

**Denouncing** the **Continued**  
**Overrepresentation** of  
**First Nations**  
**Children**  
in **Canadian Child Welfare**



Findings from the First Nations/Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2019





The cover art was gifted by Ziibiikwans, Caitlyn Murphy- Eagleson.

“

This piece is titled "Miskwaadesi" which means "painted turtle" in Ojibwe. This piece has a young indigenous youth at the center, canoeing over large, spiritual turtles in water. This piece evokes a connection with land, spirit and the youth.

**Water in my work often represents healing, and this study definitely ties into important research associated with important healing work that needs to be done to address child abuse and neglect.”**

- Ziibiikwans, Caitlyn Murphy- Eagleson

# **Denouncing the Continued Overrepresentation of First Nations Children in Canadian Child Welfare**

Findings from the First Nations/  
Canadian Incidence Study of  
Reported Child Abuse and  
Neglect-2019

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The FN/CIS-2019 was directed by the Assembly of First Nations with core study funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada. The University of Toronto was contracted by the Assembly of First Nations to conduct the study. The Ontario and Quebec Governments provided additional funding for stand alone provincial studies. A separate report of Ontario data from 2018 is available on the Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal ([cwrp.ca](http://cwrp.ca)), and a Quebec report is forthcoming.

The study would not be possible without the in-kind support of the approximately 1,500 participating child welfare workers who attended trainings, completed study instruments, and responded to additional information requests as well as agency managers, administrators, and data specialists. For purposes of confidentiality, the names of participating frontline staff and agencies cannot be released; however, the FN/CIS-2019 Advisory Committee and Research Team would like to extend our deep appreciation to the professionals who participated in this study, both for their participation as well as for the work that they do to serve children.

Several individuals whose contributions were integral to the study's success are listed below.

## FN/CIS-2019 Site Researchers

FN/CIS-2019 Site Researchers were responsible for providing presentations and trainings at participating child welfare agencies and for collecting and verifying data collected. Site Researchers for the FN/CIS-2019 are listed below in alphabetical order.

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# Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action

The following five Calls to Action pertain to child welfare and are directly quoted from the 94 Calls to Action established in 2015 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:<sup>1</sup>

## Child Welfare

- 1.** We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:
  - a. Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations.
  - b. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.
  - c. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.
  - d. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.
  - e. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.
- 2.** We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and publish annual reports on the number of Aboriginal children (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) who are in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, as well as the reasons for apprehension, the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies, and the effectiveness of various interventions.
- 3.** We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.
- 4.** We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that:
  - a. Affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies.
  - b. Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision making.
  - c. Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate.
- 5.** We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.

<sup>1</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2015), [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls\\_to\\_action\\_english2.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf).

## **FN/CIS-2019 Advisory Committee Message to Communities and Readers**

For nearly 20 years, First Nations child welfare advocates and university-based researchers have conducted a series of studies documenting child welfare services provided to First Nations and non-First Nations children and families in Canada. With funding and support from the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, provinces and territories and a number of research grants, the 2019 Canadian Incidence Study (CIS) of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect, and the First Nations CIS (FN/CIS), tracked over 44 thousand investigations conducted by a nationally representative sample of child welfare authorities.



It is with profound sadness that we report the 2019 findings of the FN/CIS show nearly identical disparities as in previous studies. As with previous CIS cycles, the FN/CIS-2019 shows that First Nations children are three to four times more likely to be reported for a child maltreatment-related concern. This initial disparity increases further as various investigation decisions are made, with investigations involving First Nations children being seventeen times more likely to lead to placement in formal out-of-home care.

The FN/CIS-2019 provides some of the data called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action for child welfare cited at the beginning of this report: monitoring (1) the number of First Nations children investigated because of child neglect and (2) the number of First Nations children placed in out-of-home care compared to non-Indigenous children as well as the reasons for apprehension. The intention of the TRC's Calls to Action was to provide a mechanism for accountability to address the inequities and harm documented by the TRC. The findings from the FN/CIS-2019 show that to date, efforts to reduce child welfare **investigation and placement disparities** for First Nations children have been woefully inadequate.

It should be noted, however, that the FN/CIS-2019 provides only a partial response to the TRC Calls to Action. As a national study, the FN/CIS does not provide information about rates of overrepresentation at the level of most provinces. Furthermore, as a study of child welfare investigations, the FN/CIS does not track service outcomes, such as length of time First Nations children spend away from their homes or whether they ever return home, nor does it track the number of moves First Nations children experience in care. Jurisdictions across Canada have not adequately met the TRC Calls to Action to monitor the most basic information about First Nations children under their care.

As we release this report, thousands of children's remains are being recovered from the sites of former residential schools on lands now known as Canada. For hundreds of years, First Nations communities have reported the horrors that historical and current colonial practices have wrought and we have chosen to look away despite resistance and advocacy efforts of Elders, matriarchs, Knowledge Keepers and community leaders. Over a century ago, Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce demanded that Canadians improve the health and living conditions of Indigenous people, and his Report on the Indian Schools of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories prompted calls to disband the residential school system. While residential schools were eventually closed, First Nations children continue to be separated from their families and communities at alarming rates. Sadly, to date, Canada has not only failed to stem the tide of removal of First Nations children, but the lack of information about these children is tantamount to continuing to bury them in near secrecy.

The TRC estimated that there were approximately 11,000 Indigenous children in residential schools at the height of the residential school system.<sup>2</sup> While we do not know precisely how many First Nations children are currently placed in child welfare care in Canada, we can estimate<sup>3</sup> that two to three times more First Nations children are in out-of-home care now than were in residential schools at the height of the residential school system.

<sup>2</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The Legacy, The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, vol. 5 (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> In 2016 the Census reported that 52.2% of children in foster care were Indigenous. These data only included 28,665 children identified as living in foster care in private homes. The estimated number of Indigenous children in foster care using these data would be 14,970 children. If we use the total of 54,139 children estimated to be in out-of-home care in 2019 and apply the proportion of Indigenous children in foster care from the Census data (52.2% of children in foster care), it could be that the number of Indigenous children in out-of-home care is closer to 28,261. This means that there are drastically more Indigenous children in out-of-home care, today, than at the height of the residential school system.

“

If Canada were fully committed to addressing the long-standing inequities in public services, then frankly it would take monolithic incompetence to achieve such a perfect record of failure. Additionally, a contrite government would logically launch wide-scale internal departmental reform to fix its approach in the wake of past failures. Canada has not. Instead, successive Canadian governments have avoided ending discrimination toward First Nations children through strategies of denial, deflection, deferral and the use of official procedures such as study and consultation to mask inaction.”<sup>4</sup>

– Cindy Blackstock, 2021

It is up to every citizen to demand that we irrevocably pay attention to these numbers, and commit to reducing the disparity and the associated harm to children, families and communities. Structural issues, both historic and current, pervade child welfare with themes of multigenerational poverty, alienation, exclusion, and outright racism being as common today as they have been since the study started. The numbers presented in this report represent sacred children and their families who continue to suffer the impact of discriminatory colonial practices and a settler population who often pays lip service to the idea of reconciliation, while accepting the magnitude of these differences with resignation and not outrage and action. While the recently proclaimed *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* finally recognizes Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services, it is the responsibility of every Canadian to demand that sufficient funds and support are put into place to ensure that First Nations communities are equipped to redress the disparities documented in this report.

<sup>4</sup> Katherine Graham and David Newhouse, *Sharing the Land, Sharing a Future: The Legacy of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, vol. 4 (Univ. of Manitoba Press, 2021), p. 281

The FN/CIS-2019 Advisory Committee extends our deep appreciation to everyone who made this study possible. This includes our funder, the Public Health Agency of Canada. The Assembly of First Nations has provided conceptual direction and continued support and advocacy. Participating agencies committed significant time and resources to ensuring the success of the study amid a global pandemic. A group of dedicated researchers has ensured the integrity and scientific merits of the study is maintained throughout this cycle and in previous efforts. Our Project Manager Rachael Lefebvre has acted as a true champion of the study.

Finally, to the workers who contributed their time to complete the data collection instruments, we thank you for your continuing efforts to honour the TRC's Calls to Action. It is only through this commitment that the FN/CIS-2019 was possible.

Kenn Richard & Nico Trocmé, Co-Chairs

On behalf of the FN/CIS-2019 Advisory Committee  
and Research Team

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# Executive Summary

The First Nations/Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (FN/CIS-2019) is a study of child welfare investigations involving First Nations and non-Indigenous children. It is the fourth national study to provide up-to-date estimates of child welfare investigations across Canada. The study is directed by the Assembly of First Nations with core funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada. Additional funding was provided by provincial governments in Ontario (OIS-2018) and Quebec (FN/EIQ-2019).

This report is a collaborative effort by the FN/CIS research team and the First Nations Advisory Committee to:

1. Continue to monitor national-level data on investigations involving First Nations children compared to non-Indigenous children as intended by the Truth & Reconciliation's Calls to Action, including;
  - Investigating the type and severity of maltreatment
  - Documenting caregiver, household and child characteristics of families investigated
  - Monitoring short-term investigation outcomes such as placement and reunification
2. Ensure the appropriate contextualization of findings.
3. Disseminate research results to First Nations communities.

## Methodology

For all jurisdictions except for Quebec, participating child welfare workers completed a standardized data collection instrument (see Appendix A) for new/re-opened investigations that were conducted during a three-month sampling period (October to December 2019). This instrument is broken down into three parts that focus on intake, household, and child information routinely collected during an investigation.

Data from Quebec was extracted from information systems from all agencies able to participate (17 out of 20 agencies) and these administrative data were matched to variables collected in the rest of Canada where possible. In provinces other than Quebec, participating agencies were selected through a multi-stage cluster sampling design.

The first stage involved selecting provincial and territorial mainstream child welfare organizations as well as Indigenous child welfare agencies from a sampling frame including all child welfare agencies. The final sample of agencies from the rest of Canada included 47 mainstream and 16 First Nations agencies. A three-month sampling period (October 1 – December 31, 2019) was then used to select cases within these sites. The final stage involved identifying child-level investigations meeting the study criteria. Complex survey weights were used to derive an estimate of child maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Canada in 2019 from these sampled cases.

The following methodological considerations must be taken into account when interpreting the data:

- The data are limited to maltreatment-related reports investigated by child welfare. This does not include screened-out cases, cases not reported, or cases that were only investigated by the police.
- Information is collected directly from investigative workers and is reflective of their clinical judgement. The information is not independently verified.
- Data from this cycle include data collected in Ontario in 2018 and administrative data from Quebec.
- Given methodological differences with previous cycles, any comparisons must be made with caution.

## Historical and Current Context of First Nations Child Welfare

The overrepresentation of First Nations children investigated by Canadian child welfare is a consequence of centuries of policies of assimilation, structural inequities, and discrimination that limit the resources needed for First Nations families and communities to thrive. First Nations child welfare is currently in a state of transition and actions need to be put in place urgently to redress the disparities presented in this study.

# Major Findings

The following section provides a brief overview of the key findings presented in this report.

## Indigenous Identity of the Child

An estimated 299,217 child maltreatment-related investigations were conducted in Canada in 2019.

Of these investigations, 45,918 involved First Nations children (15% of total investigations) and 241,137 involved non-Indigenous children (81% of total investigations).

In 2019, for every 1,000 First Nations children 15 years of age and under in Canada, there were an estimated 151 child welfare investigations.

**First Nations children (aged 0-15 years) in Canada were 3.6 times as likely to be the subject of a child maltreatment-related investigation compared to non-Indigenous children in 2019.**

Figure 1: Children's Indigenous Identity in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019

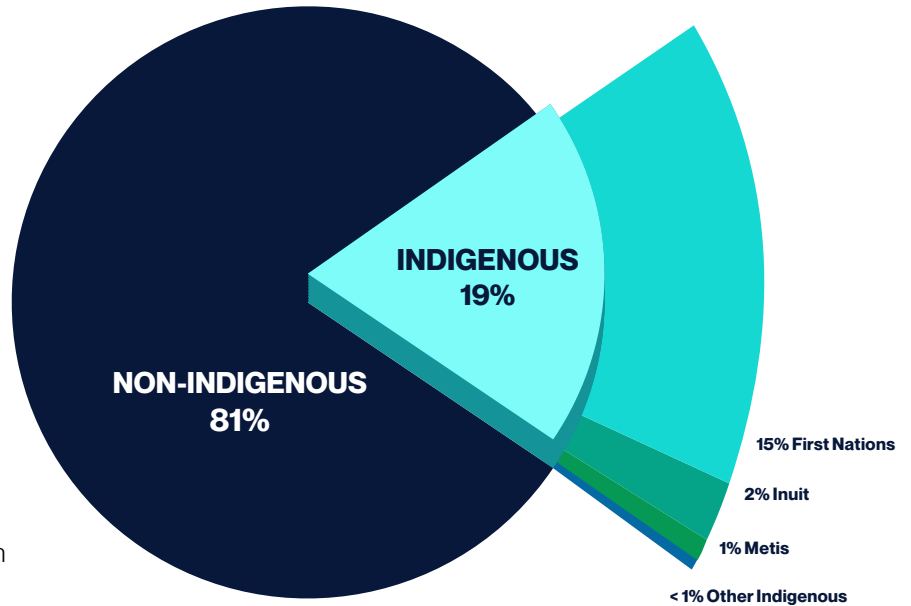
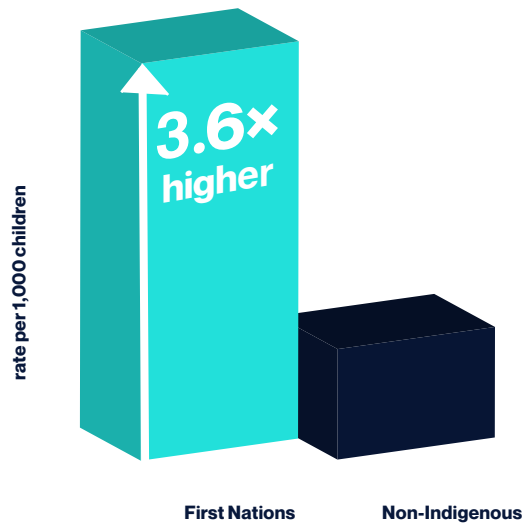


Figure 2: Rates of Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children in Canada in 2019



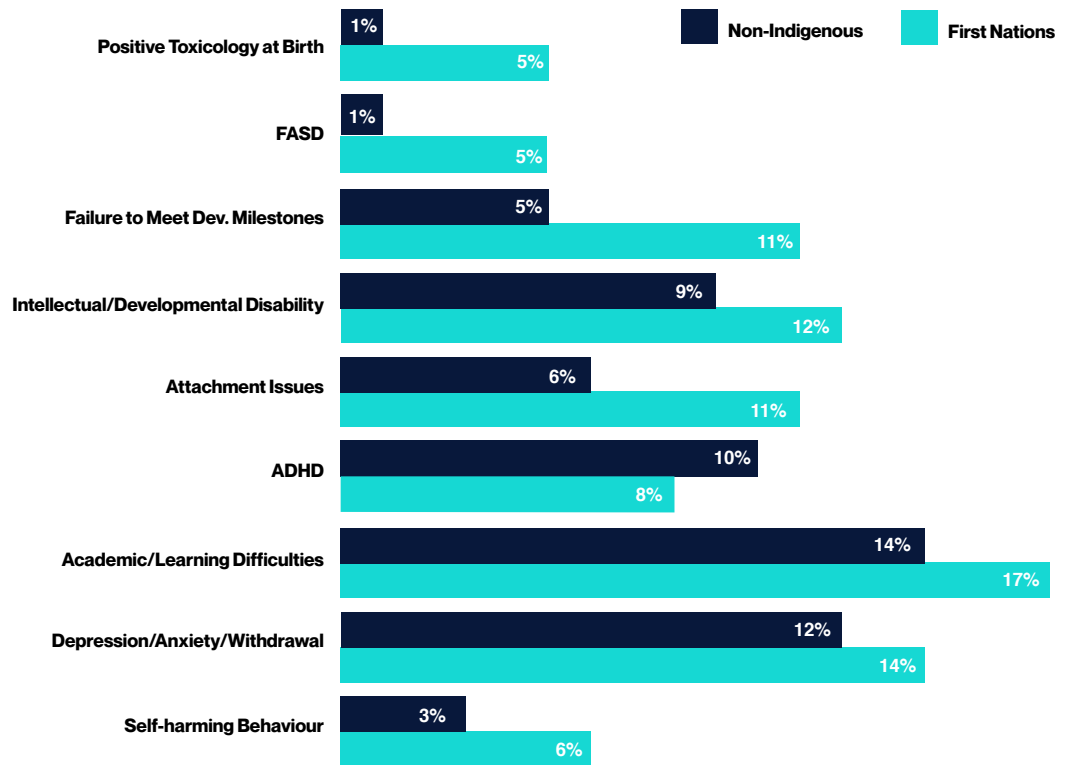
## Child Functioning Concerns



Investigating workers were asked if there were any child functioning concerns noted during the investigation.

At least one child functioning concern was identified in 37% of child maltreatment-related investigations involving First Nations children compared to 32% of investigations involving non-Indigenous children.

Figure 3: Child Functioning Concerns in Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec)



## Primary Caregiver Risk Factors

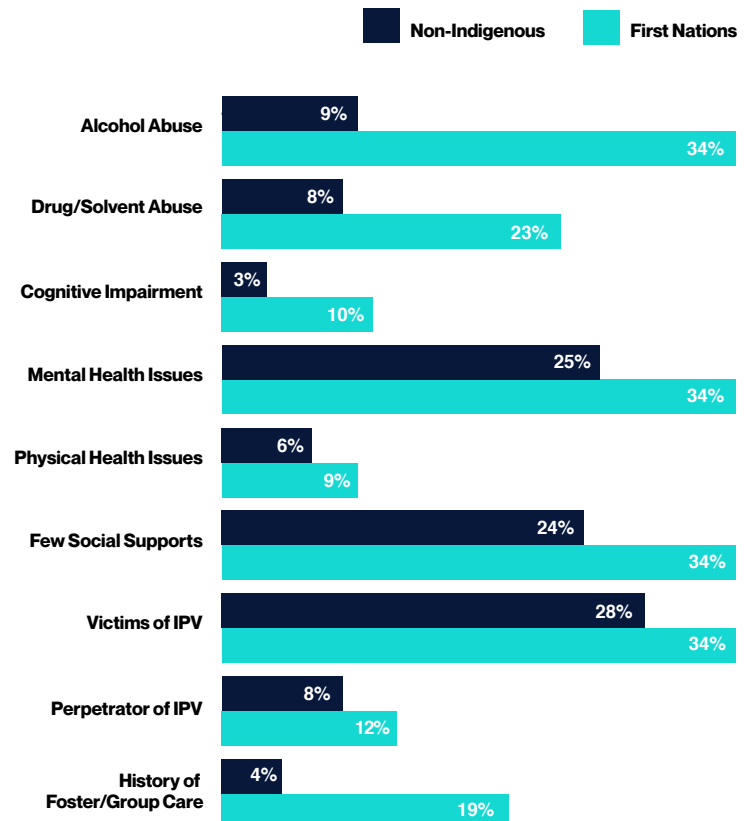


Investigating workers were asked if there were any risk factors concerning the child's primary caregiver during the past six months. All the primary caregiver risk factors analyzed were more likely to be noted in investigations involving First Nations compared to non-Indigenous children.

At least one primary caregiver risk factor was noted in 74% of investigations involving First Nations children compared to 57% of investigations involving non-Indigenous children.

**Caregivers in investigations involving First Nations children in 2019 were more likely to be facing complex needs, including having few social supports, experiencing mental health concerns or substance issues compared to caregivers of non-Indigenous children.**

Figure 4: Primary Caregiver Risk Factors in Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec)



## Housing Conditions



Investigating workers were asked about the source of household income and various housing conditions. All household risk factors captured in the FN/CIS-2019 were more likely to be noted in investigations involving First Nations compared to non-Indigenous children.

**Investigations involving First Nations children were more likely to involve families facing multiple structural challenges, such as living in unsafe housing conditions, poverty, and overcrowded housing which limit the resources available to them to provide for their children.**

## Type of Investigation and Substantiation Decision

Child maltreatment-related investigations in the study included:

1. Investigations focused on an alleged incident of maltreatment (maltreatment investigations)
2. Investigations in which there was no specific concern of an alleged incident of maltreatment but where assessing the risk of future maltreatment for the child was the primary concern of the investigation (risk-only investigations).

For both First Nations and non-Indigenous children, 70% of investigations were focused on alleged incidents of maltreatment and 30% assessed the risk of future maltreatment.

**The rate of substantiated maltreatment investigations was 4.7 times higher for First Nations children compared to non-Indigenous children in Canada in 2019.**

Figure 5: Housing Conditions in Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec)

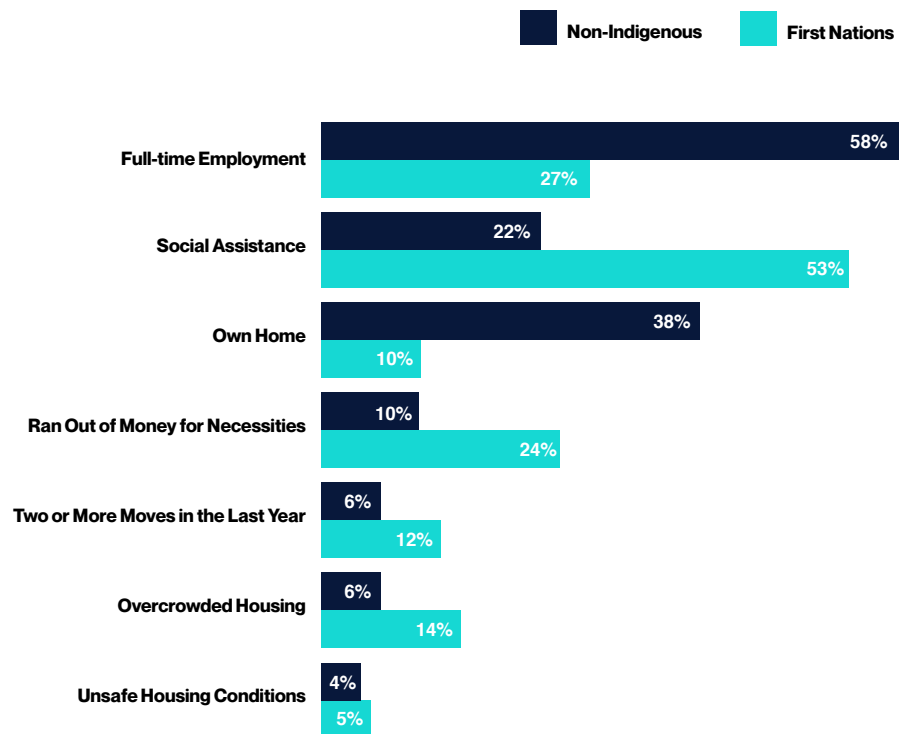


Figure 6: Type of Investigation and Level of Substantiation in Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving First Nations Children in Canada in 2019

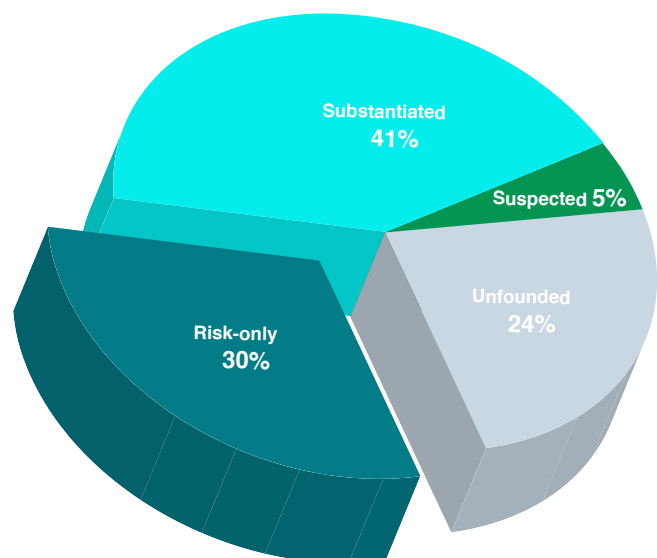


Figure 7: Primary Category of Maltreatment in Maltreatment Investigations Involving First Nations Children in Canada in 2019

## Primary Category of Maltreatment

The primary concern in maltreatment investigations involving First Nations children was most often neglect (44%), followed by exposure to intimate partner violence (27%), physical abuse (14%), emotional maltreatment (9%), and sexual abuse (6%).

The rate of substantiated investigations whose primary focus was neglect was 8.5 times as high for investigations involving First Nations children compared to investigations involving non-Indigenous children.

**Investigations of neglect drive the overrepresentation of First Nations children in the child welfare system in 2019.**

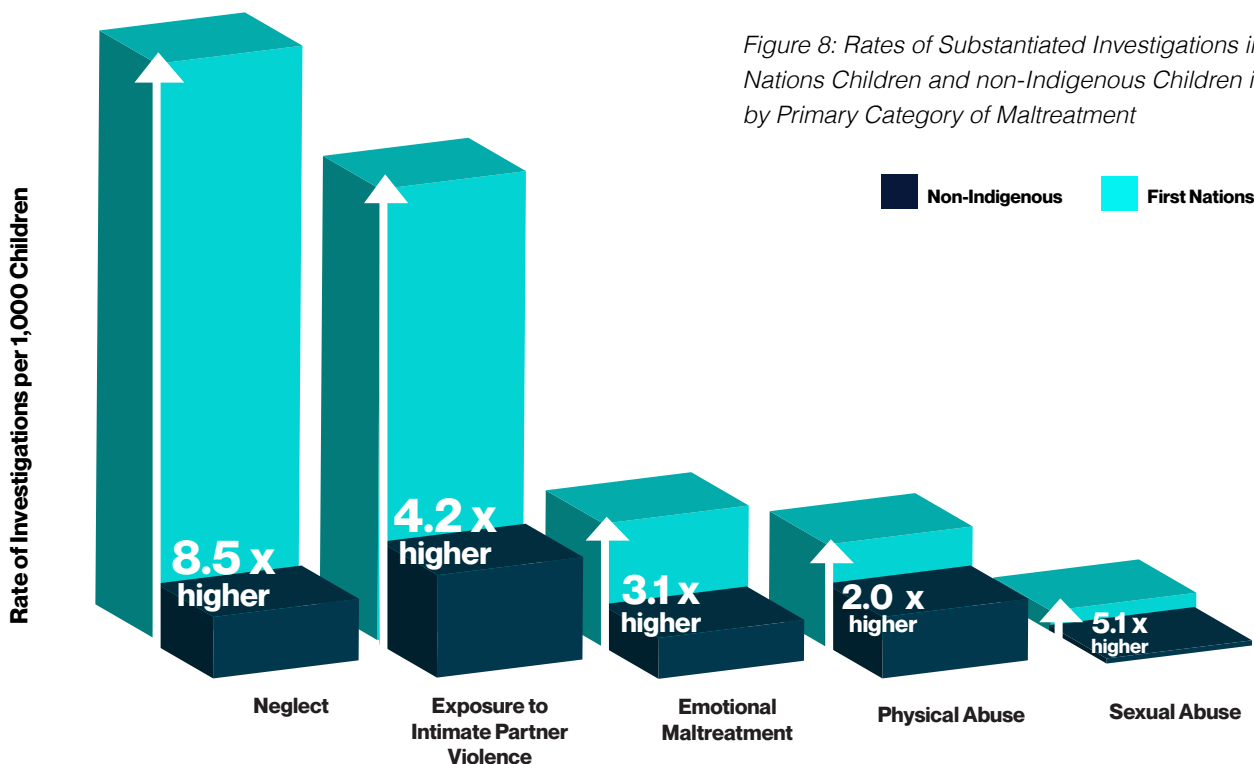
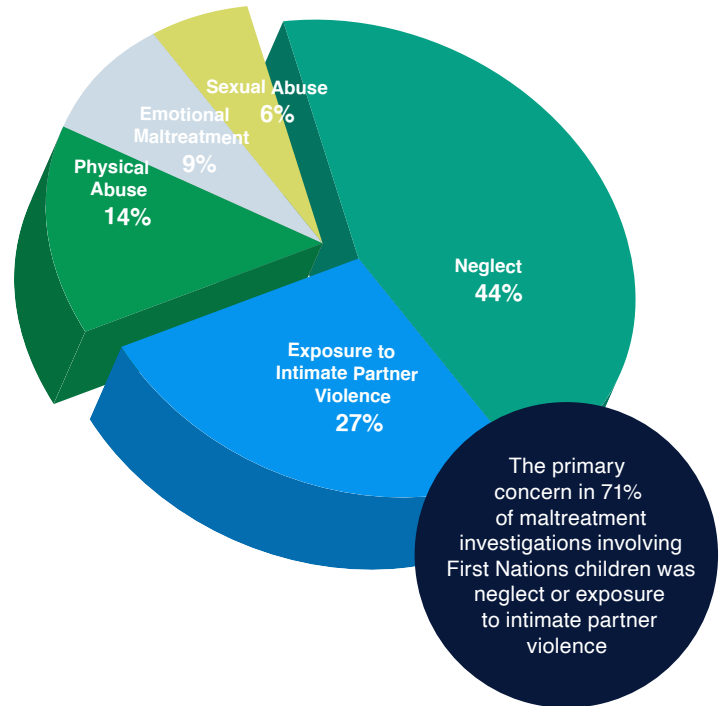


Figure 8: Rates of Substantiated Investigations involving First Nations Children and non-Indigenous Children in Canada in 2019 by Primary Category of Maltreatment



## Physical and Emotional Harm



Physical harm was documented in only 4% of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving First Nations children.

Emotional harm was noted in 35% of substantiated investigations involving First Nations children.

Figure 9: Documented Physical and Emotional Harm in Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations Involving First Nations Children in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec)

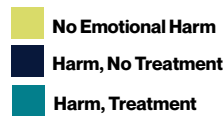
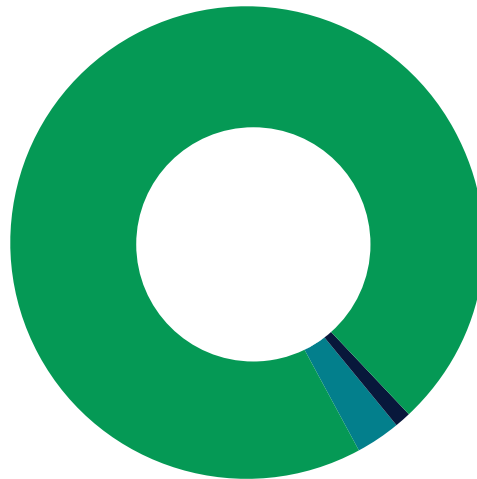
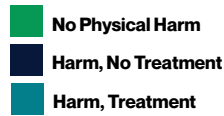


Figure 10: Difference Between Rates of Investigations per 1,000 Involving First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children in Canada in 2019

## Service Dispositions

In 2019, disparities between rates of child welfare service dispositions for First Nations and non-Indigenous children grew with every decision across the service continuum.

At the point of entry into child welfare, First Nations children were 3.6 times more likely to be investigated. They were up to 17.2 times more likely to be placed in formal out-of-home care during the investigation period.

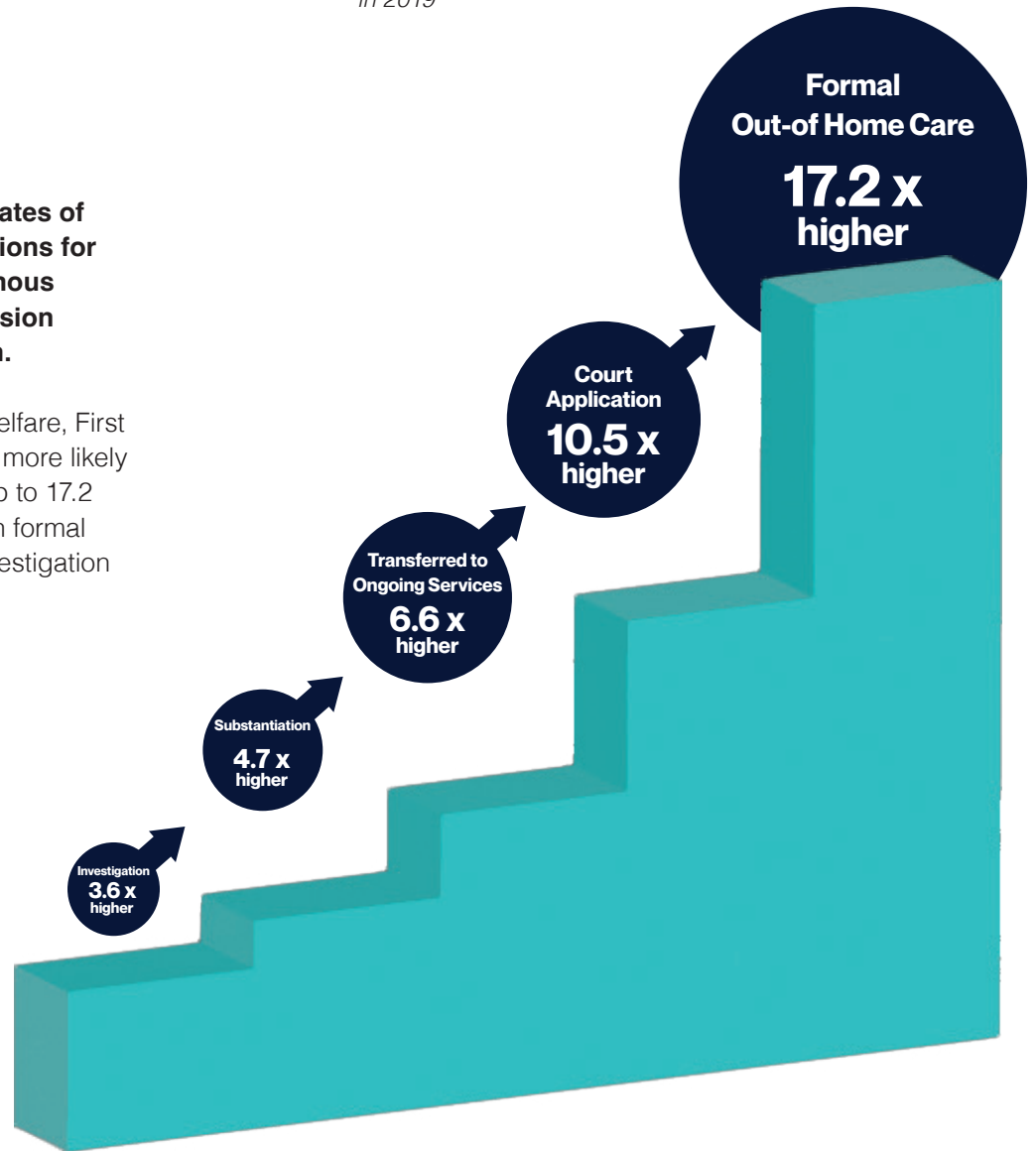
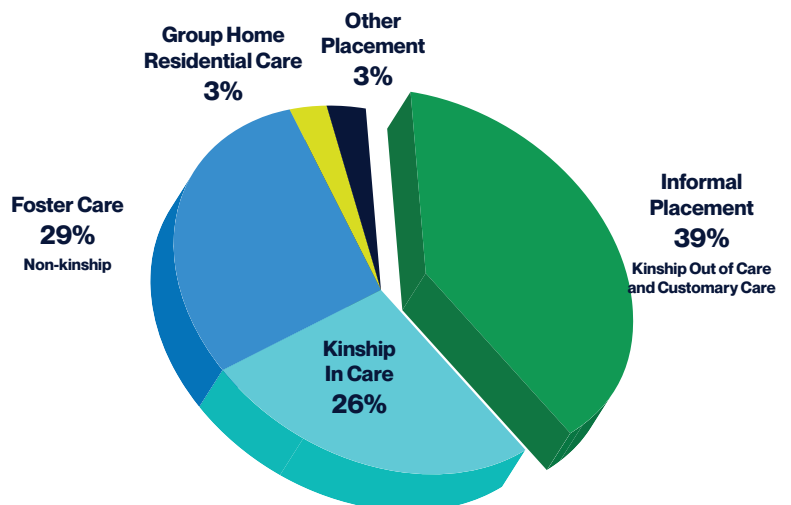


Figure 11: Placement Type in Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving First Nations Children Placed in Canada in 2019

Thirteen percent of investigations involving First Nations children resulted in an out-of-home placement for the child compared to only four percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children.

The investigating workers were asked to specify the type of placement that was made when a placement in out-of-home care was noted for the investigated child. Informal placements (including kinship out-of-care), represented the most frequently noted placement type for First Nations children, followed by non-kinship foster care and kinship in care.



## Section One



# The **Ongoing Legacy** of Colonialism Discrimination and Poverty

# Section 1:

## The Ongoing Legacy of Colonialism, Discrimination, and Poverty

The ongoing legacy of colonialism, discrimination, and structural inequities experienced by First Nations children, families, and communities are a direct driver behind the disparities observed between child welfare investigations involving First Nations children and non-Indigenous children. This brief overview is intended to remind the reader that the context for the disparities reported is integral to the interpretation of the data and the proposed solutions.

### Historical Context

#### Pre-contact

First Nations populations lived on the lands now known as Canada for thousands of years before European settlers arrived in the 15th century. During this period of pre-contact, there were considerable differences between Nations regarding traditions, social organization, food resources, homes, transportation, and languages.<sup>5</sup> All First Nations cared for their children in ways that honored their communities and the Creator and were consistent with their spiritual beliefs. Beyond differences in customs, First Nations shared a community-based approach to child rearing, with members of the extended family being collectively responsible for the protection and care of children.<sup>6</sup>

The time after contact with European settlers has been marked by policies of assimilation and alienation aimed at obliterating centuries of First Nations cultures and civilization.<sup>7</sup> These policies culminated with the *Indian Act* of 1876.<sup>8</sup> The *Indian Act* and each of its subsequent amendments have attacked First Nations' traditional systems and values, and actively tried to force the assimilation and enfranchisement of First Nations populations into Euro-Canadian society.<sup>9</sup>

#### Residential Schools

In 1883, the department of Indian Affairs began an official policy of residential schools, establishing 132 residential schools in partnership with institutionalized religions including Catholic, United, Anglican and Presbyterian faiths.<sup>10</sup> The stated goal of residential schools was to separate children from their families and communities and force them to abandon their Nation's language, customs

<sup>5</sup>René Dussault and Georges Erasmus, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996); National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, *Indigenous Children and the Child Welfare System in Canada* (2017), <https://www.nccih.ca/docs/health/FS-ChildWelfareCanada-EN.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup>Dussault and Erasmus, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*; National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, *Indigenous Children and the Child Welfare System in Canada*.

<sup>7</sup>Margo Greenwood and Perry Shawana, *Whispered Gently through Time. First Nations Quality Child Care: A National Study* (2000), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED462224.pdf>; National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, *Indigenous Children and the Child Welfare System in Canada*.

<sup>8</sup>Indian Act, R.S.C., (1985), c I-5.

<sup>9</sup> Dussault and Erasmus, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*; National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, *Indigenous Children and the Child Welfare System in Canada*.

<sup>10</sup> John S Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*, vol. 11 (Univ. of Manitoba Press, 1999).

and values. In 1920 an amendment to the *Indian Act* made residential schools mandatory for all First Nations children between the ages of seven and 15 and gave the state the authority to find and apprehend First Nations children and force them to attend.<sup>11</sup> Parents who tried to oppose the removal of their children were threatened with incarceration - and some had their food rations withheld by the government at a time when famine was ravaging Indigenous communities.<sup>12</sup>

The horrors of residential schools have been recounted by First Nations since their implementation, although they were hidden and discounted by the general population for decades. Children were humiliated and punished for speaking their language and were taught to be ashamed of their culture and traditional practices.<sup>13</sup> Accounts from survivors tell of widespread instances of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect at the hands of the clerics operating the schools.<sup>14</sup> Some were also subjected to cruel experimentations, including being forced to participate in dangerous nutritional and vaccine trials without their consent or knowledge.<sup>15</sup> In 1914, the deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, determined that at the start of the residential school system, half of the children who attended residential schools died within them.<sup>16</sup> The staggering number of deaths has been linked to the incredibly poor conditions of the schools and the abusive and negligent treatment of children who were forced to attend.<sup>17</sup> When the last residential school closed in 1996, it is estimated that the residential school system led to the separation of 150,000 Indigenous children from their families. The state-inflicted harms resulting from these mass removals are still being felt to this day.

<sup>11</sup> Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey, *Stolen From Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities* (ERIC, 1997); Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Marlyn Bennett, Cindy Blackstock, and Richard De La Ronde, *A literature review and annotated bibliography on aspects of Aboriginal child welfare in Canada*, First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (2005).

<sup>13</sup> Bennett, Blackstock, and De La Ronde, *A literature review and annotated bibliography on aspects of Aboriginal child welfare in Canada*.

<sup>14</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, vol.1 (McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Ian Mosby, "Administering colonial science: Nutrition research and human biomedical experimentation in Aboriginal communities and residential schools, 1942-1952," *Histoire sociale/Social history* 46, no. 1 (2013); Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*, 11.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Henderson Bryce, *The Story of a National Crime: an Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada* (Ottawa, Canada: James Hope & Sons, Limited, 1922). <https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/National-Crime.pdf>; Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*, 11.

## "Sixties Scoop"

Almost fifty years before the last residential school closed, in the mid 1950s, provincial child welfare authorities began enacting child welfare policies following the addition of Section 88 to the *Indian Act* in 1951, allowing provincial legislation to apply to First Nations on reserves.<sup>18</sup> The lack of understanding and respect for First Nations culture and child-rearing practices, the socio-economic difficulties brought by centuries of colonialism, and the dearth of prevention services available to communities resulted in the placement of thousands of First Nations children outside of their families and communities during the sixties, seventies and through the eighties – a period now known as the "Sixties Scoop."<sup>19</sup>

A significant number of these children were removed without the notification or agreement of their families and communities and were purposefully placed with – and adopted by – white families in Canada, in the United States, and countries across the world.<sup>20</sup> In the province of Saskatchewan, 80 to 91 percent of status First Nations children removed between 1977 and 1981 were placed in non-Indigenous homes.<sup>21</sup> These policies were a continuation of those put in place for residential schools, with a similar aim to assimilate First Nations children into the dominant culture. The children placed during the Sixties Scoop were removed from their cultural heritage, their language, and identities – with several only learning about their ancestry and place of birth as adults.<sup>22</sup> Many adoptees have recounted experiences of abuse, neglect and cruelty whilst placed under the care of their adoptive parents.<sup>23</sup>

By the end of the sixties, "30 to 40 percent of all legal wards of the state in Canada were Aboriginal children, even though they formed less than 4 percent of the national population".<sup>24</sup> The overrepresentation of First Nations children in the child welfare system did not stop at the end of the Sixties Scoop era – rather, it has continued to grow and evolve. Scholars have used the term "Millenium Scoop" to refer to the current and ongoing overrepresentation of First Nations children in the child welfare system.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Indian Act, R.S.C. (1985), c 1-5, S88.

<sup>19</sup> P Johnston, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (1983); Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*, 11.

<sup>20</sup> Johnston, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System*.

<sup>21</sup> Johnston, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System*.

<sup>22</sup> Raven Sinclair, "Identity lost and found: Lessons from the sixties scoop," *First Peoples Child & Family Review: A Journal on Innovation and Best Practices in Aboriginal Child Welfare Administration, Research, Policy & Practice* 3, no. 1 (2007).

<sup>23</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The Legacy. The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 5.

<sup>24</sup> Fournier and Crey, *Stolen From Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*, p. 83.

<sup>25</sup> Sinclair, "Identity lost and found: Lessons from the sixties scoop.", p. 67.



## Current Context

### Current Structure of Indigenous Child Welfare

At this time, provincial and territorial child welfare legislation apply to nearly all Indigenous people living on and off reserve. However these vary across jurisdictions, and special considerations are made in many statutes with respect to services to Indigenous children and families. The responsibility for funding services to First Nations children and families living on reserve rests with the federal government under the Indian Act and the Constitution Act.<sup>26</sup> In the 1980's, through the advocacy efforts of Elders, band councils and other community leaders across different jurisdictions, First Nations communities began to provide child welfare services for their own communities. By 2019, there were more than 120 Indigenous child and family service agencies across Canada.

The structure of Indigenous child welfare services is changing rapidly. A growing number of services are being provided either by fully mandated Indigenous agencies or by Indigenous counselling services that work in conjunction with mandated services. The most common types of governance models that are in place for First Nations child and family service agencies include the delegated or mandated model (where responsibility for child welfare services is either fully or partially delegated to First Nations child welfare agencies), integrated models (where both the Indigenous community and the province share authority over child welfare services), and individual bilateral or tripartite agreements with Indigenous agencies.<sup>27</sup>

*An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (also known as Bill C-92), became law on January 1, 2020 - marking a turning point in Indigenous child welfare.<sup>28</sup> It is the first federal law that acknowledges First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations' jurisdiction over child and family services and establishes mechanisms by which an Indigenous governing body can exercise this jurisdiction. Once enacted, laws put in place by Indigenous groups or communities are given priority over provincial child welfare legislation.<sup>29</sup> The Act also establishes national "minimum standards" in the provision of child and family

services to Indigenous children that take into consideration the need to ensure cultural continuity, to prioritize placement of children with family members, and to notify families and communities of measures involving Indigenous children, amongst others.<sup>30</sup>

Despite being an important step forward, the Act has been criticized by Indigenous child welfare experts and organizations across Canada for its significant limitations and many have decried the absence of adequate consultation before implementation.<sup>31</sup> Amongst its shortcomings, the lack of commitment to core funding has been highlighted as being of grave concern.<sup>32</sup> As it stands, the Act states that funding will be determined through individual coordination agreements between the Indigenous community and Canada, which increases the risk for funding to be the subject of jurisdictional disputes, thus repeating historical patterns of discriminatory funding of services to Indigenous populations and directly impacting the capacity for communities to develop the child welfare infrastructure their children and families deserve.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, although the Act claims to uphold Indigenous rights to self-governance, it does not fully recognize Indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare law. Not only does it suggest that provincial laws can be applied concurrently if they are not in conflict with Indigenous laws, but, it also states that the best interest of an Indigenous child, as set out by the Act itself, takes precedence over Indigenous laws.<sup>34</sup> In doing so, it imposes barriers on the inherent right of First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations to protect - and care for - their own children.

<sup>26</sup> *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, S.C. (2019). c. 24, s. 10.

<sup>31</sup> Cindy Blackstock, "Will Canada continue to fail Indigenous girls?," *The Globe and Mail* 2019, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-will-canada-continue-to-fail-indigenous-girls/>; Naomi Metallic, Hadley Friedland, and Sarah Morales, "The Promise and Pitfalls of C-92: An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families," (2019); Kylee Wilyman, "A Nation of Hollow Words: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families" (Board of Editors of the Saskatchewan Law Review, 2020).

<sup>32</sup> Metallic, Friedland, and Morales, "The Promise and Pitfalls of C-92: An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families."

<sup>33</sup> Wilyman, "A Nation of Hollow Words: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families."

<sup>34</sup> Metallic, Friedland, and Morales, "The Promise and Pitfalls of C-92: An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families."

<sup>26</sup> Indian Act, R.S.C., (1985), c. I-5.; Constitution Act, (UK), 30 & 31 Victoria, c.3 (1867).

<sup>27</sup> Vandna Sinha and Anna Kozlowski, "The Structure of Aboriginal Child Welfare in Canada," *International Indigenous Policy Journal* 4, no. 2 (2013).

<sup>28</sup> *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, S.C. (2019). c. 24. (The Act)

<sup>29</sup> *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, S.C. (2019). c. 24, s. 22.



Bill C-92 offers Indigenous children a colonial Faustian bargain: Accept the flawed bill in its current state or get nothing. [...] Government proclamations of good intentions – and statements of reconciliation – must not shield them from a serious review of their actions. Reconciliation is not what you say; it is what you do.”<sup>35</sup>

- Cindy Blackstock

## The Need for Change

### Recognizing the Ongoing Impact of Mass Removals: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Government of Canada issued a formal apology for residential schools on June 11, 2008 and acknowledged the devastating impact and cruelty of the residential school system. The apology included the need to account for and address the impact of residential schools through continuing remedies, including the creation of the TRC.

The reports prepared by the TRC brought to light the trauma experienced by Indigenous children as a result of the residential school system and the Sixties Scoop. They also describe how this trauma has been passed on from generation to generation, through the severed connection to culture and traditions, the breakdown of family ties that left generations of Indigenous children without parenting models, and the long-lasting psychological impacts of abuse.<sup>36</sup> This has contributed to the creation of a myriad of complex needs and risk factors that are impacting Indigenous families across Canada to this day and are driving the current overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system.

The TRC published 94 Calls to Action upon the release of the final report in 2015.<sup>37</sup> These called upon all levels of government — federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous — to change programs, policies and structures in order to address the harms of residential schools and ongoing colonial practices. The actions are divided into 42 actions to address the legacy of residential schools and 52 that focus on reconciliation.<sup>38</sup> The beginning of this report opens with those specific to child welfare. They bring forth the need to recognize the intergenerational impacts of the residential schools on Indigenous families in the child welfare system, as well as the critical importance of monitoring the number of - and the reasons why - Indigenous families come into contact with child welfare.

The Yellowhead Institute has been releasing a yearly report that tracks the government’s response to the Calls to Action. The 2020 report highlighted that in that year, only eight of the 94 Calls to Action had been implemented.<sup>39</sup> None of the actions considered to be implemented had to do with child welfare. Notably, the authors of the report highlight the ever-more pressing need to provide “timely and accurate

<sup>36</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada’s Residential Schools: The Legacy. The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.*, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.*

<sup>38</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.*

<sup>39</sup> Eva Jewell and Ian Mosby, *Calls to action accountability: A 2020 status update on reconciliation*, The Yellowhead Institute (2020), <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/yi-trc-calls-to-action-update-full-report-2020.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> Blackstock, “Will Canada continue to fail Indigenous girls?”

data” (p. 9) on Indigenous children in care. Access to such data for Indigenous communities across Canada is crucial to support the creation of new models of Indigenous child welfare services and programs that respond to the current realities of their children and families.

### Recognizing the Ongoing Inequities Experienced by First Nations Families Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

Following a complaint made by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) issued a landmark ruling in January 2016, recognizing that the government of Canada racially discriminated against First Nations children and their families in the provision of child welfare and Jordan’s Principle services.<sup>40</sup> Specifically, the Tribunal argued that the federal government provided inequitable and insufficient funding for child and family services in First Nations communities that drastically underfunded prevention services on reserve and incentivised the placement of children outside of their homes. The Tribunal ordered Canada to reform the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) program and to “cease applying its narrow definition of Jordan’s Principle”.<sup>41</sup>

Jordan’s Principle is a child-first initiative put in place in 2007 in the name of Jordan River Anderson from Norway Cree House Nation in Manitoba, who died at the age of five having never lived outside of a hospital because of jurisdictional disputes over who would pay for his in-home care needs.<sup>42</sup> This initiative was aimed to ensure that First Nations children would no longer suffer from gaps, denials, and delays in accessing essential services, as Jordan had. Until 2016, nearly no First Nations children had received services under this initiative because of the reductive definition and ineffective implementation of the principle by the Government of Canada.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. (2016). *First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and The Assembly of First Nations and Canadian Human Rights Commission and Attorney General of Canada (Representing the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development of Canada) and Chiefs of Ontario and Amnesty International*. 2016 CHRT 2.

<sup>41</sup> Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. (2016). *First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and The Assembly of First Nations and Canadian Human Rights Commission and Attorney General of Canada (Representing the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development of Canada) and Chiefs of Ontario and Amnesty International*. 2016 CHRT 2, para 481.

<sup>42</sup> Trudy L Lavallee, “Honouring Jordan: Putting First Nations children first and funding fights second,” *Paediatrics & child health* 10, no. 9 (2005); First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada. *Jordan’s Principle: A Brief History*. (2014). <https://fncaringociety.com/sites/default/files/Jordan’s Principle Information Sheet.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> Cindy Blackstock, “Jordan’s Principle: Canada’s broken promise to First Nations children?,” *Paediatrics & child health* 17, no. 7 (2012).

Since then, the CHRT has issued a series of rulings in response to Canada’s continued failure to comply with the orders set out by the Tribunal. As a result, Canada has increased funding for FNCFS programs and Jordan’s Principle services, agreed to implement a broader definition of Jordan’s Principle, and created a Consultation Committee of Child Welfare Reform.<sup>44</sup> To this day, the government of Canada refuses to comply with certain aspects of the CHRT orders.

### Current Structural Inequities

Racism and colonialism are an ongoing reality for First Nations children, families and communities that continue to curtail their access to basic human rights across different structures that extend far beyond child welfare. The consequences of these structural inequities on the socio-economic conditions of First Nations are far-reaching.

For example, as many as 51 percent of status First Nations children and 29 percent of non-status First Nations children live in poverty, compared to 18 percent of Canadian children in the general population.<sup>45</sup> In a survey conducted between 2008 and 2018, 48 percent of First Nations households were considered to be food insecure.<sup>46</sup> In 2017, 28 percent of homes on First Nations reserves did not have access to piped water, with 1.5 percent having no water service at all.<sup>47</sup> In 2016, one in four First Nations households were deemed to be overcrowded, compared to one in 20 households in the general population.<sup>48</sup>

The lack of adequate resources available to First Nations parents - brought by the persistent underfunding of essential services - creates additional structural stressors that are beyond First Nations families’ control.<sup>49</sup> Given the “tendency to see Aboriginal poverty as a symptom of neglect, rather than as a consequence of failed government policies”,<sup>50</sup> this increases the risk for First Nations children to be investigated and eventually apprehended by the child welfare system. Ultimately, structural inequities, racism, and trauma resulting from the forced removal of generations of children, lie at the root of the stark disparities in child welfare presented in the next sections of this report.

<sup>44</sup> “Progress on six points of action,” 2020, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1541188016680/15411>

<sup>45</sup> David Macdonald and Daniel Wilson, “Shameful neglect: Indigenous child poverty in Canada. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives,” (2016).

<sup>46</sup> Laurie Chan et al., “FNFNES Final Report for Eight Assembly of First Nations Regions: Draft Comprehensive Technical Report,” *Assembly of First Nations, University of Ottawa: Ottawa, ON, Canada* (2019).

<sup>47</sup> Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, *Budget Sufficiency for First Nations Water and Wastewater Infrastructure*, Parliamentary Budget Officer (Ottawa, CA), [http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2017/FN%20Water/FN\\_Water\\_EN.pdf](http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2017/FN%20Water/FN_Water_EN.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> Statistics Canada, *The housing conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada* (2017), <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016021/98-200-x2016021-eng.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> Melisa Brittain and Cindy Blackstock, *First Nations child poverty: A Literature Review and Analysis* (First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, 2015).

<sup>50</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (2015), [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive\\_Summary\\_English\\_Web.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf), p. 138.

## Section Two



# Study **Objectives** and **Rationale**

## Section 2: Study Objectives and Rationale

### Objectives

The FN/CIS-2019 is a study of child welfare investigations involving First Nations children and the fourth national study examining the incidence of reported child abuse and neglect in Canada. The primary objective of the FN/CIS-2019 is to provide reliable estimates of the scope and characteristics of child abuse and neglect investigated by child welfare services in Canada in 2019.

Specifically, the FN/CIS-2019 collects information directly from investigating child welfare workers in order to

**continue to monitor national-level data on investigations involving First Nations children compared to non-Indigenous children as intended by the TRC's Calls to Action**, including:

- Determining rates of investigated and substantiated physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment, and exposure to intimate partner violence as well as multiple forms of maltreatment;
- Investigating the severity of maltreatment as measured by form of maltreatment, duration, and physical and emotional harm;
- Examining selected determinants of health that may be associated with maltreatment; and
- Monitoring short-term investigation outcomes, such as substantiation, out-of-home placement, and use of child welfare court.

The Advisory Committee offers guidance and counsel throughout the study and ensures that the study respects Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP®) principles. The principles state that First Nations communities: (1) own their information; (2) control all facets of research and data management related to themselves; (3) are able to access information and data about their communities; and (4) possess their data.<sup>51</sup> Important goals of the Advisory Committee included contextualizing the findings of the study in all materials as well as establishing an extensive dissemination plan to First Nations communities.

Data pertaining to a Canadian estimate of child maltreatment-related investigations will be available in the academic literature by end of year 2021 and information sheets will be available on the [cwrp.ca](http://cwrp.ca) portal.

<sup>51</sup> "The First Nations Principles of OCAP®," <https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/>.

### Rationale

The objectives and design of the FN/CIS-2019 are best understood within the context of the decentralized structure of Canada's child welfare system and with respect to changes over time in mandates and intervention standards. Child welfare legislation and services are organized in Canada at the provincial and territorial levels. Child welfare is a mandatory service, directed by provincial and territorial child welfare statutes. Although all child welfare systems share certain basic characteristics organized around investigating reports of alleged maltreatment, providing various types of services and supervision, and looking after children in out-of-home care, there is considerable variation in the organization of these service delivery systems (see Table 1).<sup>52</sup> Some provinces and territories operate under a centralized, government-run child welfare system, while others have opted for decentralized models run by mandated agencies. Several provinces and territories have recently moved towards regionalized service delivery systems.

Child welfare statutes also vary considerably. Some jurisdictions limit their investigation mandates to children under 16, while others extend their investigations to youth under 19. Provincial and territorial statutes also vary in terms of the specific forms of maltreatment covered, grounds for removal, and timelines for determining permanent wardship. In addition to these legislative differences, there are important differences in regulations and investigation policies. These differences may be further accentuated by the implementation of different structured assessment tools and competency-based training programs. Varying legislation and investigation practices across provinces and territories, as well as changes over time have posed challenges in documenting the annual incidence of reported maltreatment in Canada.

**Using a standard set of definitions, the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS)-1998, 2003, 2008 and 2019 provide the best available estimates of the incidence and characteristics of reported child maltreatment across Canada over a twenty-year period. Caution should be used in comparing results across cycles as there have been considerable changes to the methodology and survey design weights.**

Ontario and Quebec conducted parallel incidence studies and have produced (Ontario) or will produce (Quebec) reports examining disparities for First Nations children and families. Please see the Ontario report here: Mashkiwenmi-Daa Noojimowin: Let's Have Strong Minds For The Healing: First Nations Ontario Incidence Study Of Reported Child Abuse And Neglect-2018 <https://cwrp.ca/publications/mashkiwenmi-daa-noojimowin-lets-have-strong-minds-healing-first-nations-ontario>

<sup>52</sup> For more detailed descriptions of provincial, territorial and Indigenous services go to the Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal: [cwrp.ca](http://cwrp.ca)



Table 1: Provincial and Territorial Child Welfare Administrations

Province	Administration	Child welfare status	Age Coverage
<b>Alberta</b>	In Alberta child protection rests with the Ministry of Children's Services. Services are delivered by Child and Family Service Offices as well as 17 delegated First Nation Agencies.	Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act	Under 18
<b>British Columbia</b>	Child Protection is the responsibility of the Director of Child Protection under the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Services are provided through 429 local ministry offices as well as 23 Indigenous agencies which have various degrees of delegation. All service offices are supported by the provincial office of the Child Protection Division.	Child, Family and Community Service Act	Under 19
<b>Manitoba</b>	Child welfare falls to the Child and Family Services System under the Ministry of Families. The system is administered through four Child and Family Services Authorities, three of which serve Indigenous communities. Eighteen agencies are served by these three Indigenous authorities.	Child and Families Services Act, Child and Family Services Authorities Act	Under 18
<b>New Brunswick</b>	Child welfare is the responsibility of the Department of Social Development and child protection services are delivered through eight Social Development Regional Offices. There are eight First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies.	Family Services Act	Under 19
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	Responsibility for the provision of child welfare programs and services fall to the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development under the Department of Health and Community Services. Services are provided through four regional integrated health authorities.	Children and Youth Care and Protection Act	Under 18
<b>Northwest Territories</b>	Child protection falls to the Department of Health and Social Services, Child and Family Services and is administered by eight regional health and social services authorities.	Child and Family Services Act	Under 16
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	Child welfare programs and services fall under the Division of Child, Youth and Family Supports under the Department of Community Services. Child Protection Services are provided by four regional district offices and seventeen county and municipal Child Welfare Service Offices. There is one delegated First Nations agency in Nova Scotia.	Children and Family Services Act	Under 19
<b>Nunavut</b>	The Ministry of Family Services is responsible for child protection, and services are provided by 25 local Community, Children and Family Services Offices	Child and Family Services Act	Under 16
<b>Ontario</b>	The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services funds child welfare services and programs, which are provided by Children's Aid Societies throughout the province. There are 49 such agencies, which are governed by Boards of Directors elected from local communities. Eleven of those agencies are mandated to provide services specifically to Indigenous communities (Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies)	Child, Youth and Family Services Act	Under 18
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	Child protection is the responsibility of the Department Child and Family Services under the Ministry of Family and Human Services. Services are provided by six regional centres and twelve Child Protection Teams.	Child Protection Act	Under 18
<b>Quebec</b>	The Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux, Department of Youth Protection is responsible for child protection. Services are provided by 34 integrated health and social service centres. Currently, 21 Indigenous agencies in Quebec have signed bipartite or tripartite agreements allowing them to provide either all or a range of child welfare services.	Youth Protection Act	Under 18
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	Child protection falls to the Ministry of Social Services and services are provided through local Social Services offices. Seventeen First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies serve children and families living on reserve.	Child and Family Services Act	Under 16
<b>Yukon</b>	The Department of Health and Social Services, Family and Children's Services is responsible for the provision of child welfare programs and services and their delivery through Regional Services Offices.	Child and Family Services Act	Under 19



## Section Three



# Study **Methodology**

## Section 3: Study Methodology

This section of the report describes the methodology of the FN/CIS-2019. As with any sample survey, estimates must be understood within the constraints of the survey instrument, the sampling design, and the estimation procedures used. A full description of the methodology is available upon request.<sup>53</sup>

### Sampling

The FN/CIS-2019 captured information about children and their families as they came into contact with child welfare services over a three-month sampling period. 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 FN/CIS-2019.

Information about sampled cases was collected directly from the investigating worker at the conclusion of their investigation, except for sites in Quebec where information was extracted from the administrative information system. In September 2019, the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services decided to postpone the data collection process using online forms filled out by investigating workers for the Quebec component of this study. Because of this, data for child welfare investigations in Quebec were obtained through an administrative data extraction within provincial child welfare data systems. For First Nations communities that used their own data systems, the research team worked with the agencies in question to extract equivalent information. Data from these sampled cases were merged with data from the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect – 2018 (OIS-2018)<sup>54</sup> and the rest of Canada in order to derive estimates of the annual rate and characteristics of child investigations in Canada.

The sampling approach was developed in consultation with a statistical expert. The FN/CIS-2019 sample (for all regions excluding Quebec) was drawn in three stages. First, a representative sample of provincial and territorial mainstream child welfare sites and Indigenous child welfare

<sup>53</sup> A more detailed description of the methodology is available on [cwrp.ca](http://cwrp.ca). If more information is needed, please contact the Study Director, Dr. Barbara Fallon ([barbara.fallon@utoronto.ca](mailto:barbara.fallon@utoronto.ca)).

<sup>54</sup> Fallon, Barbara, Rachael Lefebvre, Joanne Filippelli, Nicolette Joh-Carnella, Nico Trocme, Jessica Carradine, and John Fluke. "Major findings from the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018." *Child Abuse & Neglect* (2021).

agencies across Canada was selected. The final sample of agencies in Canada (except for Quebec) included 47 mainstream and 16 First Nations agencies. Cases were then sampled over a three-month period within the selected sites, and finally, child investigations that met the study criteria were identified from the sampled cases. Quebec administrative data were extracted for the year 2019 from the information system and, when possible, matched to the variables contained in the data collection instrument used in the rest of Canada.

### **Stage One: Child Welfare Authority Selection**

Child welfare authorities are the Primary Sampling Units (PSU) for the FN/CIS-2019. The term “child welfare authority” describes any organization that has the authority to conduct child protection investigations. A final count of 307 child welfare authorities constituted the sampling frame for the 2019 study.

In all of Canada, except Quebec, child welfare authorities were first stratified by province except for the Atlantic provinces (one stratum) and the territories (one stratum). A separate stratum was developed for all Indigenous child welfare authorities. Child welfare authorities were then further stratified by size within these strata (large and medium/small for mainstream child welfare authorities and very large, large and medium/small for Indigenous child welfare authorities). Child welfare authority size was determined by the service volume of investigations conducted in the year prior to the study. In total, 17 strata provided the sampling structure from which child welfare authorities were selected.

Sites were selected using stratified random sampling within their respective strata with a minimum number of selected child welfare authorities in each stratum determined by the variability in the service population across strata. All sites, including those that were geographically remote, were eligible for inclusion because the survey instrument was completed online by the investigating worker for this cycle of the study.

### **Stage Two: Case Selection**

The second sampling stage involved selecting cases opened in the study sites during the three-month period from October 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019. 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 was typical of the whole year.

In small to medium-sized sites, all cases opened during the three-month sampling period were selected. In larger agencies that conducted over 1,000 investigations per year, a random sample of 250 cases was selected for inclusion in the study. In Quebec, a modified data collection method was used, whereby case information was extracted from the provincial administrative information system, therefore all investigations conducted in 2019 (January to December) at all agencies were included.

These procedures resulted in the selection of 7,763 family-based cases: 4,054 from Ontario and 3,709 from the rest of Canada (excluding Quebec).

### **Stage Three: Identification of Investigated Children**

The final sampling stage involved identifying children who had been investigated as a result of concerns related to possible maltreatment. As noted above, since in most jurisdictions cases are opened at the level of the family, procedures had to be developed to determine which child(ren) in each family were investigated for maltreatment-related reasons. Furthermore, cases can be opened for reasons that do not involve maltreatment-related concerns. These can include children with behavioural problems, families seeking financial support, or other service requests that do not involve a specific allegation of maltreatment or risk of future maltreatment. Similarly, some jurisdictions classify home studies for prospective adoptive or foster homes as case openings.

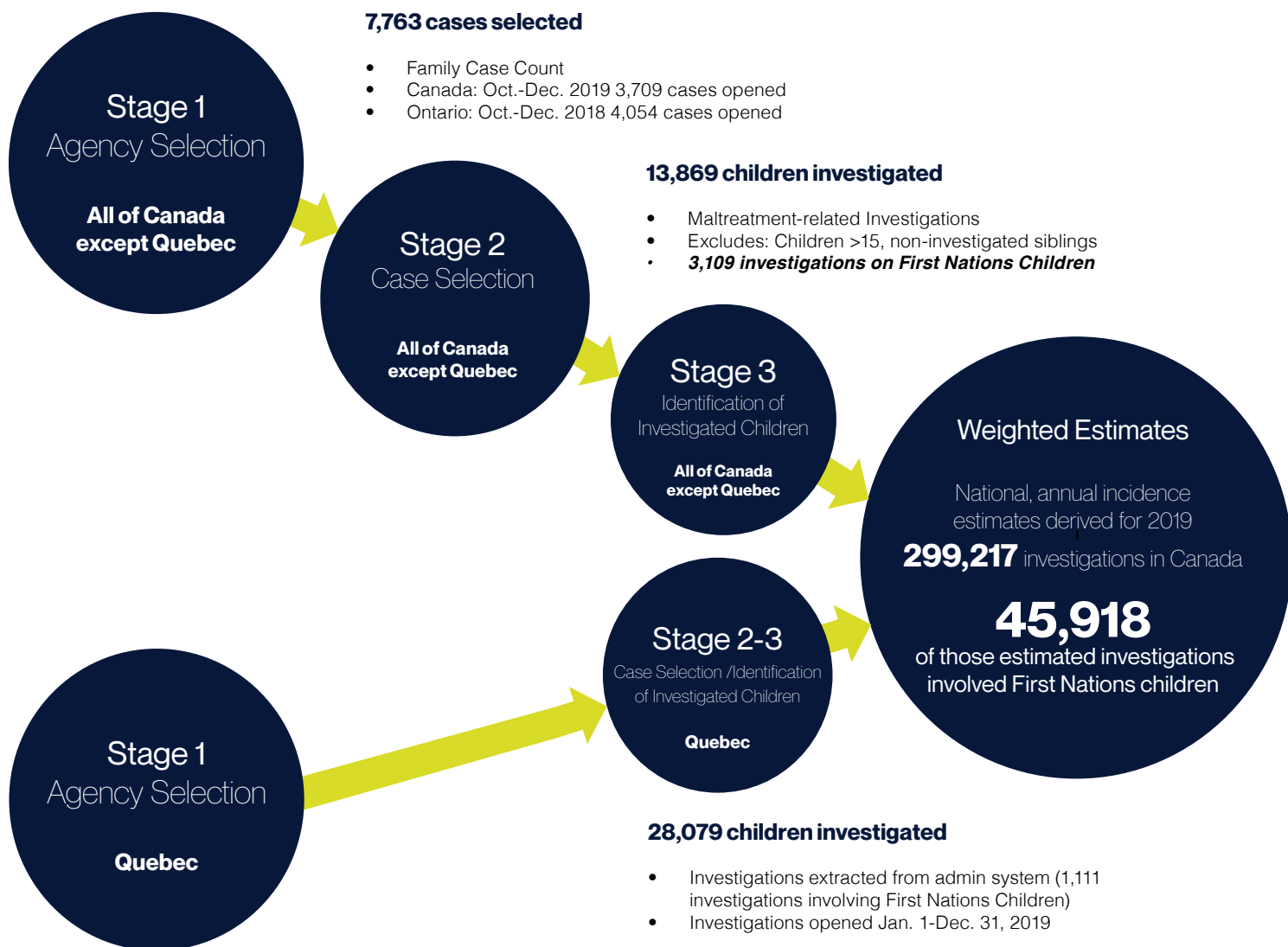
In Quebec, there were 28,079 children who were investigated in 2019. In Ontario and the rest of Canada there were 13,869 children who were investigated and identified in a data collection form. When the data were weighted using complex design weights a final estimate of 299,217 child maltreatment-related investigations of children aged 15 and younger was calculated for 2019. Of these investigations, there was an estimated 45,918 involving First Nations children.

# Survey Methodology

Figure 12: FN/CIS-2019 Sampling Frame

## 63 out of 287 agencies

- Stratified random sampling
- 47 mainstream agencies sampled
- 16 First Nations agencies sampled



## 17 out of 20 agencies

- Universal sample (3 could not participate)
- 6 First Nations agencies participated

## Terms Used in the Report

For a full glossary of terms, please refer to Appendix B. The present section goes over some key definitions.

### **Maltreatment Investigations vs. Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations**

In jurisdictions outside of Quebec, children eligible for inclusion in the final study sample were identified by having investigating workers complete the Intake Information section of the online FN/CIS-2019 Instrument. The Intake Information section allowed the investigating worker to identify any children who were investigated because of maltreatment-related concerns. These were further classified as either (1) maltreatment investigations, i.e., investigations involving a specific allegation of an incident of maltreatment or (2) risk of future maltreatment investigations, i.e., investigations where there was no specific allegation of a maltreatment incident but where the primary concern was related to the risk of future maltreatment.

### **Forms of Maltreatment Included in the FN/CIS-2019**

The FN/CIS-2019 definition of child maltreatment includes 33 forms of maltreatment, subsumed under five categories of maltreatment: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment, and exposure to intimate partner violence. This classification reflects a broad definition of child maltreatment and includes forms of maltreatment that are not specifically indicated in some provincial and territorial child welfare statutes (e.g., exposure to intimate partner violence). The FN/CIS-2019 tracked up to three forms of maltreatment for each investigation.

A source 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, emotional maltreatment, and exposure to intimate partner violence are not systematically included. There is even less consensus with respect to subtypes or forms of maltreatment.

### **Investigated Maltreatment vs. Substantiated Maltreatment**

Child welfare statutes in most jurisdictions require that professionals working with children and the general public report all situations where they have concerns that a child may have been maltreated or where there is a risk of future maltreatment. The investigation phase is designed to determine whether the child was in fact maltreated or not. Some jurisdictions use a two-tiered substantiation classification system that distinguishes between substantiated and unfounded cases or verified and not verified cases. The FN/CIS-2019 uses a three-tiered classification system for investigated incidents of maltreatment, 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.<sup>55</sup>

In reporting and interpreting maltreatment statistics it is important to clearly distinguish between risk of future maltreatment investigations, maltreatment investigations and substantiated cases of maltreatment.

### **Risk of Harm vs. Harm**

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 workers investigate and intervene in many situations in which children have not yet been harmed but are at risk of harm. For instance, a toddler who has been repeatedly left unsupervised in a potentially dangerous setting may be considered to have been neglected, even if the child has not yet been harmed.

Provincial and territorial statutes cover children who have suffered demonstrable harm due to abuse or neglect and children at risk of harm. Substantiation standards in all jurisdictions across Canada include situations where children have been harmed as a result of maltreatment as well as situations where there is no evidence of harm but where children are at substantial risk of harm as a result of maltreatment. The FN/CIS-2019 includes both types of situations in its definition of maltreatment. The study also gathers information about physical and emotional harm attributed to substantiated or suspected maltreatment.

There can be confusion around the difference between risk of harm and risk of future maltreatment. A child who has been placed at risk of harm has experienced an event that endangered their physical or emotional health.

<sup>55</sup> For more information on the distinction between these three levels of substantiation, please see: Trocmé, N., Knoke, D., Fallon, B., & MacLaurin, B. (2009). Differentiating between substantiated, suspected, and unsubstantiated maltreatment in Canada. *Child Maltreatment*, 14(1), 4 – 16.

Placing a child at risk of harm is considered a form of maltreatment. For example, neglect can be substantiated for an unsupervised toddler, regardless of whether or not harm occurs, because the parent is placing the child at substantial risk of harm. In contrast, risk of future maltreatment refers to situations where a specific incident of maltreatment has not yet occurred, but circumstances, for instance parental substance abuse, indicate that there is a significant risk that maltreatment could occur in the future.

## Weighting

The data collected for the FN/CIS-2019 were weighted in order to derive national, annual incidence estimates. Design weights were applied to each case selected in sampled agencies during the three-month case selection period. The weighting approach was developed in consultation with a statistical expert. A full description of the weighting procedure will be available on the [cwrp.ca](http://cwrp.ca) website.

## Rate per 1,000 Calculations

In this report, a rate per 1,000 calculation was performed for First Nations children and non-Indigenous children (0 to 15 years old) using data from the 2016 Census. Service volume estimates for First Nations children were divided by the census population (i.e., 304,085) and then multiplied by 1,000. Service volume estimates for non-Indigenous children were divided by the census population (5,726,305) and then multiplied by 1,000.

For variables for which data were not available from the Quebec data extraction, the Quebec child population (0 to 15 years old) was subtracted from the total Canadian child population. This resulted in population estimates of 277,720 for First Nations children and 4,182,530 for non-Indigenous children.

## The FN/CIS-2019 Instrument

The FN/CIS-2019 Instrument was the main data collection instrument used for the study. This instrument was completed by the primary investigating child welfare worker upon completion of each child welfare investigation (Appendix A). This data collection instrument consists of an Intake Information section, a Household Information section, and a Child Information section.

### Intake Information Section

Information about the report or referral as well as partially identifying information about the child(ren) involved was collected on the Intake Information section. This section requested information on: the date of referral; referral source; number of caregivers and children in the home; age and sex of caregivers and children; the reason for referral; which approach to the investigation was used; the relationship between each caregiver and child; whether the child was investigated; whether there were other adults in the home; and whether there were other caregivers outside the home.

### Household Information Section

The household was defined as all of the adults living at the address of the investigation. The Household Information section collected detailed information on up to two caregivers living in the home at the time of referral. Descriptive information was requested about the contact with the caregiver, caregiver risk factors, household risk factors, transfers to ongoing services, and referral(s) to other services.

### Child Information Section

The Child Information section was completed for each child who was investigated for maltreatment or for risk of future maltreatment. The Child Information section collected information on the type of investigation (a risk investigation or an investigated incident of maltreatment). For maltreatment investigations, it 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 harm, emotional harm to the child attributable to the alleged maltreatment, previous reports of maltreatment, spanking, child welfare court activity, and out-of-home placement. Workers who conducted investigations of risk of future maltreatment did not answer questions pertaining to substantiation, perpetrators, and duration, but did complete items about child functioning, placement, court involvement, previous reports of maltreatment, and spanking. In both types of investigations, workers were asked whether they were concerned about future maltreatment.

### Guidebook

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 FN/CIS-2019 Instrument were defined in an accompanying FN/CIS-2019 Guidebook.



## Data Collection and Verification Procedures

Each participating agency was offered a training session conducted by a Site Researcher to introduce participating child welfare workers to the FN/CIS-2019 instrument and procedures. Most agencies opted to receive the training session. In addition, many agency representatives requested one-on-one support for participating child welfare workers completing the FN/CIS-2019 instruments throughout the data collection period. Additional support was built into the FN/CIS-2019 online platform, including direct access to the FN/CIS-2019 Guidebook, containing definitions for all of the items and study procedures; written instructions for each item on the instrument available through a help pop-up; and audio instructions for a selection of items.

Site Researchers were assigned to coordinate data collection activities at each agency participating in the FN/CIS-2019. Site Researchers were trained on the study instruments and procedures and each Site Researcher was assigned between three to six agencies. Prior to travel restrictions required for the COVID-19 pandemic, Site Researchers visited their agencies on a regular basis to provide participating workers with one-on-one support in completing their data collection instruments, respond to questions, and monitor study progress. Since the instrument for this cycle of the study was online for the first time, additional support strategies were developed, and many workers preferred to complete the instruments over the phone with their assigned Site Researcher. This type of one-on-one phone support continued during the pandemic.

In Quebec, the Quebec Incidence Study team, in consultation with the FN/CIS-2019 study team and First Nations partners in Quebec, extracted and matched fields from the Quebec administrative case management system to the items in the FN/CIS-2019 data collection instrument.

### Timing of Form Completion

The data collection instrument was completed at the point when workers finished their written report of the investigation. The length of time between the receipt of the referral and the completion of the written assessment differed according to provincial, regional, and site practices, although in most instances some type of report was required within six weeks of the beginning of an investigation. There were many instances where a complex investigation took more time. Additionally, due to the unprecedented situation of child welfare agencies serving

children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic, timing of instrument completion was adapted in response to the needs of workers beginning in March 2020.

## Estimation Procedures

### Design

The study design was implemented for the purpose of point estimation and the estimation of variance. The population of agencies was stratified by size. Agencies were selected from each stratum using systematic random sampling in order to take agency size into consideration. The three months (corresponding to October, November, and December) were assumed to be a random sample of the 12 months comprising the calendar year for each agency selected. In each selected month, cases at large agencies were selected using simple random sampling. Quebec investigations represent a universal sample and are, therefore, self-representing.

### Case Duplication

Although cases reported more than once during the three-month case sampling period were unduplicated, the weights used for FN/CIS-2019 annual estimates include an unknown number of “duplicate” cases, i.e., children or families reported and opened for investigation two or more times during the 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 FN/CIS-2019 uses the term “child investigations” rather than “investigated children.”

An estimate of how often maltreated children will be counted more than once can be derived from jurisdictions that maintain separate investigation-based and child-based counts. The U.S. National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), reports that for substantiated cases of child maltreatment, the six-month recurrence rate during 2016 was 5.1 percent.<sup>56</sup> In Quebec, the six-month recurrence rate is estimated to be 2.1 percent. In a 12-month follow-up with 30 Ontario agencies, there was a 15.40 percent recurrence rate after an investigation closed.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cwo2016.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Ocands 2013-2014, <http://www.oacas.org/Wp-Content/Uploads/2016/08/Fact-Sheet-Service-Recurrence-Spi-4-And-5-Final-March-2016.Pdf>

## Ethics Procedures

The FN/CIS-2019 data collection and data handling protocols and procedures were reviewed and approved by the Health Sciences Research Ethics Board.

The study utilized a case file review methodology. The case files are the property of the Indigenous or mainstream agency. Therefore, the permission of the agency was required in order to access the case files. Confidentiality of case information and participants, including workers and agencies, was maintained throughout the process. No directly identifying information was collected on the data collection instrument. The Intake Information section collected partially identifying information about the children. The Intake Information section also included the file/case number assigned by the agency. This information was used only for verification purposes. Any names on the forms were deleted during verification. The FN/CIS-2019 used a secure, web-based delivery system for data collection.

### Indigenous Ethics

The FN/CIS-2019 adhered to the principles of Ownership of, Control over, Access to, and Possession of research (OCAP® principles), which must be negotiated within the context of individual research projects. In the case of the FN/CIS-2019, adherence to OCAP® principles is a shared concern that shapes the collaborative relationship between the FN/CIS-2019 Advisory Committee and the research team. FN/CIS-2019 Advisory Committee members guided the research design and implementation.

### Ethno-racial Data Analysis

Any analyses of ethno-racial data will be governed/informed in consultation with applicable ethno-cultural communities and will reflect their perspectives and input.

## Study Limitations

Although every effort was made to make the forthcoming FN/CIS-2019 estimates precise and reliable, several limits inherent to the nature of the data collected must be taken into consideration:

The weights used to derive annual estimates include;

- Counts of children investigated more than once during the year; therefore, the unit of analysis for the weighted estimates is a child investigation
- The national counts that will be presented in FN/CIS-2019 reports are weighted estimates. In some instances, sample sizes are too small to derive publishable estimates (please see Appendix C for coefficients of variation for the estimates produced in this report)
- The FN/CIS-2019 tracks information during approximately the first 45 days of case activity; however, there are slight provincial and territorial differences in this length of time. Service outcomes such as out-of-home placements and applications to court included only events that occurred during those first approximately 45 days
- The FN/CIS-2019 only tracks reports investigated by child welfare sites and does not include reports that were screened out, cases that were investigated only by the police, and cases that were never reported
- The study is based on the assessments provided by the investigating child welfare workers and could not be independently verified
- The data used to estimate 2019 Canadian child maltreatment-related investigations include data collected in Ontario in 2018 and annual administrative data from the Quebec information system

## Section Four



# Section 4: Major Findings

## Description of Statistics Presented

This section compares investigations involving First Nations and non-Indigenous children. Data provided include estimates of the numbers of investigations, proportions of investigations and rates per 1,000 children. Proper interpretation of these findings requires distinguishing between investigation percentages and rates per 1,000 children.

### Percentages

Percentages presented in the tables below represent the distribution of investigations involving either First Nations or non-Indigenous children in Canada in 2019 across different categories. Percentage estimates provide an overview of proportions of investigations within the child welfare system. Differences in percentages between First Nations and non-Indigenous children reflect differences in the profile of investigations involving these two populations in 2019.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Estimated number of investigations with variable of interest}}{\text{Total number of investigations}} \times 100\%$$

### Incidence rates

Incidence rates represent the number of investigations for every 1,000 First Nations or non-Indigenous children within the general population in Canada in 2019. They are used to determine how likely it is for a First Nations child or a non-Indigenous child to experience an event during an investigation in 2019.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Estimated number of investigations with variable of interest}}{\text{Child population In Canada}} \times 1,000$$

### Disparity

Disparity indices compare incidence rates of investigations involving First Nations and non-Indigenous children. While these are not reported in each table presented, they are referenced throughout the report (e.g., the rate of investigation for First Nations children is 3.6 times as high as the rate of investigation for non-Indigenous children).

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Incidence rate for investigations involving First Nations children}}{\text{Incidence rate for investigations involving non-Indigenous children}}$$

## Child and Family Characteristics

An estimated 299,217 child maltreatment-related investigations were conducted in Canada in 2019. As shown in Figure 13, 15 percent of these investigations involved First Nations (status and non-status) children.

This report focuses on investigations involving First Nations (status and non-status) children (an estimated 45,918 investigations; a rate of 151.00 per 1,000 First Nations children in Canada), compared to investigations involving non-Indigenous children (an estimated 241,137 investigations; a rate of 42.11 per 1,000 non-Indigenous children in Canada). First Nations children (aged 0-15 years) in Canada were 3.6 times as likely to be the subject of a child maltreatment-related investigation compared to non-Indigenous children in 2019.

Figure 13: Children's Indigenous Identity in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019

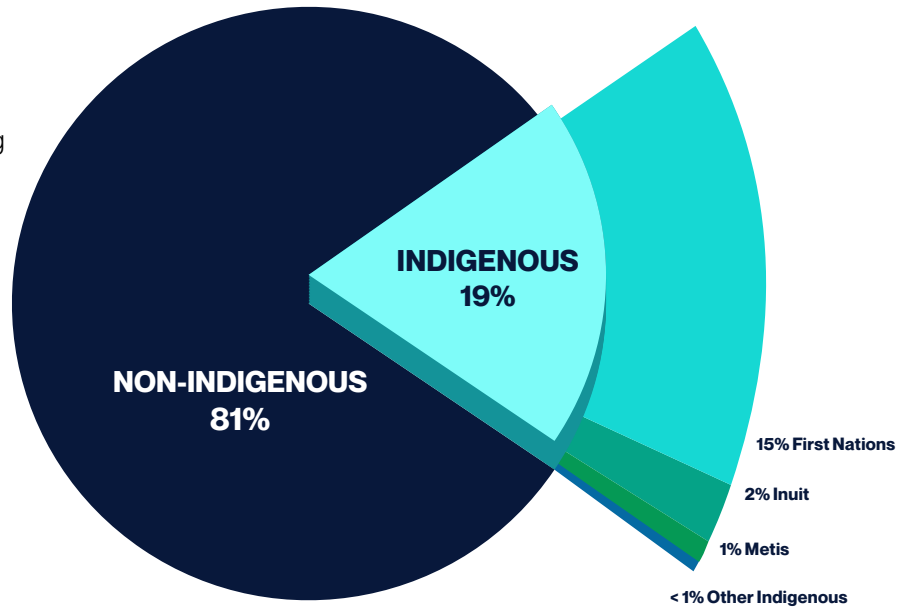


Table 2: Number and Rate of Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019 for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

First Nations and Non-Indigenous	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
First Nations	45,918	16%	151.00
Non-Indigenous	241,137	84%	42.11
<b>Total Investigations Involving First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children</b>	<b>287,055</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>46.60</b>

Based on a sample of 27,994 cases extracted from the Quebec administrative system in 2019, 7,007 investigations in Ontario in 2018, and 6,384 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.



Table 3: Age of Children in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019 for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Child Age	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children within age group	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children within age group	%
<1 Year	3,944	218.69	9%	13,962	41.05	6%
1-3 Years	9,216	167.26	20%	37,041	35.41	15%
4-7 Years	11,474	143.45	25%	66,613	45.30	28%
8-11 Years	11,125	143.11	24%	67,815	46.64	28%
12-15 Years	10,159	138.74	22%	55,706	39.35	23%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>45,918</b>	<b>151.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>241,137</b>	<b>42.11</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on a sample of 27,994 cases extracted from the Quebec administrative system in 2019, 7,007 investigations in Ontario in 2018, and 6,384 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Table 3 describes the number and incidence of investigations by child age group.

A greater proportion of investigations involving First Nations children involved younger children, with nine percent of these investigations involving First Nations children under one year of age and 20 percent involving children one to three years old (total of 29 percent of investigations involving children zero to three years old). For non-Indigenous children, investigations involving children zero to three years represented only 21 percent of investigations. The proportions of investigations involving First Nations and non-Indigenous children aged 12 to 15 years old were similar: 22 percent of investigations involving First Nations children compared to 23 percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children.

First Nations children aged under one (218.69 investigations per 1,000 children) were **5.3 times** as likely to be investigated compared to non-Indigenous children in the same age group (41.05 investigations per 1,000 children). First Nations children aged 12-15 (138.74 investigations per 1,000 children) were **3.5 times** as likely to be investigated compared to non-Indigenous children in the same age group (39.35 investigations per 1,000 children).





Table 4: Child Functioning Concerns in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec) for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Child Functioning Concern	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Positive Toxicology at Birth	2,016	7.26	5%	2,147	0.51	1%
FASD	2,415	8.70	5%	1,616	0.39	1%
Failure to Meet Developmental Milestones	4,708	16.95	11%	11,676	2.79	5%
Intellectual/Developmental Disability	5,156	18.57	12%	20,239	4.84	9%
Attachment Issues	4,745	17.09	11%	12,751	3.05	6%
ADHD	3,586	12.91	8%	21,632	5.17	10%
Aggression/Conduct Issues	4,510	16.24	10%	22,373	5.35	10%
Physical Disability	853	3.07	2%	3,028	0.72	1%
Academic/Learning Difficulties	7,679	27.65	17%	29,428	7.04	14%
Depression/Anxiety/Withdrawal	6,140	22.11	14%	25,116	6.00	12%
Self-harming Behaviour	2,482	8.94	6%	7,385	1.77	3%
Suicidal Thoughts	2,180	7.85	5%	7,989	1.91	4%
Suicide Attempts	923	3.32	2%	2,348	0.56	1%
Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour	1,275	4.59	3%	4,398	1.05	2%
Running (Multiple Incidents)	1,667	6.00	4%	3,999	0.96	2%
Alcohol Abuse	1,096	3.95	2%	1,612	0.39	1%
Drug/Solvent Abuse	1,087	3.91	2%	2,699	0.65	1%
Youth Criminal Justice Act Involvement	540	1.94	1%	1,429	0.34	1%
Other Functioning Concern	645	2.32	1%	2,787	0.67	1%
At Least One Child Functioning Concern	16,475	59.32	37%	69,051	16.51	32%
No Child Functioning Concern	27,650	99.56	63%	145,098	34.69	68%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>44,125</b>	<b>158.88</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>214,149</b>	<b>51.20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentages do not add up to 100% because investigating workers could identify more than one child functioning concern. Based on a sample of 7,007 investigations in Ontario in 2018 and 6,384 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. Information on child functioning was not available when the case was extracted from the Quebec administrative system.

The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Table 4 reflects the types of functioning concerns associated with children's physical, emotional and/or cognitive health, or with behaviour-specific concerns that workers may be aware of during their initial investigations. In 37 percent of child maltreatment-related investigations involving First Nations children (an estimated 16,475 First Nations child investigations), at least one child functioning concern was indicated by the investigating worker. At least one child functioning concern was noted in 32 percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children (representing an estimated 69,051 non-Indigenous child investigations). The incidence rate of investigations involving children with noted child functioning concerns was **3.6 times** as high for First Nations children (59.32 per 1,000 children) compared to non-Indigenous children (16.51 per 1,000 children).

Academic or learning difficulties was the most frequently reported child functioning concern for investigations involving First Nations children as well as for investigations involving non-Indigenous children (17 percent of First Nations child maltreatment-related investigations and 14 percent of non-Indigenous child maltreatment-related investigations). The second most common for both groups was depression/anxiety/withdrawal (14 percent of First Nations child maltreatment-related investigations and 12 percent of non-Indigenous child maltreatment-related investigations). The next three most common child functioning concerns for investigations involving First Nations children were an intellectual/developmental disability (12 percent), attachment issues (11 percent), and failure to meet developmental milestones (11 percent). For investigations involving non-Indigenous children, the next three most commonly noted concerns were aggression/conduct issues (10 percent), ADHD (10 percent), and an intellectual/developmental disability (nine percent).

It is important to note that this data is based on the initial child welfare investigation and do not capture child functioning concerns that may become evident after that time.



Table 5: Primary Caregiver Risk Factors in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec) for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Caregiver Risk Factors	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Alcohol Abuse	15,023	54.09	34%	18,290	4.37	9%
Drug/Solvent Abuse	10,213	36.77	23%	17,566	4.20	8%
Cognitive Impairment	4,149	14.94	10%	6,864	1.64	3%
Mental Health Issues	14,780	53.22	34%	53,506	12.79	25%
Physical Health Issues	3,771	13.58	9%	13,509	3.23	6%
Few Social Supports	14,710	52.97	34%	51,234	12.25	24%
Victim of Intimate Partner Violence	14,977	53.93	34%	58,465	13.98	28%
Perpetrator of Domestic Violence	5,027	18.10	12%	16,864	4.03	8%
History of Foster Care/Group Home	8,322	29.97	19%	8,614	2.06	4%
At Least One Primary Caregiver Risk Factor	32,159	115.80	74%	120,954	28.92	57%
No Primary Caregiver Risk Factors	11,507	41.43	26%	90,938	21.74	43%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>43,666</b>	<b>157.23</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>211,892</b>	<b>50.66</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentages do not add up to 100% because investigating workers could identify more than one primary caregiver risk factor.

Based on a sample of 6,905 investigations in Ontario in 2018 and 6,354 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. Information on caregiver risk factors was not available in situations where the case was opened under a community caregiver, the youth was living independently, or the case was extracted from the Quebec administrative system. A community caregiver is defined as anyone providing care to a child in an out-of-home setting (e.g., institutional setting).

The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Table 5 presents primary caregiver risk factors that were noted by investigating workers. At least one primary caregiver risk factor was identified in 74 percent of maltreatment-related investigations involving First Nations children (an estimated 32,159 investigations) compared to only 57 percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children. The incidence rate of investigations involving at least one primary caregiver risk factor was **4.0 times** as high for First Nations children (115.80 per 1,000 children) compared to non-Indigenous children (28.92 per 1,000 children), indicating that primary caregivers in investigations involving First Nations children were more likely to be struggling with multiple complex needs.

The most frequently noted primary caregiver risk factors among investigations involving First Nations children were alcohol abuse, mental health issues, few social supports, and victim of intimate partner violence, which were all noted in 34 percent of investigations. For investigations involving non-Indigenous children, victim of intimate partner violence was noted in 28 percent of investigations, mental health issues in 25 percent of investigations, few social supports in 24 percent of investigations and alcohol abuse in nine percent of investigations.



Table 6: Primary Source of Household Income in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec) for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Income Source	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Full-time Employment	11,784	42.43	27%	123,259	29.47	58%
Part-time/Multiple Jobs/ Seasonal Employment	4,266	15.36	10%	18,414	4.40	9%
Benefits/EI/Social Assistance	23,059	83.03	52%	46,881	11.21	22%
Unknown	747	2.69	2%	8,398	2.01	4%
None	4,007	14.43	9%	15,087	3.61	7%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>43,863</b>	<b>157.94</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>212,039</b>	<b>50.70</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on a sample of 6,908 investigations in Ontario in 2018 and 6,367 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. Information on income source was not available in situations where the case was opened under a community caregiver or the case was extracted from the Quebec administrative system. A community caregiver is defined as anyone providing care to a child in an out-of-home setting (e.g., institutional setting).

The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

The primary source of household income is presented in Table 6. Investigations involving First Nations children were more likely to involve families whose primary source of income was from benefits, employment insurance, or social assistance and less likely to involve families whose primary source of income was from full-time employment. Fifty-two percent of investigations involving First Nations children involved families who relied on benefits/employment insurance/social assistance; for investigations involving non-Indigenous children, this income source was noted in only 22 percent of investigations. In contrast, 58 percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children involved families with a full-time income while only 27 percent of investigations involving First Nations children involved families who had income from full-time employment.



Table 7: Household Risk Factors in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec) for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Household Risk Factors	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Household Ran Out of Money for Basic Necessities	10,413	37.49	24%	20,425	4.88	10%
Overcrowded Housing	6,231	22.44	14%	12,644	3.02	6%
Unsafe Housing Conditions	2,370	8.53	5%	7,783	1.86	4%
2+ Family Moves in Past Year	5,078	18.28	12%	11,892	2.84	6%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>43,819</b>	<b>157.78</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>211,959</b>	<b>50.68</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentages do not add up to 100% because investigating workers could identify more than one household risk factor.

Based on a sample of 6,906 investigations in Ontario in 2018 and 6,363 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. Information on these risk factors was not available in situations where the case was opened under a community caregiver or the case was extracted from the Quebec administrative system. A community caregiver is defined as anyone providing care to a child in an out-of-home setting (e.g., institutional setting).

The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Table 7 describes several household risk factors captured in the FN/CIS-2019. Investigating workers were asked to indicate if the household had run out of money for housing, food, utilities, telephone/cell phone, transportation or medical care in the past six months; in 24 percent of investigations involving First Nations children (a rate of 37.49 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children) the household was noted to have run out of money for at least one of these necessities, compared to 10 percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children (a rate of 4.88 per 1,000 non-Indigenous children). Workers were also asked to indicate the presence of overcrowding and unsafe housing conditions as well as how many moves the family had experienced in the past 12 months.

Investigations involving First Nations children were more likely to involve families facing multiple structural challenges, such as living in unsafe housing conditions, economic hardship, and overcrowded housing that all limit the resources available to them to provide for their children.

## Investigation Characteristics and Dispositions

Table 8: Type of Investigation in Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving First Nations and non-Indigenous Children in Canada in 2019

Type of Investigation	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Maltreatment Investigations	32,328	106.31	70%	168,570	29.44	70%
Risk-only Investigations	13,590	44.69	30%	72,567	12.67	30%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>45,918</b>	<b>151.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>241,137</b>	<b>42.11</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on a sample of 27,994 cases extracted from the Quebec administrative system in 2019, 7,007 investigations in Ontario in 2018, and 6,384 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

As described in the methods section, maltreatment-related investigations included maltreatment investigations where a specific alleged incident was being investigated as well as risk-only investigations where concerns related only to the risk of future maltreatment. For both First Nations and non-Indigenous children, 70 percent of investigations were focused on alleged incidents of maltreatment and 30 percent assessed the risk of future maltreatment.





Table 9: Level of Substantiation in Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019 for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Level of Substantiation	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Substantiated	19,143	62.95	59%	76,899	13.43	46%
Suspected	2,190	7.20	7%	9,995	1.75	6%
Unfounded	10,950	36.01	34%	81,676	14.26	48%
<b>Total Maltreatment Investigations</b>	<b>32,283</b>	<b>106.16</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>168,570</b>	<b>29.44</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on a sample of 23,670 cases extracted from the Quebec administrative system in 2019, 4,422 investigations in Ontario in 2018, and 9,319 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. Twenty-eight cases from the Quebec administrative system did not have information about substantiation.

Table does not include information on risk-only investigations.

The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Table 9 presents the level of substantiation in the estimated 32,283 maltreatment investigations involving First Nations children and 168,570 investigations involving non-Indigenous children. Fifty-nine percent of maltreatment investigations involving First Nations children were substantiated (an estimated 19,143 investigations) compared to 46 percent for non-Indigenous children. The rate of substantiated investigations was **4.7 times** as high for First Nations children (62.95 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children) compared to non-Indigenous children (13.43 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children) in Canada in 2019.

In a further seven percent of maltreatment investigations involving First Nations children there was insufficient evidence to substantiate maltreatment; however, maltreatment remained suspected by the investigating worker at the conclusion of the investigation. Thirty-four percent of investigations involving First Nations children (an estimated 10,950 maltreatment investigations or 36.01 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children) were unfounded, compared to 48 percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children.



Table 10: Primary Category of Maltreatment in Investigated and Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019 for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Primary Category of Maltreatment	Investigated						Substantiated					
	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations			First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Physical Abuse	4,491	14.77	14%	52,209	9.12	31%	1,570	5.16	8%	14,459	2.53	19%
Sexual Abuse	1,865	6.13	6%	7,383	1.29	4%	587	1.93	3%	2,108	0.37	3%
Neglect	14,321	47.10	44%	43,860	7.66	26%	8,400	27.62	44%	18,600	3.25	24%
Emotional Maltreatment	2,857	9.40	9%	18,508	3.23	11%	1,780	5.85	9%	10,941	1.91	14%
Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence	8,794	28.92	27%	46,610	8.14	28%	6,806	22.38	36%	30,791	5.38	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,328</b>	<b>106.31</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>168,570</b>	<b>29.44</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,143</b>	<b>62.95</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>76,899</b>	<b>13.43</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on a sample of 23,698 cases (16,867 substantiated cases) extracted from the Quebec administrative system in 2019, 4,422 sampled investigations (1,758 substantiated investigations) in Ontario in 2018, and 4,897 sampled investigations (2,572 substantiated investigations) in the rest of Canada in 2019.

Table does not include information on risk-only investigations.

The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Table 10 describes the primary category of investigated maltreatment in all maltreatment investigations as well as in substantiated maltreatment investigations. The highest proportion of maltreatment investigations involving First Nations children were focused on neglect (44 percent; or a rate of 47.10 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children), followed by exposure to intimate partner violence (27 percent or a rate of 28.92 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children), physical abuse (14 percent or a rate of 14.77 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children), emotional maltreatment (nine percent or a rate of 9.40 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children), and sexual abuse (six percent or a rate of 6.13 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children).

In investigations involving non-Indigenous children, the largest primary categories of maltreatment typologies at the investigation stage were physical abuse (31 percent of investigations; or 9.12 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children), exposure to intimate partner violence (28 percent of investigations; or 8.14 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children), and neglect (26 percent of investigations; or 7.66 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children). Emotional maltreatment was identified as the primary form of maltreatment in 11 percent of investigations (a rate of 3.23 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children) and sexual abuse was identified as the primary maltreatment form in four percent of investigations (a rate of 1.29 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children).



Table 11: Documented Physical Harm in Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec) for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Documented Physical Harm	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Physical Harm, No Medical Treatment Required	277	1.00	1%	2,253	0.54	4%
Physical Harm, Medical Treatment Required	478	1.72	3%	632	0.15	1%
Subtotal: Any Physical Harm Documented	755	2.72	4%	2,885	0.69	5%
No Physical Harm Documented	17,400	62.65	96%	57,695	13.79	95%
<b>Total Substantiated Investigations</b>	<b>18,155</b>	<b>65.37</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>60,580</b>	<b>14.50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on a sample of 1,758 substantiated investigations in Ontario in 2018 and 2,572 substantiated investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. Information on physical harm was not available when the case was extracted from the Quebec administrative system.

The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Table 10 also shows that, while the overall disparity index for substantiated investigations was **4.7** (rate of 62.95 substantiated investigations per 1,000 children and 13.43 substantiated investigations per 1,000 children involving First Nations and non-Indigenous children, respectively), the magnitude of this disparity varied with the typology of substantiated maltreatment. The largest disparity was for substantiated neglect investigations; First Nations children were **8.5 times** as likely to be the subject of substantiated neglect investigations (rate of 27.62 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children) compared to non-Indigenous children (rate of 3.25 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children).

The FN/CIS-2019 tracked physical harm identified by the investigating worker. Information on physical harm was collected using two measures: one describing severity of harm as measured by medical treatment needed and one describing the nature of harm. As shown in Table 11, in most substantiated maltreatment investigations, no physical harm was noted. Physical harm was identified in four percent of investigations involving First Nations children (an estimated 755 investigations or a rate of 2.72 per 1,000 First Nations children) compared to five percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children (an estimated 2,885 investigations or 0.69 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children).

In one percent of substantiated investigations involving First Nations children (an estimated 277 substantiated investigations), physical harm was identified but no medical treatment was required, compared to an estimated four percent of substantiated investigations involving non-Indigenous children. In three percent of substantiated investigations involving First Nations children (an estimated 478 substantiated investigations, or 1.72 substantiated investigations per 1,000 First Nations children), and one percent of those involving non-Indigenous children, harm was sufficiently severe to require treatment.



Table 12: Documented Emotional Harm in Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec) for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Documented Emotional Harm	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Emotional Harm, No Treatment Required	2,314	8.33	13%	9,210	2.20	15%
Emotional Harm, Treatment Required	3,980	14.33	22%	12,217	2.92	20%
Subtotal: Any Emotional Harm Documented	6,294	22.66	35%	21,427	5.12	35%
No Emotional Harm Documented	11,861	42.71	65%	39,153	9.36	65%
<b>Total Substantiated Investigations</b>	<b>18,155</b>	<b>65.37</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>60,580</b>	<b>14.48</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on a sample of 1,758 substantiated investigations in Ontario in 2018 and 2,572 substantiated investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. Information on emotional harm was not available when the case was extracted from the Quebec administrative system.

The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Information on emotional harm was collected using a series of questions asking child welfare workers to describe emotional harm that had occurred because of the maltreatment incident(s). If the maltreatment was substantiated or suspected, workers were asked to indicate whether the child was showing signs of mental or emotional harm (e.g., nightmares, bed-wetting, or social withdrawal) following the maltreatment incident(s). To rate the severity of mental/emotional harm, workers indicated whether therapeutic treatment was required to manage the symptoms of mental or emotional harm.

Table 12 presents documented emotional harm identified during substantiated child maltreatment investigations involving First Nations and non-Indigenous children. Emotional harm was noted in 35 percent of all substantiated maltreatment involving First Nations children as well as substantiated investigations involving non-Indigenous children. In 22 percent of substantiated investigations involving First Nations children (an estimated 3,980 investigations or 14.33 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children) symptoms were severe enough to require treatment compared to twenty percent of substantiated investigations involving non-Indigenous children.

Table 13: Service Referrals in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec) for First Nations and non-Indigenous children

Service Referrals	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Case Involved a Service Referral for Any Family Member	22,790	82.06	52%	81,539	19.50	38%
Case Did Not Involve Any Service Referrals	21,335	76.82	48%	132,610	31.71	62%
Total Investigations	44,125	158.88	100%	214,149	51.20	100%

Based on a sample of 7,007 investigations in Ontario in 2018 and 6,384 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. Information on service referrals was not available when the case was extracted from the Quebec administrative system.

The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Table 13 presents the number of investigations in which the investigating worker made a service referral for any family member involved in the investigation. In just over half of investigations involving First Nations children (52 percent), a service referral was made (an estimated 22,790 investigations), compared to 38 percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children in which a service referral was made. The rate of investigations leading to a service referral was **4.2 times** as high for First Nations children (82.06 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children) compared to non-Indigenous children (19.50 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children).

Table 14: Transfers to Ongoing Services in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019 (Excluding Quebec) for First Nations and non-Indigenous children

Transfers to Ongoing Services	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Case Transferred to Ongoing Services	15,725	56.62	36%	35,941	8.59	17%
Case Closed	28,400	102.26	64%	178,208	42.61	83%
Total Investigations	44,125	158.88	100%	214,149	51.20	100%

Based on a sample of 7,007 investigations in Ontario in 2018 and 6,384 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. Information on transfers to ongoing services was not available when the case was extracted from the Quebec administrative system.

The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

The number of cases that remained opened for ongoing services following an initial child welfare investigation is presented in Table 14. Thirty-six percent of investigations involving First Nations children remained open for ongoing services in Canada in 2019, compared to only 17 percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children. The rate of investigations that remained open for ongoing services was **6.6 times** as high for First Nations children (56.62 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children) compared to non-Indigenous children (8.59 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children).

Table 15: Applications to Child Welfare Court in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019 for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Child Welfare Court Application	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
No Application to Court	41,831	137.56	91%	233,805	40.83	97%
Application Made	4,087	13.44	9%	7,332	1.28	3%
Total Investigations	45,918	151.00	100%	241,137	42.11	100%

Based on a sample of 27,994 cases extracted from the Quebec administrative system in 2019, 7,007 investigations in Ontario in 2018, and 6,384 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Table 15 describes investigations involving applications to child welfare court in Canada in 2019. An application to court was made in nine percent of investigations involving First Nations children compared to only three percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children. The rate of investigations with child welfare court applications was **10.5 times** as high for investigations involving First Nations children (rate of 13.44 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children) compared to non-Indigenous children (rate of 1.28 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children).



Table 16: Placement Type in Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Canada in 2019 for First Nations and Non-Indigenous Children

Placement Type	First Nations Child Investigations			Non-Indigenous Child Investigations		
	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%	#	Rate per 1,000 children	%
Informal Placement (Kinship Out of Care and Customary Care)	2,365	7.78	5%	4,798	0.84	2%
Kinship in Care	1,589	5.23	3%	545	0.10	<1%
Foster Care (Non-kinship)	1,775	5.84	4%	2,677	0.47	1%
Group Home/Residential or Secure Treatment	207	0.68	<1%	757	0.13	<1%
Other Placement (e.g. places of safety)	205	0.67	<1%	153	0.03	<1%
<b>Subtotal: Placement Made</b>	<b>6,141</b>	<b>20.20</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>8,930</b>	<b>1.56</b>	<b>4%</b>
No Placement Made	39,776	130.81	87%	232,207	40.55	96%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>45,917</b>	<b>151.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>241,137</b>	<b>42.11</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on a sample of 27,994 cases extracted from the Quebec administrative system in 2019, 7,007 investigations in Ontario in 2018, and 6,384 investigations in the rest of Canada in 2019. The differences in rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous child investigations must be understood in the context of the ongoing impact of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty.

Table 16 presents out-of-home placements made in child maltreatment-related investigations in Canada in 2019. Thirteen percent of investigations involving First Nations children resulted in an out-of-home placement for the child (an estimated 6,141 investigations) compared to only four percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children (an estimated 8,930 investigations). When comparing the rates per 1,000 children, the rate of placement for First Nations children (20.20 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children) is **12.9 times** the rate of placement for non-Indigenous children (1.56 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children). The rate of placement in formal out-of-home care (i.e. excluding informal care) for First Nations children (12.42 investigations per 1,000 First Nations children) is **17.2 times** the rate of placement in formal out-of-home care for non-Indigenous children (0.72 investigations per 1,000 non-Indigenous children).

Investigating workers were asked to specify the type of placement that was made when a placement in out-of-home care was noted for the investigated child. Informal placements represented the most frequently noted placement type for both First Nations and non-Indigenous children (noted in five percent of investigations involving First Nations children and two percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children). The next most frequently noted placement types in investigations involving First Nations children were non-kinship foster care (noted in four percent of investigations) and kinship in care (noted in three percent of investigations).

Tables 12-16 demonstrate how the disparities between rates of child welfare service dispositions for First Nations and non-Indigenous children build across the service disposition continuum. The initial overrepresentation at the investigation level is represented by a disparity index of 3.6 (see Table 2), the disparity index for referrals to services is 4.2, the disparity index for transfers to ongoing services is 6.6, the disparity index for child welfare court applications is 10.5, and the disparity index for placements in formal out-home care is 17.2.

## **Future Directions**

These are the first preliminary descriptive statistics comparing investigations involving First Nations children and investigations involving non-Indigenous children. While the dramatic differences in rates of maltreatment-related investigations are consistent with findings from previous studies, careful examination of structural factors should always be considered.

Follow-up studies are needed to systematically explore the extent to which seasonal variation in the types of cases referred to child welfare agencies may affect estimates that are based on a three-month sampling period.

To accurately understand and inform, the data must be analyzed with an Indigenous worldview. Consequently, First Nations agencies must be supported in collecting and analyzing their own data. Increasing data collection from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities can provide evidence to support Indigenous child welfare sovereignty.

A series of information sheets that further examine the disparities between child welfare investigations involving First Nations and non-Indigenous children will supplement this initial report and be published on the Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal ([cwrp.ca](http://cwrp.ca)).

# Appendix A: FN/CIS-2019 Data Collection Instrument



Case number: **CASE00**

## Intake Information

01. Date case opened (YYYY-MM-DD)

2019-10-01

02. Source of allegation/referral

Check all that apply

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Custodial parent            | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-custodial parent                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child (subject of referral) | <input type="checkbox"/> Relative                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbour/friend            | <input type="checkbox"/> Social assistance worker             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis service/shelter      | <input type="checkbox"/> Community/recreation centre          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital (any personnel)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Community health nurse               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community physician         | <input type="checkbox"/> Community mental health professional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other child welfare service          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day care centre             | <input type="checkbox"/> Police                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community agency            | <input type="checkbox"/> Anonymous                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/>  |   |

03. Please describe the nature of the referral, including alleged maltreatment and injury (if applicable)

Results of investigation

04. Which approach to the investigation was used?

▼

**05. Caregiver(s) in the home (child's/children's primary residence)**

No caregiver investigated

No secondary caregiver in the home

Community caregiver

Youth living independently

**Primary caregiver**

a) Gender

b) Age

**Secondary caregiver in the home at time of referral**

a) Gender

b) Age

**06. Children (under 19) in the home at time of referral and caregiver's relationship to them**

a) First name only of child	b) Age of child	c) Gender of child	d) Primary caregiver's relationship to child	e) Secondary caregiver's relationship to child	f) Subject of referral	g) Was child investigated?
--------------------------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------------	---	---	---------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Child 1

Please specify the caregiver's "other" relationship to child

**07. Other adults in the home**

Check all that apply

None

Grandparent

Child >= 19

Other

**08. Caregiver(s) outside the home**

Check all that apply

None

Father

Mother

Grandparent

Other

## Household Information

### Primary/Secondary caregiver

Gender :

Age :

A09. Primary income

A10. Ethno-racial

If Indigenous,

a) On/Off reserve

b) Indigenous Status

First Nations Status Eligibility

A11. Has this caregiver moved to Canada within the last 5 years?

Yes

No

Unknown

A12. Primary language

A13. Caregiver response to investigation

A14. Caregiver risk factors within the past 6 months

Please complete all risk factors (a to i)

	Confirmed	Suspected	No	Unknown
a) Alcohol abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Drug/solvent abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Cognitive impairment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Mental health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Physical health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Few social supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Victim of intimate partner violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) Perpetrator of intimate partner violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) History of foster care/group home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Please select all drug abuse categories that apply**

- Cannabis (e.g., marijuana, hashish, hash oil)
- Opiates and Opioids and morphine derivatives (e.g., codeine, fentanyl, heroine, morphine, opium, oxycodone)
- Depressants (e.g., barbiturates, benzodiazepines such as Valium, Ativan)
- Stimulants (e.g., cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamines)
- Hallucinogens (e.g., acid (LSD), PCP)
- Solvents/Inhalants (e.g., glues, paint thinner, paint, gasoline, aerosol sprays)
- Unknown

**15. Child custody dispute (i.e., court application made or pending)**       Yes       No       Unknown

**16. Type of housing**     

**17. Number of moves in past year**     

**18. Home overcrowded**       Yes       No       Unknown

**19. Are there unsafe housing conditions?**       Yes       No       Unknown

**20. In the last 6 months, household ran out of money for:**

**a) Food**       Yes       No       Unknown

**b) Housing**       Yes       No       Unknown

**c) Utilities**       Yes       No       Unknown

**d) Telephone/Cell phone**       Yes       No       Unknown

**e) Transportation**       Yes       No       Unknown

**f) Medical care (includes dental and mental health)**       Yes       No       Unknown

**21. Has this case been previously opened for investigation?**     

**a) How long since the case was closed?**     

**22. Case will stay open for on-going child welfare services**       Yes       No

**23. Referral(s) for any family member**

**a) Referral(s) made for any family member to an internal or external service(s)**  Yes  No

**If YES, please specify the type of referral(s) made**

Check all that apply

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent education or support services  | <input type="checkbox"/> Child victim support services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family or parent counselling          | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational services         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug/alcohol counselling or treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> Special education placement   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psychiatric/mental health services    | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical or dental services    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intimate partner violence services    | <input type="checkbox"/> Child or day care             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare or social assistance          | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech/language services      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food bank                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural services             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter services                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/>    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal                                 |  |

**If YES, what was specifically done with respect to the referral(s)?**

Check all that apply

- Suggested they should get services
- Provided them with names and numbers of service providers
- Assisted them with completing/filing the application
- Made appointment for them
- Accompanied them to the appointment
- Followed-up with family to see if the service was provided
- Followed-up with internal/external service(s) to confirm if the service was provided

**If NO, please specify the reason(s)**

Check all that apply

- Already receiving services
- Service not available in the area
- Ineligible for service
- Services could not be financed
- Service determined not to be needed
- Refusal of services
- There is an extensive waitlist for services
- No culturally appropriate services



24. Gender

25. Age

26. Ethno-racial

27. Indigenous Status

28. Child functioning

Please complete all child functioning issues (a to s)

	Confirmed	Suspected	No	Unknown
a) Positive toxicology at birth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) FASD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Failure to meet developmental milestones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Intellectual/developmental disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Attachment issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) ADHD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Aggression/conduct issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) Physical disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Academic/learning difficulties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Confirmed	Suspected	No	Unknown
j) Depression/anxiety/withdrawal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k) Self-harming behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l) Suicidal thoughts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m) Suicide attempts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n) Inappropriate sexual behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o) Running (multiple incidents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p) Alcohol abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q) Drug/solvent abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Please select all drug abuse categories that apply**

- Cannabis (e.g., marijuana, hashish, hash oil)
- Opiates and Opioids and morphine derivatives (e.g., codeine, fentanyl, heroine, morphine, opium, oxycodone)
- Depressants (e.g., barbiturates, benzodiazepines such as Valium, Ativan)
- Stimulants (e.g., cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamines)
- Hallucinogens (e.g., acid (LSD), PCP)
- Solvents/Inhalants (e.g., glues, paint thinner, paint, gasoline, aerosol sprays)
- Unknown

**29. TYPE OF INVESTIGATION**

- Investigated incident of maltreatment       Risk investigation only

**Maltreatment codes**

Please use these maltreatment codes to answer Question 30. Questions 30 to 37 apply to the maltreatment of a child.

Physical abuse	Sexual abuse	Neglect	Emotional maltreatment	Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence
<b>01</b> Shake, push, grab or throw		<b>02</b> Hit with hand		<b>03</b> Punch, kick or bite
<b>04</b> Hit with object		<b>05</b> Choking, poisoning, stabbing		<b>06</b> Other physical abuse

**30. Maltreatment codes – Enter primary form of maltreatment first**

	1st Code	2nd Code	3rd Code
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>31. Alleged perpetrator</b>			
Primary caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secondary caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other perpetrator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Relationship <input type="text"/>			
b. Age <input type="text"/>			
c. Gender <input type="text"/>			
<b>32. Substantiation</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
a) Was the report a fabricated referral? (by referral source)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>33. Was maltreatment a form of punishment?</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>34. Duration of maltreatment</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>35. Police involvement</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**36. Is mental or emotional harm evident (as a result of the substantiated or suspected maltreatment)?**       Yes       No

a) Child requires therapeutic treatment       Yes       No

**37. Physical harm**

a) Is physical harm evident?  Yes  No

**b) Types of physical harm**

Check all that apply

Bruises, cuts or scrapes

Broken bones

Burns and scalds

Head trauma

Fatal

Health condition : Please specify

c) Was medical treatment required?  Yes  No

38. Is there a significant risk of future maltreatment?  Yes  No  Unknown

**39. Previous investigations**

a) Child previously investigated by child welfare for alleged maltreatment  Yes  No  Unknown

b) Was the maltreatment substantiated?  Yes  No  Unknown

**40. Placement**

a) Placement during investigation  Yes  No  Considered

b) Placement type

c) Estimate the time it takes to travel between the child's residence and their placement

d) Did the child reunify during the investigation?  Yes  No

41. Child welfare court application?  Yes  No  Considered

a) Referral to mediation/alternative response  Yes  No

42. Caregiver(s) used spanking in the last 6 months

## Comments and Other Information (Not Required)

**43. If you are unable to complete an investigation for any child please explain why**

**44. Intake information**

**45. Household information**

**46. Child information**

## Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

The following is an explanatory list of terms used throughout the First Nations/Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2019 (FN/CIS-2019) Report.

**Age Group:** The age range of children included in the FN/CIS-2019 sample. All data are presented for children between newborn and 15 years of age.

**Annual Incidence:** The number of child maltreatment-related investigations per 1,000 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 agency/office statistics as openings. Openings do not include referrals that have been screened-out.

**Categories of Maltreatment:** The five key classification categories under which the 33 forms of maltreatment were subsumed: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and exposure to intimate partner violence.

**Child:** The FN/CIS-2019 defined child as age newborn to 15 inclusive.

**Child Investigations:** Case openings that meet the FN/CIS-2019 inclusion criteria.

**Child Welfare Agency:** Refers to child protection services and other related services. The focus of the FN/CIS-2019 is on services that address alleged child abuse and neglect. The names designating such services vary by jurisdiction.

**Childhood Prevalence:** The proportion of people maltreated at any point during their childhood. The FN/CIS-2019 does not measure prevalence of maltreatment.

**Community Caregiver:** Child welfare agencies in Canada usually open cases under the name of a family (e.g., one or more parent). In certain cases, child welfare agencies do not open cases under the name of a family, but rather the case is opened under the name of a “community caregiver.” This occurs when the alleged perpetrator is someone providing care to a child in an out-of-home setting (e.g., institutional caregiver). For instance, if an allegation is made against a caregiver at a day care, school, or group home, the case may be classified as a

“community caregiver” investigation. In these investigations, the investigating child welfare worker typically has little contact with the child’s family, but rather focuses on the alleged perpetrator who is a community member. For this reason, information on the primary caregivers and the households of children involved in “community caregiver” investigations was not collected.

**Definitional Framework:** The FN/CIS-2019 provides an estimate of the number of cases of alleged child maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment, and exposure to intimate partner violence) reported to and investigated by child welfare services in 2019 (screened-out reports are not included). The estimates are broken down by three levels of substantiation (substantiated, suspected, and unfounded). Cases opened more than once during the year are counted as separate investigations.

**Differential or Alternate Response Models:** A newer model of service delivery in child welfare in which a range of potential response options are customized to meet the diverse needs of families reported to child welfare. Typically involves multiple “streams” or “tracks” of service delivery. Less urgent cases are shifted to a “community” track where the focus of intervention is on coordinating services and resources to meet the short- and long-term needs of families.

**First Nations:** “First Nations people” refers to Status and non-status “Indian” peoples in Canada. Many communities also use the term “First Nation” in the name of their community. Currently, there are more than 630 First Nation communities, which represent more than 50 nations or cultural groups and 50 Indigenous languages.<sup>58</sup>

**First Nations Status:** An individual recognized by the federal government as being registered under the Indian Act is referred to as having First Nations Status.

**Forms of Maltreatment:** Specific types of maltreatment (e.g., hit with an object, sexual exploitation, or direct witness to physical violence) that are classified under the five FN/CIS-2019 Categories of Maltreatment. The FN/CIS-2019 captured 33 forms of maltreatment.

**Indigenous Peoples:** A collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants (often ‘Aboriginal peoples’ is also used). The Canadian constitution recognizes three groups of Indigenous peoples: Indians (commonly referred to as First Nations), Inuit, and Métis. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. More

<sup>58</sup> “Indigenous peoples and communities,” 2021, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1529102490303>.

than 1.67 million people in Canada identify themselves as an Indigenous person, according to the 2016 Census National Household Survey.<sup>59</sup>

**Inuit:** Inuit are the Indigenous people of Arctic Canada. About 64,235 Inuit live in 53 communities in: Nunatsiavut (Labrador); Nunavik (Quebec); Nunavut; and Inuvialuit (Northwest Territories and Yukon).<sup>60</sup>

**Level of Identification and Substantiation:** There are four key levels in the case identification process: detection, reporting, investigation, and substantiation.

**Detection** is the first stage in the case identification process. This refers to the process of a professional or community member detecting a maltreatment-related concern for a child. Little is known about the relationship between detected and undetected cases.

**Reporting** suspected child maltreatment is required by law in all Canadian jurisdictions. The FN/CIS-2019 does not document unreported cases.

**Investigated** cases are subject to various screening practices, which vary across agencies. The FN/CIS-2019 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 FN/CIS-2019 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.

**Maltreatment Investigation:** Investigations of situations where there are concerns that a child may have already been abused or neglected.

**Maltreatment-related Investigation:** Investigations of situations where there are concerns that a child may have already been abused or neglected as well as investigations of situations where the concern is the risk the child will be maltreated in the future.

**Métis:** A distinctive peoples who, in addition to their mixed ancestry, developed their own customs and recognizable group identity separate from their Indian or Inuit and European forbearers.<sup>61</sup>

**Multi-stage Sampling Design:** A research design in which several systematic steps are taken in drawing the final sample to be studied. The FN/CIS-2019 sample (for all jurisdictions except Quebec) was drawn in three stages. First, a stratified random sample of child welfare agencies was selected from across Canada. Second, families investigated by child welfare agencies were selected (all cases in small and medium sized agencies, a random sample in large agencies). Finally, investigated children in each family were identified for inclusion in the sample (non-investigated siblings were excluded).

**Non-protection Cases:** Cases open for child welfare services for reasons other than suspected maltreatment or risk of future maltreatment (e.g., prevention services, services for young pregnant women, etc.).

**Reporting Year:** The year in which child maltreatment-related cases were opened. The reporting year for the FN/CIS-2019 was 2019 (data from Ontario were collected as part of the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018, for which the reporting year was 2018).

**Risk of Future Maltreatment:** No specific form of maltreatment alleged or suspected. However, based on the circumstances, a child is at risk for maltreatment in the future due to a milieu of risk factors. For example, a child living with a caregiver who abuses substances may be deemed at risk of future maltreatment even if no form of maltreatment has been alleged.

**Risk of Harm:** Placing a child at risk of harm implies that a specific action (or inaction) occurred that seriously endangered the safety of the child. Placing a child at risk of harm is considered maltreatment.

**Screened out:** Referrals to child welfare agencies that are not opened for an investigation.

**Unit of Analysis:** In the case of the FN/CIS-2019, the unit of analysis is a child investigation.

**Unit of Service:** When a referral is made alleging maltreatment, the child welfare agency will open an investigation if the case is not screened out. Jurisdictions in Canada vary in terms of their units of service, for some, when an investigation is opened, it is opened under an entire family, while for others the investigations are opened under individual children.

<sup>59</sup> Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, "Indigenous peoples and communities."

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<sup>61</sup> Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, "Indigenous peoples and co

## Appendix C: Sampling Error Estimation

The following is a description of the method employed to develop the sampling error estimation for the FN/CIS-2019, as well as the variance estimates and confidence intervals for the FN/CIS-2019 estimates. Variance estimates are provided for select tables in this report.

A multi-stage sampling design was used, first to select a representative sample of 63 child welfare agencies across Canada (except Quebec), and then to sample cases within these agencies. In Quebec, 17 of 20 agencies were selected. The FN/CIS-2019 estimates are based on a relatively large sample of 13,869 child maltreatment-related investigations and a self representing sample of 28,079 investigations in Quebec. Sampling error is primarily driven by the variability between the 63 participating agencies who were randomly selected to participate. 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.

Sampling error estimates were calculated to reflect the fact that the survey population had been randomly selected from across the country. Standard error estimates were calculated for select variables at the  $p < 0.05$  level. Appendix C tables provide the margin of error for selected estimates. For example, the estimated number of child maltreatment investigations in Canada is 299,217. The lower 95 per cent confidence interval is 294,956 child investigations and the upper confidence interval is 303,479 child investigations. This means that there is a 95 per cent chance that the true number of investigations is between 294,956 and 303,479.

Most coefficients of variation were in the acceptable and reliable level. The error estimates do not account for any errors in determining the design and calibration weights, nor do they account for any other non-sampling errors that may occur, such as inconsistency or inadequacies in administrative procedures from agency to agency. 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.

The following are select variance estimates and confidence intervals for FN/CIS-2019 variables of interest. Each table reports the estimate, standard error, coefficient of variation, lower and upper confidence intervals.



Table 17 A: Sampling Error Estimates for Number and Rate of Child Maltreatment Investigations and Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019

	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Number of Investigations	299,217	2,174	.72	294,956	303,479
Rate per 1,000 children	48.23	0.35		47.54	48.91

Table 17 B: Sampling Error Estimates for Age of Children in Child Maltreatment Investigations and Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019

Child Age Group	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
<1 year	19,373	695.91	3.59	18,009	20,737
Rate per 1,000 children	52.60	1.89		48.90	56.31
1-3 years	48,225	1,228.17	2.55	45,817	50,632
Rate per 1,000 children	42.54	1.08		40.41	44.66
4-7 years	81,764	1,368.94	1.67	79,080	84,447
Rate per 1,000 children	51.28	0.86		49.60	52.96
8-11 years	81,885	1,509.85	1.84	78,925	84,844
Rate per 1,000 children	51.96	0.96		50.09	53.84
12-15 years	67,971	1,322.42	1.95	65,379	70,563
Rate per 1,000 children	44.36	0.86		42.67	46.05

Table 17 C: Sampling Error Estimates for Substantiation Decisions in Canada in 2019

Maltreatment and Risk Only Investigations	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Substantiated Maltreatment	102,353	2,204		98,033	106,673
			2.15		
Rate per 1,000 children	16.50	0.36		15.80	17.19
Significant Risk of Future Maltreatment	13,498	877		11,779	15,217
			6.50		
Rate per 1,000 children	2.18	0.1		1.90	2.45

Table 17 D: Sampling Error Estimates for Referral Source in Child Maltreatment Investigations and Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019

Referral Source	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Any Non-Professional	58,463	1,875		54,789	62,138
			3.21		
Rate per 1,000 children	9.42	0.30		8.83	10.02
Any Professional	200,653	2,577		195,603	205,703
			1.28		
Rate per 1,000 children	32.34	0.42		31.53	33.15
Other/Anonymous	21,328	1,420		18,545	24,110
			6.66		
Rate per 1,000 children	3.44	0.23		2.99	3.89

Table 17 E: Sampling Error Estimates for Provision of Ongoing Services Following an Investigation in Child Maltreatment Investigations and Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019

Provision of Ongoing Services	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Case to Stay Open for Ongoing Services	54,090	1,637	3.03	50,882	57,298
Rate per 1,000 children	8.72	0.26		8.20	9.24
Case to be Closed	215,515	2,432	1.13	210,749	220,282
Rate per 1,000 children	34.74	0.39		33.97	35.50

Table 17 F: Sampling Error Estimates for Placement in Child Maltreatment Investigations and Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019

Placement Status	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Child Remained at Home	283,145	2,227	.79	277,078	285,808
Rate per 1,000 children	45.64	0.36		44.66	46.07
Informal Placement	7,515	1,035	12.94	5,967	10,023
Rate per 1,000 children	1.21	0.17		0.96	1.62
Foster or Kinship Care	7,215	529	6.56	7,032	9,107
Rate per 1,000 children	1.16	0.09		1.13	1.47
Group Home/Residential Secure Treatment	972	193	14.85	921	1,677
Rate per 1,000 children	0.16	0.03		0.15	0.27
Other	370	100	24.47	214	607
Rate per 1,000 children	0.06	0.02		0.03	0.10

Table 17 G: Sampling Error Estimates for History of Previous Investigations in Child Maltreatment Investigations and Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019

Previous Investigations	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Child Previously Investigated	142,447	2,295	1.61	137,948	146,945
Rate per 1,000 children	22.96	0.37		22.23	23.68
Child Not Previously Investigated	151,484	2,336	1.54	146,906	156,062
Rate per 1,000 children	24.42	0.38		23.68	25.15
Unknown	5,287	892	16.87	3,539	7,035
Rate per 1,000 children	0.85	0.14		0.57	1.13

Table 17 H: Sampling Error Estimates for Applications to Child Welfare Court in Child Maltreatment Investigations and Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations in Canada in 2019

Application to Child Welfare Court	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
No Court or Court Considered	287,238	2,215	.77	282,896	291,581
Rate per 1,000 children	46.30	0.36		45.60	47.00
Application Made	11,979	663	5.54	10,679	13,279
Rate per 1,000 children	1.93	0.11		1.72	2.14

Table 17 I: Sampling Error Estimates for Primary Category of Substantiated Maltreatment in Canada in 2019

Primary Category of Maltreatment	Estimate	Standard Error	Coefficient of Variation	Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Physical Abuse	16,882	757	4.48	15,398	18,366
Rate per 1,000 children	2.72	0.12		2.48	2.96
Sexual Abuse	2,793	236.89	8.48	2,329	3,258
Rate per 1,000 children	0.45	0.04		0.38	0.53
Neglect	28,676	1,354	4.72	26,022	31,330
Rate per 1,000 children	4.62	0.22		4.19	5.05
Emotional Maltreatment	13,459	646	4.80	12,192	14,726
Rate per 1,000 children	2.17	0.10		1.97	2.37
Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence	40,369	1,715	4.25	37,008	43,730
Rate per 1,000 children	6.51	0.28		5.96	7.05