

9 Support to accompanying children

The discussion in this chapter focuses on children who accompanied parents or guardians to SAAP agencies, or who required or received assistance from a SAAP agency as a result of their parent or guardian being a client of the same agency. In particular, the demographic and support profiles of accompanying children requiring assistance are examined.

The estimates presented here relate to accompanying children and accompanying child support periods. It should be noted that the number of accompanying child support periods is larger than the number of children, as individual children may accompany a parent or guardian during more than one period of support. It should also be noted that an accompanying child may or may not be present for the entire duration of their parent or guardian's support period. It is therefore not possible to assess the length of support for these children.

Accompanying child support periods

SAAP agencies provided 71,400 support periods to accompanying children during 2001–02 (Table 9.1). There was significant variation in the number of accompanying child support periods across the States and Territories, with the proportions of child support periods not following the same pattern as support periods provided to clients. In general, differences in the number of support periods provided to clients in each State and Territory reflect differences in the number of people in the general population, with the exception of the Northern Territory (see Table 2.1).

Differences in agency profiles and the level of commitment to completing child data may explain why several jurisdictions reported higher numbers of accompanying child support periods than larger States or Territories. Agencies in Victoria provided the largest proportion of accompanying child support periods (33%). Although Victoria has a smaller general population of children aged up to 17 years, agencies in that State provided almost twice as many accompanying child support periods than those in New South Wales (18%) (ABS 2001a). Queensland agencies also provided 18% of accompanying child support periods. South Australian agencies reported more accompanying child support periods than those in Western Australia (13% compared to 10%). As with support periods provided to clients, the Northern Territory had more accompanying child support periods (3%) than the Australian Capital Territory (1%).

Nationally, 89% of accompanying child support periods were provided to children aged 12 years and under, with 0 to 4 year-olds accounting for 46%. Only 3% of child support periods were provided to 16 to 17 year-olds. The age profile of accompanying child support periods differed across the States and Territories. Support periods for children aged 0 to 4 years ranged from 43% in both Victoria and Tasmania to 51% in the Northern Territory. For 5 to 12 year olds, support periods ranged from 41% in New South Wales and the Northern Territory to 48% in Tasmania. The Northern Territory had the lowest proportion of child support periods for 13 to 15 year olds (6%) and, along with Western Australia, for 16 to 17 year olds (2%). Victoria had the largest proportion of support periods for 13 to 15 year olds (10%), and along with New South Wales and South Australia, for 16 to 17 year olds (4%).

Age, gender and country of birth of accompanying children

In 2001–02, 50,700 accompanying children received around 68,100 support periods (Table 9.2).³ Ninety per cent of accompanying children were 12 years of age or under, with children aged 4 years or under accounting for slightly more accompanying children than 5 to 12 year-olds (46% compared with 44%). Nine per cent of accompanying children were aged 13 to 15 years. The remaining 2% of children were aged 16 or 17. Accompanying child support periods showed a similar distribution for age. Accompanying children and accompanying child support periods were divided evenly between girls and boys. Ninety-five per cent of accompanying children were born in Australia (Table 9.3). Two per cent of children were born in Oceania. All other birthplaces accounted for the remaining 3% of accompanying children.

Family group

Of the 68,100 accompanying child support periods during 2001–02, 44,500 were for children who required and/or received assistance. Ninety per cent of these child support periods occurred when children accompanied their mother or a female guardian to a SAAP agency (Table 9.4). A further 7% of accompanying child support periods were for children accompanying couples; 2% were for children accompanying their father (or a male guardian). Couples with children had on average more accompanying children requiring assistance (2.2) per support period than any other family grouping. The average number of such children per support period was 2.0.

Types of services provided

Sometimes it is not possible for an agency to provide the needed support directly to an accompanying child, although a referral may be arranged. Overall, agencies did not provide any services directly to children in 5% (or 2,300) of accompanying child support periods. In the remaining 42,500, children received direct support (Table 9.4).

SAAP or CAP accommodation was the most commonly provided type of service, being provided in 72% of accompanying child support periods (Table 9.4). Transport and meals (in 47% of cases each) were the next most commonly provided types of service. The types of services provided least often were sexual or physical abuse counselling, skills education, assistance with access arrangements, and brokerage services – all provided in less than 4% of accompanying child support periods.

Accommodation was provided in 73% of child support periods for children accompanying female clients and children in an 'other' family group. This compares with between 59% for children accompanying a male client, and 62% for children accompanying a couple.

As mentioned, 90% of accompanying child support periods where the child required and/or received assistance occurred when children accompanied their mother (or a female

³ Table 9.2 shows 66,300 support periods for age and 66,700 support periods for gender. The total of 68,100 accompanying child support periods is achieved when the number of missing data for age and for gender (as shown in notes 3 and 4 to Table 9.2) is added. The total number of support periods shown in this table differs from the total in Table 9.1 as high-volume records are excluded. This is because the weighting system used to estimate the number of children is based on records where a valid alpha code was obtained for the child. Child information other than age is not collected on the high-volume client form (see Appendix 1 for an explanation of the child weighting system and Appendix 2 for a copy of the high-volume client form).

guardian) to a SAAP agency. These children frequently received more types of services than those accompanying males, couples, or other family groupings (Table 9.4). Children accompanying females received meals, shower and hygiene services and recreation in at least 36% of their accompanying child support periods. In contrast, children accompanying males, couples or other family groupings were provided with these services in a maximum of 34% of accompanying child support periods. Children accompanying females also received counselling services, school liaison and child care services and specialist services more frequently than all other family groups. The services least likely to be provided to children accompanying a female client in relation to other client groups were general support or advocacy services.

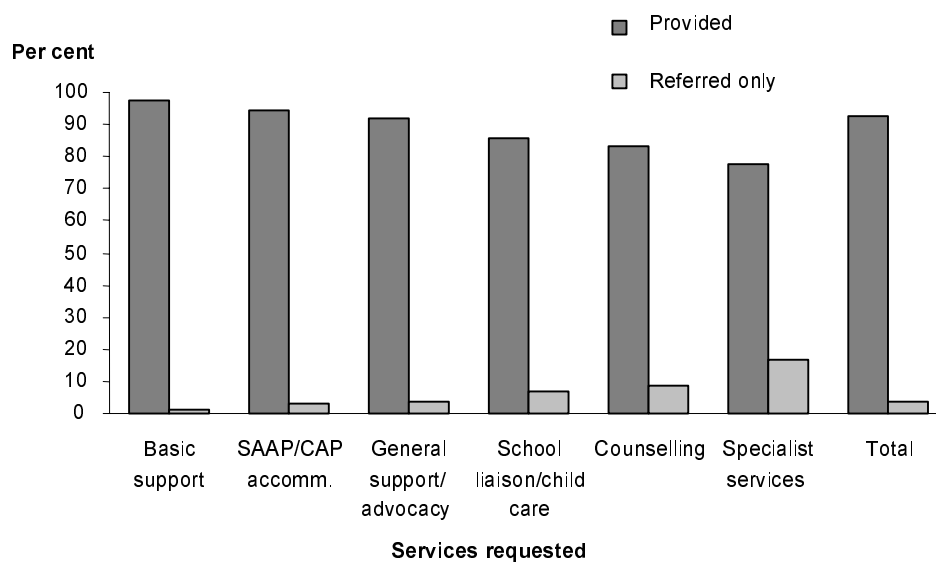
The reason for higher levels of provision of the majority of service types to children accompanying females is not clear. However, children accompanying females mostly attended agencies that target women escaping domestic violence – almost 60% of females with children used such agencies (derived from Table 5.2). In contrast, males with children most commonly visited cross-target, multiple-target or general agencies – in 52% of their support periods – and were also more likely than females with children to use agencies targeting families. This suggests that there may be service delivery differences for accompanying children in the different kinds of agencies.

Meeting children's needs

It is only after clients stop receiving support from an agency that we can examine which of their needs were met and which were not. For this reason, only closed accompanying child support periods are considered when examining the provision of services requested for accompanying children.

During 2001–02 agencies reported 38,600 closed accompanying child support periods (Table 9.6). In this period agencies also reported that children required some 158,000 distinct services in 37,700 closed accompanying child support periods, so that, on average, children received four different types of service in each accompanying child support period (derived from Table 9.5). Almost 93% of these requested services were provided to some extent. In addition to this, agencies were able to refer accompanying children on for another 4% of the services they required, leaving just over 3% of required services that were neither provided nor referred.

In broad terms, as for clients, some types of requests made during accompanying child support periods were met more often than others. As illustrated in Figure 9.1, basic support services were most often provided directly by the agency (for 98% of requests), while specialist services were the least likely to be provided directly by agencies, being provided in 78% of the cases in which they were required. Not surprisingly, the less likely a service was to be provided, the more likely it was to be referred. Thus, the most likely group of services to be referred were specialist services – such services were referred for 17% of requests. Similarly, counselling was not provided as often as some other services, being provided in 83% of cases in which it was required. However, accompanying children were referred for counselling in a further 9% of the instances in which it was required. Accommodation, on the other hand, was able to be provided for 94% of requests and was referred for a further 3%.



Source: Table 9.5, Part b.

Figure 9.1: Provision of services requested for accompanying children, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent distinct services requested in closed accompanying child support periods)

When considered individually, those services most likely to be provided to accompanying children were the basic support services: meals, showers and hygiene services, recreation and transport were all provided in over 98% of the accompanying child support periods in which they were required. Apart from SAAP or CAP accommodation, which was required in 29,000 closed accompanying child support periods, these were also the types of services that were required most frequently. Children needed these basic support services for between 13,200 accompanying child support periods (for recreation) to 19,000 accompanying child support periods (for meals).

Brokerage services, culturally sensitive services, accommodation, advocacy and advice or information were all provided for between 93% and 96% of the closed accompanying child support periods in which they were required (Table 9.5). Other types of services that were also frequently provided to children when required were general counselling or support (provided in 88% of accompanying child support periods in which it was required), school liaison (87%), child care (86%) and skills education (85%). For these types of services, however, there was also a relatively high level of need that could not be met by agencies. This is discussed in the next section.

Although required less often by children, assistance with access arrangements, health or medical services and sexual and physical abuse counselling were the types of services that agencies were least likely to provide when they were needed. These services could be provided only in 63%, 63% and 64%, respectively, of the closed accompanying child support periods in which they were required (Table 9.5). However, health or medical services were referred to other organisations in a further 30% of the 4,200 child support periods in which they were needed, remaining unprovided and not referred in 8%. Sexual or physical abuse counselling or support was referred to other organisations in a further 23% of the 1,800 accompanying child support periods in which it was needed, remaining unprovided and not

referred in 14%. Assistance with access arrangements was neither provided nor referred in 13% of the 1,600 closed accompanying child support periods in which it was required. Skills education was also a type of service with a relatively high likelihood of not being provided or referred – in this case, in 9% of the 1,400 accompanying child support periods in which it was required.

Unmet needs

Overall, during 2001–02, children had some needs remaining unmet after support in 3,100 closed accompanying child support periods – around 5,300 unmet needs distributed across all service types (Table 9.6). The most common unmet need involved general counselling (25% of unmet needs), with accommodation, school liaison or child care, general support or advocacy, and basic support services all contributing between 13% and 20% each to the total unmet needs. Specialist services contributed only 9% to children’s unmet needs (Table 9.6).

Although the number of times a service cannot be provided is important, unmet needs can also be considered in terms of the proportion of requests for services for children that cannot be met (Table 9.5). Counselling and school liaison or child care were the two groups of services least likely to be provided when requested. Agencies could not provide counselling services or refer them on in 8% of the 17,200 cases in which they were required. Similarly, school liaison or child care services could not be provided or referred in 7% of the 14,900 instances in which they were needed.

The number of unmet needs of children in each client group is roughly consistent with the number of accompanying child support periods for each client group (Table 9.6). For example, children accompanying their mother (or a female guardian) accounted for 92% of closed accompanying child support periods and for 90% of unmet needs. Children accompanying couples accounted for 6% of closed accompanying child support periods and 7% of all unmet needs, while children accompanying males accounted for 2% of all closed accompanying child support periods and for 3% of unmet needs.

For children accompanying females, the highest proportion of unmet needs was for counselling (26%), followed by school liaison and child care (20%) (Table 9.6). This accounts for the overall finding that counselling and school liaison or child care were the services least likely to be provided as children accompanying females comprised the vast majority of accompanying child support periods. For children accompanying males, however, the highest proportion of unmet needs was for accommodation (25%). This was also the case for children accompanying couples (24%).

9.1 Tables

Table 9.1: Accompanying child support periods: age by State and Territory, Australia, 2001-02

Age	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total	
									%	Number
0-4 years	48.5	42.6	46.3	48.1	44.6	43.4	47.0	51.3	45.6	32,600
5-12 years	40.6	43.6	43.1	43.7	43.1	47.5	42.1	41.2	43.0	30,700
13-15 years	7.4	9.8	8.0	6.5	8.8	6.6	7.7	5.5	8.3	5,900
16-17 years	3.5	3.9	2.5	1.8	3.5	2.5	3.2	1.9	3.2	2,300
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>..</i>
Total (%)	18.4	32.7	18.1	10.2	12.6	3.2	1.3	3.4	100.0	..
Total (number)	13,100	23,400	13,000	7,300	9,000	2,300	1,000	2,400	..	71,400

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 1,848 accompanying child support periods.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 9.2: Accompanying children and accompanying child support periods, by age and gender of child, Australia, 2001-02

Age	Accompanying children		Accompanying child support periods	
	%	Number	%	Number
0-4 years	45.9	23,300	45.7	30,300
5-12 years	43.6	22,100	43.1	28,600
13-15 years	8.5	4,300	8.3	5,500
16-17 years	1.9	1,000	2.9	1,900
Total	100.0	50,700	100.0	66,300
Gender				
Male	49.9	25,300	49.5	33,000
Female	50.1	25,400	50.5	33,700
Total	100.0	50,700	100.0	66,700

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions in age (weighted): 63 accompanying children.
2. Number excluded due to errors and omissions in gender (weighted): 103 accompanying children.
3. Number excluded due to errors and omissions in age (weighted): 1,848 accompanying child support periods.
4. Number excluded due to errors and omissions in gender (weighted): 1,425 accompanying child support periods.
5. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
6. Accompanying children figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
7. Accompanying child support period figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 9.3: Accompanying children, birthplace of child, Australia, 2001–02

Birthplace	Per cent	Number
Australia	94.6	46,000
Oceania (excluding Australia)	1.6	800
Europe and the former Soviet Union	0.7	300
South-East, North-East and Southern Asia	1.0	500
Other (including the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and Caribbean)	2.1	1,000
Total	100.0	48,600

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions in birthplace (weighted): 2,208 children.
2. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
3. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 9.4: Accompanying child support periods: services provided to accompanying children, by client group, Australia, 2001–02

Type of service	Couple with children	Male with children	Female with children	Other with children	Total	
Accompanying child support periods			(%)		%	Number
Accommodation	62.1	58.5	73.2	72.5	72.1	32,300
SAAP/CAP accommodation	62.1	58.5	73.2	72.5	72.1	32,300
School liaison/child care	18.0	19.2	30.9	22.4	29.7	13,300
School liaison	11.4	10.5	13.8	9.0	13.5	6,000
Child care	8.5	9.8	22.8	18.8	21.5	9,600
Counselling	15.5	18.5	29.7	20.6	28.4	12,700
Help with behavioural problems	5.7	5.2	13.3	8.1	12.6	5,600
Sexual/physical abuse counselling/support	1.3	1.8	3.4	0.9	3.2	1,400
Skills education	1.7	1.7	3.6	2.7	3.4	1,500
General counselling/support	11.1	14.4	20.1	18.0	19.3	8,700
General support/advocacy	32.3	33.6	30.0	46.2	30.3	13,600
Access arrangements	1.8	3.3	3.0	6.3	2.9	1,300
Advice/information	17.7	19.0	20.0	30.3	19.9	8,900
Brokerage services	7.3	5.7	3.0	5.4	3.3	1,500
Advocacy	16.6	14.9	15.8	24.8	15.9	7,100
Specialist services	8.6	7.2	16.1	8.9	15.4	6,900
Culturally sensitive services	3.3	1.9	10.1	5.4	9.4	4,200
Health/medical services	6.1	5.5	7.7	4.4	7.6	3,400
Basic support and other services n.e.s.	40.5	45.6	70.5	53.7	67.7	30,300
Meals	15.1	19.4	50.0	34.1	46.8	20,900
Showers/hygiene	8.5	16.1	42.4	30.4	39.3	17,600
Recreation	12.1	16.2	35.6	19.7	33.5	15,000
Transport	23.1	22.3	49.1	41.3	46.6	20,900
Other	10.1	12.9	12.7	14.3	12.5	5,600
No services provided directly by agency	8.3	11.6	4.8	4.5	5.2	2,300
Total accompanying child support periods (%)	7.0	2.4	90.3	0.3	100.0	..
Total accompanying child support periods (number)	3,100	1,100	40,400	100	..	44,800
Support periods for SAAP clients with accompanying children requiring assistance						
Total support periods (%)	6.4	2.8	90.5	0.3	100.0	..
Total support periods (number)	1,400	600	20,100	100	..	22,300
Mean number of accompanying child support periods in which accompanying children required assistance	2.20	1.76	2.01	1.62	..	2.01

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 23,348 accompanying child support periods (including cases with no information on service requirements or provision).
2. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 372 support periods.
3. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
4. Accompanying children were able to receive multiple services, so percentages do not total 100.
5. An accompanying child may be counted in more than one support period, so the total number of accompanying child support periods does not equal the actual number of accompanying children requiring assistance.
6. Although each member of a couple has an individual support period, in this table a couple presenting with children contributes only one support period. The table is therefore not directly comparable with other tables showing the number of support periods by client group.
7. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 9.5: SAAP services requested for accompanying children in closed support periods, by provision, Australia, 2001–02

Part a: Individual types of SAAP services requested for accompanying children in closed support periods, by provision (per cent closed accompanying child support periods)

Type of service	Not provided			Provided			Total	Closed accompanying child support periods (number)
	Neither provided nor referred	Referred	Subtotal	Provided only	Provided and referred	Subtotal		
Accommodation								
SAAP/CAP accommodation	2.4	3.2	5.6	90.9	3.5	94.4	100.0	29,000
School liaison/child care								
School liaison	7.7	5.6	13.3	75.2	11.5	86.7	100.0	5,400
Child care	6.7	7.7	14.4	78.7	6.9	85.6	100.0	9,500
Counselling								
Help with behavioural problems	7.5	10.2	17.7	70.8	11.4	82.2	100.0	5,800
Sexual/physical abuse counselling/support	14.1	22.5	36.6	43.7	19.8	63.5	100.0	1,800
Skills education	9.0	5.8	14.8	75.7	9.4	85.1	100.0	1,400
General counselling/support	6.6	5.6	12.2	80.3	7.6	87.9	100.0	8,100
General support/advocacy								
Access arrangements	13.1	24.1	37.2	50.8	12.0	62.8	100.0	1,600
Advice/information	3.1	0.9	4.0	89.6	6.4	96.0	100.0	7,700
Brokerage services	4.0	3.3	7.3	82.4	10.3	92.7	100.0	1,300
Advocacy	3.5	1.3	4.8	85.9	9.2	95.1	100.0	5,900
Specialist services								
Culturally sensitive services	3.6	3.3	6.9	88.6	4.5	93.1	100.0	4,000
Health/medical services	7.9	29.5	37.4	39.8	22.8	62.6	100.0	4,200
Basic support and other services n.e.s.								
Meals	1.3	0.5	1.8	96.9	1.4	98.3	100.0	19,000
Showers/hygiene	1.2	0.3	1.5	97.9	0.6	98.5	100.0	16,100
Recreation	1.7	0.8	2.5	95.8	1.7	97.5	100.0	13,200
Transport	1.3	0.6	1.9	96.4	1.7	98.1	100.0	18,300
Other	2.4	5.5	7.9	86.2	5.9	92.1	100.0	4,400
Further other	6.4	11.0	17.4	60.0	22.5	82.5	100.0	900

(continued)

Table 9.5 (continued): SAAP services requested for accompanying children in closed support periods, by provision, Australia, 2001-02

Part b: Broad types of SAAP services requested for accompanying children in closed support periods, by provision

Broad type of service	Not provided			Provided			Total	Distinct services requested	Assoc. closed accompanying child support periods
	Neither provided nor referred	Referred	Sub-total	Provided only	Provided and referred	Sub-total			
	% distinct services requested							Number	Number
Accommodation	2.4	3.2	5.6	90.9	3.5	94.4	100.0	29,000	29,000
School liaison/child care	7.0	6.9	13.9	77.4	8.6	86.0	100.0	14,900	12,700
Counselling	7.9	9.0	16.9	72.8	10.3	83.1	100.0	17,200	12,400
General support/advocacy	4.3	3.6	7.9	83.9	8.3	92.2	100.0	16,600	11,900
Specialist services	5.8	16.7	22.5	63.6	13.9	77.5	100.0	8,200	7,300
Basic support and services n.e.s.	1.5	1.0	2.5	95.7	1.9	97.6	100.0	72,100	26,800
Total (%)	3.4	3.9	7.3	87.7	5.0	92.7	100.0
Total (number)	5,400	6,200	11,600	138,500	8,000	146,500	..	158,000	37,700

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 20,004 closed accompanying child support periods (including cases with no information on service requirements or provision).
2. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
3. In groups of service types, an accompanying child may require more than one type of service within the group. Percentages for broad groups relate to all needs and not to support periods. For individual types of services, a need can be recorded only once within a support period, so percentages relate to accompanying child support periods.
4. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 9.6: SAAP services requested for accompanying children in closed support periods that were neither provided nor referred: broad type of service by client group, Australia, 2001–02

	Couple with children	Male with children	Female with children	Other with children	Total	
Broad type of service	% unmet needs				%	Number
Accommodation	24.2	25.0	11.6	22.4	12.9	700
School liaison/child care	15.5	14.4	20.3	—	19.7	1,000
Counselling	17.3	17.2	26.2	44.7	25.3	1,300
General support/advocacy	17.1	22.6	12.7	10.9	13.3	700
Specialist services	9.3	4.9	8.9	11.1	8.8	500
Basic support and services n.e.s.	16.7	15.9	20.3	10.9	19.9	1,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>5,300</i>
Summary totals						
Total unmet needs (%)	7.1	2.9	89.8	0.2	100.0	..
Total unmet needs (number)	400	200	4,700	<50	..	5,300
Total closed accompanying child support periods with unmet needs (%)						
	8.5	3.5	87.8	0.2	100.0	..
Total closed accompanying child support periods with unmet needs (number)						
	300	100	2,700	<50	..	3,100
Total closed accompanying child support periods (%)						
	6.0	2.2	91.5	0.2	100.0	..
Total closed accompanying child support periods (number)						
	2,300	900	35,300	100	..	38,600
Total closed support periods with accompanying children with unmet needs (%)						
	7.3	3.4	89.1	0.3	100.0	..
Total closed support periods with accompanying children with unmet needs (number)						
	100	100	1,700	<50	..	2,000
Total closed support periods with accompanying children requiring assistance (%)						
	5.6	2.6	91.5	0.3	100.0	..
Total closed support periods with accompanying children requiring assistance (number)						
	1,100	500	17,600	100	..	19,300

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 90 identified unmet needs for accompanying children.
2. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 54 closed accompanying child support periods with unmet needs.
3. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 19,030 closed accompanying child support periods (including cases with no information on service requirements or provision).
4. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 35 closed support periods with accompanying children with unmet needs.
5. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 209 closed support periods with accompanying children requiring assistance.
6. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
7. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

