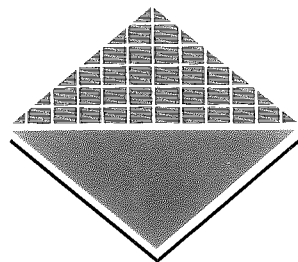


ChildWelfareSeries
Number 2

**Child abuse
and neglect
Australia
1990-91**

**Graham Angus
Katherine Wilkinson**



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

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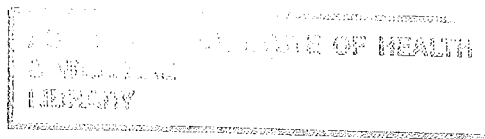
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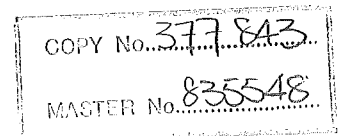
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Number 2

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Graham Angus
Katherine Wilkinson

Australian Government Publishing Service
Canberra



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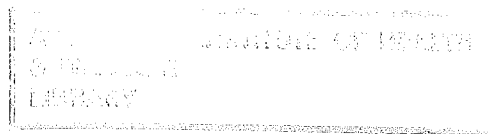
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Preface

This report was prepared by Graham Angus and Katherine Wilkinson of the Welfare Division of AIHW.

This publication, compiled for the first time by AIHW, continues the series previously titled *Child maltreatment: national data collections* and issued by the Social Welfare Administrators according to standards established under the former WELSTAT project (Standardisation of Social Welfare Statistics Project).

Tables in this publication which show only statistics for the whole of Australia are available for individual States and Territories on request.

Symbols used

The following symbols are used in the tables of this report:

- nil or rounded to zero
- .. not applicable
- n.a. not available.

Summary

- 49,721 cases of child abuse and neglect were reported to and investigated by State and Territory Welfare Departments during the period 1 July 1990 to 30 June 1991. Of these, the assessments of 46,769 cases were finalised.
- In 20,868 of the finalised cases (45% of finalised cases), the occurrence of child abuse or neglect was substantiated. In a further 3,043 cases (7%), the occurrence was not substantiated, but the child was assessed as being at risk. There were 21,288 cases (46%) in which no abuse or neglect was found. However, the proportion of cases substantiated is underestimated and the proportion of cases not substantiated overestimated, as some substantiated cases in Victoria where the harm was minimal and where there was no continued risk to the child were not included in the 'Substantiated' category. See page 5 for further information.
- 18,273 children were involved in the substantiated cases and a further 2,545 children were assessed as being at risk. Combined, this represents a rate of 4.9 cases per 1,000 children aged 0–16 years. The highest rates of substantiated abuse and neglect occurred with children aged 14 years (6.2 cases per 1,000) followed by children aged 4 years (5.5) and children under 1 year of age (5.2). Very young children (aged under 1) suffered a higher rate of emotional abuse (1.7 per 1,000) and neglect (2.1 per 1,000) than older children. Rates of physical abuse and sexual abuse, however, were higher for young teenagers than for children of other ages (1.9 cases of physical abuse and 2.1 cases of sexual abuse per 1,000 children aged 14 years).
- Girls were the subjects in the majority (75%) of sexual abuse cases; both sexes were the subjects in a nearly equal number of cases of neglect, physical abuse and emotional abuse.
- The number of substantiated cases was similar for each of the three types of abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) and neglect, with physical abuse the largest (5,479 cases) and sexual abuse the smallest (5,072 cases).
- A parent or guardian was identified as the person believed to be responsible for the abuse or neglect in 64% of substantiated cases. Persons other than relatives or friends and neighbours were identified in 22% of cases. Friends or neighbours were believed responsible in 8% of cases and siblings and other relatives in 6% of cases.
- Reports of child abuse and neglect came mainly from friends or neighbours (18% of finalised cases) or parents (14%). The major source of reports of child abuse and neglect varied between the States/Territories. The most common source of reports was a friend or neighbour in Queensland, NSW, WA, and ACT, school personnel in SA and Tasmania, hospital and health personnel in NT, and the police in Victoria.

1 Introduction

This publication presents statistics on child abuse and neglect provided by State and Territory Welfare Departments for the year 1 July 1990 to 30 June 1991 (1990-91).

The data provided by State and Territory Welfare Departments were sought according to detailed definitions and explanations agreed on by the States, Territories and the Commonwealth in *Child maltreatment standards, February 1987*. Definitions used in the data collection may be found in *Explanation of terms* on page 26 of this publication.

This report attempts to present data collected across Australia according to standard definitions and counting rules. However, the tables and figures are based on data provided, which are in turn dependent on factors such as the scope and completeness of data collection, legislation concerning mandatory notification by defined professional groups, reporting procedures, policy guidelines and casework practices. These factors may affect the comparability of data across States and Territories. These matters are outlined under *Child abuse and neglect in Australia* on page 4.

2 Scope and coverage

This collection includes all cases of child abuse and neglect reported to and investigated by authorised departments and relevant statutory authorities during the year ended 30 June 1991.

3 Child abuse and neglect in Australia

General

Many occurrences of child abuse and neglect go unreported. Those that are reported may come to the attention of someone in authority such as a school teacher, the police, a doctor, the health department, a health worker, or a welfare worker. In most States, certain professionals are required by legislation to report suspected occurrences of child abuse and neglect to the relevant welfare department.

A large proportion of allegations are made by relatives (including parents), friends and neighbours, and some by the subject child or the maltreater (person believed responsible). These allegations may be made to one of the above professional groups, to the State/Territory welfare department, or to a specific independent authority such as the Child Abuse Protection Board in Tasmania or the Youth Advocate in the ACT.

An allegation, notification or report becomes the basis of a case when the department or authority decides that an investigation is warranted, and does not already have an ongoing case involving the same matter.

Following investigation, the department will determine an assessment outcome and finalise the case. In all States and Territories except Victoria, the outcome is designated as either 'Substantiated', 'Child at risk' (except in NSW and SA—see *Child at risk and substantiation*, page 5), 'No abuse or neglect found' or 'No action possible'. In Victoria the outcome is designated as 'Registered', 'Not registered' or 'No action possible'. Cases that are substantiated or registered in Victoria are classified to the type of abuse or neglect. If more than one type has been substantiated, cases are classified to that considered the most severe, that considered to be the greatest risk to the child in the short term, or to that considered the most obvious.

Statistics are obtained from the various databases in the State/Territory welfare departments and sent to AIHW for compilation.

Mandatory reporting

New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory have systems of compulsory reporting of child abuse.

New South Wales

Medical practitioners have been required by law to report physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect since 1977. Under the *Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987*, teachers are required to report suspected cases of child sexual abuse. This includes principals, deputy principals, teachers, social workers in schools and school counsellors. Teachers are also required by Department of Community Services policy to notify suspected physical and emotional abuse and neglect. Police are required by guidelines not law, to notify all forms of suspected abuse and neglect.

Queensland

Doctors are required by law to notify the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs of all suspected cases of child abuse redundant under the *Health Act Amendment Act 1980*. Family court staff are also required to report all suspected cases under the *Family Law Act*. There is no legislation or policy that requires teachers to report child abuse and neglect.

South Australia

Under the *Community Welfare Act Amendment Act 1987*, the following are required to notify the Department for Family and Community Services of all suspected cases of all types of abuse: medical practitioners, dentists, nurses, psychologists, chemists, members of the police force, probation officers, social workers employed in hospitals, health centres or medical practices, teachers, teacher aides and kindergarten employees, and employees and voluntary workers in agencies that provide health, welfare, educational child care or residential services for children.

Tasmania

In Tasmania it is mandatory for the following to report suspected cases of child abuse to the Department for Community Services: medical practitioners, registered nurses, probation officers, child welfare officers, school principals, kindergarten teachers, welfare officers appointed under the *Alcohol and Drug Dependency Act*, guidance officers and psychologists.

Northern Territory

It is mandatory for suspected cases of abuse or neglect to be reported to either a delegated officer of the Department of Health and Community Services or the police.

Child at risk and substantiation

There is some variation between States and Territories on the classification of cases to the category 'Child at risk'.

In New South Wales, policy guidelines require that children in unsubstantiated cases who are assessed as being at risk of abuse or neglect are to be classified as 'No abuse or neglect found'. However, the percentage of substantiated cases in New South Wales is comparable to the combined percentage of cases substantiated and at risk cases in other States and Territories.

In Victoria, cases registered on the Children at Risk Register (CARR) are often used as an estimate of the number of substantiated cases. However, as the category 'Registered' excludes cases where there is evidence of abuse or neglect, but harm is considered to be minimal and there is no continuing risk to the child, the number of 'Registered' cases in Victoria is somewhat lower than the number of substantiated cases in other States: 2,427 registered cases compared with 11,611 substantiated cases in New South Wales and 3,500 substantiated cases in Queensland.

In South Australia, the use of the 'Child at risk' category was discontinued during 1989 and children formerly classified to that group are now classified as substantiated.

The other States and Territories provide for the use of the category 'Child at risk'. A case is classified as 'Child at risk' where no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but there are reasonable grounds to suspect the possibility of prior or future abuse or neglect and it is considered that continued departmental involvement is warranted.

Reporting procedures

New South Wales

Child protection services are coordinated by the Department of Community Services. These services are provided under the *Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987*.

Victoria

During 1990–91, responsibility for child protection in Victoria was shared between Community Services Victoria (CSV) and the police. Recent legislative changes have resulted in CSV increasingly becoming the central investigation agency as the police reduce their involvement in the notification and investigation stage of protective services for children and young people.

Notifications provided by both CSV and the police are placed on CSV's Child At Risk Register (CARR), and after investigation, are designated as either 'Registered' (where 'there is continuing risk, and intervention is required to ensure the child is not going to be further harmed') or 'Not registered'.

Queensland

In Queensland, child protection services are coordinated by the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs under the *Children's Services Act 1965*. All notifications are provided to the Child Protection Section of the Division of Protective Services and Juvenile Justice of the Department, including those of the police.

Western Australia

Child protection in Western Australia is coordinated by the Advisory and Coordination Committee on Child Abuse (ACCCA) and investigated by the Department for Community Services and other agencies (e.g. Sexual assault centres). As there is no legal compulsion on these agencies to notify child abuse or neglect cases to DCS or ACCCA, some cases investigated or managed by outside agencies are not centrally recorded. Statistics in this report relate only to reports made to the Department for Community Development.

South Australia

The Department for Family and Community Services (FACS) is the statutory body responsible for receiving notifications and investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect in South Australia. Its mandate is derived from the *Community Welfare Act, 1972* and the *Child Protection and Young Offenders Act, 1979*. The Police may also investigate allegations of abuse and neglect and may do so jointly with FACS. They are, however, still required to report these allegation to FACS which may also conduct its own investigations.

Tasmania

Child protection services and administration in Tasmania are coordinated by the Child Abuse Protection Board (CAPB), an autonomous statutory body which investigates allegations of abuse including neglect cases if there is a potential for abuse to arise. All neglect cases are referred to the Department for Community Services (DCS) for investigation. Cases from both the CAPB and DCS are included in the data for Tasmania. A small number of children could be the subject of both a neglect case and an abuse case and be counted more than once.

The DCS generally regards an allegation or a call from the public as a notification; a consultation from a professional such as a school teacher or doctor would be considered a notification if there was sufficient evidence to warrant an investigation.

Australian Capital Territory

The statutory framework for the provision of child protection services in the ACT is contained in the *Children's Services Act 1986*. The Act provides for voluntary notification of children who are deemed in need of care under the terms of the Act to be made to the Youth Advocate (this is an independent statutory officer upon whom the Act confers certain functions, duties and powers). Voluntary notifications are also received by the Community

Welfare Branch, the police, and the ACT Department of Health's Child At Risk Assessment Unit.

Notifications investigated by the above agencies may be received directly from the community or referred by the Youth Advocate for investigation. Information on notifications of child abuse are currently collected and maintained by each individual agency.

Northern Territory

Under the *Community Welfare Act*, the protection of children is within the responsibilities of the Minister for Health and Community Services. The police are required to inform the department of their notifications.

New developments in South Australia

The method of data recording in South Australia for child abuse and neglect changed during 1990-91, with the on-line database, the Justice Information System (JIS), being introduced during the year. Data from the previous form-based system were uploaded into JIS. Changes to recording practices were introduced with the new database, resulting in more complete data than previously available. Under JIS, it is possible to count the number of children as well as the number of cases.

Children categorised as being at risk are now included in the category of 'Substantiated' cases. The relationship of the maltreater to the child, however, is no longer recorded.

5 Child abuse and neglect 1990–91

There were 49,721 cases of child abuse and neglect reported and investigated during 1990–91. For 2,952 of these cases, investigation by State/Territory authorities had not been finalised by the date the statistics were collated, 31 August 1991. The majority of cases not finalised were in South Australia (1,517 cases), with 860 in Queensland and 385 in New South Wales. Figures for these three States represented 94% of cases not finalised. The 1,517 reports not finalised in South Australia represented 44% of reported cases, much higher than for other States/Territories. This should be considered when interpreting national statistics, as most are based on the number of cases finalised.

Assessment outcomes

Of the 46,769 cases of child abuse and neglect finalised during the year, 20,868 cases (45%) were substantiated and a further 3,043 cases (7%) were assessed as 'Child at risk', representing a combined rate of 4.9 children per 1,000 children aged 0–16 years (excluding the small number of cases involving 17 year olds)(Table 1 and Table 3).

There were 21,288 cases (46% of finalised cases) in which no abuse or neglect was found, and 1,570 (3%) where no action was possible.

The estimation of the proportion of cases substantiated and of cases where no abuse or neglect was found is complicated by Victoria data which classify cases into the 'Registered' and 'Not registered' categories. 'Registered' cases are substantiated cases where there is a continuing risk to the child. 'Not registered' cases include those where there was no abuse and neglect and those where neglect and abuse was substantiated but the harm was considered minimal and there was no continuing risk to the child. Because of this, the Victoria and national proportions of cases substantiated are underestimated and the proportions of cases where no abuse or neglect was found are overestimated. See explanatory notes on page 5 under *Child at risk and substantiation*.

Table 1: Percentage of finalised cases: assessment outcome by State/Territory, 1990–91

Assessment outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
	Percentage							
Substantiated	57	..	33	40	61	34	32	47
Child at risk ^(a)	..	..	21	14	..	16	15	13
Registered ^(b)	..	29	..	..	..	..	..	..
<i>Total substantiated & at risk or registered</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>60</i>
No abuse or neglect found	40	^(c) 67	41	42	37	49	47	38
No action possible	3	4	4	4	3	–	6	3

(a) New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia do not assign children to the 'Child at risk' category.

(b) In Victoria, cases are designated as 'Registered' where there is a continuing risk; see *Reporting procedures*—Victoria on page 6.

(c) The Victoria category is 'Not registered'. This category includes cases substantiated although the harm is considered minimal and there is not continuing risk to the child.

Note: 35 cases where there was insufficient information have been excluded from South Australia.

The proportions of cases substantiated varied considerably between States and Territories, from high levels in New South Wales (57% of finalised cases) and Northern Territory (47%),

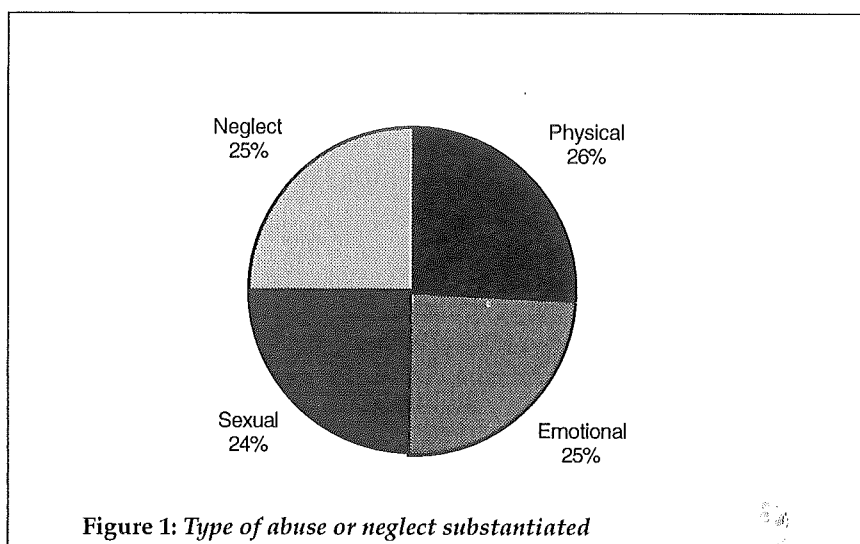
down to 32% in the Australian Capital Territory. For Victoria, 29% of finalised cases were substantiated and registered.

When figures for cases assessed as being at risk are added to cases substantiated for the States and Territories that include this category, the rates are more even across the States/Territories (except Victoria).

Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory had the largest proportion of cases where no abuse or neglect was found (49% and 47% of finalised cases respectively), with South Australia (37%) and the Northern Territory (38%) having the smallest proportion.

Types of abuse or neglect

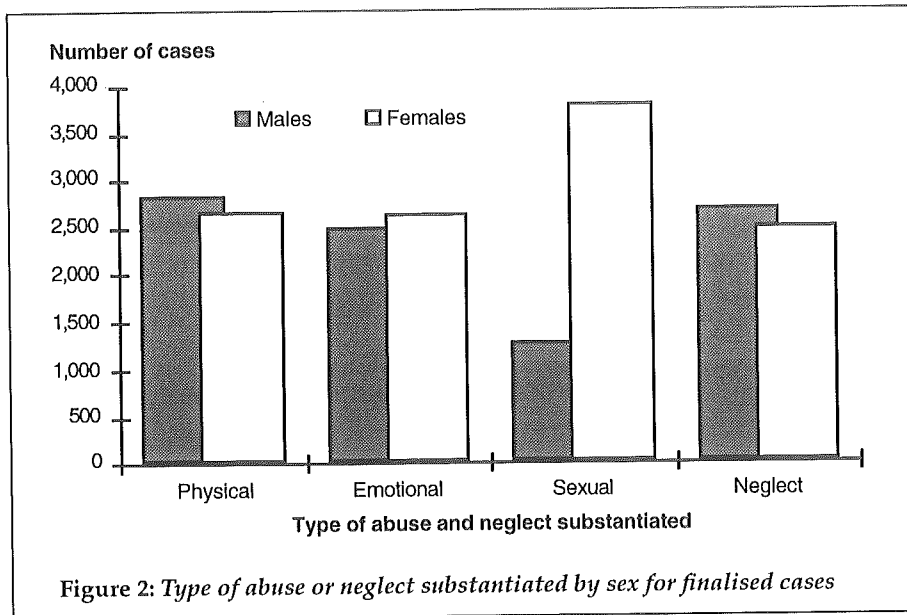
The number of substantiated cases was similar for each of the four types of abuse or neglect, with physical abuse the greatest (5,479 cases) and sexual abuse the smallest (5,072 cases) (Figure 1)(Table 6).



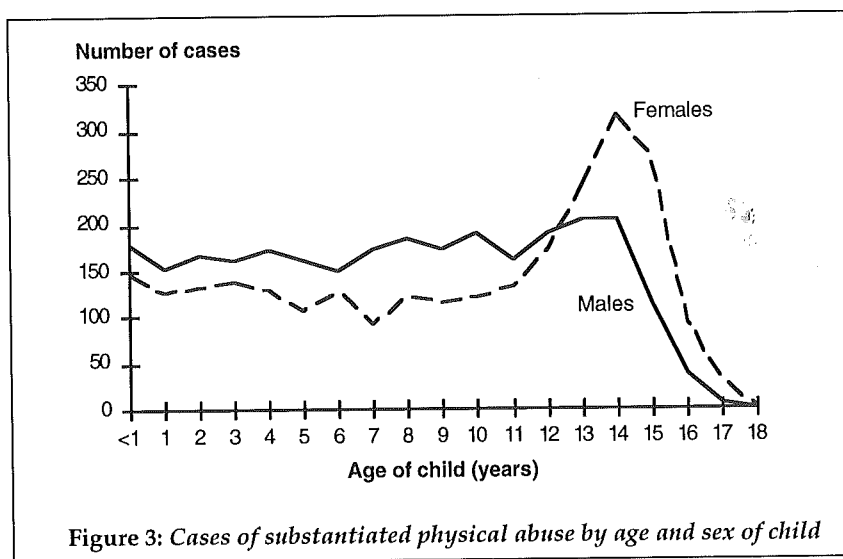
There are major variations between States/Territories in the pattern of substantiated cases. New South Wales had a fairly even spread of cases between the four types, while Victoria had a higher incidence of emotional abuse (41%) and other States/Territories had lower percentages of emotional abuse cases. The proportion of physical abuse was particularly high in Tasmania (52%), the Australian Capital Territory (50%) and South Australia (45%). Sexual abuse represented a larger proportion of cases in South Australia (35% of its substantiated cases), Western Australia (34%) and Tasmania (34%), with the Australian Capital Territory (11%) and Victoria (12%) having the lower percentage. Neglect represented a much larger proportion of cases in Northern Territory (42%) than in other States/Territories, with Tasmania (10%) and South Australia (13%) having the smaller proportion of neglect cases (Table 6).

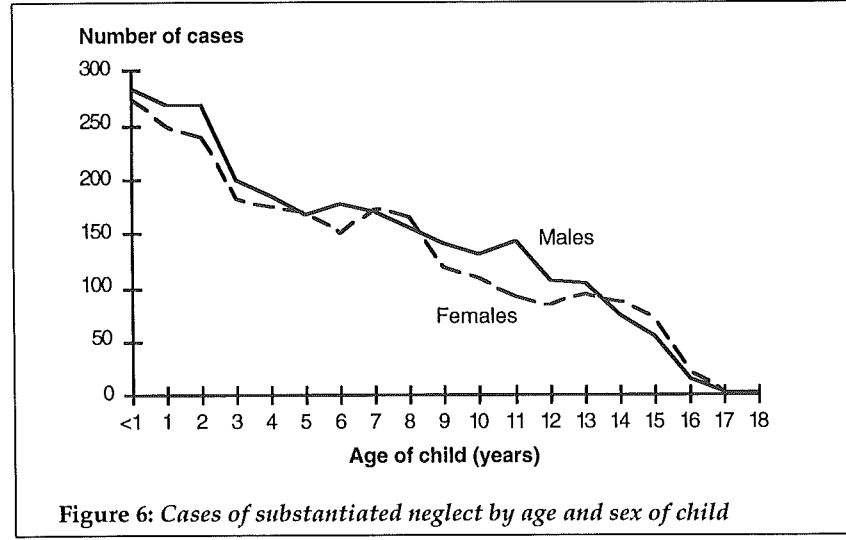
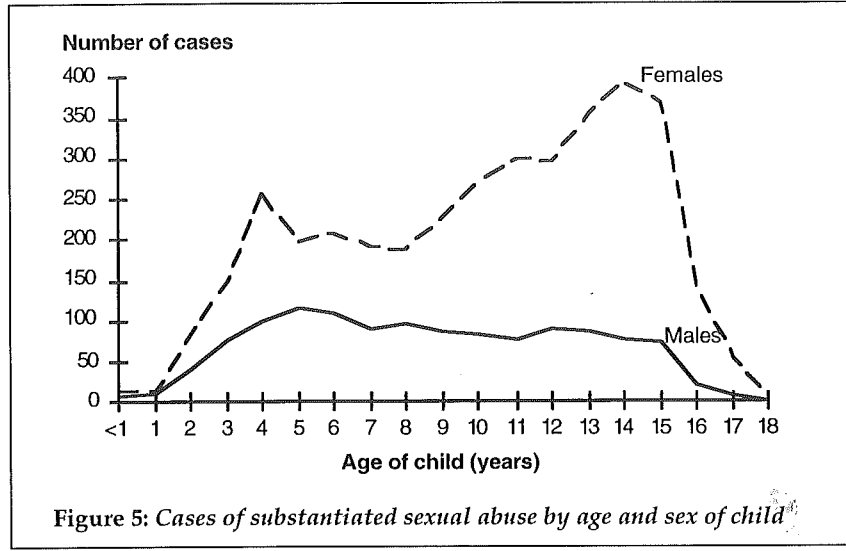
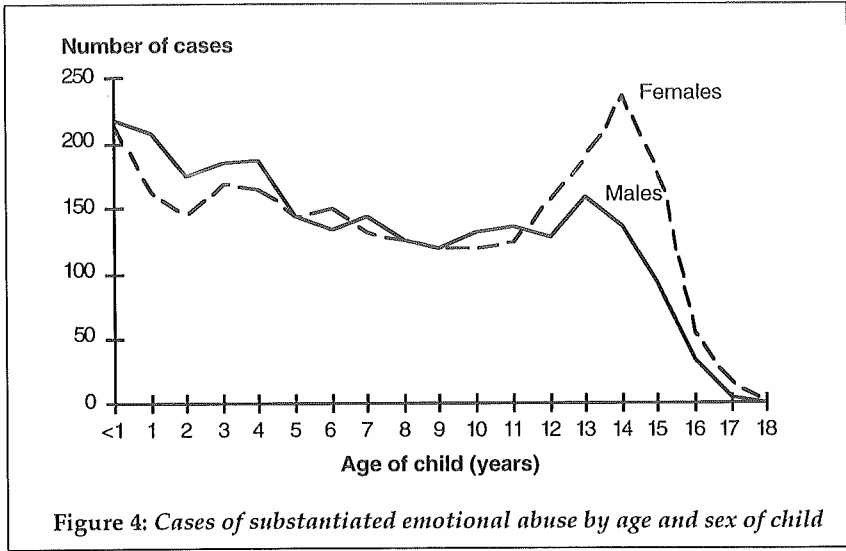
Patterns of abuse and neglect by sex, age and type

Children of both sexes were represented almost equally overall in substantiated cases of neglect, physical abuse and emotional abuse, while females were the victims in the majority (75%) of sexual abuse cases (Figure 2)(Table 7).



The pattern across age groups was not uniform, with more boys than girls being the subject of finalised reports in the lower age groups and girls being in the majority in the older age group (Table 4).





The largest number of substantiated cases concerned children aged 13 and 14 years, with 1,431 and 1,523 cases respectively; however, the number of substantiated cases of neglect declines by age (Table 4).

The highest rates of substantiated abuse and neglect occurred with children aged 14 years (6.2 cases per 1,000 children of this age) followed by children aged 4 years (5.5) and those under 1 year of age (5.2). Very young children (aged under 1) suffered a higher rate of emotional abuse (1.7 per 1,000) and neglect (2.1 per 1,000) than older children. Rates of physical abuse and sexual abuse, however, were higher for young teenagers than for children of other ages (1.9 cases of physical abuse and 2.1 cases of sexual abuse per 1,000 children aged 14 years).

Rates by age group and State/Territory

In 1990–91, 9.3 per 1,000 children¹ were involved in finalised cases of abuse or neglect. Significant variation across the States and Territories underlies this Australian figure, with Queensland and New South Wales having the highest rates (11 per 1,000 children) and Western Australia (6 per 1,000 children) having the lowest (Table 2). South Australia, which shows a rate of 5 finalised cases per 1,000 children, has a rate of 9 cases per 1,000 children when the large number of cases not finalised are included.

The rates decline with age, from around 11 per 1,000 children for the 0–4 year age group, to 5 per 1,000 children in the 15–16 year group.

The following table sets out the number of children involved in finalised cases of abuse or neglect per 1,000 children by age group and by State/Territory. In most States and Territories the rates declined considerably with age; however, Victoria and Tasmania recorded only a small decline.

Table 2: Rates of children involved in finalised cases per 1,000 children by State/Territory, 1990–91

State/Territory	0–4	5–9	10–14	15–16	Total ^(a)
New South Wales	12.8	11.4	11.0	5.2	11.4
Victoria	8.6	7.7	6.7	6.5	7.6
Queensland	14.9	11.9	10.0	5.3	11.4
Western Australia	8.2	6.5	5.4	2.9	6.3
South Australia	5.5	5.6	5.2	2.7	^(b) 5.2
Tasmania	11.0	10.5	10.2	8.6	10.4
Australian Capital Territory	7.6	6.5	4.5	3.9	7.7
Northern Territory	12.8	7.0	8.7	0.7	8.7
Australia	10.9	9.4	8.6	5.2	9.3

(a) Includes cases involving children of unknown age (see Table 5).

(b) The rates for South Australia are low due to the high proportion of cases not finalised. Including these cases brings the total rate for South Australia to 9.0 and that for Australia to 9.6.

Note: Based on estimated resident population at 30 June 1991

1. These rates are the number of children involved in finalised cases of abuse and neglect per 1,000 population aged 0–16 years. Note that these rates do not imply a measure of the incidence of abuse and neglect, because not all cases of abuse and neglect are reported and because not all reported cases are substantiated.

Abuse and neglect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Eight per cent of finalised cases of reported child abuse or neglect involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a much higher proportion than they represent in the population (less than 2%) (Table 9).

A higher proportion of finalised cases involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were substantiated or classified as 'at risk' (62%) than for the total population (51%). The type of substantiated cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children differed significantly from the general pattern, with neglect cases representing a much higher proportion (42%) of total substantiations than for all children (25%), and sexual abuse cases being much lower—14% of total substantiations compared with 24% overall.

Substantiated cases occurred at a younger age for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children than for the total population. Children under one year old represented 14% of substantiated cases of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children compared to 6% for all children. Of the substantiated cases in this age group, 59% were identified as neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and 41% for the total population (Table 8).

Relationship of maltreater to child

Parents were identified as responsible for abuse or neglect in the majority of substantiated cases. Natural or adoptive parents were identified in 55% of substantiated cases, and step-parents, de facto parents, foster parents and guardians were identified in 10% of cases. Siblings and other relatives were identified in a further 6% of substantiated cases. Persons other than relatives or friends and neighbours were identified in 22% of cases, with the remainder of cases being perpetrated by friends/neighbours (8%) and others (22%) (Table 12).

This pattern applies to each of the different types of abuse except for sexual abuse.² Eighty-nine per cent of substantiated cases in which a friend or neighbour was believed responsible were cases of sexual abuse, as were 66% of cases where a relative other than a parent or sibling was the maltreater.

Source of abuse and neglect reports

Friends or neighbours (18%), parents (14%), the police (11%) and school personnel (11%) were the main sources of reports for finalised cases (Table 14).

Reports of abuse or neglect from the subject child had the highest rate of substantiation (65%), followed by hospital/health workers (57%), school personnel (57%), social workers (56%), the police (55%) and other medical workers (55%). Reports from anonymous persons (22%), siblings (30%) and friends/neighbours (30%) showed the lowest rate of substantiation (Table 15). Friends and neighbours, the greatest source of reporting, had one of the lowest rates of substantiation, whereas the subject child, one of the sources reporting least often, had the highest rate of substantiation. Professionals, including medical staff, social workers and school personnel, had a very consistent substantiation rate of between 50% and 57%.

The type of abuse or neglect identified in substantiated cases varied according to the source of the report. Of substantiated cases reported by friends or neighbours, 43% involved neglect, whereas neglect was identified in only 9% of cases reported by parents and guardians. For reports by school personnel, 30% of substantiated cases involved sexual abuse

2. It should be noted that some cases where the relationship of the maltreater to the child is unknown have been included in the 'Other' category.

and 38% involved physical abuse. Neglect was identified in 31% of substantiated cases reported by the police, and sexual abuse in 30% of these cases. (Table 14).

The major source of report varied between the States/Territories. In Queensland, 26% of finalised cases were reported by friends or neighbours, this being also the highest category for New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. In South Australia and Tasmania, school personnel reported most finalised cases (23% and 17% respectively). The police reported the largest proportion of cases (18%) in Victoria, and hospital and health personnel were the highest reporters (16%) in the Northern Territory (Table 16).

6 Detailed tables

Table 3: Cases: assessment outcome of case by State/Territory, 1990-91

Outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust.
Number									
Finalised									
Substantiated	11,611	..	3,500	1,223	1,162	472	247	226	n.a.
Child at risk ^(a)	..	..	2,226	415	..	223	119	60	n.a.
Registered ^(b)	..	2,427	..	..	..	..	..	..	n.a.
No abuse and neglect found	8,092	5,641	4,342	1,280	699	685	368	181	21,288
No action possible	558	323	462	118	49	4	44	12	1,570
Total finalised	20,261	8,391	10,530	3,036	1,910	1,384	778	479	46,769
Not finalised	385	6	860	48	1,517	136	-	-	2,952
Total cases	20,646	8,397	11,390	3,084	3,427	1,520	778	479	49,721
Percentage									
Finalised									
Substantiated	56.2	..	30.7	39.7	33.9	31.1	31.7	47.2	n.a.
Child at risk ^(a)	..	..	19.5	13.5	..	14.7	15.3	12.5	n.a.
Registered ^(b)	..	28.9	..	..	..	..	..	..	n.a.
No abuse and neglect found	39.2	67.2	38.1	41.5	20.4	45.1	47.3	37.8	42.8
No action possible	2.7	3.8	4.1	3.8	1.4	0.3	5.7	2.5	3.2
Total finalised	98.1	99.9	92.4	98.4	55.7	91.1	100.0	100.0	94.1
Not finalised	1.9	0.1	7.6	1.6	44.3	8.9	-	-	5.9
Total cases	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia do not assign children to the 'Child at risk' category.

(b) In Victoria, cases are designated as 'Registered' where there is a continuing risk; see *Reporting procedures*—Victoria on page 5.

Note: 35 cases have been excluded from South Australia as there was insufficient information.

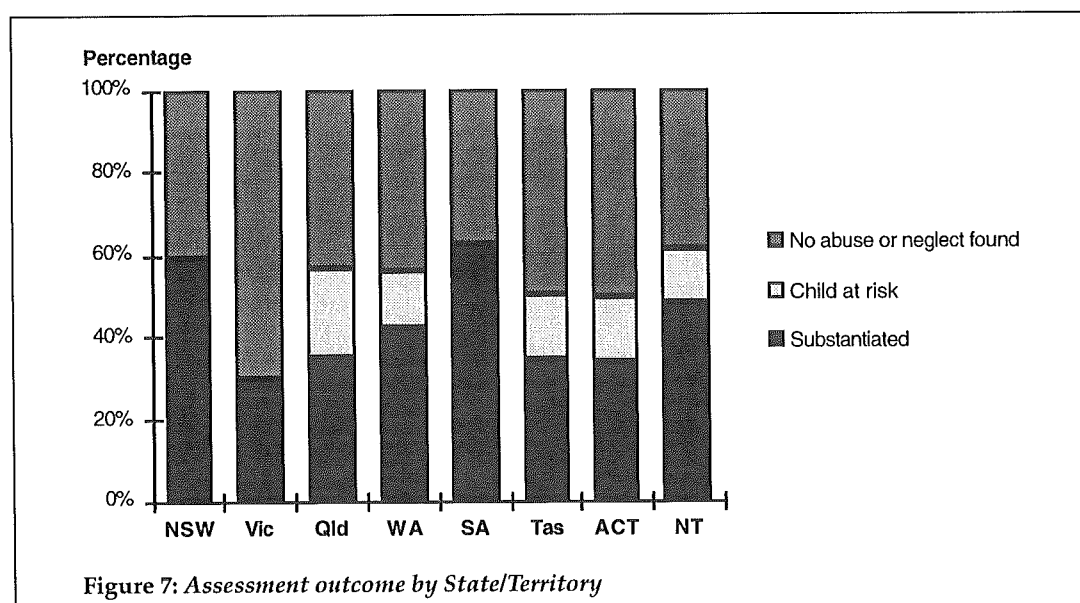


Figure 7: Assessment outcome by State/Territory

Table 4: Finalised cases: age of child by assessment outcome and sex, 1990-91

Age of child	Substantiated physical		Substantiated emotional		Substantiated sexual		Substantiated neglect		Substantiated total		Child at risk ^(a)		No abuse or neglect found		No action possible		Total cases										
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	P								
Months																											
Under 2	37	35	72	58	59	117	2	3	5	50	44	94	141	288	19	17	36	71	85	156	16	7	23	253	250	503	
2 and under 6	73	50	123	73	78	151	3	4	7	86	92	178	235	459	42	44	86	216	206	422	15	14	29	508	488	996	
6 and under 12	69	63	132	88	77	165	4	8	12	147	137	284	308	593	73	68	141	374	370	744	43	28	71	798	751	1,549	
Years																											
1	152	126	278	207	162	369	10	13	23	268	249	517	637	1,187	111	109	220	762	823	1,585	62	54	116	1,572	1,536	3,108	
2	168	133	301	175	145	320	40	84	124	268	240	508	651	1,253	145	126	271	883	906	1,789	80	75	155	1,759	1,709	3,468	
3	161	140	301	186	169	355	77	150	227	201	182	383	625	1,266	113	141	254	914	941	1,855	71	67	138	1,723	1,790	3,513	
4	174	130	304	188	165	353	100	258	358	186	175	361	648	1,376	125	143	268	787	879	1,666	56	59	115	1,616	1,809	3,425	
5	161	107	268	145	144	289	117	199	316	168	171	339	591	1,212	128	108	236	778	835	1,613	49	55	104	1,546	1,619	3,165	
6	150	126	276	135	151	286	110	207	317	179	150	329	574	1,208	85	103	188	641	760	1,401	34	45	79	1,394	1,542	2,876	
7	174	94	268	144	132	276	91	191	282	170	172	342	579	1,168	88	82	170	602	709	1,311	36	46	82	1,305	1,426	2,731	
8	184	122	306	126	126	252	95	189	284	155	166	321	560	1,163	64	86	150	578	638	1,216	36	40	76	1,238	1,367	2,605	
9	173	116	289	119	120	239	88	227	315	142	118	260	522	1,103	66	71	137	510	593	1,103	35	40	75	1,133	1,285	2,418	
10	190	121	311	131	120	251	83	270	353	132	109	241	536	1,156	64	67	131	492	572	1,064	20	28	48	1,112	1,287	2,399	
11	163	134	297	136	123	259	77	300	377	143	93	236	519	1,169	70	73	143	452	495	947	26	28	54	1,067	1,246	2,313	
12	191	173	364	127	157	284	91	297	388	107	85	192	516	1,228	50	73	123	402	436	838	26	31	57	994	1,252	2,246	
13	204	243	447	158	187	345	86	355	441	103	95	198	551	1,431	51	98	149	388	549	937	21	38	59	1,011	1,565	2,576	
14	204	316	520	136	236	372	75	396	471	74	86	160	489	1,034	40	98	138	339	585	924	23	53	76	891	1,770	2,661	
15	113	271	384	93	182	275	72	370	442	54	73	127	332	896	27	79	106	246	503	749	22	34	56	627	1,512	2,139	
16	37	94	131	33	54	87	22	147	169	16	23	39	108	318	14	41	55	120	273	393	11	17	28	253	649	902	
17	7	29	36	4	18	22	9	55	64	3	2	5	23	104	5	14	19	41	99	140	4	6	10	73	223	296	
Adult	1	2	3	-	1	1	1	8	9	2	2	4	4	13	1	-	1	6	9	15	2	4	6	13	26	39	
Unknown	32	36	68	25	30	55	23	65	88	40	36	76	120	167	13	8	21	191	229	420	68	45	113	392	449	841	
Total	2,818	2,661	5,479	2,487	2,636	5,123	1,276	3,796	5,072	2,694	2,500	5,194	9,275	11,593	20,868	1,394	1,649	3,043	9,793	11,495	21,288	756	814	1,570	21,218	25,551	46,769

M=males F=females P=persons

(a) New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia do not assign children to the 'Child at risk' category.

Table 5: Finalised cases: age of child by State/Territory, 1990-91

Age of child	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Number									
Years									
Under 5	7,023	2,797	4,074	1,189	582	438	225	234	16,562
5-9	5,873	2,461	3,198	929	610	415	193	116	13,795
10-14	5,545	2,099	2,615	735	546	389	141	125	12,195
15-17 ^(a)	1,171	1,034	640	183	142	142	60	4	3,376
Unknown	649	-	3	-	30	-	159	-	841
Total	20,261	8,391	10,530	3,036	1,910	1,384	778	479	46,769
Percentage									
Years									
Under 5	35	33	39	39	30	32	29	49	35
5-9	29	29	30	31	32	30	25	24	29
10-14	27	25	25	24	29	28	18	26	26
15-17 ^(a)	6	12	6	6	7	10	8	1	7
Unknown	3	-	-	-	2	-	20	-	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Includes 39 cases involving persons aged over 17 years.

Table 6: Substantiated cases: type of abuse and neglect by State/Territory, 1990-91

Type of abuse or neglect	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Number									
Physical	2,598	442	1,080	386	521	246	124	82	5,479
Emotional	3,395	986	532	60	85	21	30	14	5,123
Sexual	2,973	300	758	417	402	160	28	34	5,072
Neglect	2,645	699	1,130	360	154	45	65	96	5,194
Total	11,611	2,427	3,500	1,223	1,162	472	247	226	20,868
Percentage									
Physical	22	18	31	32	45	52	50	36	26
Emotional	29	41	15	5	7	4	12	6	25
Sexual	26	12	22	34	35	34	11	15	24
Neglect	23	29	32	29	13	10	26	42	25
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 7: Substantiated cases: age of child by type of abuse and neglect and sex, 1990-91

Age of child	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total		
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Persons
Years											
Under 5	834	677	975	855	236	520	1,206	1,119	3,251	3,171	6,422
5-9	842	565	669	673	501	1,013	814	777	2,826	3,028	5,854
10-14	952	987	688	823	412	1,618	559	468	2,611	3,896	6,507
15-17 ^(a)	158	396	130	255	104	580	75	100	467	1,331	1,798
Unknown	32	36	25	30	23	65	40	36	120	167	287
Total	2,818	2,661	2,487	2,636	1,276	3,796	2,694	2,500	9,275	11,593	20,868

(a) Includes 17 cases involving persons aged over 17 years.

Table 8: Finalised cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: age of child by assessment outcome and sex, 1990-91

Age of child	Substantiated physical			Substantiated emotional			Substantiated sexual			Substantiated neglect			Substantiated total			Child at risk ^(a)			No abuse or neglect found			No action possible			Total cases							
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P		
Months																																
Under 2	9	3	12	7	11	18	-	-	-	10	8	18	26	22	48	4	2	6	7	8	15	2	1	3	39	33	72					
2 and under 6	8	12	20	15	15	30	-	-	-	26	31	57	49	58	107	8	14	22	26	21	47	2	2	4	85	95	180					
6 and under 12	9	15	24	10	6	16	-	-	-	56	41	97	75	62	137	24	18	42	31	32	63	3	6	9	133	118	251					
Years																																
1	19	17	36	20	12	32	1	1	2	64	62	126	104	92	196	16	23	39	66	58	124	8	4	12	194	177	371					
2	14	15	29	19	13	32	2	6	8	42	39	81	77	73	150	20	8	28	56	48	104	10	7	17	163	136	299					
3	13	10	23	13	15	28	-	7	7	21	32	53	47	64	111	13	13	26	50	52	102	4	9	13	114	138	252					
4	9	10	19	16	14	30	3	20	23	23	29	52	51	73	124	11	13	24	59	52	111	3	4	7	124	142	266					
5	13	4	17	7	16	23	7	13	20	24	26	50	51	59	110	16	16	32	42	48	90	5	8	13	114	131	245					
6	12	17	29	11	7	18	8	17	25	22	18	40	53	59	112	15	11	26	44	37	81	4	5	9	116	112	228					
7	8	5	13	3	12	15	5	17	22	29	29	58	45	63	108	14	11	25	42	43	85	2	2	4	103	119	222					
8	16	9	25	17	11	28	2	14	16	21	30	51	56	64	120	8	18	26	39	41	80	4	2	6	107	125	232					
9	13	18	31	12	11	23	4	10	14	25	15	40	54	54	108	11	14	25	29	45	74	1	4	5	95	117	212					
10	16	15	31	6	12	18	4	14	18	20	13	33	46	54	100	8	11	19	28	44	72	5	3	8	87	112	199					
11	6	9	15	6	8	14	4	21	25	19	11	30	35	49	84	8	14	22	28	40	68	5	3	8	76	106	182					
12	16	20	36	11	13	24	5	15	20	13	16	29	45	64	109	5	13	18	29	26	55	2	2	4	81	105	186					
13	17	28	45	9	20	29	5	21	26	8	15	23	39	84	123	4	10	14	30	27	57	2	3	5	75	124	199					
14	14	31	45	4	11	15	6	23	29	7	8	15	31	73	104	3	11	14	15	30	45	5	5	10	54	119	173					
15	5	20	25	5	9	14	4	19	23	3	9	12	17	57	74	1	11	12	11	21	32	2	3	5	31	92	123					
16	1	7	8	1	2	3	-	6	6	-	2	2	2	17	19	1	6	7	4	8	12	1	1	2	8	32	40					
17	-	4	4	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	5	5	-	1	1	3	1	4	-	-	-	3	7	10					
Adult	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	3	4	-	-	-	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	4	7					
Unknown	3	4	7	4	7	11	1	-	1	10	7	17	18	18	36	-	1	1	19	20	39	5	2	7	42	41	83					
Total	221	274	495	196	226	422	62	225	287	443	442	885	922	1,167	2,089	190	239	429	659	703	1,362	76	76	152	1,847	2,185	4,032					

M=males F=females P=persons

(a) New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia do not assign children to the 'Child at risk' category.

Table 9: Finalised cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: assessment outcome by State/Territory, 1990-91

Outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Cases finalised									
Substantiated	1,098	37	468	272	60	13	11	130	2,089
Child at risk ^(a)	-	-	323	69	-	6	3	28	429
No abuse or neglect found	589	61	423	161	29	23	14	62	1,362
No action possible	52	9	65	13	3	-	1	9	152
Total cases	1,739	107	1,279	515	92	42	29	229	4,032

(a) New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia do not assign children to the 'Child at risk' category.

Table 10: Substantiated cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: age of child by type of abuse and neglect and sex, 1990-91

Age of child	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total		Persons
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Years											
Under 5	81	82	100	86	6	34	242	242	429	444	873
5-9	62	53	50	57	26	71	121	118	259	299	558
10-14	69	103	36	64	24	94	67	63	196	324	520
15-17 ^(a)	6	32	6	12	5	26	3	12	20	82	102
Unknown	3	4	4	7	1	-	10	7	18	18	36
Total	221	274	196	226	62	225	443	442	922	1,167	2,089

(a) Includes four cases involving persons aged over 17 years.

Table 11: Substantiated cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: type of abuse and neglect by State/Territory, 1990-91

Type of abuse or neglect	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Number									
Physical	215	9	128	73	26	4	7	33	495
Emotional	355	5	45	12	2	-	-	3	422
Sexual	165	-	52	47	14	1	-	8	287
Neglect	363	23	243	140	18	8	4	86	885
Total	1,098	37	468	272	60	13	11	130	2,089
Percentage									
Physical	20	24	27	27	43	31	64	25	24
Emotional	32	14	10	4	3	-	-	2	20
Sexual	15	-	11	17	23	8	-	6	14
Neglect	33	62	52	51	30	62	36	66	42
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 12: Substantiated cases: relationship of maltreater (person believed responsible) to child by assessment outcome and sex, 1990-91

Relationship of maltreater ^(a) to child	Physical			Emotional			Sexual			Neglect			Total		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Natural/adoptive parent	1,403	1,380	2,783	1,335	1,361	2,696	141	541	682	1,682	1,564	3,246	4,561	4,846	9,407
Step-parent	244	177	421	61	90	151	40	299	339	24	25	49	369	591	960
De facto parent	174	126	300	47	41	88	19	143	162	34	26	60	274	336	610
Foster parent	17	14	31	3	6	9	2	18	20	6	1	7	28	39	67
Guardian	9	4	13	2	7	9	3	6	9	9	3	12	23	20	43
Sibling	20	39	59	10	7	17	43	164	207	3	7	10	76	217	293
Other relative	54	56	110	21	31	52	83	448	531	41	54	95	199	589	788
Friend/neighbour	50	43	93	13	19	32	351	819	1,170	10	14	24	424	895	1,319
Other	367	418	785	520	596	1,116	333	638	971	455	432	887	1,675	2,084	3,759
Total	2,338	2,257	4,595	2,012	2,158	4,170	1,015	3,076	4,091	2,264	2,126	4,390	7,629	9,617	17,246

M=Males F=Females

(a) The maltreater is the person believed responsible for abuse or neglect.

Note: 1. Data not available for South Australia.

2. The table excludes 3,622 substantiated cases for which information on relationship of maltreater to child is not known (including figures for South Australia).

3. The table does not provide a category for cases where the relationship of the maltreater to the child was not known. Some of these cases have most likely been included in the category 'Other'.

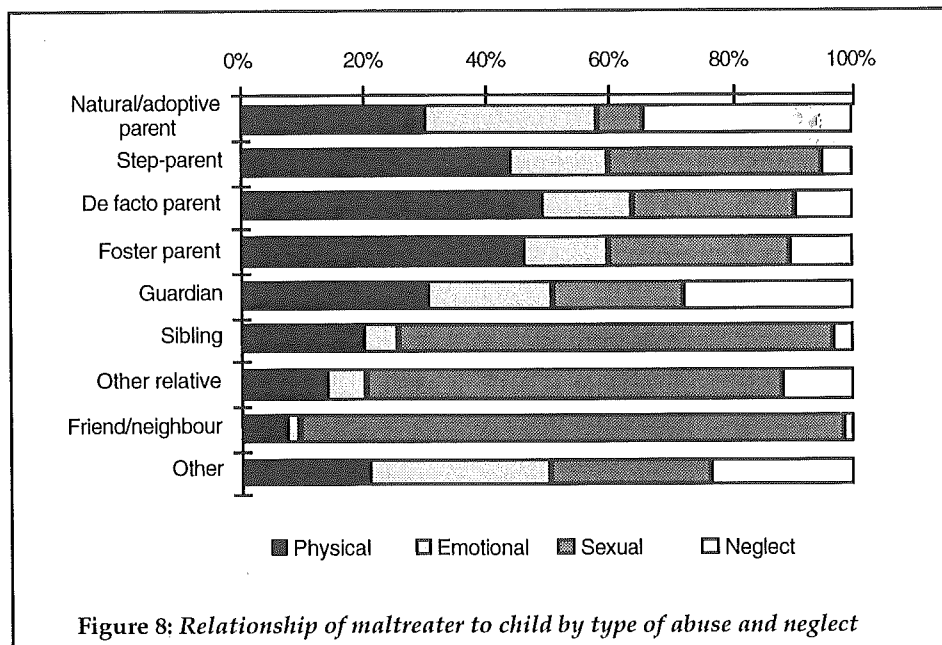


Figure 8: Relationship of maltreater to child by type of abuse and neglect

Table 13: Substantiated cases: relationship of maltreater to child by State/Territory, 1990-91

Relationship of maltreater to child	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Natural/adoptive parent	5,531	434	2,205	738	n.a.	211	179	109
Step-parent	400	73	324	77	n.a.	33	26	27
De facto parent	241	—	270	56	n.a.	23	9	11
Foster parent	48	—	11	7	n.a.	1	—	—
Guardian	19	1	7	12	n.a.	2	1	1
Sibling	171	13	69	22	n.a.	15	3	—
Other relative	448	37	184	67	n.a.	35	4	13
Friend/neighbour	857	18	237	129	n.a.	76	2	—
Other	3,338	6	193	115	n.a.	76	23	8
Total	11,053	582	3,500	1,223	n.a.	472	247	169

Note: 1. Data not available for South Australia.

2. The table excludes 3,622 substantiated cases for which information on relationship of maltreater to child is not known (including figures for South Australia)—558 in New South Wales, 1,845 in Victoria and 57 in the Northern Territory.

3. The table does not provide a category for cases where the relationship of the maltreater to the child was not known. Some of these cases have most likely been included in the category 'Other'.

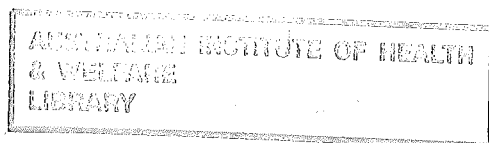
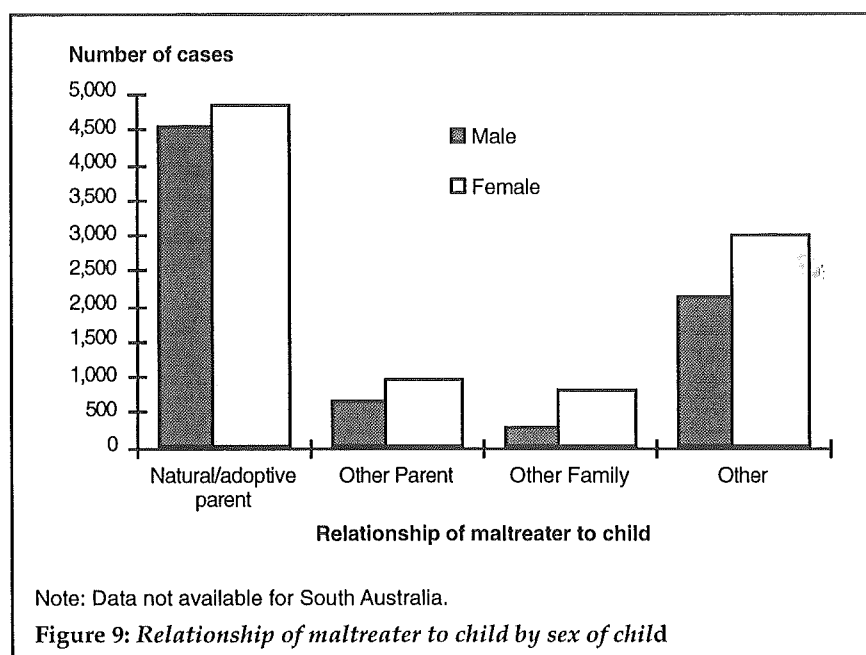


Table 14: Finalised cases: source of report by assessment outcome and sex, 1990-91

Source of report	Substantiated physical		Substantiated emotional		Substantiated sexual		Substantiated neglect		Substantiated total		Child at risk ^(a)		No abuse or neglect found		No action possible		Total cases										
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F									
Subject child	76	182	258	28	67	95	21	139	160	19	32	51	144	420	564	28	60	88	71	134	205	5	12	17	248	626	874
Parent/guard.	457	370	827	379	374	753	333	707	1,040	142	132	274	1,311	1,583	2,894	157	222	379	1,382	1,687	3,069	101	109	210	2,951	3,601	6,552
Sibling	12	13	25	9	6	15	1	13	14	6	4	10	28	36	64	12	17	29	41	42	103	9	10	19	90	125	215
Other relative	192	142	334	165	202	367	43	159	202	211	218	429	611	721	1,332	122	168	290	988	1,120	2,108	96	101	197	1,817	2,110	3,927
Friend/nbr.	263	243	506	303	337	640	86	245	331	589	516	1,105	1,241	1,341	2,582	335	320	655	2,437	2,541	4,978	143	143	286	4,156	4,345	8,501
Medical pract.	160	112	272	66	63	129	44	187	231	52	62	114	322	424	746	66	75	141	213	343	556	21	26	47	622	868	1,490
Other medical	66	62	128	80	90	170	23	64	87	68	49	117	237	265	502	16	16	32	164	207	371	8	6	14	425	494	919
Hosp./health worker	179	170	349	199	220	419	72	208	280	145	162	307	595	760	1,355	60	70	130	356	466	822	30	29	59	1,041	1,325	2,366
Social worker	250	228	478	336	347	683	146	403	549	270	255	525	1,002	1,233	2,235	119	143	262	599	758	1,357	62	92	154	1,782	2,226	4,008
School pers.	553	573	1,126	222	253	475	154	744	898	239	228	467	1,168	1,798	2,966	113	159	272	802	1,064	1,866	41	39	80	2,124	3,060	5,184
Day care	48	31	79	19	19	38	7	16	23	35	36	71	109	102	211	32	15	47	128	139	267	6	8	14	275	264	539
Police Dept. officer	213	249	462	347	344	691	238	627	865	499	408	907	1,297	1,628	2,925	92	145	237	919	1,118	2,037	51	67	118	2,359	2,958	5,317
Non-govt. orgn.	63	48	111	43	34	77	25	61	86	49	36	85	180	179	359	32	50	82	172	174	346	13	12	25	397	415	812
Anon.	55	74	129	113	122	235	26	78	104	73	85	158	267	359	626	22	21	43	218	272	490	30	21	51	537	673	1,210
Other Not stated	67	48	115	69	52	121	6	17	23	123	120	243	265	237	502	76	63	139	735	802	1,537	72	63	135	1,148	1,165	2,313
Total	2,818	2,661	5,479	2,487	2,636	5,123	1,276	3,796	5,072	2,694	2,500	5,194	9,275	11,593	20,868	1,394	1,649	3,043	9,793	11,495	21,288	756	814	1,570	21,218	25,551	46,769

M=males F=females P=persons

(a) New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia do not assign children to the 'Child at risk' category.

Table 15: Finalised cases: source of report by assessment outcome, percentage distribution, 1990-91

Source of report	Cases substantiated		Child at risk		No abuse or neglect found		No action possible		Total cases finalised	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Subject child	564	65	88	10	205	23	17	2	874	100
Parent/guardian	2,894	44	379	6	3,069	47	210	3	6,552	100
Sibling	64	30	29	13	103	48	19	9	215	100
Other relative	1,332	34	290	7	2,108	54	197	5	3,927	100
Friend/neighbour	2,582	30	655	8	4,978	59	286	3	8,501	100
Medical practitioner	746	50	141	9	556	37	47	3	1,490	100
Other medical	502	55	32	3	371	40	14	2	919	100
Hospital/health	1,355	57	130	5	822	35	59	2	2,366	100
Social worker	2,235	56	262	7	1,357	34	154	4	4,008	100
School personnel	2,966	57	272	5	1,866	36	80	2	5,184	100
Day care	211	39	47	9	267	50	14	3	539	100
Police	2,925	55	237	4	2,037	38	118	2	5,317	100
Department officer	359	44	82	10	346	43	25	3	812	100
Non-govt. orgn.	626	52	43	4	490	40	51	4	1,210	100
Anonymous	502	22	139	6	1,537	66	135	6	2,313	100
Other	737	39	181	10	854	45	105	6	1,877	100
Not stated	268	40	36	5	322	48	39	6	665	100
Total	20,868	45	3,043	7	21,288	46	1,570	3	46,769	100

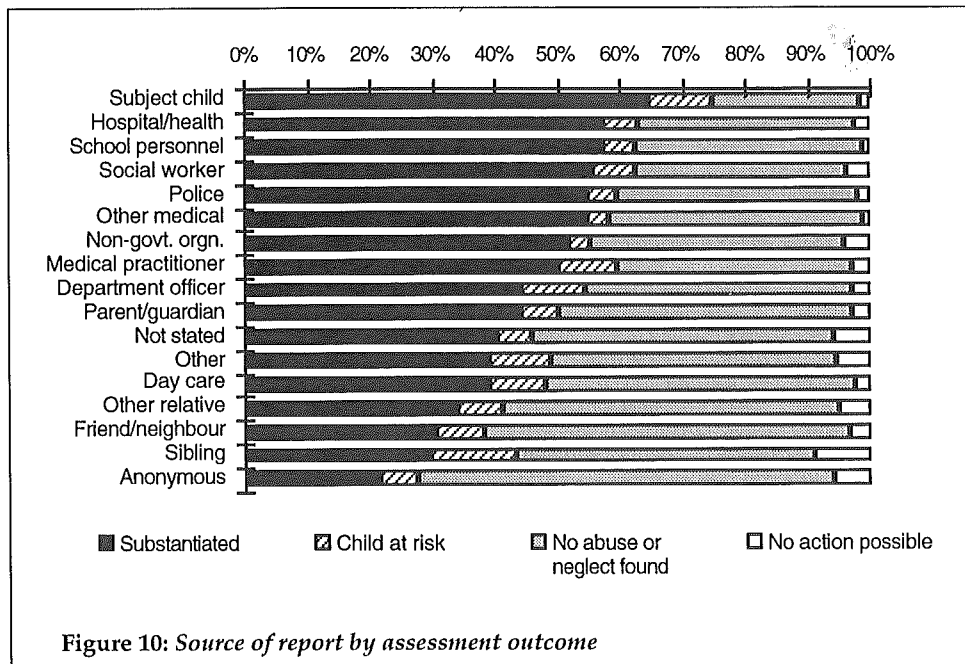


Table 16: Finalised cases: source of report by State/Territory, 1990-91

Source of report	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA		SA		Tas		ACT		NT	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Subject child	337	2	114	1	216	2	81	3	96	5	9	1	10	1	11	2
Parent/guardian	2,837	14	1,185	14	1,391	13	538	18	274	14	171	12	106	14	50	10
Sibling	n.a.	n.a.	40	-	91	1	27	1	31	2	10	1	14	2	2	-
Other relative	1,607	8	613	7	983	9	391	13	134	7	104	8	69	9	26	5
Friend/neighbour	3,456	17	1,168	14	2,748	26	599	20	178	9	161	12	121	16	70	15
Medical practitioner	614	3	197	2	410	4	78	3	96	5	79	6	10	1	6	1
Other medical	588	3	108	1	123	1	29	1	14	1	22	2	11	1	24	5
Hospital/health	1,221	6	502	6	259	2	214	7	23	1	58	4	12	2	77	16
Social worker	2,396	12	500	6	964	9	n.a.	n.a.	56	3	8	1	46	6	38	8
School personnel	2,549	13	708	8	745	7	346	11	443	23	229	17	104	13	60	13
Day care	216	1	121	1	138	1	26	1	9	-	10	1	5	1	14	3
Police	2,142	11	1,533	18	1,104	10	198	7	146	8	119	9	32	4	43	9
Dept. officer	188	1	213	3	n.a.	n.a.	129	4	47	2	195	14	40	5	-	-
Non-govt. orgn.	491	2	484	6	71	1	69	2	n.a.	n.a.	39	3	52	7	4	1
Anonymous	935	5	540	6	636	6	116	4	20	1	9	1	49	6	8	2
Other	233	1	365	4	651	6	123	4	316	17	108	8	35	4	46	10
Not stated	451	2	-	-	-	-	72	2	27	1	53	4	62	8	-	-
Total	20,261	100	8,391	100	10,530	100	3,036	100	1,910	100	1,384	100	778	100	479	100

Table 17: Children in finalised cases: assessment outcome by State/Territory, 1990-91

Outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Substantiated									
Physical	2,223	426	968	338	493	228	98	75	4,849
Emotional	2,660	931	468	49	67	19	23	8	4,225
Sexual	2,744	288	710	388	390	152	24	34	4,730
Neglect	2,175	667	979	334	131	41	52	90	4,469
<i>Total substantiated</i>	<i>9,802</i>	<i>2,312</i>	<i>3,125</i>	<i>1,109</i>	<i>1,081</i>	<i>440</i>	<i>197</i>	<i>207</i>	<i>18,273</i>
Child at risk ^(a)	..	..	1,820	383	..	199	88	55	2,545
No abuse or neglect found	6,406	5,640	3,536	1,153	675	633	286	174	18,503
No action possible	418	301	339	103	48	4	39	11	1,263
Total finalised	16,626	8,253	8,820	2,748	1,804	1,276	610	447	40,584

(a) New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia do not assign children to the 'Child at risk' category.

Table 18: Children in finalised cases: State/Territory by age group, 1990–91

State/Territory	0–4	5–9	10–14	15–16	Total ^(a)
New South Wales	5,557	4,851	4,557	953	16,626
Victoria	2,745	2,417	2,071	899	8,253
Queensland	3,293	2,702	2,237	521	8,820
Western Australia	1,052	847	672	149	2,748
South Australia	550	575	512	118	1,804
Tasmania	396	390	357	127	1,276
Australian Capital Territory	172	146	104	43	610
Northern Territory	213	110	120	4	447
Australia	13,978	12,038	10,630	2,814	40,584

Table 19: Reported cases: State/Territory, 1987–88 to 1990–91

Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
1987–88	22,729	3,539	9,812	n.a.	3,898	852	564	722	n.a.
1988–89	19,869	5,282	10,255	1,937	3,213	932	606	374	42,468
1989–90	17,599	8,262	11,190	2,390	2,900	1,163	n.a.	354	n.a.
1990–91	20,646	8,397	11,390	3,084	3,427	1,520	778	479	49,721

Table 20: Substantiated and at risk cases: State/Territory, 1987–88 to 1990–91

Year	NSW	Vic ^(a)	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
1987–88	13,498	2,018	4,768	n.a.	1,330	409	387	429	n.a.
1988–89	10,112	2,493	5,361	1,054	1,327	475	396	229	21,447
1989–90	9,429	2,950	5,831	1,294	1,165	333	n.a.	236	n.a.
1990–91	11,611	2,427	5,726	1,638	1,162	695	366	286	23,911

(a) Victoria figures relate to cases 'Registered' and are underestimates of the number of cases substantiated and at risk. See page 5 for explanatory notes.

7 Explanation of terms

Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she is associated. Following investigation of a report of child abuse or neglect, a subject child is recorded as Aboriginal when the child identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or when that child's principal caregiver identifies the child as such.

Age

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

Assessment outcome

The outcome of a case is designated as either 'Substantiated', 'Child at risk', 'No abuse or neglect found', or 'No action possible'.

Details of State variations are given under *Child at risk and substantiation* on page 5.

Substantiated abuse or neglect

A case is given an outcome of 'Substantiated' where there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has been or is being abused or neglected. Substantiation does not necessarily require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution and does not imply that treatment or case management was, or is to be, provided. See *Type of abuse or neglect* on page 28.

Child at risk

A case is classified as 'Child at risk' where no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but there are reasonable grounds to suspect the possibility of prior or future abuse or neglect and it is considered that continued departmental involvement is warranted. This term is used differently in Victoria, see *Child at risk and substantiation* on page 5 and *Reporting procedures for States/Territories—Victoria* on page 6.

No abuse or neglect found

A case is classified to this category where an investigation has concluded that there is no reasonable cause to suspect prior, current or future abuse or neglect of the child.

No action possible

A case is classified to this category where for any reason it was not possible to take action on a report of child abuse or neglect.

Case

A case is a report (or notification) of abuse or neglect where:

- there has been no previous report of abuse or neglect concerning the child, or
- where investigations concerning any previous report have been finalised, or
- the investigation relating to any previous report concerning the child is incomplete but involves allegations of a different maltreater or of a different nature.

A case can only involve one child; a report claiming that two children have been abused or neglected is regarded as two cases, even if it relates to children from the one family. A child may be the basis of more than one case in a reporting period; the number of cases does not necessarily equal the number of individuals. If an unknown number of children are reported, the number of cases will be determined during investigation. The count of cases in the tables includes only reports made in the reporting period; a case does not have to be finalised to be included in some tables.

Child

The definition of a child is based on the age at the time abuse or neglect is reported. The age differs across States/Territories as follows: for New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, a child is aged under 17 years; for Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, a child is aged under 18 years.

A small number of persons over these ages were investigated. Thirty-nine persons aged over 17 years are included in the figures.

A child may be the subject of more than one case. The compilation of data relating to children requires the identification of each child who may have been the subject of different reports in the enumeration period. There would be some double-counting of children in States which have a statutory authority as well as a department investigating abuse or neglect unless there was a procedure to identify the same child in both organisations.

Child abuse and neglect

Child abuse or neglect occurs when a person, having the care of a child, inflicts, or allows to be inflicted, on the child a physical injury or deprivation which may create a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or the impairment of either physical health and development or emotional health and development. Child abuse or neglect also occurs when a person having the care of a child creates, or allows to be created, a substantial risk of such injury, other than by accidental means. This definition includes sexual abuse and exploitation of the child.

Finalised case

A finalised case is one reported in the reporting year and closed by the following 31 August. South Australia used 7 August 1991 as the closing date for 1990-91.

Having the care of

A person is regarded as having the care of a child when they have either permanent or temporary custody, control or responsibility at the time of abuse or neglect, regardless of whether this is on a regular, part-time or ad hoc basis.

Maltreater

The maltreater is the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect.

Where there is more than one maltreater, the statistics are based on the maltreater who is 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 maltreater in this way, the maltreater is identified as the person who inflicted the most obvious form of abuse or neglect.

Parents and other relatives

Natural or adoptive 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 a child but is or was involved in a legal marriage relationship with one of the child's biological parents.

De facto 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.

Guardian

Any person who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child.

Foster parent

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

Sibling

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

Other relative

This category includes a grandparent, aunt or uncle, cousin, whether the relationship is of the whole blood or half-blood or by marriage. This category includes members of Aboriginal communities who are accepted as being related to the child by that community.

Report

A report of child abuse or neglect has been made when a person or organisation makes an allegation to a relevant authority that a child has been, is being currently, or is likely to be abused or neglected in the future, and a decision is made by the relevant department or authority that an investigation is warranted.

Source of report

The source of a report is that person or organisation who initially reports child abuse or neglect to a participating authority. The source is classified according to their relationship to the child or children allegedly abused or neglected.

Type of abuse or neglect

Substantiated cases are classified to one of four categories: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Where more than one type of abuse or neglect has occurred, the case is classified to that most likely to be the most severe in the short term or most likely to place the child at risk in the short term, or if such an assessment is not possible, to the most obvious form of abuse or neglect.

Physical abuse

Any non-accidental physical injury inflicted upon a child by a person having the care of a child.

Emotional abuse

Any act by a person having the care of a child which results in the child suffering any kind of significant emotional deprivation or trauma.

Sexual abuse

Any act by a person having the care of the child which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards.

Neglect

Any serious omissions or commissions by a person having the care of a child which, within the bounds of cultural tradition, constitute a failure to provide conditions which are essential for the healthy, physical and emotional development of a child.



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