



# Living in a world of neglect: S.A.I.N. helps families move on<sup>1</sup>

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For over 10 years, the members of the group for research and action on neglect (known by its French acronym, GRIN), headed by Carl Lacharité and Louise Éthier of the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, have been studying the complex issue of child neglect. They have come to refer to neglect as a “world,” a sort of neighbourhood, in which isolated, vulnerable families—the poorest of the poor—struggle to survive.

The researchers at GRIN and their partners from the Quebec youth protection centres have developed an innovative model for working against neglect—a truly ecological model that encourages families to start moving beyond the world of neglect.<sup>2</sup>

S.A.I.N. stands for “Service d’aide intégré en négligence” (or “integrated assistance for dealing with neglect”). The S.A.I.N. model proposes a move. A move for parents and children who need to turn their lives around. A move for caseworkers, who are urged to review their perceptions and received ideas about those who live in the world of neglect.

## Scope of child neglect

In Canada, recent studies have shown that 40–60% of investigated reports of child maltreatment involve neglect. In 33% of cases of neglect, other forms of maltreatment (physical, sexual, or psychological abuse) are also seen.<sup>3</sup>

## In the S.A.I.N. model:

- Neglect is a disruption in the:
  - *parent-child relationship*, in which the parent is emotionally unavailable or no longer available to meet the child’s needs responsibly;
  - *family-community relationship*, in which the child has very few or no alternative ways of having needs met.

- Parents and children are not looked upon as passive victims, but rather as active people trying to understand the meaning in their histories and their actions and find solutions. They have to make choices within a context bound by many constraints.
- The parents’ social integration and involvement in the community, the development of self-help networks, and the improvement of the resources available to these families to help them take care of their children are absolutely essential.

- 1 This information sheet has been reviewed by child welfare experts.
- 2 S.A.I.N. project designers and members: Carl Lacharité, Louise Éthier, Claire Chamberland, Elsa Marziali, Nico Trocmé, and caseworkers and partners at the youth centres of Mauricie, Centre du Québec and Montreal, and Batshaw Youth and Family Centres.
- 3 Trocmé, N., MacLaurin, B., Fallon, B., Daciuk, J., Billingsley, D., Tourigny, M., et al. (2001). *Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect: Final report*. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

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