

# Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2023 (OIS-2023)

## OACAS Webinar

---

**Barbara Fallon, PHD**

Principal Investigator OIS-2023

Canada Research Chair in Child welfare

**FACTOR-INWENTASH**  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK



# Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Introduction and overview of the OIS-2023
3. Contributions of the OIS
4. OIS-2023 sampling and recruitment
5. Discussion

# Introduction and Overview of the OIS-2023

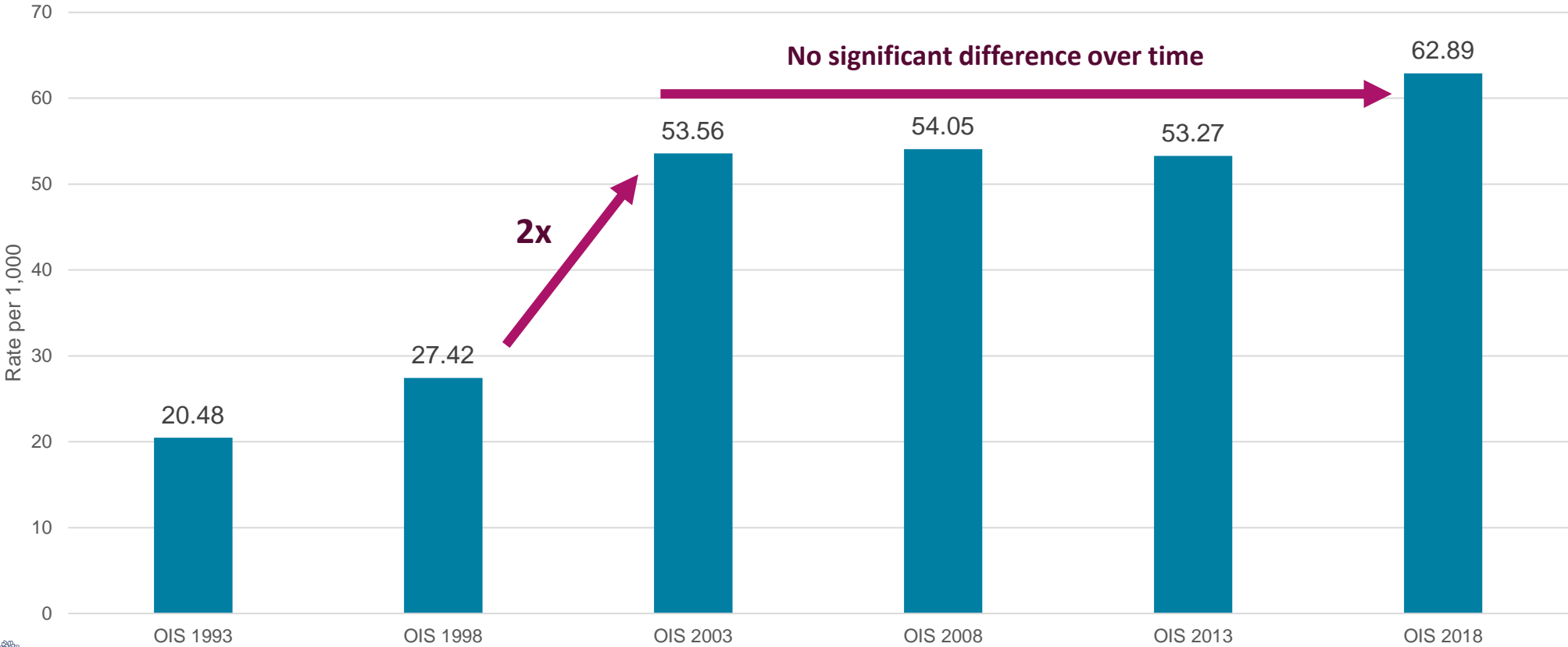
- The OIS-2023 is a province-wide research study
- The OIS-2023 is the seventh in a series of incidence studies that have run in five-year cycles since 1993
- The OIS-2023 is designed to:
  - Determine rates of investigated and substantiated maltreatment and rates of investigations involving risk of maltreatment
  - Document forms and severity of maltreatment
  - Examine selected health determinants
  - Monitor short-term investigation outcomes
  - Compare rates and characteristics across cycles (OIS-1993, OIS-1998, OIS-2003, OIS-2008, OIS-2013, OIS-2018, OIS-2023)

# Introduction and Overview of the OIS

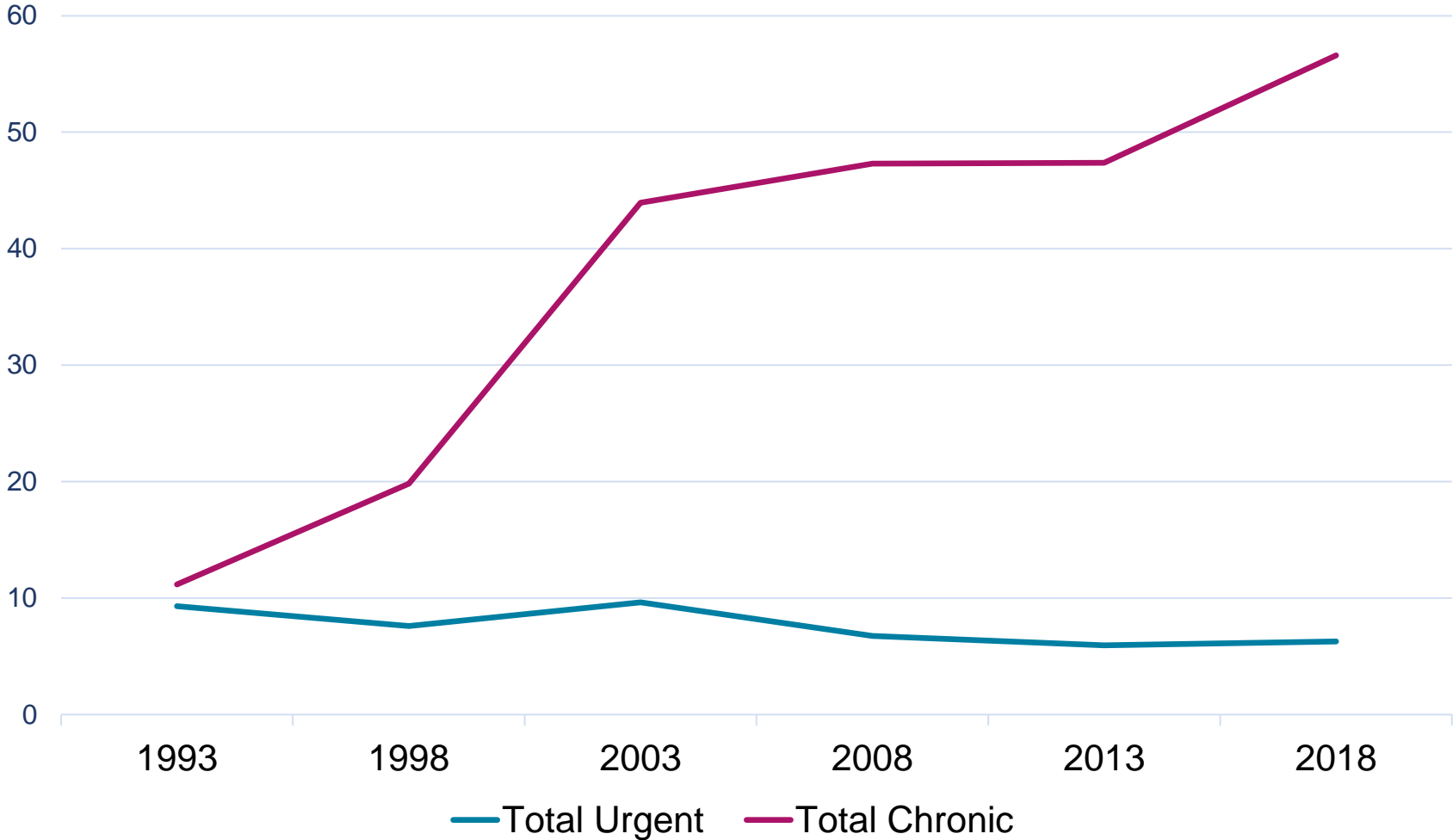
- Reflective of provincial effort and commitment by child welfare service providers, researchers and policy makers to improve services through research
- Funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- In-kind support of:
  - Child welfare workers, managers, administrative staff
  - Researchers from Universities, Governments and Agencies
- Only source of provincially aggregated child welfare data
- Critical to advancing the child welfare knowledge base, building capacity and informing practice and policy efforts

# OIS Contributions: Advancing Knowledge

Rate of Maltreatment Investigations in Ontario in 1993, 1998, 2003, and child maltreatment investigations and risk of future maltreatment investigations in Ontario in 2008, 2013 and 2018

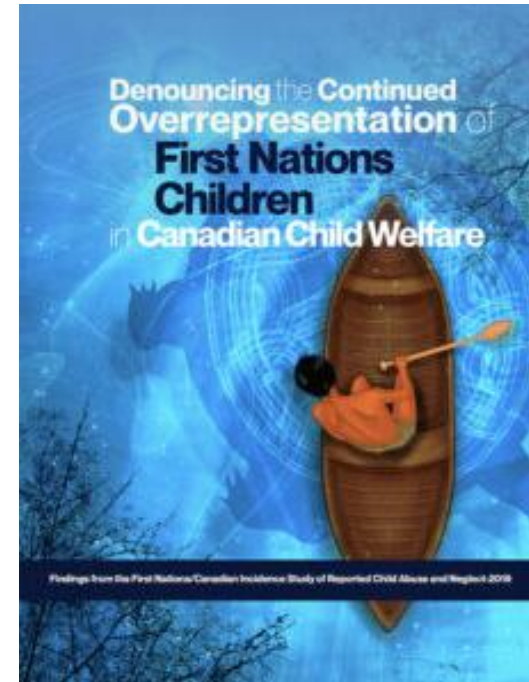


# Comparison of Total Incidences of Urgent Protection Investigations and Other Investigations in Ontario



# OIS Contributions: Open Access Publications

- Since the OIS-2018, 30+ peer-reviewed journals; 45+ information Sheets published on the [CWRP Information Sheets](#)
  - Areas of focus: Ethno-racial comparisons, agency-university partnerships, risk, neglect, child welfare worker qualifications, infants, custody disputes, poverty and food insecurity, intimate partner violence, police involvement, organizations, urgent-chronic taxonomy, education
- Sample of peer-reviewed journal publications:
  - Fallon, B., Joh-Carnella, N., Houston, E., Livingston, E., & Trocmé, N. (2023). The more we change the more we stay the same: Canadian child welfare systems' response to child well-being. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. 137, 1060431. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106031>.
  - Lwin, K., Fallon, B., Filippelli, J., & Trocmé, N. (2022). A Multilevel Examination of Whether Child Welfare Worker Characteristics Predict the Substantiation Decision in Canada. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. <https://doi-org./10.1177/08862605221120>
  - Quinn, A., Fallon, B., Joh-Carnella, N., & Saint-Girons, M. (2022). The overrepresentation of First Nations children in the Ontario child welfare system: A call for systemic change. *Children and Youth Services Review*. 106558. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106558>



## Child Characteristics in On Reserve Investigations Involving First Nations Children Aged 0-17 in Canada in 2019

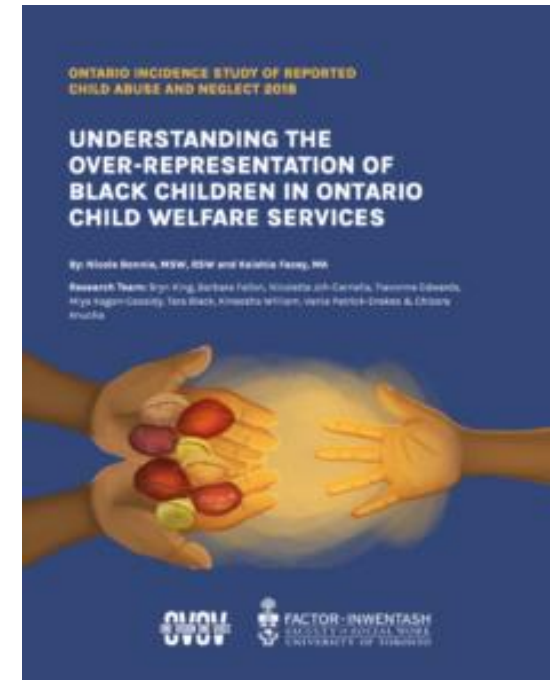
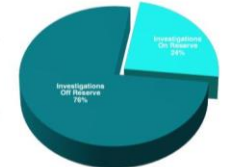
**Introduction**  
This information sheet highlights key child characteristics in on reserve child maltreatment-related investigations involving First Nations children in Canada in 2019. These data were collected as part of the First Nations/Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2019 (FN/CIS-2019), a data collection effort to produce estimates of the incidence of reported and investigated child maltreatment in Canada. This information sheet specifically describes the gender and age of children as well as noted concerns that investigating workers had related to children's functioning. For the purposes of this information sheet, "on reserve" investigations are those which involved a First Nations child whose primary or secondary caregiver was noted to be living on reserve, whereas "off reserve" investigations are those in which neither caregiver was noted to be living on reserve.

The information presented must be understood within the context of the ongoing legacy of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty that First Nations communities in Canada continue to face. Further information on the colonial practices that drive these disparities is available in Section 1 of the FN/CIS-2019 Major Findings Report (available at: <https://www.cjpublications.ca/our-journals/child-welfare>).

**On and Off Reserve Investigations**  
Figure 1 shows the proportion of on and off reserve investigations involving First Nations children. Approximately one quarter of investigations involving First Nations children in 2019 were conducted on reserve (24 percent).

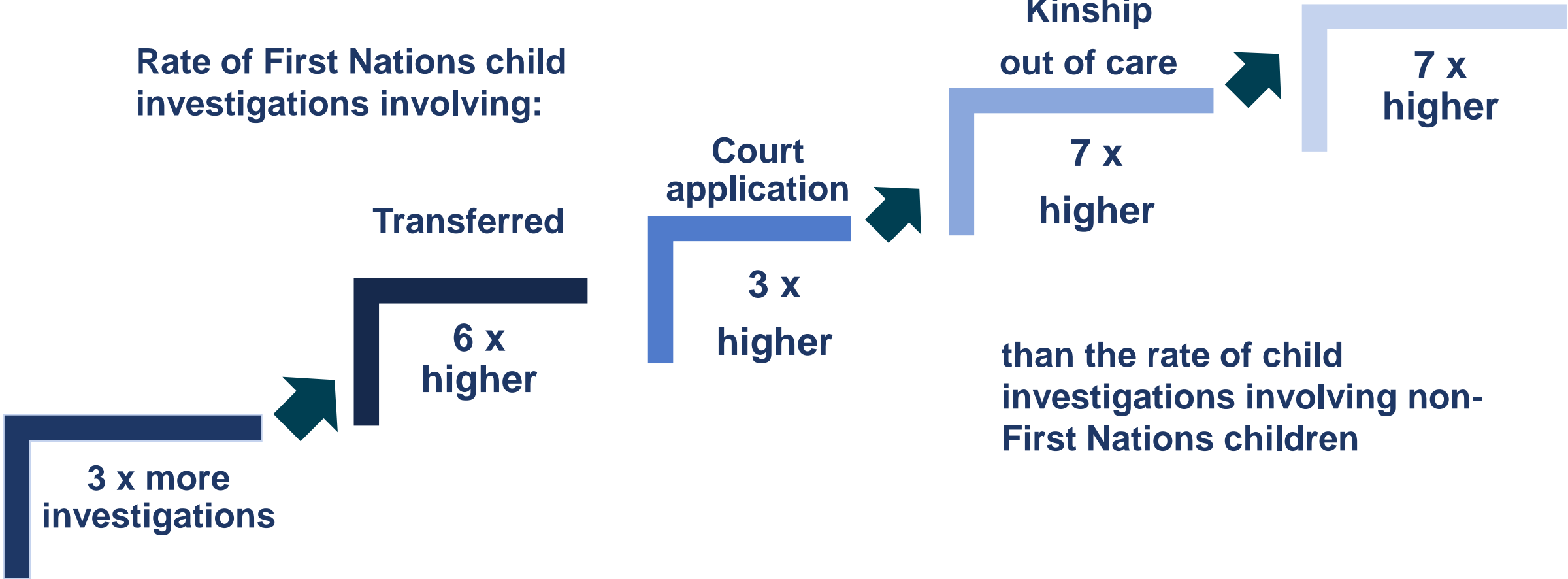
The remaining figures and tables in this information sheet describe the 24 percent of on reserve investigations involving First Nations children in 2019.

Figure 1. Estimated on and off reserve child maltreatment-related investigations involving First Nations children in Canada in 2019.



# Overrepresentation Builds Across the Service

## Dispositions made during the investigation: FN/OIS-2018







SOVEREIGN RIGHTS  
TO CARE, RAISE  
AND PROTECT  
OUR CHILDREN

“So often in child welfare, we codify the wrongdoing at the level of the parent,” says Blackstock, who is also now a professor at McGill’s School of Social Work. “And I will hold parents’ feet to the fire for things they can change. But in so many of these cases, it’s actually things beyond their control. This type of data allows us to push for change at those systemic levels often held within government policies and legislation.”

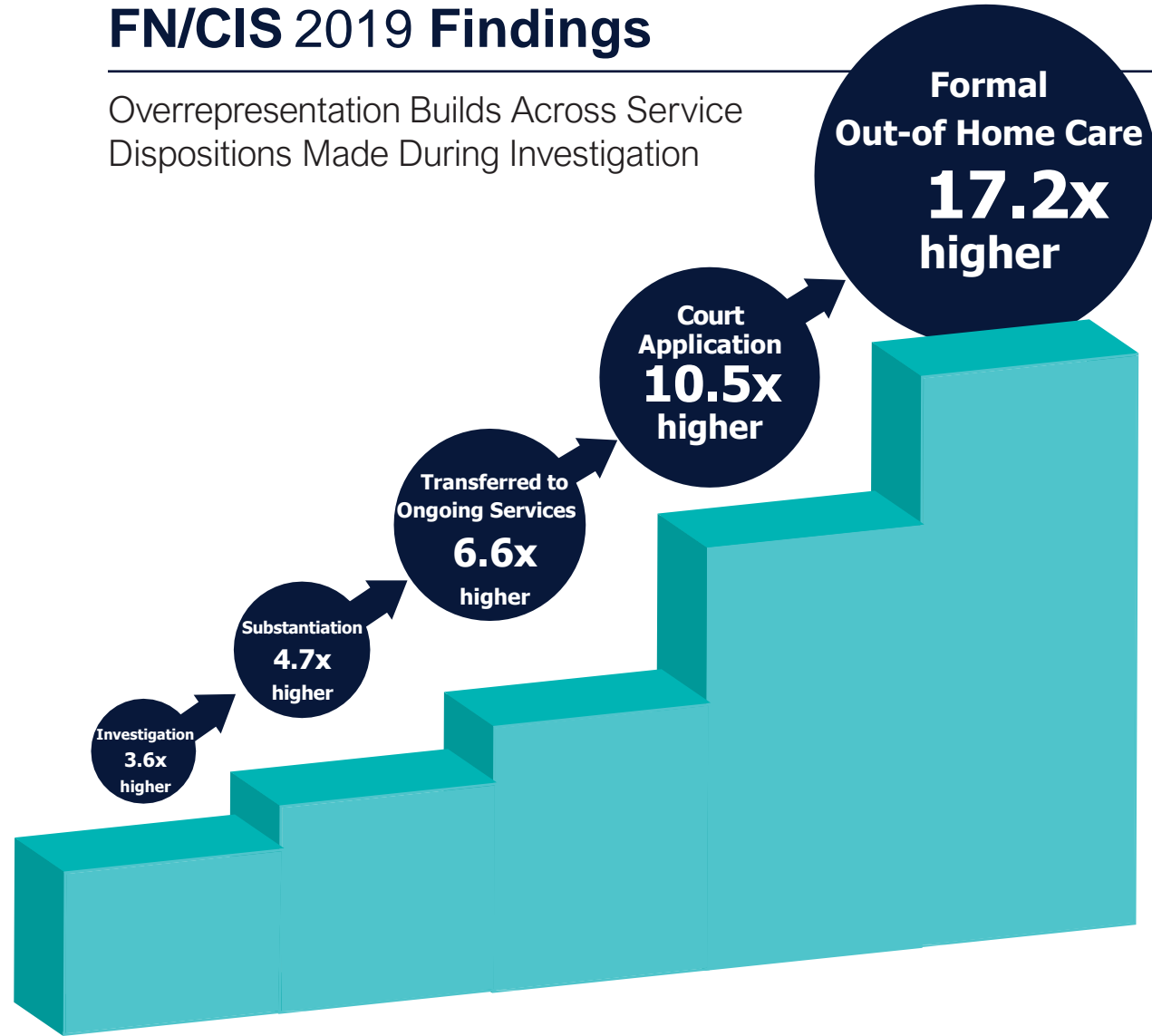
<https://socialwork.utoronto.ca/news/a-bitter-truth-30-years-of-child-welfare-data-collection-reveals-deep-systemic-inequities-racism-and-harm/>



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

# FN/CIS 2019 Findings

Overrepresentation Builds Across Service Dispositions Made During Investigation



# UNDERSTANDING THE OVER-REPRESENTATION OF BLACK CHILDREN IN ONTARIO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

By: Nicole Bonnie, MSW, RSW and Keishia Facey, MA

**Research Team:** Bryn King, Barbara Fallon, Nicolette Joh-Carnella, Travonne Edwards, Miya Kagan-Cassidy, Tara Black, Kinesha William, Vania Patrick-Drakes & Chizara Anucha



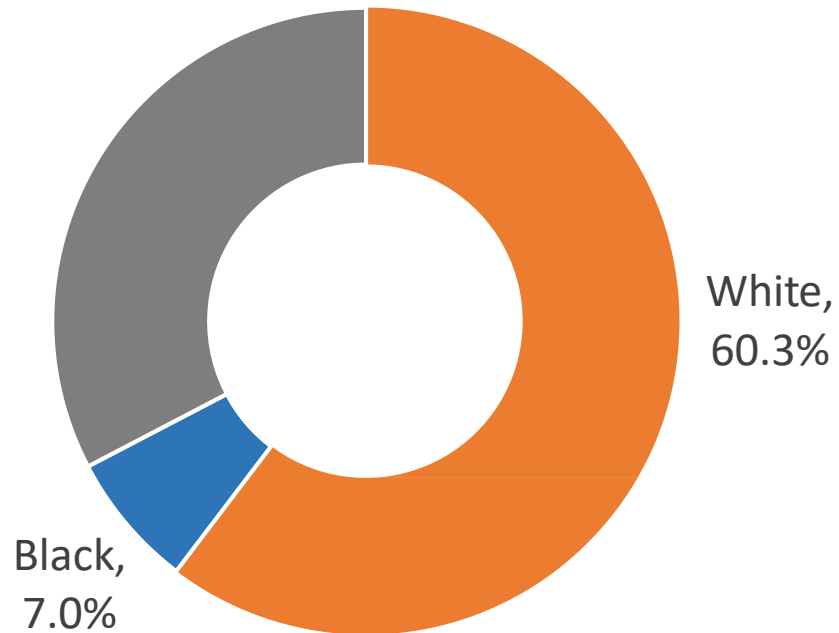
OVOW  
ONE VISION ONE VOICE



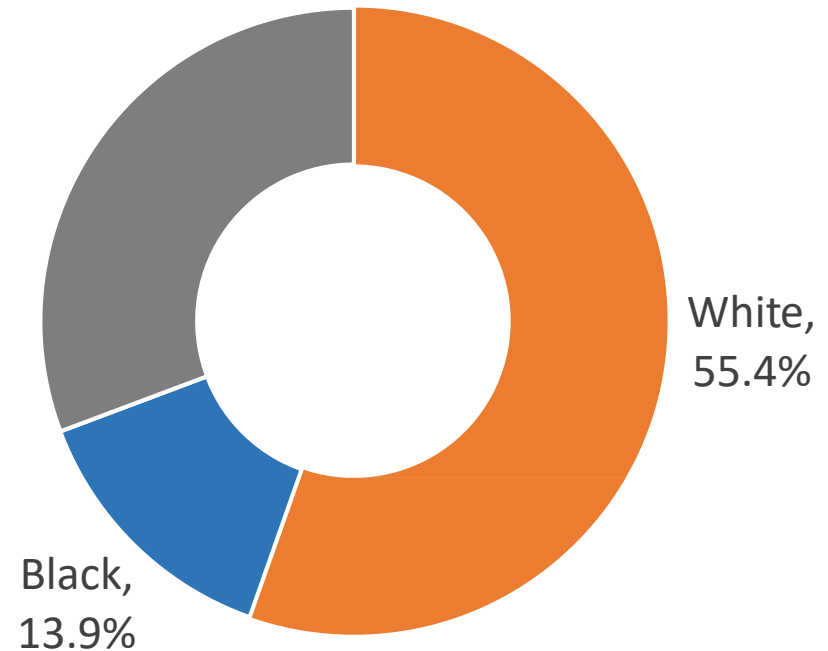
FACTOR-INWENTASH  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

# Disproportional Representation: 2018

Child Population (0-15)

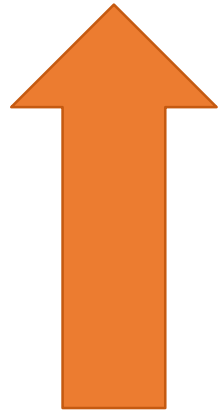


Investigations (0-15)

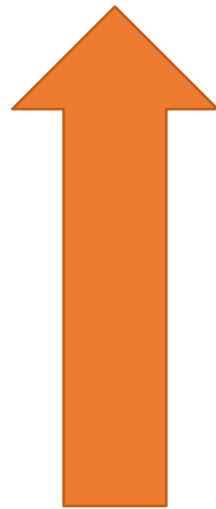


# Disparate Representation: 2018

Compared to white children, Black children in Ontario were:



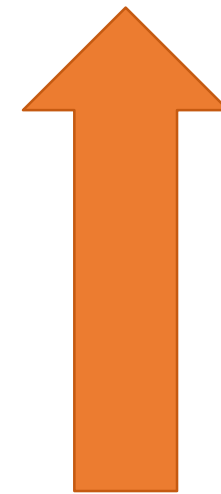
2.2 times more likely to be investigated



2.5 times more likely to be substantiated



1.7 times more likely to be transferred to ongoing services



2.5 times more likely to be placed during the investigation



# The Overrepresentation of Latin American Children in Canada's Child Welfare System

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

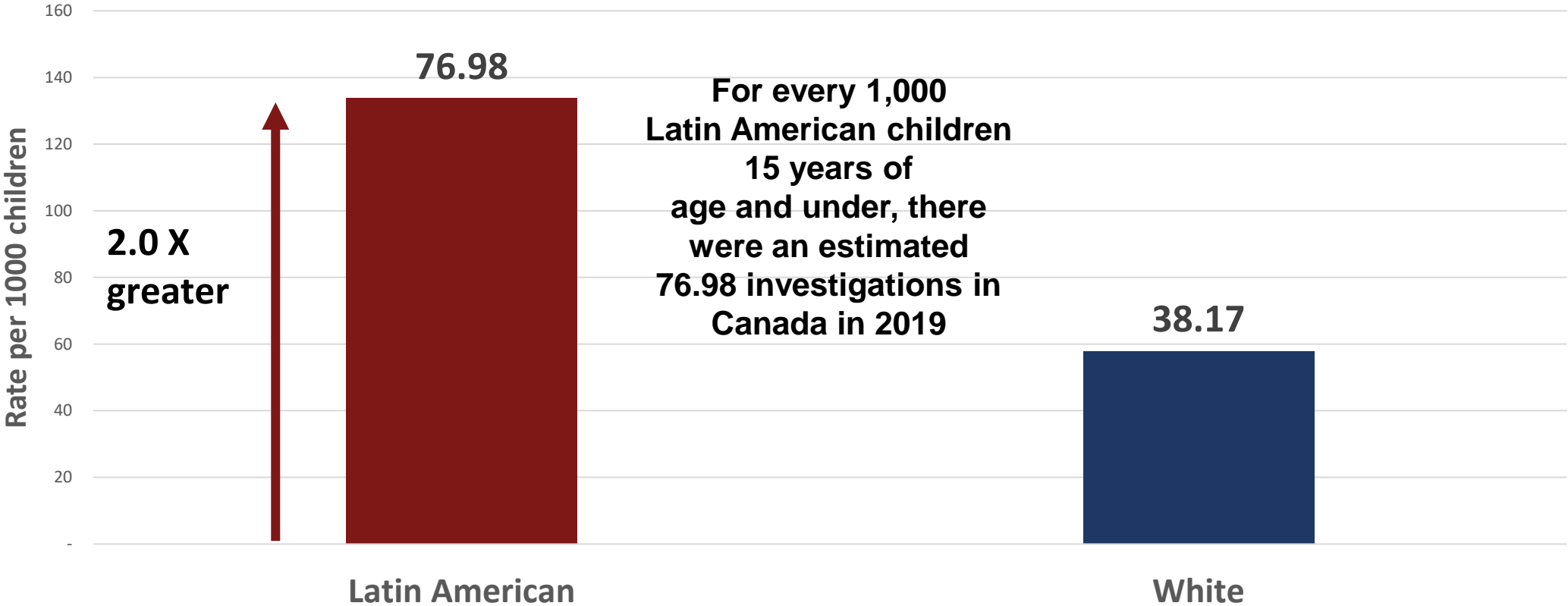


School of Social Work  
Faculty of Community Services

SSHRC CRSH

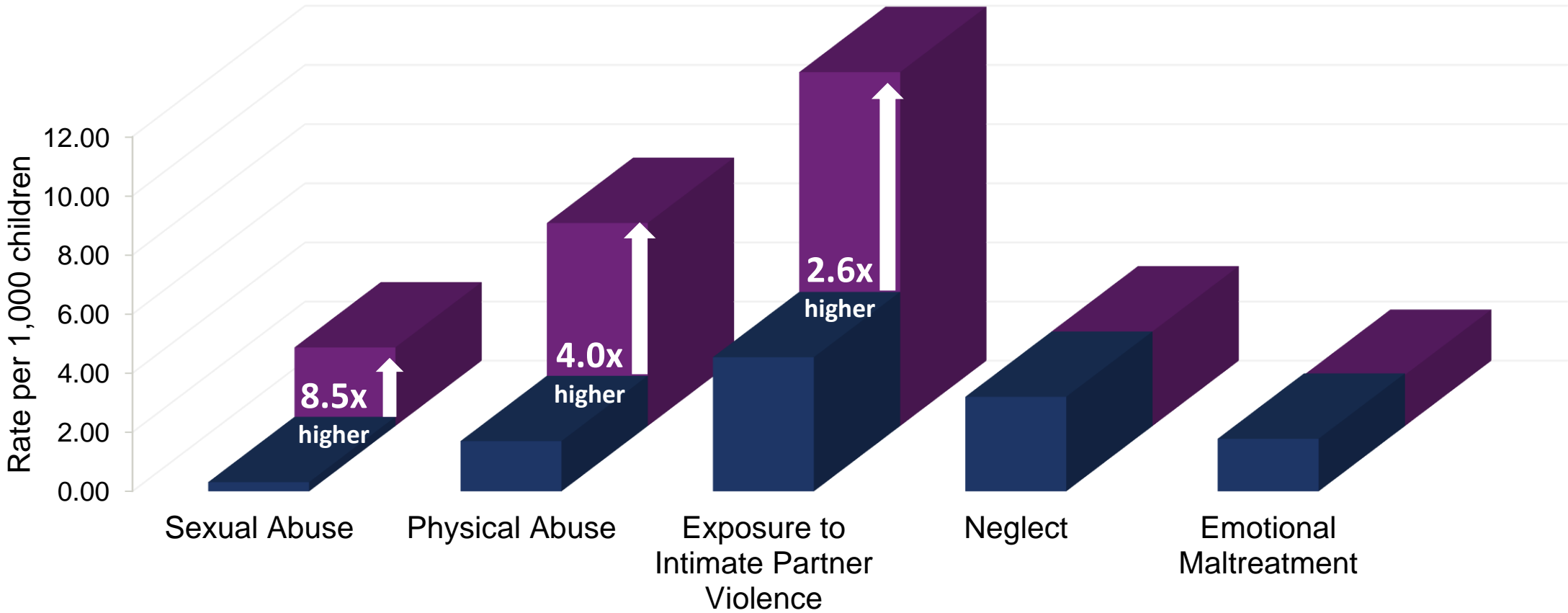
1

# Rate of Latin American and White Child Investigations in Canada in 2019





# Rates of Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations involving Latin American and White Children in Canada in 2019



■ Latin American ■ White

# OIS Contributions: Practice and Policy Implications and Considerations

Informed differential response strategies:

- Numerous child welfare agencies implementing specialized teams at intake, including intimate partner violence teams

Applied the urgent-chronic taxonomy of child welfare investigations to explore six OIS cycles:

- Fallon B, Lefebvre R, Filippelli J, et al. Major findings from the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018. *Child Abuse Neglect*. 2021;111:104778.  
[doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104778](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104778)

Disproportionality and disparity specific analyses

- [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](#)
- [Understanding the Over-Representation of Black children in Ontario Child Welfare Services](#)

# OIS Contributions: Building Capacity

Integral to building and enhancing research capacity in Ontario child welfare organizations and academia

- Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario
- Martin Foundation Initiative – Early Years Program
- Canadian Foundation for Innovation
- Indigenous Services Canada
- Current partnerships: Durham Children’s Aid Society, Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services
- Past partnerships: Family & Children's Services of the Waterloo Region, Peel Children's Aid Society, Children's Aid Society of Algoma, Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, Highland Shores Children’s Aid Society, Catholic Children’s Aid Society of Toronto

# OIS 2023: Sampling and Recruitment

- 18 Mainstream agencies and 5 Indigenous Child and Well-being Agencies were sampled for inclusion in the OIS-2023 and will be contacted shortly
- Investigations opened between October 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, will be sampled up to a maximum of 85 investigations per month for large agencies
- OIS-2023 Site Researchers will complete data collection instruments with investigating workers over the phone at the conclusion of the investigation
  - Collects a range of clinical information routinely collected during the investigation (e.g., caregiver, child, case characteristics and investigation outcomes)

# Discussion