

Glossary

General definitions

Community services department

Refers to those departments in each State and Territory which are responsible for child protection matters. See the Acknowledgments for a list of the relevant departments.

Definitions for child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations

Age of child

Age is calculated from the date of birth at the time a report is made, and is shown in completed years, or in completed months where the age is less than 1 year.

Child protection notification

Child protection notifications consist of reports made to an authorised department by persons or other bodies making allegations of child abuse or neglect, child maltreatment or harm to a child. Notifications should not include reports regarding wider concerns about children or families which are classified as child concern reports.

A notification can only involve one child; where it is claimed that two children have been abused or neglected, this is counted as two notifications, even if the children are from one family. Where there is more than one notification about the same 'event', this should be counted as only one notification. Where there is more than one notification between 1 July 1999 and 30 June 2000, but relating to different events (for instance, a different type of abuse or neglect or a different person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect) these notifications should be counted as separate notifications.

Investigation

An investigation is the process whereby the community services department obtains more detailed information about a child who is the subject of a notification and makes an assessment about the harm or degree of harm to the child and their protective needs. An investigation includes the interviewing or sighting of the subject child where it is practicable to do so.

Investigations to be counted in this collection relate to those child protection notifications of children aged 0–17 years that were made to an authorised department between 1 July 1999 and 30 June 2000, and which were subsequently investigated.

Substantiation

A substantiation in the national data collection is a child protection notification made to relevant authorities during the year ended 30 June 2000, which was investigated and the investigation was finalised by 31 August 2000, and it was concluded that there was

reasonable cause to believe that the child had been, was being or was likely to be abused or neglected or otherwise harmed.

Person believed responsible

Where there is more than one person believed responsible for the abuse and neglect, the person believed responsible is categorised as the person believed to have inflicted the most severe abuse or neglect, or most likely to have harmed the child or put the child at risk. Where it is not possible to identify the person believed responsible in this way, the person is categorised as the person who inflicted the most obvious form of abuse or neglect.

Relationship to child of the person believed responsible

Intra-familial

Natural parent

Any male or female who is the biological or adoptive parent of the child.

Step-parent

Any person who is not the biological or adoptive parent of the child, but was legally married to one of the child's biological parents.

De facto step-parent

Any male or female who is not the biological or adoptive parent of the child and who is the de facto marital partner of the child's parent.

Sibling

A natural, adopted, foster, step- or half-brother or sister.

Other relative/kin

This category includes grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins whether the relationship is a full, half or step relationship. It also includes members of Aboriginal communities who are accepted by that community as being related to the child but who are not the child's biological parents.

Extra-familial

Foster parent

A foster parent is defined as any person (or person's spouse) being paid a foster allowance by a government or non-government organisation for the care of a child (excluding children in family group homes).

Friend/neighbour

An unrelated person or acquaintance who is known to the family, or who lives in close proximity to the subject child or his or her family.

Other

Any person whose relationship to the child is known but not classified above.

Not stated

This category includes all notifications substantiated where the relationship to the child of the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect to the child was not specified.

Source of notification

The source of a notification is that person who, or organisation which, initially makes a child protection notification to a relevant authority. The source is classified according to the relationship to the child allegedly abused or neglected.

Parent/guardian

A natural or substitute parent, spouse of a natural parent, adoptive parent or spouse of an adoptive parent or any other person who has an ongoing legal responsibility for the care and protection of a child.

Sibling

A natural (i.e. biological), adopted, foster, step-brother or -sister, or half-brother or -sister.

Other relative

This category includes grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. The relationship can be full, half or step or through adoption and can be traced through, or to, a person whose parents were not married to each other at the time of his or her birth. This category also includes members of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities who are accepted by that community as being related to the child.

Friend/neighbour

An unrelated person or acquaintance who is known to, or lives in close proximity to, the subject child or his or her family, or to the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect.

Medical practitioner

This category includes only registered medical practitioners. It includes both general practitioners and specialists in hospitals or in the community.

Other health personnel

Any person engaged in supplementary, paramedical and/or ancillary medical services. This includes nurses, infant welfare sisters, dentists, radiographers, physiotherapists and pharmacists. It does not include social workers and non-medical hospital/health centre personnel.

Hospital/health centre personnel

Any person not elsewhere classified who is employed at a public or private hospital or other health centre or clinic.

Social/welfare worker

Any person engaged in providing a social or welfare work service in the community.

School personnel

Any appropriately trained person involved in the instruction or imparting of knowledge to children or providing direct support for this education. This includes teachers, teachers' aides, school principals and counsellors who work in preschool, kindergarten, primary, secondary, technical, sporting or art and crafts education.

Childcare personnel

Any person engaged in providing occasional, part-time or full-time day care for children.

Police

Any member of a Commonwealth, State or Territory law enforcement agency.

Departmental officer

Any person, not classified above, who is employed by a State or Territory community services department.

Non-government organisation

Any non-government organisation not classified above which provides services to the community on a non-profit-making basis.

Anonymous

This category covers notifications received from people who do not give their names.

Other

All other persons or organisations not classified above (e.g. ministers of religion, or government agencies and instrumentalities not classified above).

Not stated

This category includes all notifications that are received from unknown sources.

Family of residence

This can refer to the family type in which the child was residing at the time the abuse and neglect occurred or at the time of notification, depending on the State or Territory practices.

Two-parent—natural

This category includes all two-parent families where both parents are the biological parents or both parents are adoptive.

Two-parent—step or blended

This category includes blended and reconstituted families (one biological parent and one step-parent, or one natural parent and a de facto of that parent).

Single parent—female

This category includes all families with single female parents. The parent may be the biological, step- or adoptive parent.

Single parent—male

This category includes all families with single male parents. The parent may be the biological, step- or adoptive parent.

Other relatives/kin

This includes Indigenous kinship arrangements.

Foster care

This category includes situations in which a child is placed with foster parent(s) who receive a foster allowance from a government or non-government organisation for the care of the child. This category excludes children in family group homes.

Other

This category includes extended families and substitute care (not included above). It includes non-family situations, such as hostels and institutional accommodation. It excludes children living in foster care.

Not stated

This category is used when the family in which a child lives is not recorded or is unknown.

Definitions for care and protection orders

Child subject to orders

Any child for whom the community services department has a responsibility as a result of some formal legal order or an administrative/voluntary arrangement. Only orders issued for protective reasons are included.

A legal or administrative order is any lawful direction which involves the community services department with a child over and above what is generally considered normal for most children, or which has an assumption that the department will have carriage of the

order (or a substantial part of it). The involvement might take the form of total responsibility for the welfare of the child (e.g. guardianship); responsibility for overseeing the actions of the person or authority caring for the child; responsibility for providing or arranging accommodation or reporting or giving consideration to the child's welfare. Depending on the State or Territory regulation under which the order is issued, the order can be from a Court, Children's Panel, Minister of the Crown, authorised community services department officer (e.g. director) or similar tribunal or officer.

Age of child

The age of the child in completed years at 30 June 2000.

Living arrangements

This category covers the type of living arrangements in which the child spent the night of 30 June 2000. The categories are:

Family care

Where the child is living either with parents, or with relatives/kin who are not reimbursed including:

- (i) living with parents (natural or adoptive) who are reimbursed by the State/Territory for the care of the child;
- (ii) living with parents (natural or adoptive) who are not reimbursed for the care of the child;
- (iii) living with relatives or kin (other than natural or adoptive parents) who are not reimbursed for the care of the child.

Home-based out-of-home care

Where the placement is in the home of a carer who is reimbursed for the cost of care of the child including:

- (i) foster care/community care—general authorised caregiver who is reimbursed for the care of the child by the State/Territory and supported by an approved agency (excluding relatives/kin who are reimbursed);
- (ii) living with a relative or kin other than parent who is reimbursed by the State/Territory for the care of the child;
- (iii) other, including private board.

Facility-based care

Where care is in a facility-based (residential) building whose purpose is to provide placements for children and where there are paid staff.

Independent living

Where children are living independently, such as those in private boarding arrangements.

Other living arrangements

Where living arrangements do not fit into the above categories or are unknown.

Definitions for out-of-home care

Age of child

The age of the child in completed years at 30 June 2000.

Type of placement

Placement type is divided into two main categories.

Home-based care

Where placement is in the home of a carer who is reimbursed for expenses for the care of the child including:

- (i) foster care/community care—general authorised caregiver who is reimbursed by the State/Territory for the care of the child and supported by an approved agency;
- (ii) relative/kinship care—family members other than parents or a person well known to the child and/or family (based on a pre-existing relationship) who is reimbursed by the State/Territory for the care of the child;
- (iii) other home-based—including private board.

Facility-based care

Includes care in a facility-based (residential) building whose purpose is to provide placements for children and where there are paid staff. Placements in 'family group homes' are counted as facility-based care.

Independent living

Where children are living independently, such as those in private boarding arrangements.

Other

Where the placement type does not fit into the above categories or is unknown.

Respite care

Out-of-home care provided on a temporary basis for reasons other than for child protection reasons, for example, when parents are ill or unable to care for the child on a short-term basis. Does not include emergency care provided to children who have been removed from their homes for protective reasons.