or family has actually started to receive services. Please fill in all that apply.

*Parent support program:* Any group program designed to offer support or education (e.g. Parent's Anonymous, Parenting Instruction Course, Parent Support Association).

*In-home parenting support:* Home based support services designed to support families, reduce risk of out-of-home placement, or reunify children in care with their family.

*Other family/parent counseling:* Include programs for family therapy/counseling or couple counseling (e.g. family service bureau, mental health centre).

*Drug/Alcohol counseling:* Addiction program (any substance) for caregiver(s) or children.

*Welfare/Social assistance:* Referral for social assistance to address financial concerns of the household.

*Food bank:* Referral to any food bank.

*Shelter services:* Regarding domestic violence or homelessness.

*Domestic violence services:* Referral for services/counseling regarding domestic violence, abusive relationships, or the effects of witnessing violence.

*Psychiatric/Psychological services:* Child or parent referral to psychological or psychiatric services (trauma, high risk behaviour, or intervention).

*Special education referral:* Any specialized school program to meet a child's educational, emotional, or behavioural needs.

*Recreational program:* Referral to a community recreational program (e.g. organized sports leagues, community recreation, Boy's and Girl's Club).

*Victim support program:* Referral to a victim support program (e.g. sexual abuse disclosure group).

*Medical/Dental services:* Any specialized service to address the child's immediate medical or dental health needs.

*Child/day care:* Any paid child/day care services, including staff-run and in-home services.

*Cultural services:* Services to help children or families strengthen their cultural heritage.

*Other child/family referral:* Indicate and specify any other child or family focused referral.



## DEFINITIONS: CHILD INFORMATION SHEET

### QUESTION 21: CHILD NAME AND SEX

Indicate the first name and sex of the child for which the maltreatment assessment is being completed.

### QUESTION 22: AGE

Indicate the child's age.

### QUESTION 23: ABORIGINAL STATUS

Indicate the Aboriginal status of the child for which the maltreatment assessment is being completed.

### QUESTION 24: CHILD FUNCTIONING

This section focuses on issues related to a child's level of functioning. Please fill in "Confirmed" if problem has been diagnosed, observed by you or another worker, or disclosed by the parent or child. Suspected means that, in your clinical opinion, there is reason to suspect that the conditions may be present, but they have not been diagnosed, observed or disclosed. Fill in "No" if you do not believe there is a problem and "Unknown" if you are unsure or have not attempted to determine if there was such a child functioning issues. Where appropriate, use the past six months as a reference point.

*Depression/anxiety:* feelings of depression or anxiety that persist for most of every day for two weeks or longer, and interfere with the child's ability to manage at home and at school.

*ADD / ADHD:* Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder includes: distractibility (quickly moving attention from one thing to another); impulsivity (acting quickly without thinking of the consequences); hyperactivity (excessive activity and physical restlessness). These behaviors are very noticeable, occur over a long period of time in many situations, and are troublesome to others.

*Negative peer involvement:* high-risk peer activities (e.g. gang activities, graffiti, vandalism).

*Alcohol abuse:* problematic consumption of alcohol (consider age, frequency and severity)

*Drug/solvent abuse:* include prescription drugs, illegal drugs and solvents.

*Self-harming behaviour:* include high risk or life threatening behaviour, suicide attempts, and physical mutilation or cutting.

*Violence toward others:* aggression and violence to other children or adults.

*Running (one incident):* has run away from home (or other residence) on one occasion, for at least one overnight period.

*Running (multiple incidents):* has run away from home (or other residence) on multiple occasions for at least one overnight period.

*Inappropriate sexual behaviour:* child involved in inappropriate sexual behaviour.

*Other emotional or behavioural problems:* significant emotional or behavioural problems not covered by the previous items.

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**Learning disability:** disability that is usually identified in schools. Children with learning disabilities have normal or above normal intelligence, but deficits in one or more areas of mental functioning (e.g. language usage, numbers, special, reading, work comprehension)

**Specialized education services:** any special education program for learning disability, special needs, or behaviour problems.

**Irregular school attendance:** irregular attendance and truancy (+5 days/month).

**Developmental delay:** is characterized by delay intellectual development. It is typically diagnosed with a child does not reach his/her developmental milestones at expected times, such as speech and language, fine gross motor skills, and/or personal and social skills.

**Physical disability:** physical disability is the existence of a long-lasting condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying. This includes sensory disability conditions such as blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment that noticeably affects activities of daily living.

**Substance abuse related birth defects:** birth defects related to substance abuse of the biological parent (e.g. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)/Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE), cocaine addiction, solvent use).

**Positive toxicology at birth:** when a toxicology screen for a newborn tests positive for the presences of drug or alcohol.

**Other health condition:** ongoing physical health condition (e.g. chronic disease, frequent hospitalizations).

**Psychiatric disorder:** psychiatric disorder, use the confirmed category only if diagnosed by a Psychiatrist (e.g. conduct disorder, anxiety disorder).

**Youth Criminal Justice Act involvement:** charges, incarceration or alternative measures with the Youth Justice system.

**Other:** specify any other conditions related to child functioning.

#### QUESTION 25: MALTREATMENT CODES

Select the applicable maltreatment codes from the list provided (1-25), and write these numbers clearly in the boxes beside Question 26. Please enter in the first box the primary form of maltreatment that best characterizes the investigated maltreatment.

The maltreatment typology developed here uses four major forms of maltreatment: **Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Neglect, and Emotional Maltreatment**. These categories are comparable those used in the first cycle of the CIS, the Ontario Incidence Study, and the U.S. National Incidence Study.

Because there is significant variation in provincial and territorial child welfare statutes, we are using a broad typology. Please rate cases on the basis of your clinical opinion, not on provincial, territorial or agency/office specific definitions.

In cases of physical or sexual abuse where several codes may apply please select the code that you consider to be the most harmful to the child. For example, if sexual abuse involves fondling and penetration, you would most likely select penetration. If more than one code applies to the physical or sexual abuse, then enter the most harmful and circle the other codes that apply (circle

the corresponding number from the list under #25).

All major forms of alleged, suspected or investigated maltreatment should be noted in the maltreatment code box regardless of the outcome of the investigation. For example, a three year old repeatedly found playing on a busy street is neglected even if harm has not yet occurred.

#### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

The child has suffered, or is at substantial risk of suffering physical harm, at the hands of the child's caregiver. Include any alleged physical assault, including abusive incidents involving some form of punishment. If several types of physical abuse are involved, please identify the most harmful sub-type and circle the codes of other relevant descriptors.

*Shake, push, grab, or throw:* include pulling or dragging a child as well as shaking an infant.

*Hit with hand:* include slapping and spanking, but not punching.

*Punch, kick, or bite:* include as well any other hitting with other parts of the body (e.g.: elbow or head).

*Hit with object:* includes hitting with a stick, a belt or other object, throwing an object at a child, but does not include stabbing with a knife.

*Other physical abuse:* Include any other form of physical abuse, including choking, strangling, stabbing, burning, shooting, poisoning, and the abusive use of restraints.

#### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

The child has been, or is at substantial risk of being sexually molested or sexually exploited. This includes oral, vaginal or anal sexual activity, attempted sexual activity, sexual touching or fondling, exposure, voyeurism, involvement in prostitution or pornography, and verbal sexual harassment. If several types of sexual activity are involved, please identify the most intrusive sub-type. Include both intra-familial and extra-familial sexual abuse, as well as sexual abuse involving an older child or youth perpetrator.

*Penetration:* penile, digital or object penetration of vagina or anus.

*Attempted penetration:* attempted penile, digital or object penetration of vagina or anus.

*Oral sex:* oral contact with genitals either by perpetrator or by the child.

*Fondling:* touching or fondling genitals for sexual purposes

*Sex talk:* Verbal or written proposition, encouragement, or suggestion of a sexual nature (include face to face, phone, written and internet contact, as well as exposing the child to pornographic material).

*Voyeurism:* Include activities where the alleged perpetrator observes the child for the perpetrator's sexual gratification. Use the "Exploitation" code if voyeurism includes pornographic activities.

*Exhibitionism:* Include activities where the perpetrator is alleged to have exhibited himself/herself for his/her own sexual gratification

*Exploitation:* Include situations where an adult sexually exploits a child for purposes of financial gain or other profit, including pornography and prostitution.

## NEGLECT

The child has suffered harm or the child's safety or development has been endangered as a result of the caregiver(s)' failure to provide for or protect the child. Please note that the term "neglect" is not consistently used in all provincial/territorial statutes, but interchangeable concepts include: "failure to care and provide or supervise and protect"; "does not provide"; "refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to treatment".

**Failure to supervise: physical harm** The child suffered or is at substantial risk of suffering physical harm because of the caregiver's failure to supervise or protect child adequately. Failure to supervise includes situations where a child is harmed or endangered as a result of a caregiver's actions (e.g. drunk driving with a child, or engaging in dangerous criminal activities with a child).

**Failure to supervise: sexual harm:** The child has been, or is at substantial risk of being sexually molested or sexually exploited, and the caregiver knows or should have known of the possibility of sexual molestation and failed to protect the child adequately.

- **Permitting criminal behaviour:** A child has committed a criminal offence (e.g. theft, vandalism or assault) with the encouragement of the child's caregiver, or because of the caregiver's failure or inability to supervise the child adequately.

**Physical neglect:** The child has suffered or is at substantial risk of suffering physical harm caused by the caregiver(s)' failure to care and provide for the child adequately. This includes inadequate nutrition/clothing, and unhygienic dangerous living conditions. There must be evidence or suspicion that the caregiver is at least partially responsible for the situation.

**Medical neglect:** The child requires medical treatment to cure, prevent or alleviate physical harm or suffering and the child's caregiver does not provide, or refuses, or is unavailable, or unable to consent to the treatment. This includes dental services when funding is available.

**Failure to provide psych. treatment:** The child is at substantial risk of suffering from either emotional harm demonstrated by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or self-destructive or aggressive behaviour; or a mental emotional or developmental condition that could seriously impair the child's development. The child's caregiver does not provide, or refuses, or is unavailable, or unable to consent to treatment to remedy or alleviate the harm. This category includes failing to provide treatment for school related problems such as learning and behaviour problems, as well as treatment for infant development problems such as non-organic failure to thrive. Parent awaiting service should not be included in this category.

**Abandonment:** The child's parent has died or is unable to exercise custodial rights and has not made adequate provisions for care and custody, or child is in a placement and parent refuses/unable to take custody.

**Educational neglect:** Caregivers knowingly permit chronic truancy (5+ days a month), or fail to enroll the child, or repeatedly keep the child at home. If child is experiencing mental, emotional, or developmental problems associated with school, and treatment is offered but caregivers do not cooperate with treatment, classify the case under failure to provide treatment as well.

## EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT

**Emotional abuse:** The child has suffered or is at substantial risk of suffering from mental, emotional or developmental problems caused by overtly hostile or punitive treatment, or

habitual or extreme verbal abuse (e.g. threatening, belittling). If treatment is offered but caregivers do not cooperate, classify case under failure to provide treatment as well.

**Non-organic failure to thrive:** A child under three, who has suffered a marked retardation or cessation of growth for which no organic reasons can be identified. Failure to thrive cases where inadequate nutrition is the identified cause should be classified as physical neglect. Non-organic Failure to Thrive is generally considered to be a form of psychological maltreatment, however it has been classified as a separate category because of its particular characteristics.

**Emotional neglect:** The child has suffered or is at substantial risk of suffering from mental, emotional or developmental problems caused by inadequate nurturing or affection. If treatment is being offered but caregivers are not cooperating, classify case under failure to provide treatment as well.

**Exposed to domestic violence:** A child has been a witness to violence occurring between the caregivers (or a caregiver and his/her partner). This would include situations where the child indirectly witnessed the violence (e.g. saw the physical injuries on his/her caregiver the next day or overheard the violence).

#### QUESTION 26: ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

This section relates to the individual who is alleged, suspected or guilty of maltreatment towards the young person in question. Fill in either Caregiver A, Caregiver B or Other and please specify the relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the child. If you select Caregiver A or Caregiver B please write in a short descriptor (e.g. "mom", "dad" or "boyfriend") to allow us to verify consistent use of the label between the Household and Child sheets. Note that different people can be responsible for different forms of maltreatment (e.g. common-law partner abuses child, but other parent could possibly have prevented the abuse). If you responded with "Other", please specify relationship to child (e.g. brother, uncle, grandmother, teacher, doctor, stranger, classmate, neighbour, family friend). Identify the alleged perpetrator regardless of the level of substantiation at this point of the investigation.

**A) If "Other" Alleged Perpetrator, Age:** If the alleged perpetrator is "Other", please indicate the age of this individual. Age is essential information used to distinguish between child, youth and adult perpetrators. If there are multiple alleged perpetrators, please describe the perpetrator associated with the primary form of maltreatment.

**B) If "Other" Perpetrator, Sex** Please indicate the sex of the "Other" alleged perpetrator.

#### QUESTION 27: SUBSTANTIATION

Indicate the level of substantiation at this point in your investigation.

**Substantiated:** A case is considered "Substantiated" if the balance of evidence indicates that abuse or neglect has occurred.

**Suspected: Insufficient evidence:** A case is "Suspected" if you do not have enough evidence to substantiate maltreatment, but you also are not sure that maltreatment can be ruled out.

**Unfounded:** A case is "Unfounded" if the balance of evidence indicates that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

**QUESTION 27A: IF UNFOUNDED, WAS REPORT A MALICIOUS REFERRAL?**

Identify if this case was intentionally reported while knowing the allegation was unfounded. This could apply to conflictual relationships (e.g. custody dispute between parents, disagreements between relatives, disputes between neighbours).

**QUESTION 28: WAS ALLEGED MALTREATMENT A FORM OF PUNISHMENT?**

Indicate if the alleged maltreatment was a form of punishment. This includes situations where abusive punishment was investigated but eventually unfounded.

**QUESTION 29: DURATION OF MALTREATMENT**

Check the duration of maltreatment, as it is known at this point of time in your investigation. This can include a single incident, multiple incidents for less than six months in duration, or multiple incidents longer than six months in duration. If this case is unfounded, then the duration needs to be listed as "Not Applicable (Maltreatment unfounded)".

**QUESTION 30. PHYSICAL HARM**

Describe the physical harm suspected or known to have been caused by each of the investigated forms of maltreatment. Please include harm ratings even in accidental injury cases where maltreatment is unfounded, but the injury triggered the investigation.

*No harm:* There is no apparent evidence of physical harm to the child as a result of maltreatment.

*Bruises/Cuts/Scrapes:* The child suffered various physical hurts visible for at least 48 hours.

*Burns and scalds:* The child suffered burns and scalds visible for at least 48 hours.

*Broken bones:* The child suffered fractured bones.

*Head trauma:* The child was a victim of head trauma (note that in shaken infant cases the major trauma is to the head not to the neck).

*Fatal:* Child has died, maltreatment was suspected during the investigation as the cause of death. Include cases where maltreatment was eventually unfounded.

*Other health conditions:* Other physical health conditions, such as untreated asthma, failure to thrive or STDs.

**QUESTION 31. PHYSICAL HARM**

*A) Medical treatment required for injury:* In order to help us rate the severity of any documented physical harm, please indicate whether medical treatment was required as a result of the injury or harm for any of the investigated forms of maltreatments.

*B) Health or safety seriously endangered by suspected or substantiated maltreatment:* In cases of "suspected" or "substantiated" maltreatment indicate whether the child's health or safety were endangered to the extent that the child could have suffered life threatening or permanent harm (e.g.: three year old child wandering on busy street, child found playing with dangerous chemicals or drugs).

*C) History or undetected or misdiagnosed injuries:* Indicate whether the investigation revealed a history of previously undetected or misdiagnosed injuries.

**QUESTION 32: MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL HARM**

*A) No current signs, but mental or emotional harm is probable:* Indicate if the child is showing no symptoms, but in your opinion mental or emotional harm is probable. If child is showing symptoms indicate no.

*B) Child shows signs of mental or emotional harm:* Indicate whether child is showing signs of mental or emotional harm (e.g. nightmares, bed wetting or social withdrawal following the maltreatment incident(s)).

*C) Exhibited mental or emotional harm requires treatment:* Indicate whether child is exhibiting symptoms of mental or emotional harm requiring therapeutic treatment.

**QUESTION 33: PHYSICIAN/NURSE CONDUCTED A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OF THE CHILD**

Indicate if a physician or nurse conducted a physical examination of the child over the course of the investigation.

**QUESTION 34: OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT**

Check one category related to the placement of the child. If the child is already living in an alternative living situation (emergency foster home, receiving home), please indicate the setting where the child has spent the most time.

*No placement required:* No placement is required following the investigation.

*Placement considered:* At this point of the investigation, an out-of-home placement is still being considered.

*Informal kinship care:* An informal placement has been arranged within the family support network (kinship care, extended family, traditional care), the child welfare authority does not have temporary custody.

*Kinship foster care:* A formal placement has been arranged within the family support network (kinship care, extended family, customary care), the child welfare authority has temporary or full custody and is paying for the placement.

*Other family foster care:* Include any family-based care, including foster homes, specialized treatment foster homes, and assessment homes.

*Group home placement:* Out of home placement required in a structured group living setting.

*Residential/secure treatment centre:* Placement required in a therapeutic residential treatment centre to address the needs of the child.

**QUESTION 35: CHILD WELFARE COURT**

There are three categories to describe the current status of child welfare court at this time in the investigation. Select one category. If investigation is not completed, please answer to the best of your knowledge at this time. Please fill in one only.

**QUESTION 36: PREVIOUS REPORTS**

*A) Child previously reported to child welfare for suspected maltreatment:* This section collects

information on previous reports to Child Welfare for the individual child in question. Please report if the child has been previously reported to Child Welfare authorities because of suspected maltreatment. Please use "Unknown" if you are aware of an investigation but cannot confirm this. Note that this is a child-specific question as opposed to the previous reports questions on the Household Information sheet.

**B) If yes, was the maltreatment substantiated:** Please indicate if the maltreatment was substantiated.

**QUESTION 37: POLICE INVOLVEMENT IN CHILD MALTREATMENT INVESTIGATION**

Indicate if there was a police investigation only or if charges were laid. If police investigation is on-going and a decision to lay charges has not yet been made select the investigation only item.

**QUESTION 38: POLICE INVOLVEMENT IN ADULT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INVESTIGATION**

Indicate if there was a police investigation only or if charges were laid. If police investigation is on-going and a decision to lay charges has not yet been made select the investigation only item.

**QUESTION 39: CAREGIVERS USE SPANKING AS A FORM OF DISCIPLINE**

Indicate if the caregiver uses spanking as a form of discipline. Please use "Unknown" if you are unaware of the caregiver using spanking.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND INTEREST  
IN THE SECOND CYCLE OF THE CANADIAN INCIDENCE STUDY





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## APPENDIX E

### AIS/CIS-2003 Case Vignettes

#### Intake Assessment: Vignette – Rebecca

<b><u>File Number:</u></b> 2345-234 G	
<b><u>Referring Source:</u></b> School Vice-Principal	<b><u>Date of Referral:</u></b> October 6
<b><u>Family Name:</u></b> Smith	<b><u>Ethno-racial group:</u></b> White
<b><u>Mother's Name:</u></b> Betsy Smith	<b><u>Father's Name:</u></b> Barry Smith
<b><u>Children in the Family Home:</u></b> Rebecca	<b><u>Date of Birth:</u></b> 02/02/92
<b><u>Address at Time of Referral:</u></b>	222 Apple Street Vancouver, Ontario D3E F4G

#### *Referral Summary:*

**Date:** 06/10/03 Vice Principal Q called the office about an alleged sexual abuse involving a student at his school. Rebecca's mother had called Q after Rebecca had disclosed to her that her father had touched her breasts and had made Rebecca touch his penis.

The parents are divorced. Ms. Smith has had custody for a number of years. Rebecca lives with her mother in a rented townhouse. Mrs. Smith is 31 and she works full time as a grocery store clerk and makes \$20,000 annually. Mr. Smith is 32 and is presently unemployed but has worked as a computer software salesperson in the past. He receives monthly employment insurance. Rebecca visits her father every other weekend, Friday to Sunday at his apartment. There is also a Thursday evening visit.

#### *Action Taken:*

**Date:** 06/10/03 Police officer J. and Mrs. Smith were contacted and arrangements were made to interview Rebecca at the police station on October 7. The CAS has no previous record of this family.

Mr. Smith has criminal convictions for drug possession and for driving while impaired. There is no record of any violence.

**Date: 07/10/03** Constable J. of the Youth Bureau, Mrs. Smith and Rebecca were met at the police station. Mrs. Smith was interviewed alone. She explained that she has had custody of Rebecca for three years. Her father has been in Vancouver only one year; prior to that he was living in Calgary. Betsy has recently sought treatment for her own childhood sexual abuse, by her father. She is seeing a therapist weekly. Her father has not been charged but is being investigated by the police.

During Rebecca's interview both the police and I were present. The interview was videotaped. Rebecca stated that the first incident occurred a few weeks ago when she was sleeping over at her father's. Rebecca reported that shortly after she went to bed, her father came into the bedroom, bent over the bed and touched her breasts under her pyjamas, rubbing them with his fingers. Her father said "shh shh" but nothing else.

Rebecca reported that the second incident occurred on the most recent visit. Her father again came into the bedroom after she had been asleep. He reached for her hand and had her touch his penis. He whispered "it's okay, it's okay" Rebecca provided details of both events remembering what pajamas she was wearing, and noting that during the second incident her father was only wearing his undershirt. Rebecca indicated that her father had an erection during the second incident.

Rebecca stated that she is afraid that something else will happen and that her father may try to hurt her again.

Later that evening the police officer indicated that Mr. Smith was charged with sexual assault. No contact is allowed between Mr. Smith and his daughter at this time. Both Rebecca and her mother are accepting a referral to the disclosure group.

**Date 8/10/03:** A follow-up visit to the home was conducted. The home is adequately equipped and tidy. Rebecca and her mother were feeling calm and still prepared to attend the disclosure group.

**Date: 10/11/03:** A message was left for Betsy Smith's therapist to call me.

I spoke with the family doctor who has known Mrs. Smith and her children for 8 years. The doctor indicated that both girls had normal childhood milestones. They were functioning well in school and had no health problems. The doctor noted that the parents separated because of Mr. Smith's drug and alcohol use. He had no concerns about Mrs. Smith's emotional health or her physical health.

A referral was made to the Sex abuse disclosure Group.

***Investigation Conclusions:***

**Date: 11/11/03** This case involves the sexual abuse of Rebecca by her father; Barry. The mother presents as a concerned and supportive parent. Rebecca was very clear and credible when she was interviewed and the police have charged Mr. Smith. Rebecca felt relieved after she made the disclosure. She is not displaying signs of emotional distress at this time. Rebecca is close with her mother and has the support of her aunts and neighbourhood friends.

***Investigation Recommendations:***

- Interview Mr. Smith,
- To support and encourage both mother and daughter to attend the Disclosure Group

**Outcome: Case to be transferred to Family Services**

## Intake Assessment: Vignette – Peter

<b><u>File Number:</u></b> 1234-567A	
<b><u>Referring Source:</u></b> Tom B – School Principal	<b><u>Date of Referral:</u></b> October 21, 2003
<b><u>Family Name:</u></b> Nyugen	<b><u>Date of Opening:</u></b> October 22, 2003
<b><u>Mother's Name:</u></b> Marla Nyugen	<b><u>Father's Name:</u></b> Martin Nyugen
<b><u>Children in the Family Home:</u></b> Peter Susan	<b><u>Date of Birth:</u></b> 28/02/97 5/03/89
<b><u>Address at Time of Referral:</u></b>	111 Anystreet, Apartment #1 Barrie, Ontario A1B C2D
<b><u>Language Spoken:</u></b> Vietnamese (limited English)	

### *Referral Summary:*

**Date:** 21/10/03 Peter (6 years) came to school complaining that his father hit him with a shoe. He pointed to his upper back. The school principal said that Peter stated earlier in the year that his father hits him on the bottom. The principal indicated that Peter goes home from school with grade 5 and 6 students; D and N. D and N reported having seen Peter's father hit him outside of the family's store. The principal also noted that Peter had been telling other children his father had been in jail for fighting with the neighbours. He was unaware of any details of this incident.

D and N say Peter is hard to control on the daily walk home from school and see him as bullying and hitting his peers. Peter's teacher (L) reports that Peter is regularly disruptive in class and she wonders if Peter may have a learning disability as he has not yet learned basic routines and he can only follow a single instruction at a time. Peter misses approximately 2 or 3 days of school each month.

### *Action Taken:*

**Date:** 21/10/03 Record check completed. No record found. I contacted the 1001 Division Youth Bureau to consult regarding this case. During this consultation the police verified that Mr Nyugen had recently been jailed on a warrant, which originated from a charge of "uttering death threats." The details of the charge were not available. The police advised that they would not be joining the

investigation at this time. Should more serious concerns arise, I was advised to call again and consult with the duty sergeant.

**Date: 22/09/03** Peter was in attendance at school and, in the presence of his teacher L, was interviewed in regards to the above referral report. Peter spoke with ease and explained that his father hit him with a shoe when he ran out of the family's store. Peter indicated that the shoe hit him on his right shoulder. Peter openly stated that his father hits him with his hand or a stick, the last incident was in the summer holiday. Peter stated that he has always been punished this way, since he was three. The child did not appear to be saddened or feel his father's behaviour was out of the norm. He did not appear frightened by his parents and was willing to have us talk with his father. Peter told us that his father had been in jail for fighting with some neighbourhood youth. He went into much detail about the fighting. The boy jumped around much in the conversation and had a difficult time concentrating on the questions he was asked.

The teacher and I examined Peter and found no bruising or injury to his back.

I called Peter's father and requested an interview. Mr Nguyen agreed and directed me to the Family's apartment the following evening. His wife would also be available to talk with me.

**Date: 23/09/03:** Mother and father appeared calm and pleasant. Mother is 40 and Mr. Nguyen is approximately five years older. The apartment appeared neat and orderly. The family has lived in this apartment for six years. Mr Nyugen described Peter as hard to manage and as a result he was primarily responsible for disciplining Peter. Peter is always asking for money from the till and trying to sneak candies. He does not listen to his mother. Mr. and Mrs. Nguyen work long hours, being the sole employees in the store. Peter accompanies his parents to the store in the mornings and joins them there after school. Mr. Nguyen told me that the store does not make much money and some months he has a hard time paying his bills. The father says he has never hit Peter and explains how much he values him, especially as he is the only male child.

Mrs. Nguyen was calm and quiet during the interview. She appeared somewhat depressed and struggled to express herself in English. She concurred that Mr. Nguyen is the disciplinarian and denied that he hit Peter. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Nguyen drink alcohol nor do they keep any in the home. They report that their elder daughter is well behaved and attends high school.

Mr and Mrs. Nguyen emigrated to Canada 10 years ago. Their extended family remained in Vietnam. Mr. Nguyen was an accountant and has completed college in Vietnam. Mrs. Nguyen was a homemaker in Vietnam. Her level of education is not known. Mr. Nguyen and the children attend a local church on Sundays where Mr. Nguyen volunteers with the choir. Mrs. Nguyen has few social supports outside of her husband.

This worker contacted the family doctor who reported that Peter's development had been normal. She was aware that Mrs. Nguyen has difficulty in disciplining Peter and that Peter often acted up at school. She had no knowledge of physical abuse nor inappropriate discipline. The doctor reported that Mrs. Nguyen has diabetes but the parents are otherwise healthy.

Mr. Nguyen was interested in ongoing support from the agency and assured me he does not use physical discipline. Peter and his father appeared to have a warm relationship. I provided the Nguyen's with the phone number for the Southeast Asian Family Help Center for both recreation and parent support programs. The school social worker has been contacted to arrange a special education assessment.

***Investigation Conclusions:***

**Date:** 24/09/03 It is my opinion that the Nguyen family does use physical discipline and I have difficulty with their denial in this regard. At this time physical abuse cannot be confirmed, but ongoing monitoring is warranted given the conflicted evidence.

A referral to a child behaviour management program is required. Further assessment of the family history, family dynamics, and Mrs. Nguyen's emotional state are necessary. If possible, these assessments should be completed in the family's primary language.

***Investigation Recommendations:***

Child management  
Develop community supports

***Protection Concerns:***



Child's behaviour  
Parent's disciplinary measures  
Possible supervision difficulties  
Mrs. Nguyen's emotional state

**Outcome: Case to be transferred to Family Services**



# APPENDIX F

## Worker Information Form

	<p>Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect - Cycle II          Étude canadienne sur l'incidence des cas signalés de violence          et de négligence à l'égard des enfants - Cycle II          Funded by Health Canada and supported by the Provincial and Territorial          Governments of Canada with additional funding from Bell Canada</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">             CIS OFFICE USE ONLY              [ ] [ ] - [ ] [ ]           </div>
<h3>WORKER INFORMATION FORM</h3> <p>Thank you for taking the time to complete this Worker Information Form for the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect. This information is confidential and you will not be identified in the study report or within your agency office. If you have any questions about completing this form, please contact your assigned Research Associate: _____          Tel: (_____) _____</p>		
<p><b>A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b></p>		
1. Name: _____	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">[ ] [ ]</div> <small>CIS OFFICE USE ONLY</small>	Date: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] <small>day month year</small>
2. Age: [ ] [ ]	3. Gender: <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female	
4. Ethno-racial Group		
<input type="radio"/> White <input type="radio"/> Latin American <input type="radio"/> Arab/West Asian (e.g. Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Moroccan) <input type="radio"/> Chinese <input type="radio"/> Aboriginal <input type="radio"/> South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan) <input type="radio"/> Black (e.g. African, Haitian, Jamaican) <input type="radio"/> Southeast Asian other than Chinese (e.g. Filipino, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Vietnamese) <input type="radio"/> Other: _____		
5. Primary Language: <input type="radio"/> English <input type="radio"/> French <input type="radio"/> Other (specify): _____		
6. Agency: _____	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">[ ] [ ]</div> <small>CIS OFFICE USE ONLY</small>	
7. Team/Branch: _____	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">[ ] [ ]</div> <small>CIS OFFICE USE ONLY</small>	
8. Which category best describes your current position?		
<input type="radio"/> Intake worker (primarily investigations and referrals) <input type="radio"/> Combination of ongoing and intake <input type="radio"/> Ongoing service worker (primarily ongoing cases) <input type="radio"/> Other (specify): _____		
<p><b>B. CASELOAD INFORMATION</b></p>		
9. What is your current caseload? [ ] [ ] [ ] <small>(# of open cases at this time)</small>	10. What is the average size of your caseload? [ ] [ ] [ ]	
<p><b>C. EDUCATION</b></p>		
11. Please check all diplomas that you have obtained <input type="checkbox"/> College diploma <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BSc <input type="checkbox"/> BSW <input type="checkbox"/> MSc <input type="checkbox"/> MSW <input type="checkbox"/> PhD		
<p><b>D. EXPERIENCE</b></p>		
12. Total years you have worked as a social worker? [ ] [ ]	13. How many years of this were spent in child protection? [ ] [ ]	
<p><b>E. CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING</b></p>		
14. Please fill in all specific training that you have received		
<input type="radio"/> General child abuse <input type="radio"/> Crisis intervention <input type="radio"/> Neglect assessment <input type="radio"/> Family preservation intervention <input type="radio"/> Sexual abuse training <input type="radio"/> Risk assessment <input type="radio"/> Child development <input type="radio"/> Cultural sensitivity training <input type="radio"/> Physical abuse training <input type="radio"/> Solution focussed interventions <input type="radio"/> Other: _____		
		4885 

## **APPENDIX G**

### **Variance Estimates and Confidence Intervals**

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The following is a description of the method employed to develop the sampling error estimation for the AIS-2003. As well as the variance estimates and confidence intervals for the AIS-2003 estimates. Variance estimates are provided for the statistics in the “total” column for most tables in the Major Findings Report.

#### **Sampling Error Estimation<sup>1</sup>**

The AIS-2003 uses a random sample survey method to estimate the incidence and characteristics of cases of reported child abuse and neglect across the country. The study estimates are based on the core AS-2003 sample of 2,653 child investigations drawn from a total population of 1,669 family cases open for service in Canada.

The size of this sample ensures that estimates for figures such as the overall rate of reported maltreatment, substantiation rate, and major categories of maltreatment have a reasonable margin of error. However, the margin of error increases for estimates involving less frequent events, such as the number of reported cases of medical neglect or the number of children under four years of age placed in the care of child welfare services. For extremely rare events, such as voyeurism, the margin of error is very large, and such estimates should be interpreted as providing a rough idea of the relative scope of the problem rather than a precise number of cases.

Appendix G tables provide the margin of error for selected AIS-2003 estimates. For example, the estimated number of child maltreatment investigations in Alberta is 32,453. The lower 95 per cent confidence interval is 24,008 child investigations and the upper confidence interval is 37,000 child investigations. This means that there is a 95 per cent chance that the true number of substantiated maltreatment is between 24,008 and 37,000. In contrast, the estimated number of substantiated investigations involving sexual abuse only is 391, but the 95 per cent confidence interval is between 31 and 751 child investigations. The estimate of 391 is unlikely to be exactly correct; however, we can be reasonably sure that the actual number of cases involving head trauma investigated by child welfare services in Alberta is in the range of 31 to 751 investigations.

The error estimates do not account for any errors in determining the annual and regional weights. Nor do they account for any other non-sampling errors that may occur, such as inconsistency or

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical consultation and sampling error estimation were provided by Health Canada, Social Survey Method Division, Jane Mulvihill, Senior Methodologist.

inadequacies in administrative procedures from site to site. The error estimates also cannot account for any variations due to seasonal effects. The accuracy of these annual estimates depends on the extent to which the sampling period is representative of the whole year.

To assess the precision of the AIS-2003 estimates, sampling errors were calculated from the sample with reference to the fact that the survey population had been stratified and that a single cluster (or site) had been selected randomly from each stratum. From the selected cluster all cases in the three-month period were sampled. In a few situations, a shorter period of time was sampled or random cases were sampled. An annualization weight was used to weight the survey data to represent annual cases. A regionalization weight was used to weight the survey data so that data from sites represented regions or strata.

Sampling errors were calculated by determining the sampling variance and then taking the square root of this variance. The sampling variability that was calculated was the variability due to the randomness of the cluster selected. Had a different cluster been selected, then a different estimate would have been obtained. The sampling variance and sampling error calculated are an attempt to measure this variability. Thus, the measured variability is due to the cluster. We did not measure the variability, however, because only three months were sampled, not a full year, and in some situations only every second case was sampled.

To calculate the variance, the stratified design allowed us to assume that the variability between strata was zero and that the total variance at the Alberta level was the sum of the variance for each strata.

Calculating the variance for each strata was a problem, because only one cluster had been chosen in each strata. To overcome this problem we used the approach given in Rust and Kalton (1987).<sup>2</sup> This involved collapsing stratum into groups (collapsed strata); the variability among the clusters within the group was then used to derive a variance estimate. Collapsing of strata was done to maintain homogeneity as much as possible. The estimated population of incidences with the characteristic of interest is:

$$\hat{\tau} = \sum_{b=1}^H \hat{\tau}_b$$

where  $\hat{\tau}_b$  is the population of incidences ( $\hat{\tau}$ ) with the characteristic of interest for the  $b^{\text{th}}$  stratum.

<sup>2</sup> Rust, K., & Kalton, G. (1987). Strategies for collapsing strata for variance estimation. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 3 (1): 69–81.

$$\hat{\tau}_b = \sum_i^H w_b y_{bi}$$

where:

$w_b$  is the weight for the  $b^{\text{th}}$  stratum

$y_{bi}$  is 1 if the  $i^{\text{th}}$  unit (case) in stratum  $b$  has the characteristic of interest, is 0 if the  $i^{\text{th}}$  unit (case) in stratum  $b$  does not have the characteristic of interest, and we sum over all the  $i$  units (cases) in the  $b^{\text{th}}$  stratum.

For our study the  $H$  strata were partitioned into  $J$  groups of strata, known as collapsed strata, and there were  $H_j \geq 2$  strata in the collapsed stratum  $j$ . Stratum  $b$  within collapsed stratum  $j$  is denoted by  $b(j)$ . The collapsed strata estimator of the variance  $\hat{\tau}$  is

$$\text{var}(\hat{\tau}) = \sum_j^J \frac{H_j}{(H_j - 1)} \sum_b^{H_j} \left[ \hat{\tau}_{b(j)} - \frac{\hat{\tau}_j}{H_j} \right]^2$$

Where  $\hat{\tau}_{b(j)}$  denotes the unbiased estimator of  $\hat{\tau}_{b(j)}$ , the parameter value for stratum  $b$  in collapsed stratum  $j$ , and

$$\hat{\tau}_j = \sum_b^H \hat{\tau}_{b(j)}$$

The following are the variance estimates and confidence intervals for AIS-2003 variables of interest. The tables are presented to correspond with the tables in the chapters of the Major Findings Report. Each table reports the estimate, standard error, coefficient of variation, lower and upper confidence interval.

**Appendix G, Table 3-1**  
**Estimate of Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Child Investigations	32,453	4,309	13.28	24,008	37,020
Incidence Per Thousand	43.22	5.73	13.26	31.99	49.29

**Appendix G, Table 3-2**  
**Estimate of Family Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Family Investigations	19,906	2,775	13.94	14,466.41	25,345.77

**Appendix G, Table 3-3**  
**Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Physical Abuse: Primary or Secondary	3,503	401	11.46	2,717	4,290
Incidence per Thousand	4.66	0.53	11.46	3.61	5.71
Sexual Abuse: Primary or Secondary	537	185	34.41	175	900
Incidence per Thousand	0.71	0.25	34.41	0.23	1.19
Neglect	6,064	660	10.89	4,770	7,358
Incidence per Thousand	8.09	0.88	10.85	6.37	9.81
Emotional Maltreatment	3,647	773	21.18	2,133	5,162
Incidence per Thousand	4.87	1.03	21.08	2.86	6.88
Exposure to Domestic Violence	3,647	773	21.18	2,133	5,162
Incidence per Thousand	5.47	0.64	11.73	4.21	6.73

**Appendix G, Table 3-4**  
**Single and Multiple Categories of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Physical Abuse Only	2,231	310	13.89	1,623	2,838
Incidence per Thousand	2.97	0.41	13.89	2.16	3.78
Sexual Abuse Only	391	184	46.97	31	751
Incidence per Thousand	0.52	0.24	46.97	0.04	1.00
Neglect Only	4,232	441	10.43	3,367	5,097
Incidence per Thousand	5.65	0.587	10.39	4.50	6.80
Emotional Maltreatment Only	2,336	684	29.28	995	3,677
Incidence per Thousand	3.13	0.91	29.07	1.35	4.91
Exposure to Domestic Violence	3,195	373	11.69	2,463	3,927
Incidence per Thousand	4.25	0.50	11.69	3.28	5.22
Physical and Sexual Abuse	6	0	0.00	6	6
Incidence per Thousand	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01
Physical Abuse and Neglect	322	77	23.87	171	472
Incidence per Thousand	0.43	0.10	23.87	0.23	0.63
Physical Abuse and Emotional Maltreatment	666	112	16.89	445	886
Incidence per Thousand	0.89	0.15	16.89	0.60	1.18
Physical Abuse and Exposure to Domestic Violence	189	18	9.31	155	224
Incidence per Thousand	0.25	0.02	9.31	0.20	0.30
Sexual Abuse and Neglect	169	62	36.66	47	290
Incidence per Thousand	0.22	0.08	36.66	0.06	0.38
Sexual Abuse and Emotional Maltreatment	–	–	–	–	–
Incidence per Thousand	–	–	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sexual Abuse and Exposure to Domestic Violence	–	–	–	–	–
Incidence per Thousand	–	–	–	–	–
Neglect and Emotional Maltreatment	1,632	284	17.38	1,076	2,188
Incidence per Thousand	2.17	0.38	17.38	1.43	2.91
Neglect and Exposure to Domestic Violence	426	35	8.15	358	494
Incidence per Thousand	0.57	0.05	8.15	0.48	0.66
Emotional Maltreatment and Exposure to Domestic Violence	1,174	238	20.29	707	1,641
Incidence per Thousand	1.56	0.32	20.29	0.94	2.18

**Appendix G, Table 3-4** (continued)

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect Incidence per Thousand	–	–	–	–	–
Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Emotional Maltreatment Incidence per Thousand	5.5 0.01	0 0.00	0.00 0.00	5.5 –	5.5 –
Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Exposure to Domestic Violence Incidence per Thousand	17.36 0.02	0 0.00	0.00 0.00	17.36 –	17.36 –
Physical Abuse, Neglect, Emotional Maltreatment Incidence per Thousand	127 0.17	26 0.04	20.88 20.88	75 0.10	178 0.24
Physical Abuse, Neglect and Exposure to Domestic Violence Incidence per Thousand	73 0.1	24 0.03	32.99 32.99	26 0.04	120 0.16
Physical Abuse, Emotional Maltreatment and Exposure to Domestic Violence Incidence per Thousand	375 0.5	39 0.05	10.50 10.50	298 0.40	452 0.60
Sexual Abuse, Neglect and Emotional Maltreatment Incidence per Thousand	8.81 0.01	9 0.01	100.00 100.00	–8.46 –	26.08 –
Sexual Abuse, Neglect and Exposure to Domestic Violence Incidence per Thousand	– –	– –	– –	– –	– –
Sexual Abuse, Emotional Maltreatment and Exposure to Domestic Violence Incidence per Thousand	– –	– –	– –	– –	– –

**Appendix G, Table 3-5**  
**Primary or Secondary Forms of Physical Abuse by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<b>Primary Physical Abuse</b>					
Shake, Push, Grab or Throw Incidence per Thousand	2,165 2.88	539 0.72	24.87 24.87	1,109 1	3,220 4
Hit With Hand Incidence per Thousand	2,255 3.00	301 0.40	13.36 13.36	1,664 2	2,845 4
Punch, Kick, or Bite Incidence per Thousand	622 0.83	111 0.15	17.88 17.88	404 1	840 1
Hit With Object Incidence per Thousand	987 1.31	82 0.11	8.29 8.29	826 1	1,147 2
Other Physical Abuse Incidence per Thousand	620 0.82	167 0.22	26.92 26.92	293 0	947 1
<b>Secondary Physical Abuse (1)</b>					
Shake, Push, Grab or Throw Incidence per Thousand	484 0.64	98 0.13	20.35 20.35	291 0	677 1
Hit With Hand Incidence per Thousand	1,139 1.51	165 0.22	14.52 14.52	815 1	1,463 2
Punch, Kick, or Bite Incidence per Thousand	280 0.37	45 0.06	16.07 16.07	192 0	368 0
Hit With Object Incidence per Thousand	661 0.88	224 0.30	33.84 33.84	223 0	1,099 1
Other Physical Abuse Incidence per Thousand	384 0.51	102 0.14	26.71 26.71	183 0	585 1
<b>Secondary Physical Abuse (2)</b>					
Shake, Push, Grab or Throw Incidence per Thousand	177 0.24	66 0.09	37.20 37.20	48 0	307 0
Hit With Hand Incidence per Thousand	334 0.44	106 0.14	31.67 31.67	127 0	541 1
Punch, Kick, or Bite Incidence per Thousand	81 0.11	26 0.04	32.63 32.63	29 0	133 0
Hit With Object Incidence per Thousand	98 0.13	10 0.01	10.54 10.54	77 0	118 0
Other Physical Abuse Incidence per Thousand	394 0.52	305 0.41	77.47 77.47	-204 0	993 1



**Appendix G, Table 3-6**  
**Primary or Secondary Forms of Sexual Abuse by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<b>Primary Sexual Abuse</b>					
Penetration	156	31	19.73	95	216
Incidence per Thousand	0.21	0.04	19.73	0	0
Attempted Penetration	70	19	26.72	33	106
Incidence per Thousand	0.09	0.03	26.72	0	0
Oral Sex	260	183	70.49	-99	618
Incidence per Thousand	0.35	0.24	70.49	0	1
Fondling	519	154	29.59	218	820
Incidence per Thousand	0.70	0.20	29.28	0	1
Sexual Talk	111	49	44.51	14	208
Incidence per Thousand	0.15	0.07	44.51	0	0
Voyeurism	13	9	72.71	-5	31
Incidence per Thousand	0.02	0.01	72.71	0	0
Exhibitionism	72	9	12.27	55	89
Incidence per Thousand	0.10	0.01	12.27	0	0
Exploitation	205	122	59.59	-34	444
Incidence per Thousand	0.27	0.16	59.59	0	1
<b>Secondary Sexual Abuse (1)</b>					
Penetration	78	56	71.93	-32	187
Incidence per Thousand	0.10	0.07	71.93	0	0
Attempted Penetration	34	0	0.00	34	34
Incidence per Thousand	0.04	0.00	0.00	0	0
Oral Sex	145	61	42.14	25	264
Incidence per Thousand	0.19	0.08	42.14	0	0
Fondling	346	151	43.50	51	641
Incidence per Thousand	0.46	0.20	43.50	0	1
Sexual Talk	62	0	0.00	62	62
Incidence per Thousand	0.08	0.00	0.00	0	0
Voyeurism	32	26	82.91	-20	84
Incidence per Thousand	0.04	0.04	82.91	0	0
Exhibitionism	23	0	0.00	23	23
Incidence per Thousand	0.03	0.00	0.00	0	0
Exploitation	46	0	0.00	46	46
Incidence per Thousand	0.06	0.00	0.00	0	0

**Appendix G, Table 3-6** (continued)

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<b>Secondary Sexual Abuse (2)</b>					
Penetration	27	0	0.00	27	27
Incidence per Thousand	0.04	0.00	0.00	0	0
Attempted Penetration	9	9	100.00	-8	26
Incidence per Thousand	0.01	0.01	100.00	0	0
Oral Sex	11	0	0.00	11	11
Incidence per Thousand	0.01	0.00	0.00	0	0
Fondling	122	9	7.20	105	140
Incidence per Thousand	0.16	0.01	7.20	0	0
Sexual Talk	38	15	40.24	8	68
Incidence per Thousand	0.05	0.02	40.24	0	0
Voyeurism	9	9	100.00	-8	26
Incidence per Thousand	0.01	0.01	100.00	0	0
Exhibitionism	0	0	0.00	0	0
Incidence per Thousand	—	—	—	—	—
Exploitation	40	0	0.00	40	40
Incidence per Thousand	0.05	0.00	0.00	0	0

**Appendix G, Table 3-7**  
**Primary or Secondary Forms of Neglect by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<b>Primary Neglect</b>					
Failure to Supervise (Physical)	3,795	756	19.92	2,313	5,276
Incidence per Thousand	5.05	1.01	19.92	3	7
Failure to Supervise (Sexual)	424	102	24.12	223	624
Incidence per Thousand	0.56	0.14	24.12	0	1
Physical Neglect	4,171	744	17.83	2,714	5,629
Incidence per Thousand	5.55	0.99	17.81	4	7
Medical Neglect	517	110	21.30	301	733
Incidence per Thousand	0.69	0.15	21.30	0	1
Failure to Provide Psychological Treatment	411	125	30.43	166	657
Incidence per Thousand	0.55	0.17	30.43	0	1
Permitting Criminal Behaviour	201	37	18.50	128	274
Incidence per Thousand	0.27	0.05	18.01	0	0
Abandonment	2,289	1,294	56.53	-247	4,825
Incidence per Thousand	3.07	1.72	56.10	0	6
Educational Neglect	487	78	16.08	333	640
Incidence per Thousand	0.65	0.10	16.08	0	1

**Appendix G, Table 3-7** (continued)

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<b>Secondary Neglect (1)</b>					
Failure to Supervise (Physical) Incidence per Thousand	875 1.16	27 0.04	3.09 3.09	822 1	928 1
Failure to Supervise (Sexual) Incidence per Thousand	321 0.43	110 0.15	34.27 34.27	105 0	536 1
Physical Neglect Incidence per Thousand	1,830 2.46	195 0.26	10.64 10.54	1,448 2	2,211 3
Medical Neglect Incidence per Thousand	396 0.53	186 0.25	46.97 46.97	31 0	760 1
Failure to Provide Treatment Incidence per Thousand	128 0.17	15 0.02	11.96 11.96	98 0	159 0
Permitting Criminal Behaviour Incidence per Thousand	160 0.21	63 0.08	39.29 39.29	37 0	283 0
Abandonment Incidence per Thousand	251 0.33	61 0.08	24.37 24.37	131 0	370 0
Educational Neglect Incidence per Thousand	367 0.49	62 0.08	16.92 16.92	245 0	489 1
<b>Secondary Neglect (2)</b>					
Failure to Supervise (Physical) Incidence per Thousand	378 0.50	73 0.10	19.28 19.28	235 0	521 1
Failure to Supervise (Sexual) Incidence per Thousand	201 0.27	122 0.16	60.60 60.60	-38 0	440 1
Physical Neglect Incidence per Thousand	406 0.54	21 0.03	5.09 5.09	365 0	446 1
Medical Neglect Incidence per Thousand	159 0.23	0 0.00	0.00 0.00	159 0	159 0
Failure to Provide Treatment Incidence per Thousand	35 0.05	19 0.03	53.25 53.25	-2 0	71 0
Permitting Criminal Behaviour Incidence per Thousand	72 0.10	47 0.06	64.93 64.93	-20 0	164 0
Abandonment Incidence per Thousand	187 0.25	63 0.08	33.56 33.56	64 0	311 0
Educational Neglect Incidence per Thousand	266 0.35	75 0.10	28.81 28.27	119 0	414 1

**Appendix G, Table 3-8****Primary or Secondary Forms of Emotional Maltreatment by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<b>Primary Emotional Abuse</b>					
Emotional Abuse	4,769	1,286	26.97	2,248	7,290
Incidence per Thousand	6.36	1.71	26.87	3	10
Non-Organic Failure to Thrive	20	9	46.04	2	38
Incidence per Thousand	0.03	0.01	46.04	0	0
Emotional Neglect	1,660	114	6.85	1,437	1,883
Incidence per Thousand	2.21	0.15	6.85	2	3
Exposure to Non-Intimate Partner Violence	102	0	0.00	102	102
Incidence per Thousand	0.14	0.00	0.00	0	0
<b>Secondary Emotional Abuse (1)</b>					
Emotional Abuse	3,458	376	10.88	2,721	4,196
Incidence per Thousand	4.60	0.50	10.88	4	6
Non-Organic Failure to Thrive	16	0	0.00	16	16
Incidence per Thousand	0.02	0.00	0.00	0	0
Emotional Neglect	2,804	173	6.17	2,465	3,142
Incidence per Thousand	3.73	0.23	6.17	3	4
Exposure to Non-Intimate Partner Violence	208	183	87.86	-150	567
Incidence per Thousand	0.28	0.24	87.86	0	1
<b>Secondary Emotional Abuse (2)</b>					
Emotional Abuse	1,110	299	26.90	525	1,695
Incidence per Thousand	1.48	0.40	26.90	1	2
Non-Organic Failure to Thrive	5	0	0.00	5	5
Incidence per Thousand	0.01	0.00	0.00	0	0
Emotional Neglect	978	430	43.94	136	1,820
Incidence per Thousand	1.30	0.57	43.94	0	2

**Appendix G, Table 3-9****Primary or Secondary Exposure to Domestic Violence by Level of Substantiation in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Primary Exposure to Domestic Violence	5,555	565	10.18	4,446	6,663
Incidence per Thousand	7.39	0.75	10.18	6	9
Secondary Exposure to Domestic Violence (1)	2,232	398	17.83	1,452	3,011
Incidence per Thousand	2.97	0.53	17.83	2	4
Secondary Exposure to Domestic Violence (2)	701.91	74	10.56	557	847
Incidence per Thousand	0.93	0.10	10.56	1	1

**Appendix G, Table 4-1(a)****Physical Harm in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Physical Harm	15,820	1,954	12.35	11,990	19,650
Physical Harm: Treatment Required	2,044	237	11.61	1,579	2,510

**Appendix G, Table 4-1(b)****Nature of Physical Harm in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Physical Harm	15,820	1,954	12.35	11,990	19,650
Bruises, Cuts and Scrapes	1,286	181	14.09	931	1,641
Burns and Scalds	22	0	0.00	22	22
Broken Bones	45	31	68	-15	105
Head Trauma	53	0	0.93	52	54
Fatality	-	-	-	-	-
Other Health Condition	648	44	6.78	562	734

**Appendix G, Table 4-1(c)****Medical Treatment Required in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Medical Treatment not Required	17,088	2,054	12.02	13,062	21,115
Medical Treatment Required	775	73	9.48	631	919

**Appendix G, Table 4-2****Emotional Harm in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Emotional Harm	12,537	1,087	8.67	10,407	14,667
Emotional Harm	5,327	1,048	19.68	3,272	7,382

**Appendix G, Table 4-3**  
**Duration of Maltreatment in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Single Incident	4,102	429	10.46	3,261	4,943
Less than Six Months	3,657	242	6.62	3,182	4,132
More than Six Months	7,764	1,298	16.72	5,219	10,309
Unknown	2,311	448	19.40	1,432	3,189

**Appendix G, Table 5-1(a)**  
**Previous Case Opening in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Previous Openings	5,437	427	7.86	4,600	6,274
One Previous Opening	4,219	386	9.15	3,462	4,976
2–3 Previous Openings	3,305	467	14.13	2,390	4,221
More than 3 Previous Openings	4,661	1,162	24.92	2,384	6,938
Unknown Record	241	61	25.31	121	361

**Appendix G, Table 5-1(b)**  
**Time Since Case Was Last Closed in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Previous Openings	5,437	427	7.86	4,600	6,274
Less than 3 Months	1,962	532	27.11	919	3,004
3–6 Months	3,099	745	24.03	1,639	4,559
7–12 Months	2,927	553	18.88	1,844	4,011
13–24 Months	1,809	365	20.19	1,093	2,525
More than 24 Months	2,373	290	12.23	1,804	2,942

**Appendix G, Table 5-2**  
**Ongoing Child Welfare Services in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Case to Stay Closed	7,443	1,063	14.28	5,360	9,526
Case to Stay Open	10,369	1,005	9.69	8,399	12,339

**Appendix G, Table 5-3**  
**Referrals to Support Services in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Referrals	4,844	859	17.22	3,162	6,527
In Home Parenting Support	5,215	505	9.68	4,226	6,204
Parent Support Group	2,513	617	24.57	1,303	3,723
Other Family/Parent Counseling	4,316	576	13.35	3,186	5,445
Drug/Alcohol Counseling	3,627	505	13.93	2,637	4,617
Welfare/Social Assistance	1,320	323	24.47	687	1,953
Food Bank	1,413	154	10.90	1,111	1,715
Shelter Services	781	106	13.51	575	988
Domestic Violence Services	3,399	402	11.82	2,612	4,186
Psychiatric/Psychological Services	3,595	481	13.39	2,652	4,538
Special Education Referral	170	0	0.00	170	170
Recreational Program	682	105	15.41	476	888
Victim Support Program	451	78	17.38	298	605
Medical/Dental Services	814	140	17.20	539	1,088
Child/Daycare	726	158	21.72	417	1,035
Cultural services	1,007	146	14.48	721	1,292
Other Referral	1,771	459	25.91	871	2,670

**Appendix G, Table 5-4**  
**Out-of-Home Placement in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Placement Required	13,355	1,527	11.44	10,361	16,348
Placement Considered	949	53	5.58	846	1,053
Informal Kinship Care	1,463	517	35.31	451	2,476
<b>Child Welfare Placement:</b>					
Kinship Foster Care	474	305	64.45	-125	1,072
Other Family Foster Care	1,153	98	8.52	960	1,346
Group Home	316	29	9.11	260	373
Incidence per Thousand					
Residential/Secure Treatment	148	19	12.58	112	185

**Appendix G, Table 5-5**  
**Applications to Child Welfare Court and Mediation/Alternative Response in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Court Considered	13,956	1,663	11.92	10,696	17,216
Application Considered	1,728	251	14.55	1,235	2,220
Application Made	2,180	337	15.46	1,519	2,840
No Mediation/Alternative Response	16,533	2,014	12.18	12,585	20,481
Referral to Mediation/Alternative Response	1,257	107	8.52	1,047	1,467

**Appendix G, Table 5-6**  
**Police Investigations and Charges Laid in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Police Investigation	15,217	1,760	11.57	11,768	18,667
Police Investigation, No Charges Laid	1,823	305	16.74	1,225	2,421
Police Investigation, Charges Considered	291	65	22.42	163	419
Police Investigation, Charges Laid	532	116	21.85	304	760



**Appendix G, Table 6-1**  
**Child Age and Sex in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
< 1 Female	450	29	6.41	393	506
<1 Male	728	145	19.94	444	1,013
1 Female	267	47	17.52	175	358
1 Male	468	78	16.74	314	621
2 Female	485	111	22.86	268	703
2 Male	426	23	5.32	382	470
3 Female	366	63	17.24	242	489
3 Male	539	81	15.01	381	698
4 Female	375	68	18.23	241	508
4 Male	298	38	12.74	224	373
5 Female	366	47	12.74	275	458
5 Male	752	139	18.44	480	1,023
6 Female	641	136	21.23	374	907
6 Male	488	81	16.64	329	647
7 Female	391	67	17.04	260	522
7 Male	440	44	10.04	353	526
8 Female	392	49	12.57	296	489
8 Male	647	140	21.60	373	921
9 Female	469	188	40.09	101	838
9 Male	921	267	28.94	399	1,443
10 Female	357	60	16.81	240	475
10 Male	678	148	21.89	387	969
11 Female	370	23	6.31	325	416
11 Male	728	109	15.03	514	943
12 Female	670	193	28.85	291	1,050
12 Male	602	67	11.16	470	734
13 Female	781	83	10.62	619	944
13 Male	631	63	9.90	509	754
14 Female	722	101	14.05	523	921
14 Male	327	41	12.40	247	406
15 Female	478	53	11.088	374	581
15 Male	460	75	16.21	314	606
16 Female	408	84	20.63	243	573
16 Male	299	62	20.78	177	420
17 Female	237	76	32.32	87	386
17 Male	206	44	21.19	121	292

**Appendix G, Table 6-3**  
**Child Age and Sex in Substantiated Child Maltreatment, in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Males 0–17 Years of Age	8,225	829	12.78	6,601	9,849
Females 0–17 Years of Age	9,639	1,232	11.52	7,225	12,052
Males <1 Years of Age	728	145	19.94	444	1,013
Females <1 Years of Age	450	29	6.41	393	506
Males 0–3 Years of Age	2,161	275	12.72	1,622	2,700
Females 0–3 Years of Age	1,568	189	12.06	1,197	1,938
Males 4–7 Years of Age	1,978	249	12.59	1,490	2,466
Females 4–7 Years of Age	1,772	205	11.57	1,371	2,174
Males 8–11 Years of Age	2,975	648	21.78	1,705	4,244
Females 8–11 Years of Age	1,589	183	11.52	1,231	1,948
Males 12–15 Years of Age	2,020	162	8.04	1,702	2,339
Females 12–15 Years of Age	2,651	277	10.44	2,109	3,194
Males 16–17 Years of Age	505	106	20.94	297.76	712.26
Females 16–17 Years of Age	645	157	24.34	337.11	952.25

**Appendix G, Table 6-4(a)**  
**Child Functioning (Physical, Emotional and Cognitive) in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Developmental Delay	2,691	436	16.20	1,837	3,546
Learning Disability	3,950	692	17.52	2,593	5,306
Physical Disability	550	136	24.70	284	817
Substance Abuse Related Birth Defect	1,851	322	17.40	1,219	2,482
Other Health Condition	872	87	10.01	701	1,043
Specialized Education Services	2,542	477	18.77	1,607	3,478
Depression or Anxiety	4,971	559	11.24	3,876	6,066
Self-harming Behaviour	1,220	55	4.52	1,112	1,328
Psychiatric Disorder	1,082	193	17.83	704	1,461
Positive Toxicology at Birth	491	124	25.31	248	735

**Appendix G, Table 6-4(b)****Child Functioning (Behavioural) in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Negative Peer Involvement	4,167	561	13.45	3,068	5,265
Alcohol Abuse	1,717	175	10.22	1,374	2,061
ADD/ADHD	3,138	570	18.18	2,020	4,256
Drug/Solvent Abuse	1,684	328	19.49	1,041	2,327
Violence Towards Others	3,412	269	7.87	2,885	3,938
Running	1,870	232	12.41	1,415	2,325
Irregular School Attendance	4,360	607	13.93	3,170	5,550
Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour	1,537	285	18.53	979	2,095
Youth Criminal Justice Act Involvement	812	142	17.45	534	1,090
Other Behavioural Emotional Problems	6,464	1,339	20.72	3,839	9,089

**Appendix G, Table 6-5****Aboriginal Heritage of Investigated Children in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Non-Aboriginal	12,719	1,328	10.44	10,116	15,321
First Nation, Status	3,075	765	24.88	1,576	4,574
First Nation, Non-Status	818	123	15.06	576	1,059
Metis	1,130	50	4.41	1,032	1,227
Inuit	15	15	100.00	-15	45
Other Aboriginal	108	15	14.22	78	138

**Appendix G, Table 7-1**  
**Household Structure by Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Two Parent-Biological	5,176	497	9.61	4,201	6,151
Two Parent-Blended/ Step	3,533	569	16.10	2,419	4,648
Biological Parent and Other	1,094	318	29.09	470	1,717
Lone Mother	6,026	713	11.84	4,628	7,424
Lone Father	682	81	11.89	523	841
Other	1,354	152	11.19	1,057	1,651

**Appendix G, Table 7-2(a)**  
**Age of Female Caregivers by Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Less than 19	145	15	10.61	115	175
19–21	519	59	11.30	404	634
22–25	1,112	148	13.27	823	1,401
26–30	3,482	752	21.60	2,008	4,956
31–40	8,227	917	11.15	6,429	10,024
Over 40	2,342	118	5.02	2,112	2,573

**Appendix G, Table 7-2(b)**  
**Age of Male Caregivers by Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Less than 19	5	0	0.00	5	5
19–21	86	9	10.23	69	103
22–25	476	75	15.77	329	623
26–30	1,330	364	27.40	616	2,044
31–40	5,301	321	6.06	4,671	5,931
Over 40	2,863	304	10.62	2,267	3,458

**Appendix G, Table 7-3**  
**Siblings of Children in Child Maltreatment Investigations in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Sibling	4,470	414	9.27	3,659	5,282
One Sibling	6,330	1,037	16.38	4,299	8,362
Two Siblings	4,051	627	15.47	2,823	5,279
Three Siblings	1,571	292	18.59	999	2,144
Four of More Siblings	1,441	147	10.23	1,152	1,730

**Appendix G, Table 7-4**  
**Investigated Siblings in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Sibling	4,470	414	9.27	3,659	5,282
One Sibling, Not Investigated	986	157	15.94	678	1,294
One Sibling, Investigated	5,344	1,045	19.55	3,297	7,392
Two or More Siblings, None Investigated	886	177	20.01	538	1,233
Two or More Siblings, At Least One Other Investigated	6,177	730	11.82	4,747	7,608

**Appendix G, Table 7-5**  
**Household Source of Income in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Full-Time Employment	9,258	860	9.29	7,572	10,943
Part-time/Multiple Jobs/Seasonal Employment	2,310	540	23.38	1,251	3,369
Benefits/Unemployment/Social Assistance	4,972	495	9.96	4,001	5,942
Unknown	972	202	20.76	577	1,368
No Source of Income	318	122	38.44	78	558

**Appendix G, Table 7-6**  
**Housing Type in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Own Home	4,826	580	12.03	3,688	5,964
Rental Accomodation	7,989	832	10.42	6,358	9,620
Public Housing	2,568	465	18.12	1,656	3,480
Shelter/Hotel	264	41	15.33	185	344
Other	793	134	16.96	529	1,056
Unknown	1,423	236	16.58	961	1,886

**Appendix G, Table 7-7**  
**Housing Conditions by Primary Category of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Safe Conditions	15,201	2,012	13.24	11,258	19,145
Unsafe Conditions	1,685	221	13.13	1,251	2,119
Unknown	978	174	17.83	636	1,319

**Appendix G, Table 7-8**  
**Family Moves Within the Last Twelve Months in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Moves in Last Twelve Months	7,801	609	7.81	6,607	8,996
One Move	3,075	411	13.37	2,269	3,881
Two or More Moves	2,579	614	23.80	1,376	3,783
Unknown	4,408	749	16.99	2,940	5,876

**Appendix G, Table 7-9 (a)****Female Caregiver Functioning in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Alcohol Abuse	5,240	835	15.94	3,603	6,876
Drug/Solvent Abuse	4,634	848	18.29	2,972	6,295
Criminal Activity	1,956	636	32.50	710	3,202
Cognitive Impairment	3,051	427	14.00	2,213	3,888
Mental Health Issues	6,128	1,035	16.89	4,099	8,157
Physical Health Issues	3,179	509	16.01	2,181	4,177
Few Social Supports	9,525	1,004	10.54	7,558	11,493
Maltreated as a Child	6,500	955	14.69	4,629	8,371
Victim of Domestic Violence	9,989	1,461	14.62	7,126	12,853
Perpetrator of Domestic Violence	3,239	532	16.42	2,197	4,282
Other Concerns	287	15	5.36	256	317

**Appendix G, Table 7-9 (b)****Male Caregiver Functioning in Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Alcohol Abuse	3,723	368	9.87	3,003	4,444
Drug/Solvent Abuse	2,967	257	8.66	2,463	3,470
Criminal Activity	2,149	402	18.71	1,361	2,937
Cognitive Impairment	1,614	235	14.58	1,152	2,075
Mental Health Issues	2,470	328	13.27	1,828	3,113
Physical Health Issues	1,585	189	11.94	1,214	1,956
Few Social Supports	4,721	530	11.22	3,682	5,759
Maltreated as a Child	2,831	519	18.35	1,813	3,849
Victim of Domestic Violence	1,881	206	10.96	1,477	2,285
Perpetrator of Domestic Violence	5,442	601	11.05	4,263	6,621
Other Concerns	198	64	32.05	74	323

**Appendix G, Table 7-10**  
**Custody Dispute in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Custody Dispute	16,035	2,020	12.60	12,075	19,994
Custody Dispute	1,211	219	18.08	782	1,640
Unknown	618	38	6.22	543	694

**Appendix G, Table 8-1**  
**All Referral Sources (Non-Professional and Professional) in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Canada, Excluding Québec, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<b>Non-Professional Referral Sources</b>					
Parent	2,106	311	14.79	1,495	2,716
Child	741	134	18.11	478	1,005
Relative	1,351	93	6.91	1,168	1,534
Neighbour/Friend	1,138	192	16.83	763	1,514
Other Referral Sources	836	131	15.63	580	1,092
Anonymous	302	77	25.40	152	453
<b>Professional Referral Sources</b>					
Police	3,216	210	6.54	2,804	3,629
School Personnel	4,065	719	17.68	2,656	5,474
Health Professional	1,214	89	7.33	1,040	1,389
Mental Health Professional	490	188	38.38	121	858
Other Child Welfare Service	1,143	296	25.89	563	1,723
Community Agency	2,129	279	13.10	1,583	2,676



**Appendix G, Table 8-2(a)**  
**Unsubstantiated and Malicious Reports of Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Substantiated Reports	17,864	2,058	11.52	13,829	21,898
Suspected Reports	5,998	529	8.82	4,961	7,034
Unsubstantiated Non-Malicious Reports	5,643	2,207	39.11	1,317	9,969
Unsubstantiated Malicious Reports	603	77	12.82	451	754
Unsubstantiated Reports, Malicious Intent Unknown	2,009	364	18.11	1,296	2,722

**Appendix G, Table 8-2(b)**  
**Unsubstantiated and Malicious Reports of Child Maltreatment by Referral Source Category in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<b>Parent</b>					
Substantiated Reports	2,106	311	14.79	1,495	2,716
Suspected Reports	802	112	13.95	583	1,021
Unsubstantiated Non-Malicious Reports	206	32	15.54	143	268
Unsubstantiated Malicious Reports	133	31	23.13	73	193
Unsubstantiated Reports, Malicious Intent Unknown	265	92	34.75	85	446
<b>Child</b>					
Substantiated Reports	741	134	18.11	478	1,005
Suspected Reports	288	185	64.09	-74	650
Unsubstantiated Non-Malicious Reports	167	53	31.61	63	270
Unsubstantiated Malicious Reports	9	0	0.00	9	9
Unsubstantiated Malicious Intent Unknown	122	31	25.19	62	182
<b>Relative</b>					
Substantiated Reports	1,351	93	6.91	1,168	1,534
Suspected Reports	462	154	33.23	161	763
Unsubstantiated Non-Malicious Reports	340	246	72.42	-143	822
Unsubstantiated Malicious Reports	111	9	7.94	94	128
Unsubstantiated Malicious Intent Unknown	388	111	28.45	172	605
<b>Neighbour/Friend</b>					
Substantiated Reports	1,138	192	16.83	763	1,514
Suspected Reports	380	46	12.18	290	471
Unsubstantiated Non-Malicious Reports	396	116	29.38	168	623
Unsubstantiated Malicious Reports	120	15	12.80	90	150
Unsubstantiated Malicious Intent Unknown	264	15	5.81	234	294

**Appendix G, Table 8-2(b)** (continued)

<b>Professional or Service</b>					
Substantiated Reports	12,049	1,527	12.67	9,056	15,042
Suspected Reports	3,703	399	10.79	2,920	4,485
Unsubstantiated Non-Malicious Reports	3,859	1,615	41.84	694	7,023
Unsubstantiated Malicious Reports	134	31	22.95	74	194
Unsubstantiated Malicious Intent Unknown	783	151	19.27	487	1,079
<b>Other</b>					
Substantiated Reports	836	131	15.63	580	1,092
Suspected Reports	327	123	37.62	86	568
Unsubstantiated Non-Malicious Reports	432	93	21.57	249	614
Unsubstantiated Malicious Reports	82	0	0.00	82	82
Unsubstantiated Malicious Intent Unknown	60	9	14.72	43	77
<b>Anonymous</b>					
Substantiated Reports	302	77	25.40	152	453
Suspected Reports	110	31	27.92	50	170
Unsubstantiated Non-Malicious Reports	321	305	94.91	-276	919
Unsubstantiated Malicious Reports	56	18	31.37	22	91
Unsubstantiated Malicious Intent Unknown	201	15	7.63	171	231

**Appendix G, Table 8-3**  
**Relative Size of Child Welfare Agency/Office in Substantiated Child Maltreatment investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Small (< 350)	2,171	1,062	48.95	88	4,253
Medium (350–949)	3,655	2,676	73.22	-1,590	8,900
Large (950–2,000)	1,383	1,383	100.00	-1,328	4,094
Very Large (>2,000)	10,655	0	0.00	10,655	10,655

**Appendix G, Table 8-4**  
**Urban/Rural Location of Child Welfare Agency/Office in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Large Metropolitan Service Area	10,655	0	0.00	10,655	10,655
Mixed Urban and Rural Service Area	6,728	2,167	32.21	2,481	10,975
Primarily Rural Service Area	481	177	36.76	0	827

**Appendix G, Table 8-5**  
**Job Position of Investigating Worker in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Intake and Investigation Specialists	6,523	845	12.96	4,867	8,180
Generalists with Mixed Intake and Ongoing Service Caseloads	6,505	2,285	35.13	2,026	10,984
Other	2,714	265	9.77	2,194	3,234

**Appendix G, Table 8-6**  
**Years of Child Welfare Experience of Investigating Workers in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<1 Year	507	63	12.39	384	630
1 to 2 Years	953	122	12.80	714	1,193
3 to 4 years	6,016	1,181	19.63	3,702	8,330
5 to 6 Years	4,275	670	15.67	2,962	5,588
More than 6 Years	5,058	863	17.06	3,367	6,749

**Appendix G, Table 8-7**  
**Highest Completed Educational Level of Investigating Workers in Substantiated Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation (%)	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
MSW	801	0	0.00	801	801
BSW	864	440	50.91	2	1,727
MSc	7,443	1,393	18.72	4,712	10,174
BA/BSc	5,151	1,528	29.66	2,156	8,145
College Diploma or Certificate	2,999	950	31.68	1,137	4,861

## APPENDIX H

### Supporting Data for Additional Report Findings

#### *Appendix H, Table 1(a)*

#### *Mean Number of Children 19 and Under per Household in Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003*

Children under 19 Per Household Per Child Investigation	Child Investigations
One Child	8,122
Two Children	11,006
Three Children	7,589
Four Children	2,815
Five Children	2,222
Six Children	673
Seven Children	26
<b>Total Childen Under 19</b>	<b>32,453</b>
<b>Mean Number of Children 19 and Under per Household in Child Maltreatment Investigations*</b>	<b>2.45</b>
* The mean number of children per household was calculated by dividing the number of children under 19 living in the households by the total number of households.	

#### *Appendix H, Table 1(b)*

#### *Mean Number of Investigated Children per Household in Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003*

Number of Children	Child Investigations
One Child	11,923
Two Children	9,894
Three Children	5,713
Four Children	2,969
Five Children	1,584
Six Children	370
<b>Total Child Investigations</b>	<b>32,453</b>
<b>Mean Number of Investigated Children per Household in Child Maltreatment Investigations*</b>	<b>1.63</b>
* The mean number of investigated children was calculated by dividing the number of children investigated by the total number of families	

#### *Appendix H, Table 2*

#### *Investigated Children Under One Year of Age, Experiencing Head Trauma in Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003*

	Head Trauma	No Head Trauma	Total
Number of Children Less than One Year Old	9	2,023	2,032
Percentage	0.44%	99.56%	100%

**Appendix H, Table 3**  
**Parents Involved as Alleged Perpetrators in Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

	Child Investigations	Percentage
Either Parent Involved as Alleged Perpetrator	30,047	93%
Neither Parent Involved as Alleged Perpatrator	2,406	7%
<b>Total Child Investigations</b>	<b>32,453</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Appendix H, Table 4**  
**Parents as Perpetrators of Primary Substantiated Physical Abuse for Two-Parent Families in Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

	Physical Abuse Investigations	Percentage
Mother as Perpetrator in Two-Parent Families	1,169	53%
Father as Alleged Perpetrator in Two-Parent Families	1,354	62%
<b>Total Two-Parent Families Investigated for Phsycial Abuse</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Appendix H, Table 5**  
**Parents as Perpetrators of Primary Substantiated Neglect for Two-Parent Families in Child Maltreatment Investigations in Alberta, in 2003**

	Neglect Investigations	Percentage
Mother as Perpetrator in Two-Parent Families	2,705	87%
Father as Perpetrator in Two-Parent Families	2,205	71%
<b>Total Two-Parent Families</b>	<b>3,092</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Appendix H, Table 6**  
**Age and Sex of Victims of Substantiated Child Maltreatment in Alberta, in 2003\***

		Number of Substantiated Cases	Incidence Per 1,000 Children
<b>0-17</b>	<b>All Children</b>	<b>17,864</b>	<b>23.76</b>
	Females	8,225	22.43
	Males	9,638	25.01
<b>0-3 Years</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>1,568</b>	<b>21.59</b>
	<b>Males</b>	<b>2,161</b>	<b>28.67</b>
< 1 Year	Females	450	25.45
	Males	728	40.07
1 Year	Females	267	14.69
	Males	468	24.73
2 Years	Females	485	26.60
	Males	426	22.12
3 Years	Females	366	19.73
	Males	539	28.35
<b>4-7 Years</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>1,773</b>	<b>22.70</b>
	<b>Males</b>	<b>1,978</b>	<b>23.87</b>
4 Years	Females	375	20.24
	Males	298	14.97
5 Years	Females	366	18.52
	Males	752	36.35
6 Years	Females	641	32.24
	Males	488	23.23
7 Years	Females	391	19.61
	Males	440	20.70
<b>8-11 Years</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>1,588</b>	<b>18.50</b>
	<b>Males</b>	<b>2,974</b>	<b>33.00</b>
8 Years	Females	392	18.92
	Males	647	30.05
9 Years	Females	469	21.99
	Males	921	41.14
10 Years	Females	357	16.55
	Males	678	29.90
11 years	Females	370	16.67
	Males	728	30.93
<b>12-15 Years</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>2,651</b>	<b>30.53</b>
	<b>Males</b>	<b>2,020</b>	<b>22.17</b>
12 Years	Females	670	30.76
	Males	602	26.36
13 Years	Females	781	36.56
	Males	631	28.30
14 Years	Females	722	33.34
	Males	327	14.36
15 Years	Females	478	21.70
	Males	460	19.80
<b>16-17 Years</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>14.91</b>
	<b>Males</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>11.00</b>
16 Years	Females	408	18.87
	Males	299	12.95
17 Years	Females	237	10.96
	Males	206	9.03
<b>Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003</b>			
* Based on a sample of 2,653 child maltreatment investigations with information about child age and sex.			