



Fact Sheet: Child Welfare in Ontario

The *Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2003*, conducted by the Centre for Excellence in Child Welfare, examines the landscape of child maltreatment in Ontario. Below are some significant findings from this landmark study.

Categories of Child Maltreatment:

- Nearly a third of all investigations of maltreatment (32%) involved exposure to domestic violence
- Neglect was the second most common form of substantiated maltreatment at 27%
- Physical abuse followed closely at 24%
- Emotional abuse was the primary category of abuse in 15% of cases
- Sexual abuse represented 3% of substantiated investigations

Child Characteristics:

- Girls represented 47% of victims
- Girls were a larger proportion of victims in cases of sexual abuse (65%) and emotional maltreatment (57%)
- Boys were more often the victims in cases of physical abuse (60%) and neglect (55%)
- Older children were more often identified as victims of physical abuse and sexual abuse (69% of physical abuse victims and 64% of sexual abuse victims were between the ages of 8 and 15)
- Younger children were more often identified in cases of exposure to domestic violence (59% were 7 or under)

Household Characteristics:

- 32% of abuse situations involved children who lived with their two biological parents
- 46% of abuse situations involved children who lived in a family led by a lone parent
- 19% of households depended on social assistance or other benefits as their major source of income

Service and Intervention:

- 57% of substantiated investigations had at least one previous case opening (contact with CAS)
- 18% had more than three previous case openings

Placement Out of Home:

- 6% of all abuse investigations led to a child being placed in formal child welfare care (out of the family home); An additional 4% were placed in other family foster care or kinship foster care or other care facility
- In total 10% of children experienced a change of residence during or at the conclusion of the initial investigation.