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Re-involving the community:

The need for a differential
response to rising child welfare
caseloads in Canada

*Community Collaboration &
Differential Response*

4th National Child Welfare Symposium,
Banff Alberta , March 20-21, 2003

Nico Trocmé & Claire Chamberland

Outline

1. Epidemiology of child protection:

- Caseload increases
- Maltreatment specific changes
- Injury & homicides

2. Re-focusing on well-being: a clinical-developmental perspective

- Effects of child maltreatment
- Ecological framework

3. Conclusion:

- Differential response &
- Community collaboration

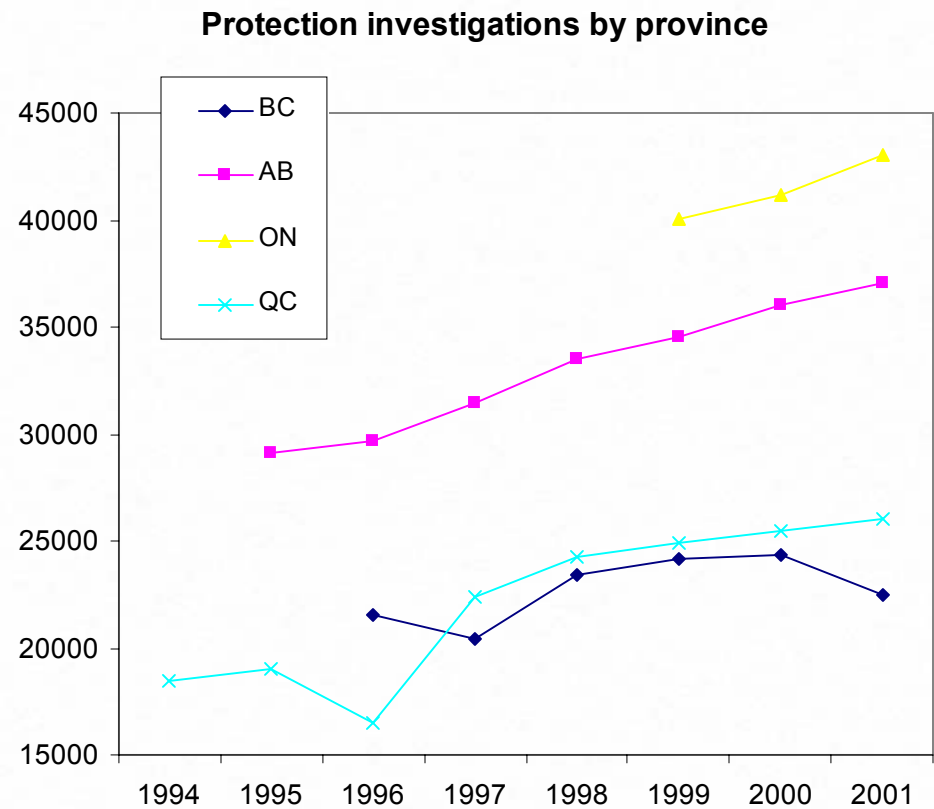


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Increasing caseloads across Canada

- Child protection investigations on the rise



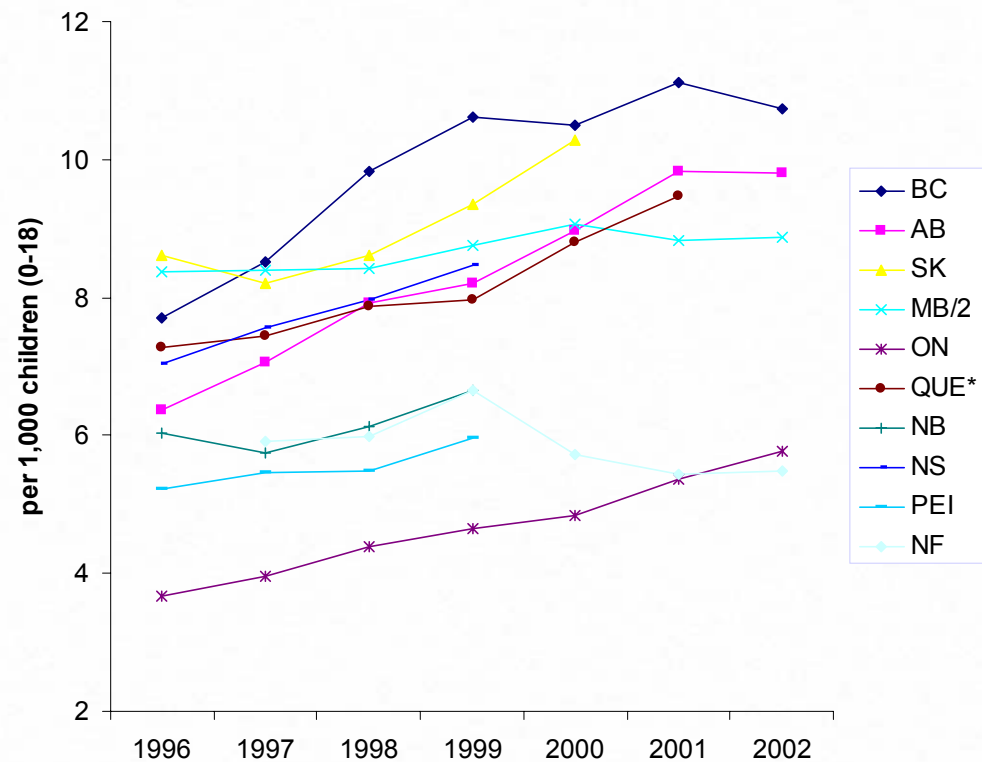
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Increasing caseloads across Canada

- Child protection investigations on the rise
- More children in care

Children in Care by Province



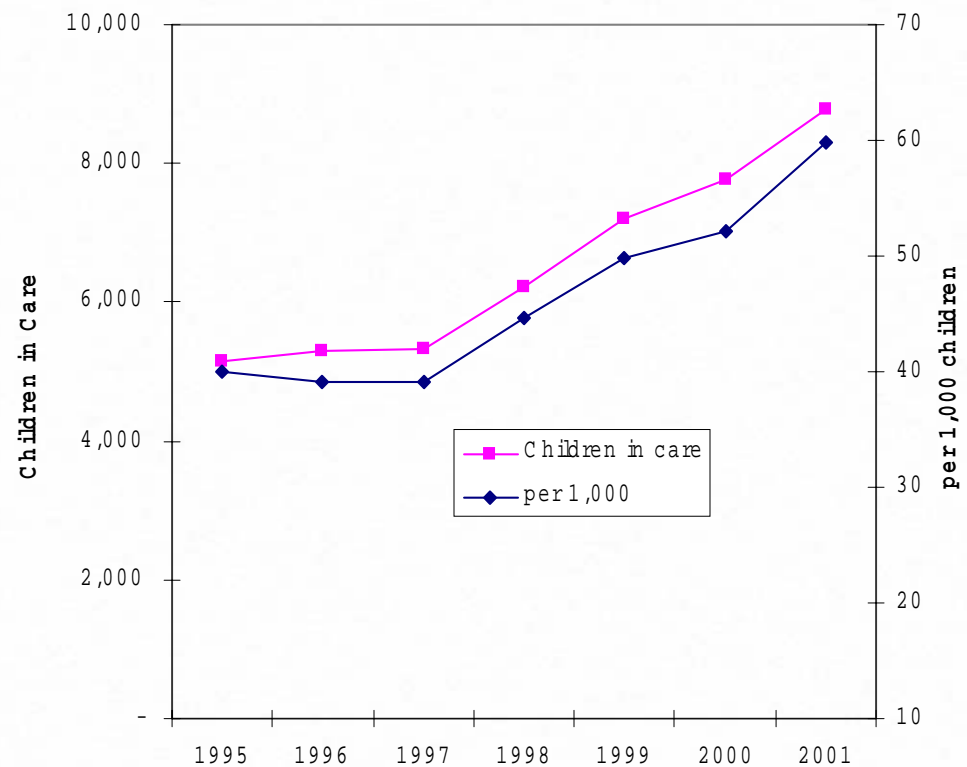
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Increasing caseloads across Canada

- Child protection investigations on the rise
- More children in care
- More First Nations children in care

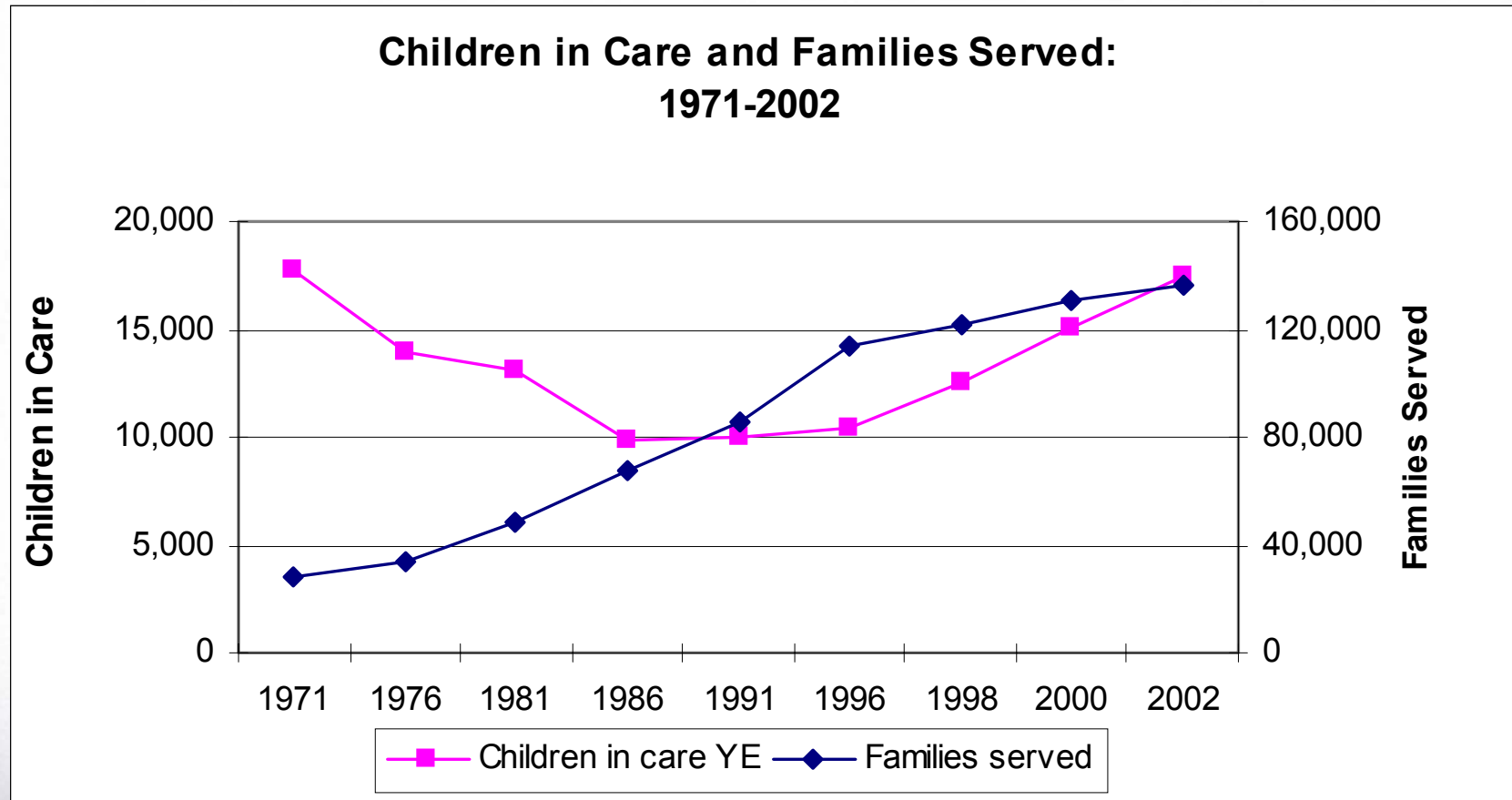
On-reserve children in care



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A 30 year perspective: Ontario 1970-2002

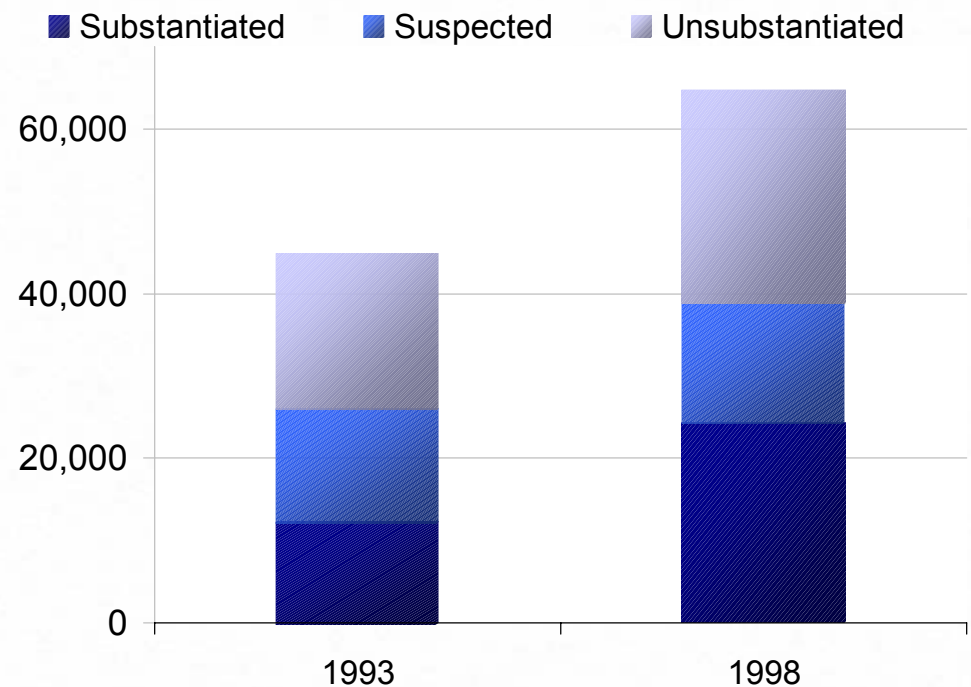


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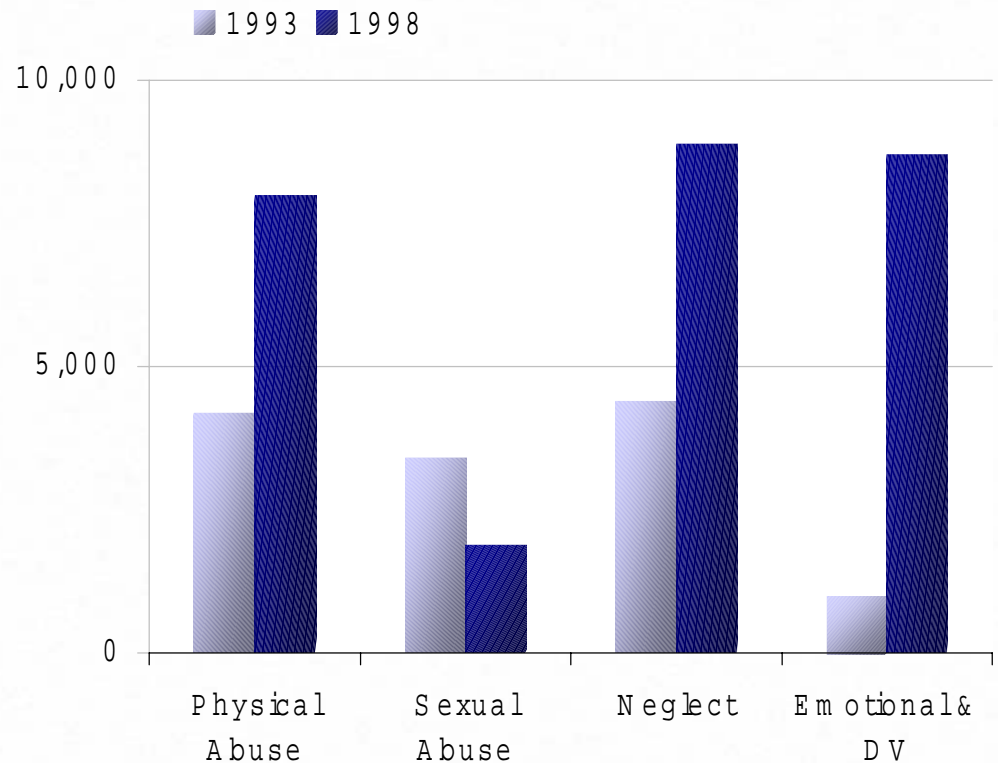
Differential trends by form of maltreatment: OIS 93-98

- 44% increase in investigations: 44,900 to 64,800
- 98% increase in substantiated investigations: 12,300 to 24,400



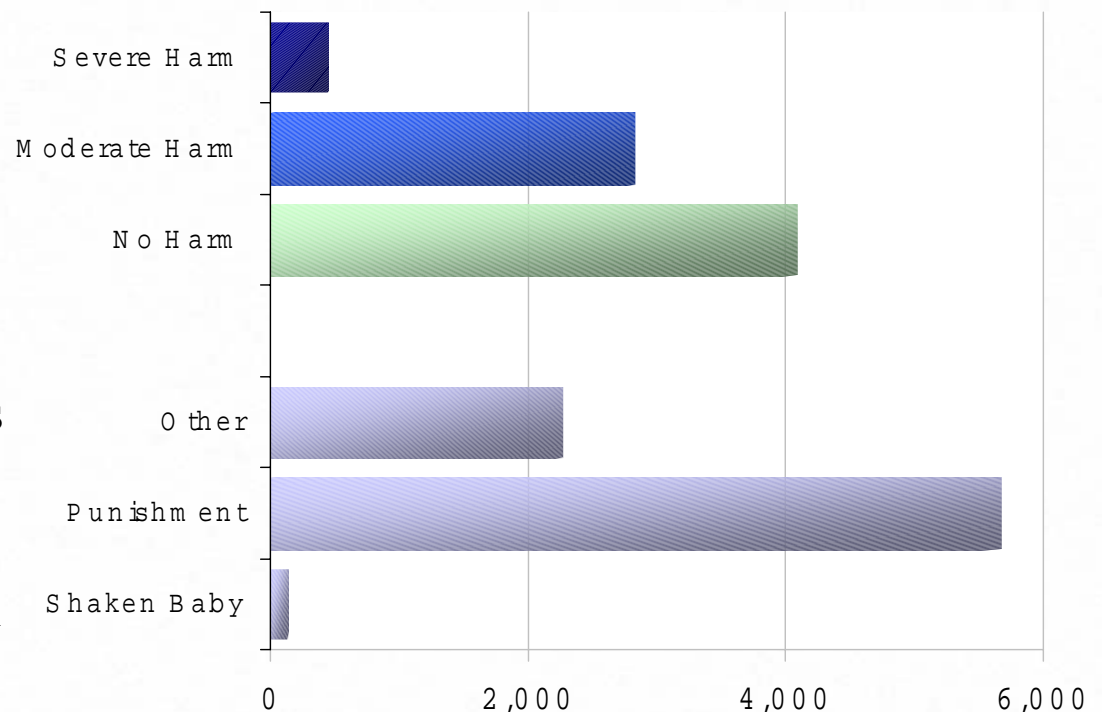
Differential trends by form of maltreatment: OIS 93-98

- 90% increase in substantiated physical abuse: 4,200 to 8,000
- 44% decrease in substantiated sexual abuse: 3,400 to 1,900
- 102% increase in substantiated neglect: 4,400 to 8,900
- 770% increase in substantiated emotional maltreatment/exposure to DV, 1,000 to 8,700.



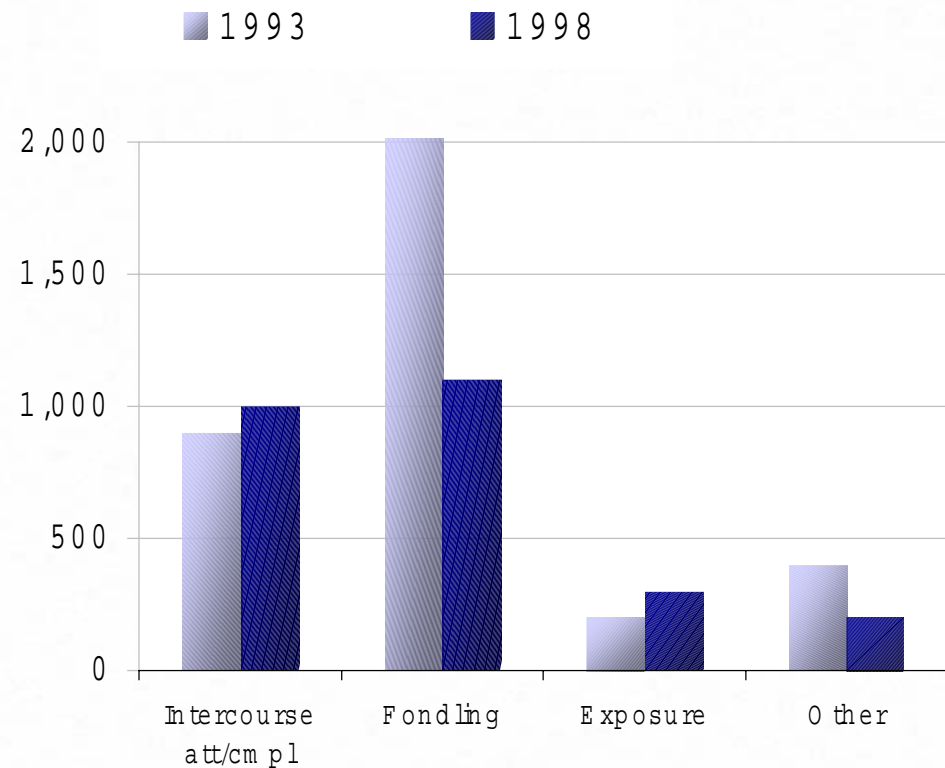
Type and severity of substantiated physical abuse: OIS 98

- 71% of substantiated investigations of physical abuse classified as inappropriate punishment
- no physical harm noted in 55% of substantiated cases
- severe harm requiring medical treatment noted in 6% of cases



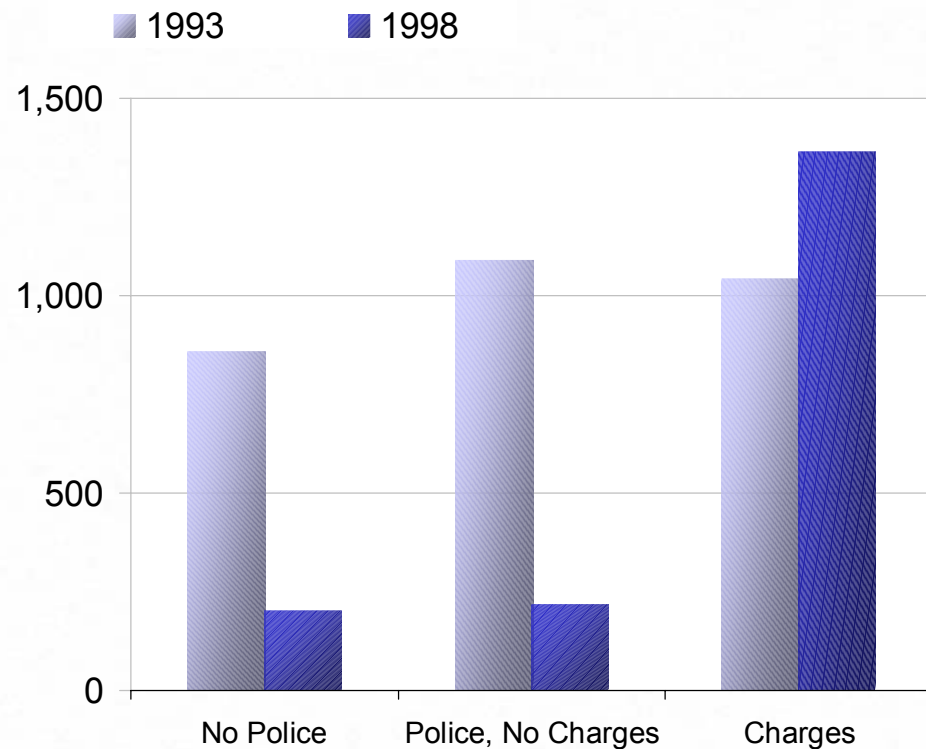
Sexual abuse: Decreasing incidence or decreasing reporting?(OIS 93-98)

- 48% decrease in substantiated fondling, from 2,100 victims in 1993 to 1,100 in 1998 .
- Attempted or completed intercourse remained steady around 1,000 victims per year.



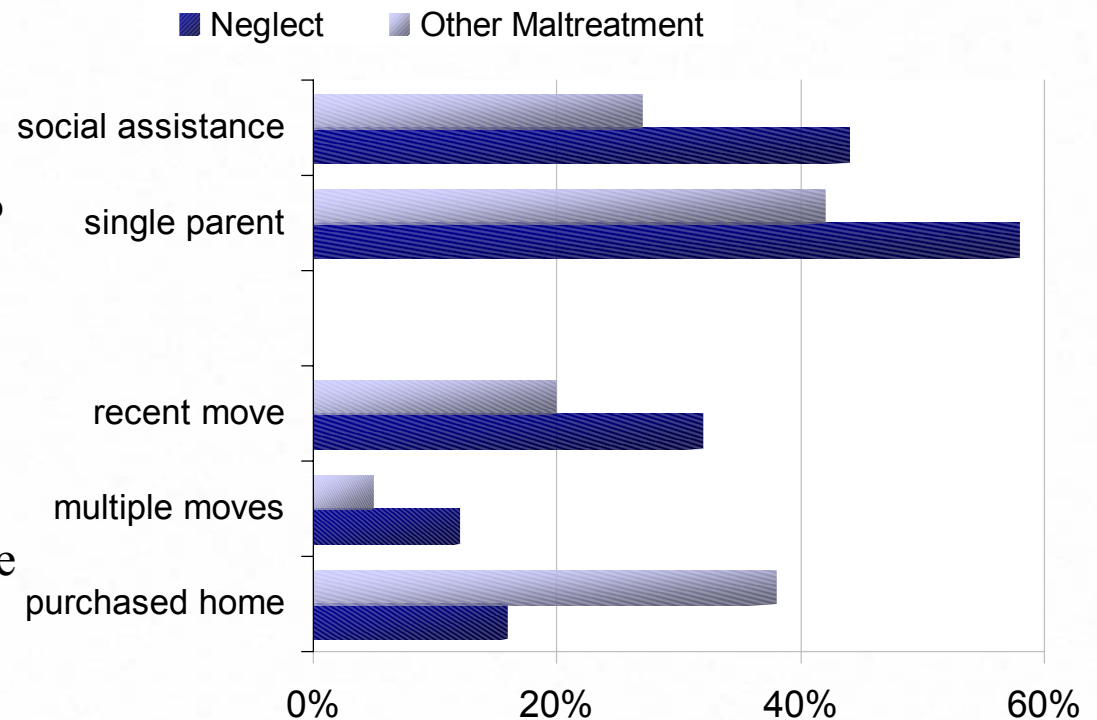
Sexual abuse: Decreasing incidence or decreasing reporting?(OIS 93-98)

- In 1993 charges were laid in 35% of substantiated sexual abuse cases,
- by 1998, charges were being laid in 76% of substantiated sexual cases.



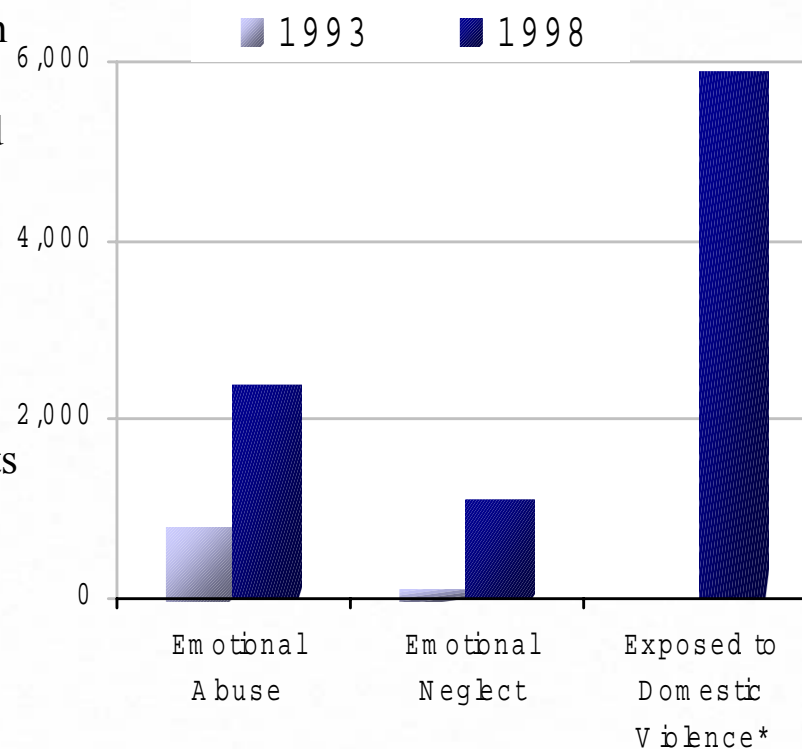
Neglect and poverty: OIS 98

- 44% of neglect cases were dependent on social assistance, compared to 27% for other forms of maltreatment .
- Other cases of maltreatment were more likely to live in purchased homes (38% vs. 16%) , and less likely to have moved within the previous six months (20% vs. 32%).



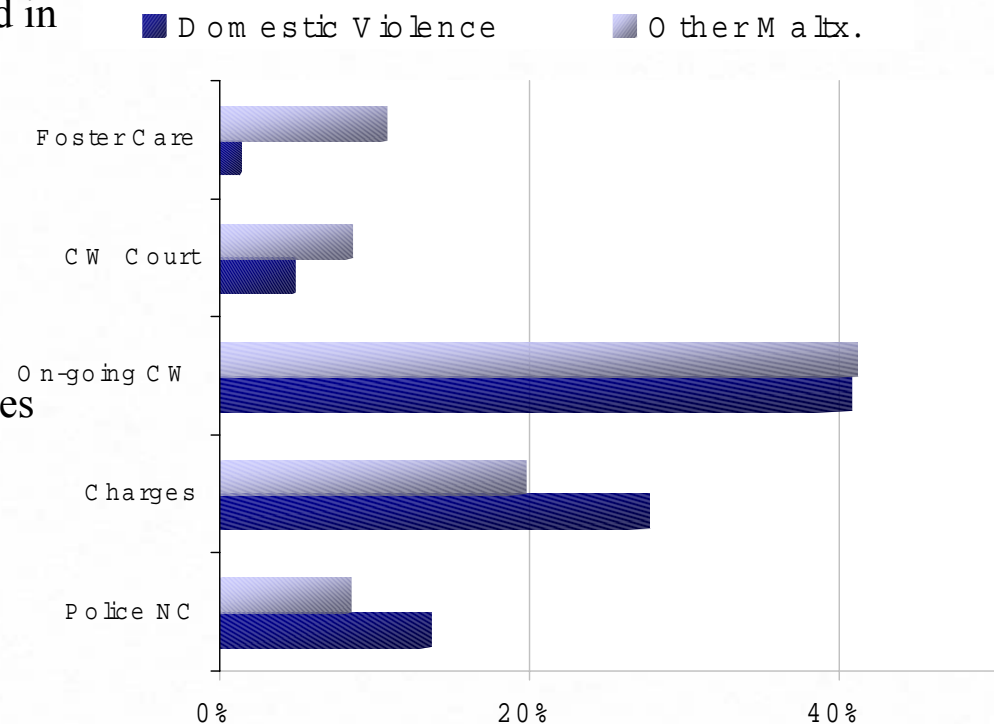
Exposure to domestic violence: OIS 93-98

- Exposure to domestic violence noted in nearly 6,000 substantiated investigations, 24% of all substantiated cases.
- Domestic violence noted in 35% of cases of substantiated maltreatment, involving nearly 8,000 maltreated children.
- Exposure to domestic violence accounts for half of the increase in substantiated cases between 1993-1998
- Over 80% of referrals are from professionals



Responding to exposure to domestic violence: OIS 98

- Police investigations were conducted in 42% of cases, charges laid in 28%.
- On-going child welfare services provided in 41% of cases.
- CW court initiated in 5% of cases compared to 9% for other forms of maltreatment
- Children placed in care in 1% of cases compared to 11% for other forms of maltreatment.



Endangered safety (CIS 98)

- Severe physical harm: 4% of substantiated cases

**Severe
Injury 4%**

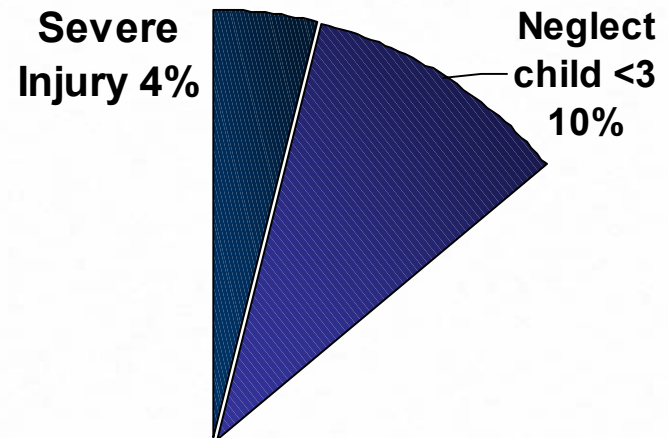


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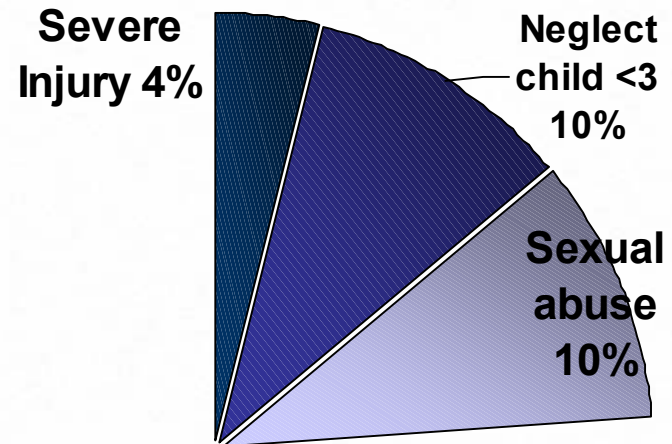
Endangered safety (CIS 98)

- Severe physical harm: 4% of substantiated cases
- Neglect of child under 3: 10% of substantiated cases



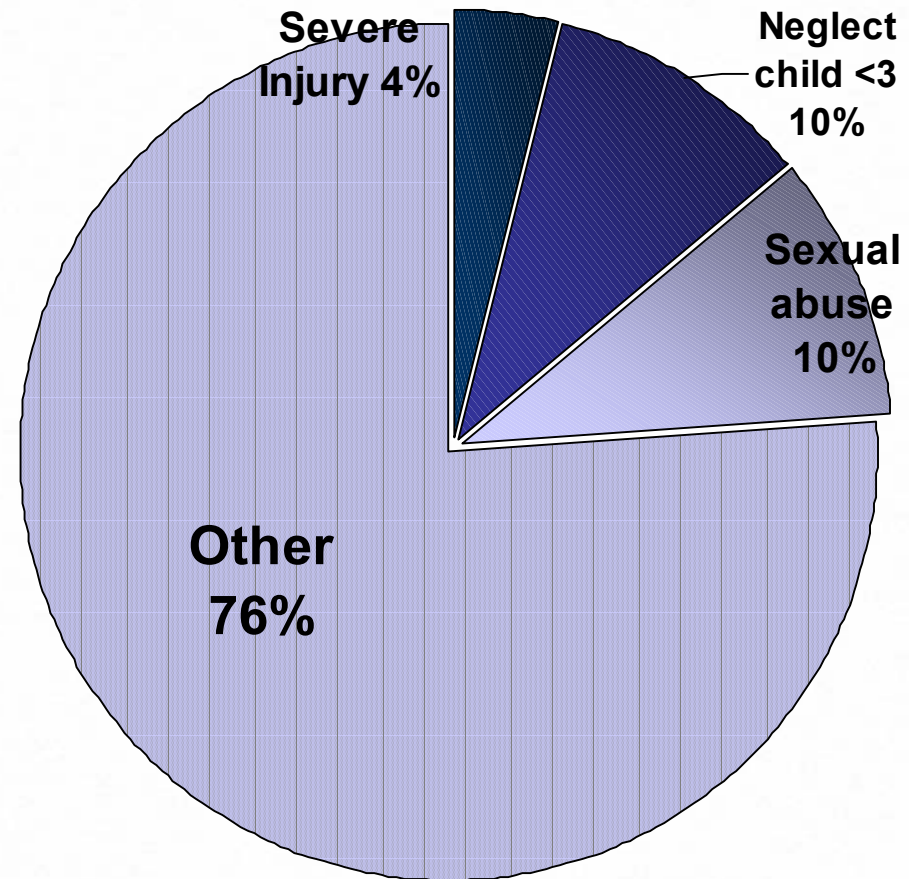
Endangered safety (CIS 98)

- Severe physical harm: 4% of substantiated cases
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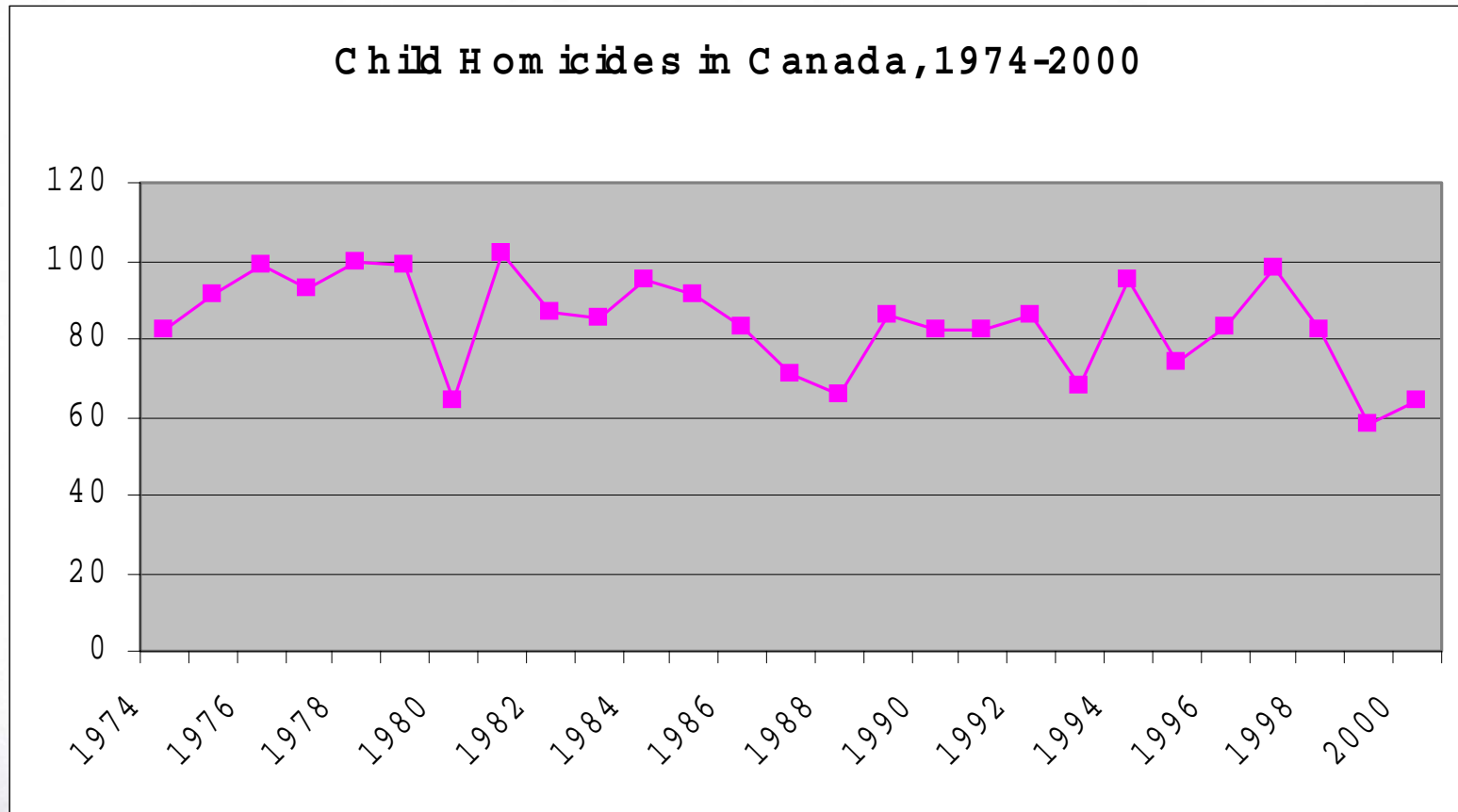


Endangered safety (CIS 98)

- Severe physical harm: 4% of substantiated cases
- Neglect of child under 3: 10% of substantiated cases
- Sexual abuse: 10% of substantiated cases
- Other maltreatment : 76% of substantiated cases



Child homicides



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The other 75%...

- At risk of harm?

or

- Endangered development & well-being



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Safety & well-being paramount principles in child welfare legislation across Canada

- **British Columbia:** *the safety and well-being of children are the paramount considerations...*
- **Alberta:** *survival, security or development of the child is endangered*
- **Newfoundland:** *every child is entitled to be assured of personal safety, health and well-being..*
- **NWT:** *the paramount objective of this act is to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children.*
- **New Brunswick:** *protective care” means a service which provides an immediate safeguard for a child’s security and development/*
- **Saskatchewan:** *The purpose of this act is to promote the well-being of children in need of protection...*
- **Quebec:** *loi s'applique à un enfant dont la sécurité ou le développement est ou peut être considéré comme compromis.*
- **Ontario:** *The paramount purpose of this Act is to promote the best interests, protection and well being of children*
- **Manitoba:** *The best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration...*
- **PEI:** *...the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.*



The need to focus equally on endangered development

- Urgent protection has become the central focus of child welfare services
- Endangered development (développement compromis) is the major reason for intervention for 75% of victims of maltreatment
- Treating the sequelae of maltreatment is not sufficiently emphasized
- Re-focus on preventing recurrence of maltreatment (threats to development) and breaking the cycle of maltreatment



The severity of endangered development

Children

Language delays
Aggressiveness
Attention disorders
Anxiety/depression
Educational delays
Early drop-out
Limited involvement in sports
Tobacco & alcohol consumption for some
Social isolation & marginalisation
Multiple moves and school changes

Parents & families

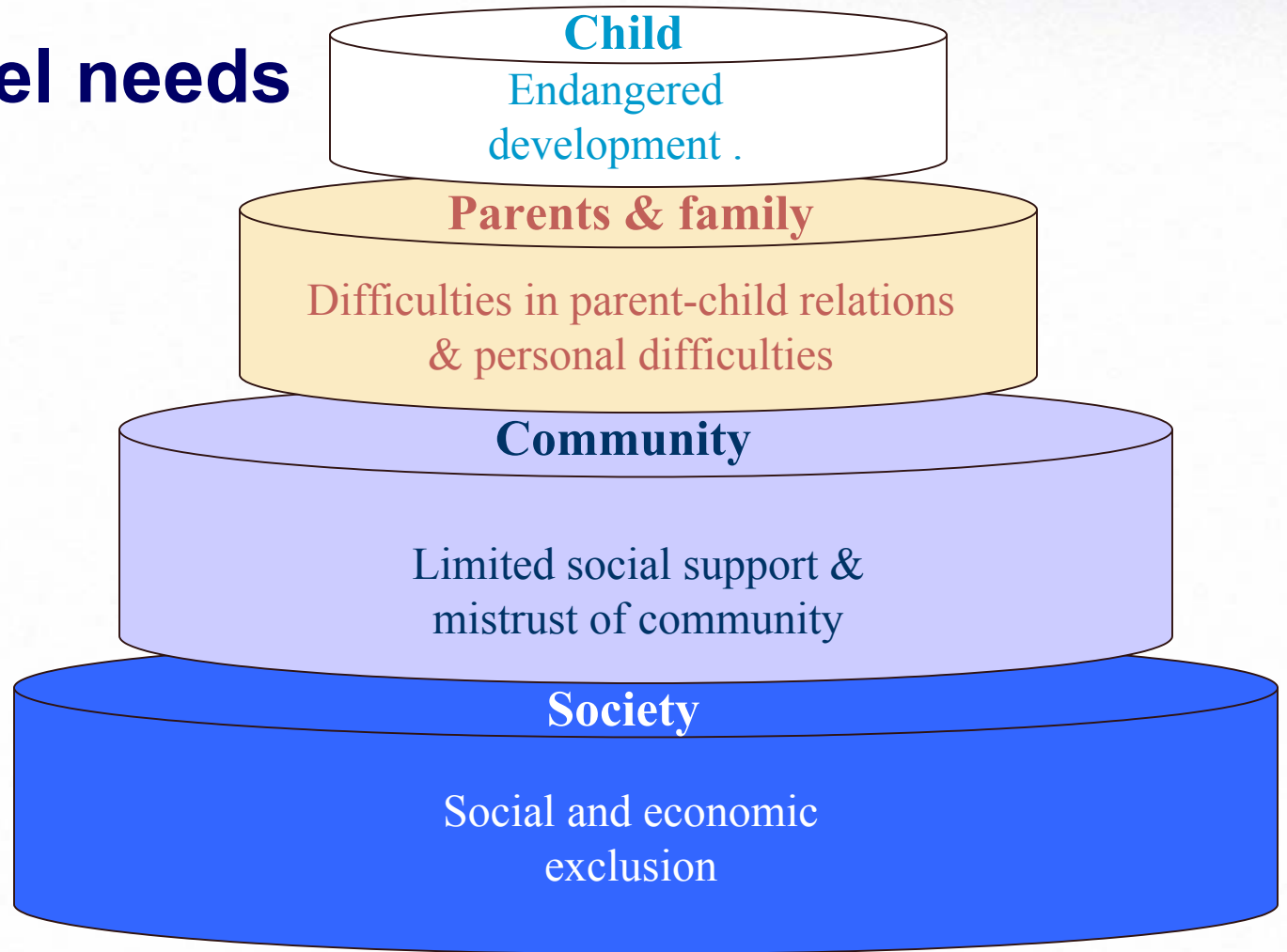
Extreme poverty
Single parents
Mental health problems
Substance abuse
Spousal violence
Social isolation & mistrust
Feeling of parental incompetence
Limited support for school activities
Limited community involvement
Poor self-esteem



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Multi-level needs



Interventions at all levels

Target of intervention

Examples

Specialized clinical services

Attachment clinics
Groups for sexual abuse victims
Support groups for children in care
Substance abuse programs
Shelters for abused women
Specialized clinics...

Parent-child programs

Infant & child stimulation programs
Sport, arts & craft programs
Parenting groups
Respite care services
Educational outings
Conflict resolution programs
Parent-school support programs

Improved living conditions

Access to quality affordable housing
Employment programs
Transportation services
Collective kitchens
Volunteer services



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Differential response & community collaboration

- Child maltreatment is not a uni-dimensional phenomenon ranging from mild neglect to severe battery or death.
- Each form of maltreatment and level of severity requires a differential response ranging from criminal charges to community based parent training, from court-ordered child welfare services to the helping hands of neighbours, from foster care to public education campaigns.
- No single program, no single service sector and no single level of government can fully address the needs of maltreated children.



Copies of OIS 98 and OIS 93-98



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