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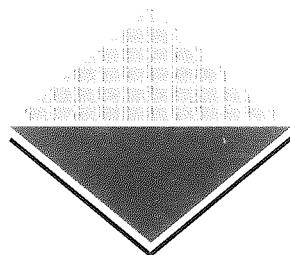
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**Child abuse  
and neglect  
Australia  
1992-93**

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**Graham Angus  
Penelope Zabar**

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AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF  
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AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND WELFARE  
CHILD WELFARE SERIES  
Number 9

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# Child abuse and neglect Australia 1992-93

Graham Angus  
Penelope Zabar

Australian Government Publishing Service  
Canberra

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# Preface

This report was prepared by Graham Angus and Penelope Zabar of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. It is the Institute's third report on child abuse and neglect and the ninth report in the Child Welfare Series.

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

Figures shown in tables may not add to totals due to rounding.

## 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

- It should be noted that this report, while containing considerable detail on the number and nature of abuse and neglect cases, does not include information about the level of seriousness of cases nor the type and extent of support services provided. These data would provide a more detailed and accurate picture of child abuse and neglect in Australia.
- State and Territory welfare departments received 59,122 reports of child abuse and neglect during 1992–93—an increase of 10.9% over 1991–92. Of these, the assessment of 55,895 cases was finalised.
- Of the 55,895 cases of child abuse and neglect finalised during the year, 25,630 cases were substantiated (46% of finalised cases). A further 2,543 cases (5%), were not substantiated but the child was assessed as being at risk. There were 25,483 cases (46%) in which no abuse or neglect was found, and a further 2,239 cases (4%) where no action was possible.
- The 25,630 cases of child abuse and neglect substantiated during 1992–93 involved 22,379 children and represents an increase of 19.9% from 1991–92. This increase has been influenced by a change in the reporting procedures in Victoria.
- Children of both sexes were represented almost equally in substantiated cases of neglect, physical abuse and emotional abuse, while females were the victims in the majority (77%) of sexual abuse cases.
- The largest numbers of children in substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect were those aged 13 and 14 years, (1,628 and 1,734 respectively)—a rate of 6.6 and 7.0 children per 1,000 respectively.
- A natural parent was believed responsible in 69% of substantiated cases, a step-parent in 6% and a de facto parent in 5%. Friends and neighbours were believed responsible for 7% of cases.
- The highest number of cases of child abuse and neglect were reported by friends and neighbours (17% of finalised cases), parents (15%), school personnel (15%) and police (15%).
- Reports of abuse and neglect from medical workers other than a medical practitioner had the highest rate of substantiation (64%), followed by cases reported by the subject child (60%), the police (59%) and department officers (58%). Reports from anonymous persons (18%), and friends and neighbours (30%), showed the lowest rate of substantiation.
- Nine per cent of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a much higher proportion than they represent in the population (less than 2%). The type of substantiated cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children differed significantly from the national pattern, with neglect cases representing a much higher proportion (40%) of total substantiations than for all children (23%), and sexual abuse cases represented a much lower proportion (14%) of substantiated cases than for all children (23%).
- In twenty-six per cent of substantiated cases of physical abuse in New South Wales bruising was the major injury. In emotional abuse cases the highest percentage of substantiated cases (26%) resulted from a parent's alcohol or drug abuse, while in a further 23% of cases the parent's emotional state threatened the child. In 43% of substantiated sexual abuse cases the primary abuse was sexual fondling. Forty-six per cent of substantiated neglect cases resulted from the child being left without adequate supervision.

# 1 Introduction

This publication presents statistics on child abuse and neglect provided by State and Territory welfare departments for the year 1 July 1992 to 30 June 1993 (1992-93).

The data provided by State and Territory welfare departments were sought according to detailed definitions, procedures and counting rules agreed to by the States, Territories and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Definitions used in the data collection may be found in Section 7 'Explanation of terms'.

The tables and figures in this report are based on data provided, so their accuracy is dependent on factors such as the scope and completeness of data collection, legislation concerning mandatory reporting, reporting procedures, policy guidelines and casework practices of the particular State or Territory. These factors may also affect the comparability of data across States and Territories. These matters are outlined in Section 3 'Child abuse and neglect in Australia'.

## 2 Scope and coverage

This collection includes all reports of child abuse and neglect made to authorised departments and relevant statutory authorities during the year ended 30 June 1993.

In Queensland abuse and neglect inflicted by a person living within the child's home is investigated by the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. The department will also investigate cases involving a person living outside the child's home where the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child, and cases where it is not known if the person believed responsible lives in the child's home. The Queensland Police will investigate all cases where a child is abused or neglected by someone living outside the child's home. Data on cases investigated by the police are currently not available and therefore not included in this report.

In the Northern Territory the Department of Health and Community Services investigates cases of abuse and neglect within the family and the immediate family circle (including Aboriginal kinship). The department also investigates cases involving persons outside the immediate family circle where it appears that the child's caregivers are unable or unwilling to protect the child. Cases falling outside this scope are investigated by the police and are not included in this report.

# 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. These allegations may be made to one of the above professional groups, to the State or Territory welfare department or to a specific independent authority.

An allegation 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.

Statistics are obtained from the various databases in the State and Territory welfare departments and sent to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare for compilation.

## Assessment outcomes

Following investigation, a department will determine an assessment outcome and finalise the case. In all States and Territories the outcome is designated as either 'Substantiated', 'Child at risk' (except in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia—see 'Child at risk and substantiation', page 6), 'No abuse or neglect found' or 'No action possible'.

Substantiated cases are classified as either 'Physical abuse', 'Emotional abuse', 'Sexual abuse' or 'Neglect'. If more than one type has been substantiated, cases are classified as being the abuse considered most severe, or most obvious or considered to be the greatest risk to the child in the short term.

Prior to 1992–93 Victoria designated the outcome of cases as 'Registered', 'Not registered' or 'No action possible'. 'Registered' excluded cases where there was evidence of abuse or neglect but harm was considered to be minimal. In 1991–92 these cases were classified as 'Not registered' and included in the category 'No abuse or neglect found'. In 1992–93 these cases are classified as 'Substantiated' in accordance with national definitions, resulting in a large increase in the number of cases substantiated for Victoria and in turn for Australia as a whole.

## Mandatory reporting

All States and Territories except Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have systems of compulsory reporting of child abuse. Family court staff are also required to report all suspected cases under the *Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975*.

## **New South Wales**

Medical practitioners have been required by law to report physical and sexual abuse 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, school social workers and school counsellors. Teachers are also required by Department of School Education policy to notify suspected physical and emotional abuse and neglect. The police service and department of health workers are also required, under their own departmental guidelines, to report abuse.

## **Victoria**

In June 1993 the Victorian Government legislated for mandatory reporting of child abuse by particular professional groups including doctors, primary and secondary school teachers, police officers, youth and care workers, social workers, welfare workers and other workers in the health, education, community and welfare services fields. The government decided on a phased approach to mandatory reporting so that target training could be provided and to enable protective services to meet the additional workload. Doctors, nurses and police were mandated from late 1993, primary and secondary school teachers from July 1994, and the other groups will be mandated progressively in the future. These new arrangements were introduced after 1992-93 and therefore do not affect data in this publication.

## **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 under the *Health Act Amendment Act 1980*. Queensland Education Department guidelines state that teachers are required to advise their principal of suspected cases of child abuse, but there is no legislation or policy that requires reporting to child protection authorities.

## **Western Australia**

While reporting of child abuse in Western Australia is not mandatory, there is a policy to educate selected professionals, including police, teachers, and health and prison workers, to report. The circumstances under which reports should be made to the Minister are set out, and agencies are relied on to follow those guidelines.

## **South Australia**

Under the *Community Welfare Act 1972*, the following professionals 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 and 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 professionals to report suspected cases of child abuse to the Child Protection Board: medical practitioners, registered nurses, probation officers, child welfare officers, school principals, kindergarten teachers, welfare officers appointed under the *Alcohol and Drug Dependency Act 1968*, guidance officers and psychologists.

## **Australian Capital Territory**

There is currently no mandatory reporting of child abuse in the Australian Capital Territory. *The Children's Services Act 1986* contains a provision that certain specified professionals (including medical practitioners, dentists, registered nurses, police officers and others) be required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse. However, this section of the Act did not take effect with the commencement of the Act and accordingly at this stage there is no mandatory reporting in the Australian Capital Territory. At the request of the Australian Capital Territory Government, the issue of the commencement was considered by the ACT Community Law Reform Committee, which published its findings in November 1993. The Government is currently considering its response to the recommendations of the committee.

## **Northern Territory**

It is mandatory for any person who believes that a child is being, or has been, abused or neglected to make a report either to a Family, Youth and Children's Services office of the Department of Health and Community Services or to the police, who will then notify Family, Youth and Children's Services.

## **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 in unsubstantiated cases children 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 in other States and Territories.

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'.

Other States and Territories use the category 'Child at risk' where no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but there are reasonable grounds for suspecting the possibility of prior or future abuse or neglect and it is considered that continued departmental involvement is warranted.

In the Northern Territory cases will not be classified as 'Child at risk' after 1992-93.

## **Reporting procedures**

### **New South Wales**

Under the *Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987*, the Department of Community Services has responsibility for child protection services. Their functions in following up allegations of child abuse and neglect include assessment, investigation, counselling, placement of children and conducting research.

### **Victoria**

Recent legislative changes in Victoria have resulted in the Department of Health and Community Services becoming the central investigation agency. The police ceased their involvement in receiving notifications of child abuse and neglect in 1992. The data in this publication, therefore, only relate to notifications made to the Department of Health and Community Services. The Department of Health and Community Services follows up allegations of child abuse and neglect; and this includes assessment, investigation, counselling and placement of children.



Due to changes in the data processing system in Victoria, detailed data for 1992-93 were only available from November 1992 to June 1993. Data for the full year have been estimated using 1991-92 and 1992-93 patterns. Complete data will be available from 1993-94. Also data relating to children were not available. A total figure was provided and the age, sex and assessment outcome break ups were derived using 1991-92 data.

For 1992-93, 160 substantiated cases classified as 'Other' abuse have been excluded from the Victorian data. These included cases of self-inflicted alcohol and drug abuse and cases of attempted suicide.

In Victoria a more restricted interpretation of 'investigation' is used than in the other States and Territories. An investigation by the Victorian Department of Health and Community Services involves a face-to-face interview. If data for Victoria were to include reports involving other kinds of investigation (such as telephone interviews), their values would be higher than shown.

### **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, including those of the police, are provided to the Child Protection Section of the Division of Protective Services and Juvenile Justice.

### **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 Development (DCD) 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 DCD or ACCCA, an unknown number of cases investigated or managed by outside agencies are not centrally recorded. Statistics in this report relate only to reports made to the DCD.

### **South Australia**

The Department for Family and Community Services (FACS) is the statutory body responsible for receiving notifications and investigating allegations of child abuse or neglect in South Australia. Its mandate is derived from the *Community Welfare Act 1972* and the *Children's Protection and Young Offenders Act 1979*. The police, who are required to report allegations of abuse and neglect to FACS, may conduct their own investigations or may investigate jointly with FACS.

### **Tasmania**

The Child Protection Board of Tasmania is an autonomous statutory body, which is empowered by the *Child Protection Act 1974*, and its amendments, to make arrangements for the care and protection of children who have suffered, or who are at risk of suffering abuse.

Investigation and case management are carried out by officers of the Department of Community and Health Services (DC&HS). DC&HS officers are also responsible for the investigation and case management of neglect cases, which are notified under the terms of the *Child Welfare Act 1960*. A small number of children could be both the subject of a neglect case and an abuse case, and be counted more than once.

The DC&HS 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 Australian Capital Territory 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 Community Advocate. Voluntary notifications are also received by the Family Services Branch and the police.

Notifications are investigated by the Family Services Branch and may be received directly from the community or referred by the Community Advocate. All information on notifications of child abuse is collected and maintained on a central Client Information System. This includes notifications referred from the Community Advocate.

### **Northern Territory**

Under the *Community Welfare Act 1983*, 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 notifications made to them. Investigations of alleged abuse and neglect are carried out by authorised Family, Youth and Children's Services staff. In cases of alleged sexual abuse and serious physical abuse the police are also involved in the investigation.

## 4 Child abuse and neglect 1992–93

State and Territory welfare departments received 59,122 reports of child abuse and neglect during 1992–93—an increase of 10.9% over 1991–92. (A report is defined as an allegation that warrants investigation). Of these, the assessment of 55,895 cases was finalised. There were 3,227 cases which had not been finalised by the close off date for these statistics, 31 August 1993 (Table 1). The majority of cases not finalised were in South Australia (922 cases), Queensland (918 cases) and New South Wales (877 cases). Figures for these three States represented 84% of cases not finalised. (An unfinalised case is one which does not yet have an outcome decision or recorded end date for the investigation) (Table 5).

### Assessment outcomes

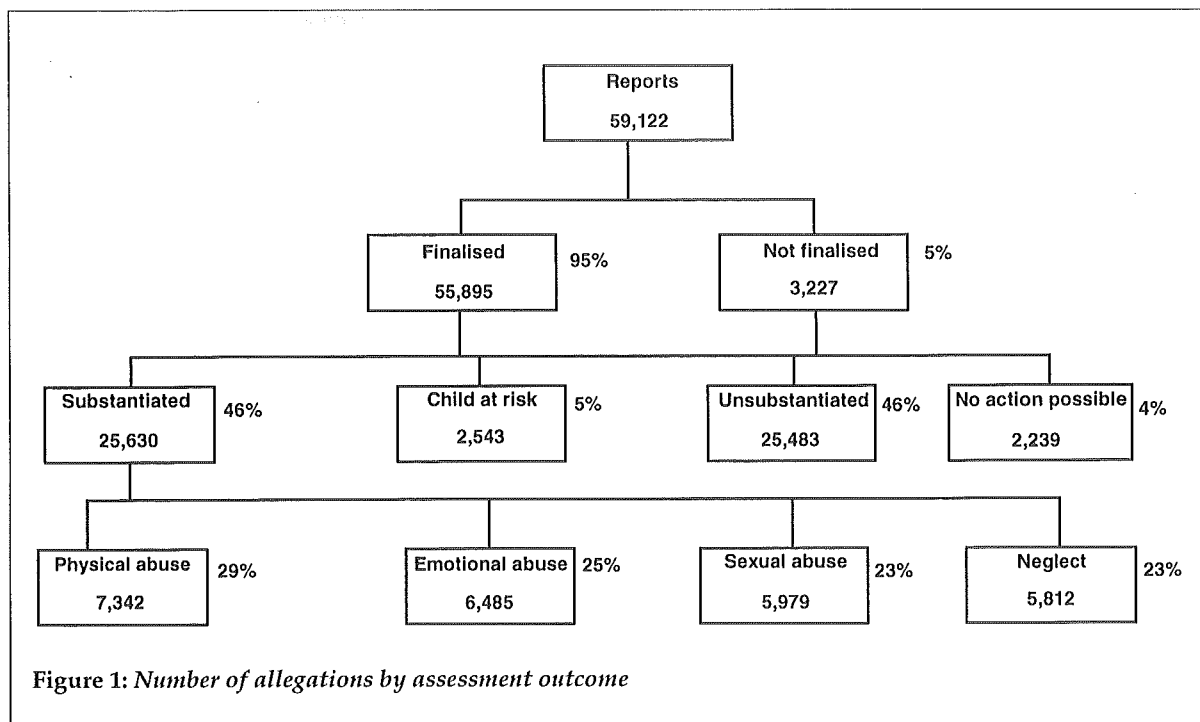
Of the 55,895 cases of child abuse and neglect finalised during the year, 25,630 cases were substantiated (46% of finalised cases). A further 2,543 cases (5%) were not substantiated but the child was assessed as being at risk. There were 25,483 cases (46%) in which no abuse or neglect was found, and a further 2,239 cases (4%) where no action was possible (Figure 1; Table 1).

The 25,630 cases of child abuse and neglect substantiated during 1992–93 involved 22,379 children, which represents an increase of 19.9% in substantiated cases from 1991–92 (Table 27). This increase has been influenced by a change in the reporting procedures in Victoria (see 'Assessment outcomes' in Section 3).

Table 1: Number of cases and children: counting units by assessment outcome, 1992–93

Counting units	Finalised				Total	Not finalised	Total
	Abuse or neglect substantiated	Child at risk <sup>(a)</sup>	No abuse or neglect found	No action possible			
Cases	25,630	2,543	25,483	2,239	55,895	3,227	59,122
Children	22,379	2,041	21,858	1,862	48,140	2,531	50,671

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



The proportion of cases substantiated varied considerably between States and Territories. New South Wales and Northern Territory had high levels of substantiated cases (55% and 50% of finalised cases respectively), while Western Australia and Tasmania had low levels of substantiation (31% of finalised cases, see Table 7).

When figures for cases assessed as 'Child at risk' are added to cases substantiated for the States and Territories that include this category, the rates are more even across the States and Territories (Table 7).

Tasmania and South Australia had the largest proportion of cases where no abuse or neglect was found (61% and 56% of finalised cases respectively), with Northern Territory (36%) having the smallest proportion (Table 7).

## Change over time

The number of cases reported has increased from 42,468 in 1988-89 to 59,122 in 1992-93, an increase of 39% over the four years (Table 27). Cases assessed as 'Substantiated' and 'Child at risk' increased from 21,447 to 28,173 (31%). Without the marked increase in Victoria due to a change in the basis of reporting this increase would have been approximately 22% (Table 26).

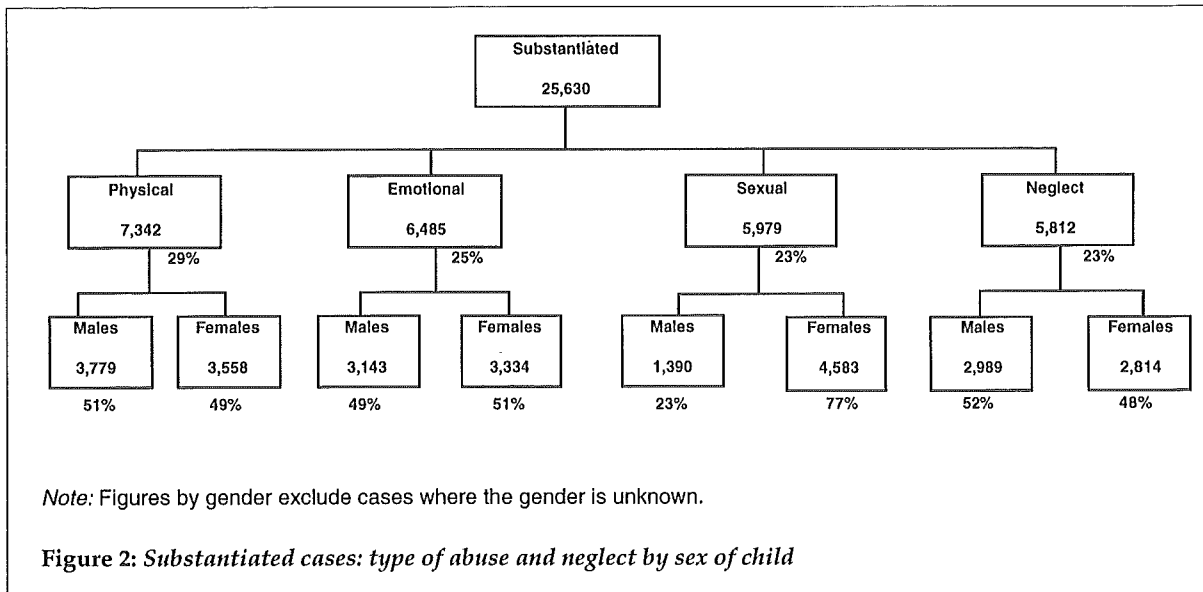
Since 1987-88 substantiated cases have increased at a lower rate than cases reported, although the reverse has been the case between 1991-92 and 1992-93 due only to a change in the reporting procedures in Victoria (Table 27).

The number of cases in all outcome categories increased from 1990-91 except for those assessed as 'Child at risk', which fell from 3,043 to 2,543 over this period (Table 27).

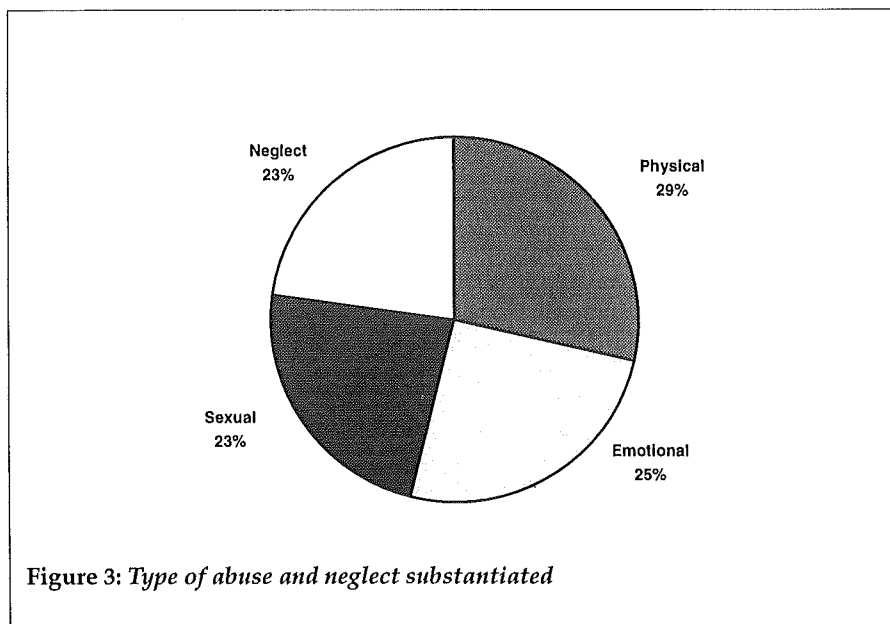
## Types of abuse and neglect substantiated

Child abuse or neglect is substantiated on the basis of information gathered during an investigation including contact with the subject child and family. The matter is considered

substantiated if, in the professional opinion of the officers concerned, there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has been, is being or is likely to be abused or neglected. The level of information or evidence required for substantiation is less than that required for criminal prosecutions. The fact that a case is substantiated does not necessarily imply that court action will follow.



The number of substantiated cases of each of the four types of abuse and neglect ranged from 7,342 cases of physical abuse to 5,812 cases of neglect (Figure 2; Table 10). Of substantiated cases, 29% were cases of physical abuse, 25% were cases of emotional abuse, and sexual abuse and neglect each comprised 23% of the total (Figure 3; Table 10). This is similar to the pattern in previous years.



There are major variations between States and Territories in the proportion of each type of abuse or neglect. The highest proportions of emotional abuse were in the Australian Capital Territory (33% of substantiated cases), New South Wales and Victoria (30%). The proportion of physical abuse was particularly high in Tasmania (48% of substantiated cases), the Northern Territory (43%) and South Australia (41%). Sexual abuse accounted for a high proportion of cases in Tasmania (34%) and Western Australia (32%), with Queensland (10%) and the Australian Capital Territory (12%) having the lowest percentages. Neglect represented a much larger proportion of cases in Queensland (34%) and Western Australia (30%) than in other States and Territories, with Tasmania (14%) and South Australia (16%) having the lowest proportions (Table 10).

## **Children**

A child can be the subject of more than one case of child abuse and neglect in a particular year. A comparison of the number of finalised cases of abuse and neglect (Table 6) with the corresponding number of children (Table 24) gives an indication of the number of cases involving children who have been a subject to another report during 1992–93.

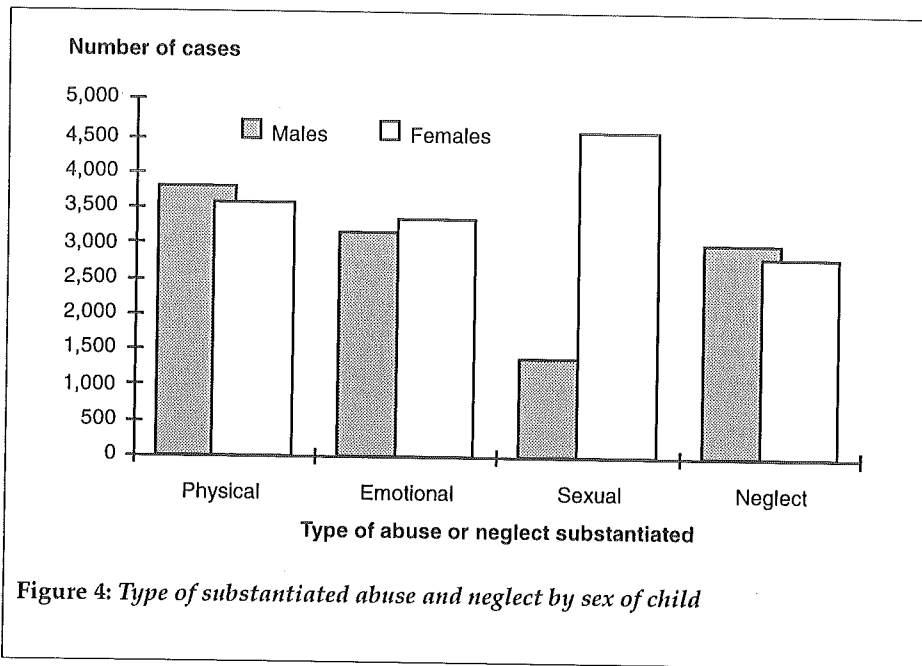
In 1992–93 the 55,895 finalised cases of child abuse and neglect involved 48,140 children—a ratio of 1.16 cases per child. The ratio for most ages was around this overall rate although it was slightly lower in the higher age groups. The outcome categories with the highest rate of finalised cases to children were 'Child at risk' (1.25) and 'No action possible' (1.20) (Tables 6 and 24).

Of substantiated cases the highest ratio involved neglect (1.20) and emotional abuse (1.19). Sexual abuse had the lowest ratio (1.07) (Tables 6 and 24). Children aged one year showed the highest ratio (1.22) during the year, with emotional abuse (1.27) being higher than physical abuse (1.23), neglect (1.18) and sexual abuse (1.09) (Tables 6 and 24).

## **Patterns of abuse and neglect by sex, age and type**

The pattern of abuse and neglect across age groups was not uniform, with more boys than girls being the subject of reports at the lower ages, and girls being in the majority in the older ages (Table 6).

Children of both sexes were represented almost equally in substantiated cases of neglect, physical abuse and emotional abuse, while females were the victims in the majority (77%) of sexual abuse cases (Figure 4; Table 9).



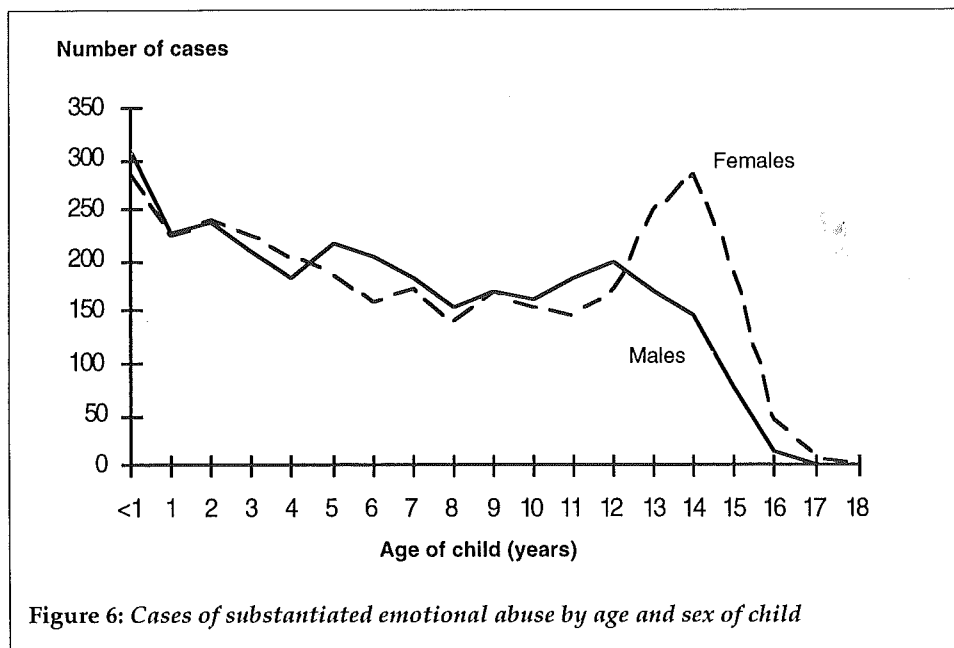
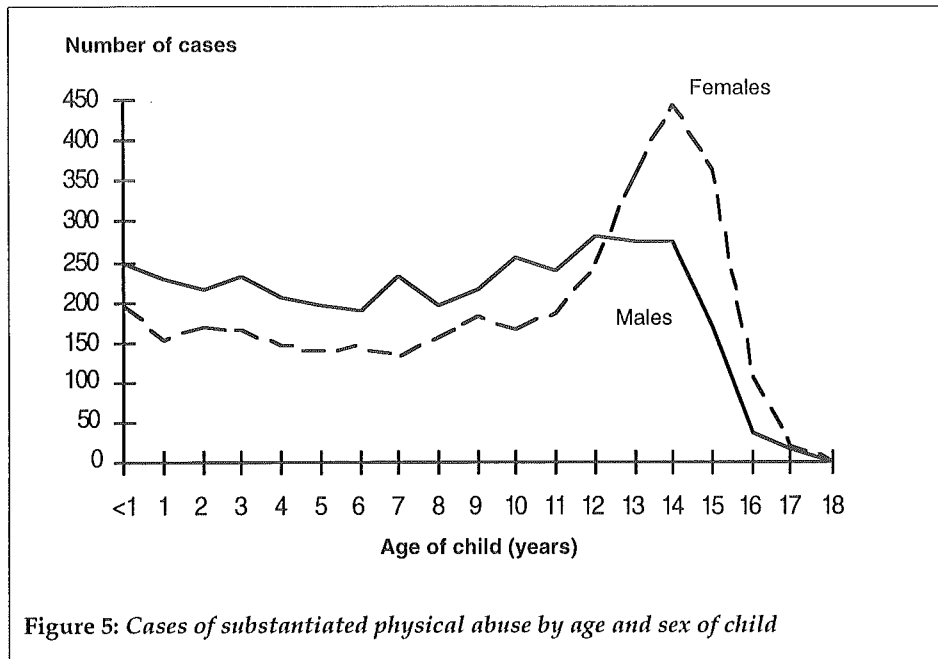
The largest numbers of children in substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect were those aged 13 and 14 years (1,628 and 1,734 respectively)—a rate of 6.6 and 7.0 children per 1,000 respectively (Table 23).

For substantiated cases of physical abuse, boys were the primary subjects at each age for preteenage children. However, more teenage girls than teenage boys were the subjects of substantiated cases of physical abuse, with the highest number of cases involving girls aged 14 and 15 years (Figure 5; Table 6).

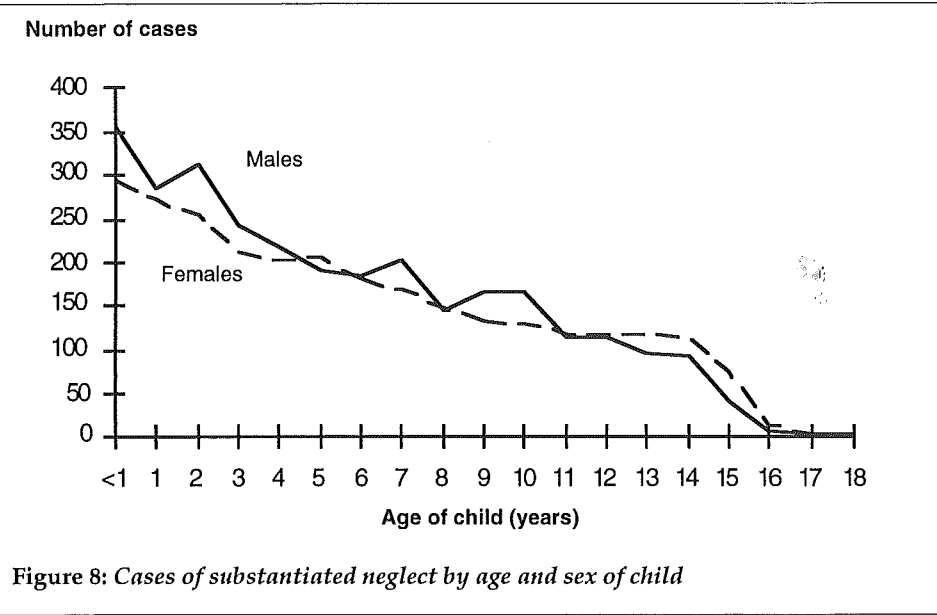
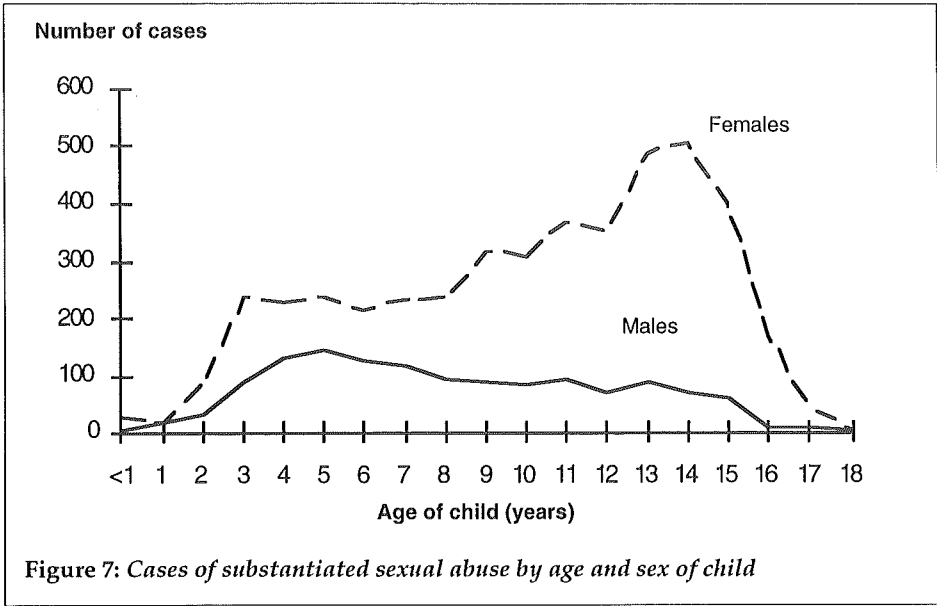
Substantiated cases of emotional abuse were highest among the youngest age group and showed a steady decline with age, except for a sharp increase in the number of cases involving girls in the early teenage years (Figure 6; Table 6).

More girls than boys were the subjects of substantiated sexual abuse cases at all ages, with the highest number of cases involving girls in the early teenage years (Figure 7; Table 6).

Substantiated cases of neglect were highest at the youngest ages, and showed a steady decline with age, except for increases in the number of cases involving boys at ages 7 and 9 (Figure 8; Table 6).







## Rates by age group and State and Territory

In 1992-93, 5.1 per 1,000 children<sup>1</sup> were involved in substantiated cases of abuse and neglect. Significant variation across the States and Territories underlies this national figure, with New South Wales having the highest rate (8.3 per 1,000 children) and Queensland (2.8 per 1,000 children) and Western Australia (2.9 per 1,000 children) having the lowest rates (Table 2).

The following table sets out the number of children involved in substantiated cases of abuse and neglect per 1,000 children by age group and by State and Territory.

**Table 2: Rates of children 0-16 years in substantiated cases per 1,000 children by State and Territory, 1992-93**

State/Territory	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-16	Total <sup>(a)</sup>
New South Wales	7.9	7.9	9.5	5.3	8.3
Victoria	4.3	3.5	4.0	2.1	3.8 <sup>(b)</sup>
Queensland	2.9	2.5	3.4	1.8	2.8
Western Australia	3.1	2.8	3.1	2.0	2.9
South Australia	3.9	5.3	5.2	3.5	4.9
Tasmania	2.4	2.4	3.8	4.2	3.2
Australian Capital Territory	3.7	4.3	3.6	3.1	4.6
Northern Territory	5.9	4.9	7.3	1.2	5.5
<b>Australia</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>5.1</b>

(a) Includes children of unknown age but excludes 151 children aged over 16 years.

(b) 1992-93 data on children are not available. The rates have been derived using 1991-92 data (see 'Reporting procedures' on page 6).

Note: Rates are calculated by dividing the number of children in substantiated cases by the estimated resident population aged 0-16 years at 30 June 1993, multiplied by 1000.

The highest rates of substantiated abuse and neglect occurred with children aged 13 and 14 years, 6.6 and 7.0 children per 1,000 respectively (Table 23).

The rate of physical abuse was highest for children aged 13 and 14 years (2.3 and 2.5 children per 1,000 respectively) as was the rate of sexual abuse (2.2 children per 1,000). The rate of neglect was highest for children aged one year and under (1.9 children per 1,000)(Table 23).

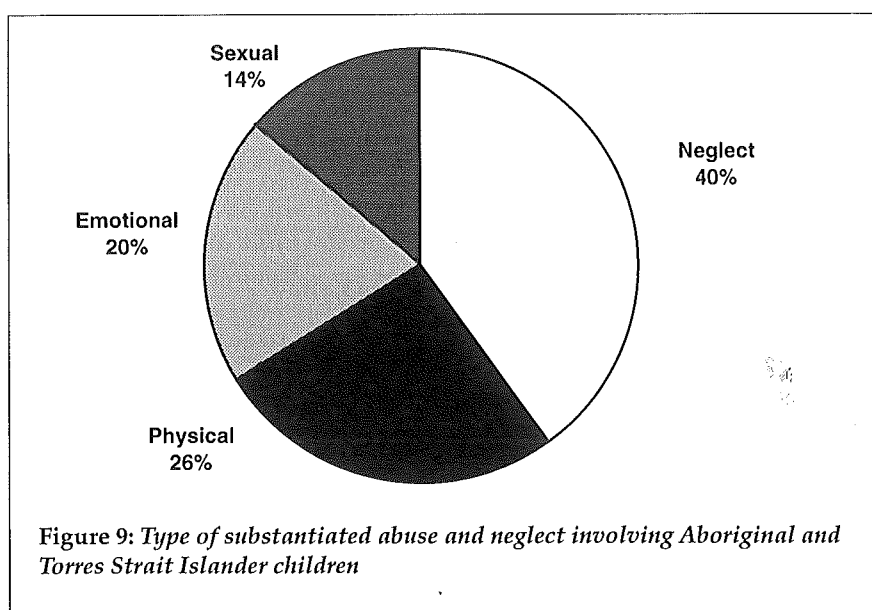
1. These rates are based on the number of children involved in substantiated cases of abuse and neglect per 1,000 population aged 0-16 years. These rates are not measures of the incidence of abuse and neglect, because not all cases of abuse and neglect are reported.

## Abuse and neglect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Nine per cent of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a much higher proportion than they represent in the population (less than 2%) (Tables 11 and 5).

The type of substantiated cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children differed significantly from the national pattern, with neglect cases representing a much higher proportion (40%) of total substantiations than for all children (23%). This pattern was particularly evident in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania where neglect represented about half of all substantiated cases involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children—more than 20 percentage points higher than generally for children in those states (Tables 10 and 13).

Sexual abuse cases involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children represented a much lower proportion (14%) of substantiated cases than for all children (23%). This was particularly the case in Tasmania (nil compared with 34% generally), Western Australia (16% compared with 32%) and South Australia (16% compared with 29%) (Figure 9; Tables 10 and 13).



Twelve per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children involved in substantiated cases of abuse and neglect were under one year old, compared with 7% for all children. This reflects the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in neglect cases, which are highest in the youngest age groups (Tables 14 and 6).

Thirty-one per cent of substantiated cases of abuse and neglect involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were cases of neglect of children under 9 years of age. The corresponding figure for all children was only 17% (Tables 12 and 9).

Ten per cent of substantiated cases of abuse and neglect of children aged 10 to 14 years were sexual abuse cases, whereas the corresponding figure for cases involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children was only five per cent (Tables 12 and 9).

## Relationship of maltreater to child

Natural parents (including a few but unknown number of adoptive parents) were identified as being responsible for the abuse or neglect in 46% of substantiated cases, and step-parents, de facto parents, foster parents and guardians were identified in a further 7% of cases. Siblings and other relatives were identified as being responsible in 4% and friends or neighbours in 5% of substantiated cases. In 3% of substantiated cases the person was someone other than a parent or guardian, sibling, other relative or friend or neighbour. In the remaining 34% of substantiated cases the relationship of the maltreater to the child was not specified, with the vast majority of these cases coming from New South Wales (Tables 3 and 16).

This pattern applies to each of the different types of abuse and neglect except for sexual abuse where friends and neighbours were identified as the main specified maltreater (19%) (Table 3).

Table 3: Substantiated cases <sup>(a)</sup>: relationship of maltreater to child by type of abuse or neglect, 1992-93

Relationship of maltreater <sup>(b)</sup> to child	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Natural parent	3,428	52	3,229	52	746	14	3,463	63	10,871	46
Step-parent	467	7	162	3	313	6	34	1	976	4
De facto parent	362	5	121	2	260	5	58	1	801	3
Foster parent	41	1	9	—	22	—	8	—	80	—
Guardian	17	—	9	—	3	—	12	—	41	—
Sibling	99	2	16	—	205	4	16	—	336	1
Other relative	89	1	57	1	560	10	48	1	754	3
Friend/neighbour	62	1	30	—	1,041	19	17	—	1,150	5
Other	92	1	58	1	486	9	31	1	667	3
Not specified <sup>(c)</sup>	1,929	29	2,544	41	1,817	33	1,833	33	8,130	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,586</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6,235</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5,453</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5,520</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23,806</b>	<b>100</b>

(a) Table excludes data for South Australia as details of relationship of maltreater to child are not available.

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

(c) 7,126 of these cases are from New South Wales: 1,664 physical abuse; 2,262 emotional abuse; 1,666 sexual abuse; 1,527 Neglect and 7 cases where the type of abuse was not known.

Substantiated cases in which a natural parent was believed responsible were mainly cases of physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Seven per cent of cases involved sexual abuse.

Over 45% of substantiated cases in which a step-parent or de facto parent was believed responsible were cases of physical abuse, with 32% being cases of sexual abuse.

Ninety-one per cent of substantiated cases in which a friend or neighbour was believed responsible were cases of sexual abuse, as were 74% of cases where a relative other than a parent or sibling was involved, 73% of cases in which a person other than a parent, guardian, sibling, other relative, friend or neighbour was believed responsible and 61% of cases where a sibling was the maltreater (Table 3).

The data are seriously affected by having 34% of records not coded to show the relationship of the maltreater to the child. When these cases are excluded, natural parents (including a few but unknown number of adoptive parents) were identified as being responsible for the abuse or neglect in 69% of substantiated cases, and step-parents, de facto parents, foster parents and guardians were identified in 13% of cases. Siblings and other relatives were identified as being responsible in 7%, and friends or neighbours were identified in 7% of substantiated cases. In 4% of cases the person was someone other than a parent or guardian, sibling, other relative or friend or neighbour (most of these are cases of sexual abuse).

Data on the relationship of the maltreater to the child across the States and Territories are also affected by differences in the scope and coverage between States and Territories (see Section 2, 'Scope and coverage').

New South Wales data are seriously affected by having 50% of records not coded to show the relationship of the maltreater to the child (Table 16). When these cases are excluded<sup>2</sup> from the New South Wales data, a natural parent is believed responsible in 65% of cases, a step parent in 4% and a defacto parent in 4%. Friends and neighbours and persons classified as 'Other' were responsible for 12% and 7% respectively (most of these are cases of sexual abuse) (Table 16).

Queensland has the highest percentage of substantiated cases involving parents—a natural parent was believed responsible in 74% of cases, a step-parent in 11% and a de facto parent in 8%. These figures are influenced by the exclusion in Queensland of cases of abuse involving persons living outside the child's home (see Section 2, 'Scope and coverage') (Table 16).

Tasmania, which has a wider definition of abuse than other States and Territories (see Section 2, 'Scope and coverage') has by far the highest percentage of substantiated cases where the person believed responsible was a friend or neighbour (20%) and one of the lowest percentages of cases where a parent was believed responsible (Table 16).

The Northern Territory showed the highest proportion of cases where the relationship of the maltreater was classified as 'Other relatives' (10%) and 'Other' (11%), which includes cases where the maltreater was related by Aboriginal kinship (Table 16).

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2. Of the New South Wales cases where the relationship of the maltreater to the child is not specified (physical abuse, 1,664; emotional abuse, 2,262; and neglect, 1,527), the maltreater is most likely a parent. Of the cases of sexual abuse (1,666) where the relationship of the maltreater to the child is not specified, the maltreater is most likely a friend, neighbour or natural parent.

## Source of abuse and neglect reports

Table 4: Finalised cases: source of report by assessment outcome, 1992-93

Source of report	Cases substantiated		Child at risk <sup>(a)</sup>		No abuse or neglect found		No action possible		Total cases finalised	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Subject child	762	3	92	4	362	1	58	3	1,274	2
Parent/guardian	3,841	15	323	13	3,694	14	266	12	8,124	15
Sibling	95	-	20	1	135	1	12	1	262	0
Other relative	1,751	7	266	10	2,677	11	240	11	4,934	9
Friend/neighbour	2,788	11	546	21	5,476	21	437	20	9,247	17
Medical practitioner	895	3	70	3	650	3	43	2	1,658	3
Other medical	601	2	18	1	283	1	34	2	936	2
Hospital/health centre	1,430	6	115	5	1,112	4	77	3	2,734	5
Social worker	2,175	8	154	6	1,440	6	148	7	3,917	7
School personnel	3,955	15	212	8	3,007	12	159	7	7,333	13
Day care	157	1	38	1	317	1	13	1	525	1
Police	3,850	15	260	10	2,187	9	265	12	6,562	12
Department officer	943	4	78	3	509	2	108	5	1,638	3
Non-govt orgn	840	3	48	2	558	2	69	3	1,515	3
Anonymous	445	2	104	4	1,745	7	151	7	2,445	4
Other	717	3	184	7	965	4	94	4	1,960	4
Not stated	385	2	15	1	366	1	65	3	831	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,630</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,543</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25,483</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,239</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>55,895</b>	<b>100</b>

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

The highest number of reports of finalised cases of child abuse and neglect came from friends and neighbours (17%), followed by parents and guardians (15%), school personnel (13%) and the police (12%). Friends and neighbours were clearly the highest reporters of cases assessed as 'Child at risk' (21% of such cases), 'No maltreatment found' (21%) and 'No action possible' (20%), while they were the source of only 11% of substantiated cases (Table 4).

Reports of abuse and neglect from medical workers other than a medical practitioner had the highest rate of substantiation (64%), followed by the subject child (60%), the police (59%) and department officers (58%). Reports from anonymous persons (18%), friends and neighbours and day care staff (30%), showed the lowest rates of substantiation. Friends and neighbours, the largest source of reporting, had one of the lowest rates of substantiation, whereas the subject child, one of the sources reporting least often, had one of the highest rates of substantiation. Professionals, including medical and health staff, social workers and school personnel, had a very consistent substantiation rate of between 52% and 64% (Table 17).

The type of abuse and neglect identified in substantiated cases varied according to the source of the report. Of substantiated cases reported by the subject child, the highest percentage (50%) involved physical abuse as did 37% of cases reported by school personnel. Forty-three per cent of substantiated cases reported by medical workers other than medical practitioners

involved emotional abuse. The highest percentage of substantiated cases of sexual abuse was reported by school personnel (32%) and parents and guardians (31%). Forty-two per cent of substantiated cases reported anonymously were for neglect as were 37% of cases reported by friends and neighbours (Table 20).

The major source of report varied between the States and Territories. In New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, most finalised cases were reported by friends or neighbours. In Victoria the largest proportion of cases were reported by the police (19%), while in South Australia school personnel were the highest reporters (25%). In Tasmania, school personnel and parents and guardians were each the source of 17% of finalised cases, while hospital and health centre workers were the highest reporters (16%) in the Northern Territory (Table 19).

Of substantiated cases of physical abuse, medical practitioners reported nearly twice as many boys as girls, and most reports from parents and guardians and other relatives related to boys. Most reports by school personnel and the subject child related to girls.

While only 23% of substantiated cases of sexual abuse involved boys, 32% of substantiated cases reported by a parent or guardian related to boys. Of substantiated cases of sexual abuse reported by the subject child, 88% were from girls (Table 18).

## **Substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect—action causing harm/ type of injury or harm sustained**

As outlined previously, child abuse and neglect is substantiated on the basis of information gathered during an investigation, including contact with the subject child and family. A case is classified as substantiated if, in the professional opinion of the officer concerned, there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has been, is being or is likely to be abused or neglected. The level of information or evidence required for substantiation is less than that required for criminal prosecutions.

As noted, there were 25,630 substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in Australia in 1992–93. Of these 7,342 were cases of physical abuse, 6,485 were cases of emotional abuse, 5,979 were cases of sexual abuse and 5,812 were cases of neglect. The actions causing the injury or harm, and the extent of injury or harm attributed to these cases vary considerably.

National data on the action causing injury or harm, or type of injury or harm sustained in child abuse and neglect cases are not available because some States and Territories do not collect or process it, and those which do (New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia) do not use the same definitions. Notwithstanding the lack of comparability, some data on injury or harm for New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia are included in this publication for indicative purposes.

### **New South Wales**

In New South Wales child abuse and neglect cases are classified according to the 'Primary actual abuse'. The classification of injury or harm data is a mixture of items which describe actions responsible for injury or harm to the child, and resulting identifiable injury or harm sustained by the child. Almost all of the physical abuse categories are types of injuries (burns, cuts, bruising etc.), although there are some actions (threats, administration of alcohol). The categories used for emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect cases are actions (verbal abuse, exposure, failure to provide shelter).

In 26% of substantiated cases of physical abuse, the type of harm sustained was bruising (13% facial or head bruising and 13% other significant bruising), with a further 36% being recorded as 'Other (physical)'. In 26% of substantiated emotional abuse cases the parent's

alcohol or drug abuse led to emotional harm, while in a further 23% of cases the parent's emotional state threatened the child. In 43% of substantiated sexual abuse cases the primary abuse was sexual fondling, with a further 22% of cases being vaginal or anal penetration. In 46% of substantiated neglect cases the child was left without adequate supervision (Table 28).

### **Queensland**

In Queensland, as in New South Wales, the categories used are a mixture of items describing actions causing the injury or harm, and items which describe the type of injury or harm sustained by the child. Queensland also has an 'Other' category in each type of abuse and neglect, but unlike New South Wales and Western Australia, Queensland also classifies cases in each of the four types of abuse and neglect as 'At risk of abuse'. The physical abuse categories are types of injuries (burns, cuts, bruising, etc.), although there are some actions (threats, administration of alcohol, etc.). The categories used for emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect cases are actions (verbal abuse, exposure, failure to provide shelter, etc.).

In 46% of substantiated physical abuse cases the major injury or harm sustained was bruising, while a further 42% of cases were classified as 'Other physical'. Seven per cent of physical abuse cases were cuts or abrasions, and four per cent of cases resulted in skull fractures, other fractures or burns. In substantiated emotional abuse cases, severe verbal abuse was recorded as the major harm sustained (24% of emotional abuse cases), with scapegoating and rejection being the major harm in a further 20%. Fifty-one per cent of cases were coded as 'Other emotional'. The type of abuse in 65% of substantiated sexual abuse cases was coded as 'Other sexual contact'. In 16% of cases there was penetration with violence or coercion. Thirty-four per cent of substantiated neglect cases involved the child being left unattended, and in a further 25% the child's physical needs were neglected (Table 29).

### **Western Australia**

In contrast to the other two States, the data collected from Western Australia show only the injury or harm resulting from the abuse or neglect. Although Western Australia uses the category 'No identifiable injury' in all four types of abuse and neglect, this does not necessarily mean that such cases are not serious. While the abuse or neglect may have no immediately identifiable physical or emotional impact, such abuse or neglect may have a long-term effect on the child's health and well-being. In New South Wales and Queensland such cases may be included in the category 'Other'.

In 59% of substantiated cases of physical abuse the major type of harm consisted of cuts or bruises, with a further 5% of cases being skull fractures/brain damage, other fractures, scalds or burns. In 26% of cases no identifiable injury was recorded. Emotional trauma was cited in 25% of substantiated emotional abuse cases, and 43% had 'No identifiable injury'. Emotional trauma was cited in 32% of substantiated sexual abuse cases, with a further 46% having 'No identifiable injury'. Thirty per cent of substantiated neglect cases were recorded as 'Other neglect', while 50% had no identifiable injury (Table 30).

## **Child homicide, 1989 to 1992**

An analysis of Australian homicide data by the Australian Institute of Criminology (see Strang 1993) has shown that during the three-year period from mid-1989 to mid-1992, 60 children aged under 15 years of age were killed by their parents or de facto parents, three were killed by other family members, and 12 by acquaintances; only three children were known to be victims of strangers, and eight children were killed by an offender whose identity was not known (James 1994).



Twenty-two of these child homicides were classified as resulting from deliberate abuse. All of these children were aged under four years, and 15 were less than twelve months of age. Six children were victims of fatal sexual assault and two were abandoned neonates (James 1994). Thirty-two children died as a consequence of a family dispute (including murder/suicides), while 12 were victims of the psychotic illness of the offender (James 1994). In the remaining cases there was not enough information known to classify the deaths.

According to the United States National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse more than 1,200 children died from physical abuse in the United States in 1989. Child abuse authorities in the United States believe that for every child who dies of abuse at least three more deaths are undetected (Sandrick 1994).

## 5 References

James M. Child abuse and neglect: incidence and prevention. *Family Matters* 1994 April; 37: 80-85.

Sandrick K. Image databases assist child abuse investigation. *Diagnostic Imaging* 1994 February; 11-15.

Strang H. Child homicide: incidence, circumstances, interventions, paper presented at the American Society of Criminology Conference, Phoenix, Arizona, October 1993.

# 6 Detailed tables

## Assessment outcomes

Table 5: Cases: assessment outcome of case by State and Territory, 1992-93

Outcome	NSW	Vic <sup>(a)</sup>	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Number									
<b>Finalised</b>									
Substantiated	14,290	4,089	2,743	1,519	1,824	416	445	304	25,630
Child at risk <sup>(b)</sup>	..	..	1,538	727	..	108	107	63	2,543
No abuse or neglect found	10,777	5,162	2,964	2,430	2,693	825	410	222	25,483
No action possible	784	462	333	301	297	-	41	21	2,239
<i>Total finalised</i>	<i>25,851</i>	<i>9,713</i>	<i>7,578</i>	<i>4,977</i>	<i>4,814</i>	<i>1,349</i>	<i>1,003</i>	<i>610</i>	<i>55,895</i>
Not finalised	877	185	918	2	922	249	74	-	3,227
<b>Total cases</b>	<b>26,728</b>	<b>9,898</b>	<b>8,496</b>	<b>4,979</b>	<b>5,736</b>	<b>1,598</b>	<b>1,077</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>59,122</b>
Percentage									
<b>Finalised</b>									
Substantiated	53.5	41.3	32.3	30.5	31.8	26.0	41.3	49.8	43.4
Child at risk <sup>(b)</sup>	..	..	18.1	14.6	..	6.8	9.9	10.3	4.3
No abuse or neglect found	40.3	52.2	34.9	48.8	46.9	51.6	38.1	36.4	43.1
No action possible	2.9	4.7	3.9	6.0	5.2	-	3.8	3.4	3.8
<i>Total finalised</i>	<i>96.7</i>	<i>98.1</i>	<i>89.2</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>83.9</i>	<i>84.4</i>	<i>93.1</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>94.5</i>
Not finalised	3.3	1.9	10.8	0.0	16.1	15.6	6.9	-	5.5
<b>Total cases</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) The definition of 'Case' in Victoria is more restricted than that outlined in the 'Explanation of terms' on page 48. (See 'Reporting procedures—Victoria on page 6.)

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

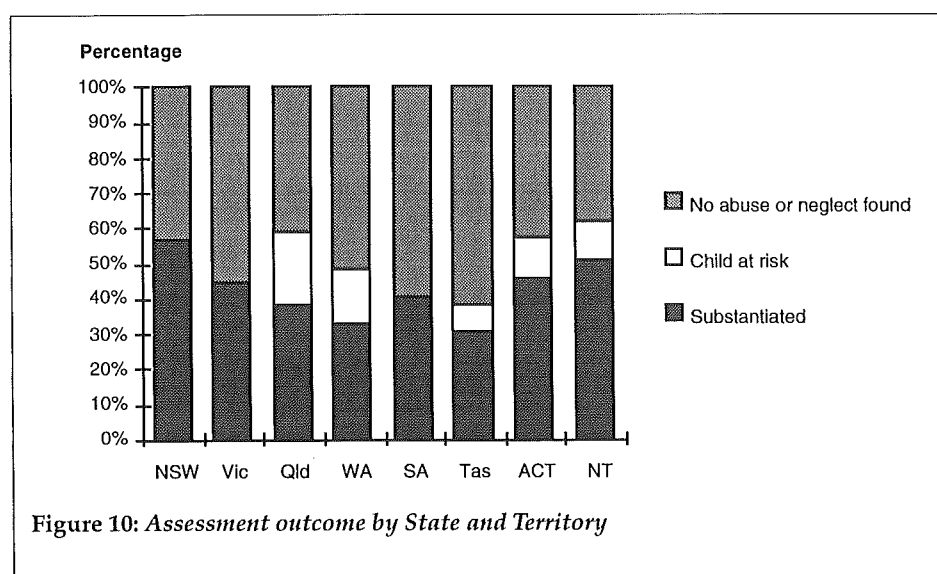


Figure 10: Assessment outcome by State and Territory



**Table 7: Finalised cases: assessment outcome by State and Territory, 1992-93**

Outcomes	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
<b>Number</b>									
<b>Finalised</b>									
Substantiated	14,290	4,089	2,743	1,519	1,824	416	445	304	25,630
Child at risk <sup>(a)</sup>	..	..	1,538	727	..	108	107	63	2,543
No abuse or neglect found	10,777	5,162	2,964	2,430	2,693	825	410	222	25,483
No action possible	784	462	333	301	297	-	41	21	2,239
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,851</b>	<b>9,713</b>	<b>7,578</b>	<b>4,977</b>	<b>4,814</b>	<b>1,349</b>	<b>1,003</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>55,895</b>
<b>Percentage</b>									
<b>Finalised</b>									
Substantiated	55	42	36	31	38	31	44	50	46
Child at risk (a)	..	..	20	15	..	8	11	10	5
No abuse or neglect found	42	53	39	49	56	61	41	36	46
No action possible	3	5	4	6	6	-	4	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

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

**Table 8: Finalised cases: age of child by State and Territory, 1992-93**

Age of child (years)	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
<b>Number</b>									
Under 5	8,745	3,442	2,970	1,863	1,348	389	433	248	19,438
5-9	7,593	2,796	2,232	1,597	1,548	401	239	165	16,571
10-14	7,104	2,677	1,985	1,159	1,184	375	177	183	14,844
15-17 <sup>(a)</sup>	1,513	750	391	285	340	147	51	14	3,491
Unknown	896	48	-	73	394	37	103	-	1,551
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,851</b>	<b>9,713</b>	<b>7,578</b>	<b>4,977</b>	<b>4,814</b>	<b>1,349</b>	<b>1,003</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>55,895</b>
<b>Percentage</b>									
Under 5	34	35	39	37	28	29	43	41	35
5-9	29	29	29	32	32	30	24	27	30
10-14	27	28	26	23	25	28	18	30	27
15-17 <sup>(a)</sup>	6	8	5	6	7	11	5	2	6
Unknown	3	-	-	1	8	3	10	-	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(a) Includes 70 cases involving persons aged over 17 years.

Table 9: Substantiated cases: age of child by type of abuse and neglect and sex, 1992-93

Age of child (years)	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total		
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Persons
Under 5	1,133	830	1,166	1,183	279	606	1,412	1,239	3,993	3,858	7,856
5-9	1,026	764	937	831	577	1,229	885	833	3,427	3,658	7,088
10-14	1,338	1,403	868	1,014	409	2,026	588	599	3,205	5,045	8,255
15-17 (a)	227	495	93	249	89	622	53	94	463	1,460	1,925
Unknown	55	66	79	57	36	100	51	49	221	272	506
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,779</b>	<b>3,558</b>	<b>3,143</b>	<b>3,334</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>4,583</b>	<b>2,989</b>	<b>2,814</b>	<b>11,309</b>	<b>14,293</b>	<b>25,630</b>

(a) Includes 23 cases involving persons aged over 17 years.

Notes: 1. Table includes 12 substantiated cases where the type of abuse or neglect is not known (three males aged under 5 years, two males and one female aged 5-9 years, two males and three females aged 10-14 years, one male aged 15-17 years).  
2. Table includes 28 substantiated cases where the sex of the child is not known (five aged under 5 years, three aged 5-9 years, five aged 10-14 years, two aged 15-17 years and 13 age unknown).

Table 10: Substantiated cases: type of abuse and neglect by State and Territory, 1992-93

Type of abuse or neglect	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
	Number								
Physical	3,380	1,148	1,085	508	756	200	135	130	7,342
Emotional	4,340	1,209	441	67	250	16	146	16	6,485
Sexual	3,809	589	286	489	526	142	54	84	5,979
Neglect	2,749	1,143	931	455	292	58	110	74	5,812
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,290</b>	<b>4,089</b>	<b>2,743</b>	<b>1,519</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>25,630</b>
	Percentage								
Physical	24	28	40	33	41	48	30	43	29
Emotional	30	30	16	4	14	4	33	5	25
Sexual	27	14	10	32	29	34	12	28	23
Neglect	19	28	34	30	16	14	25	24	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: The total includes 12 cases from New South Wales where the type of abuse or neglect is not known.

## Abuse and neglect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Table 11: Finalised cases involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: assessment outcome by State and Territory, 1992–93

Outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
	Number								
<b>Finalised</b>									
Substantiated	1,044	125	452	375	129	12	43	142	2,322
Child at risk <sup>(a)</sup>	..	..	210	156	..	2	6	39	413
No abuse or neglect found	520	228	365	415	169	13	24	92	1,826
No action possible	55	–	58	48	16	–	8	5	190
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,619</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>4,751</b>
	Percentage								
<b>Finalised</b>									
Substantiated	64	35	42	38	41	44	53	51	49
Child at risk <sup>(a)</sup>	..	..	19	16	..	7	7	14	9
No abuse or neglect found	32	65	34	42	54	48	30	33	38
No action possible	3	–	5	5	5	–	10	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

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

Table 12: Substantiated cases involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: age of child by type of abuse and neglect and sex, 1992–93

Age of child (years)	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total		Persons
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Under 5	99	97	90	114	19	44	237	232	445	487	932
5–9	68	60	72	70	24	87	123	135	287	352	639
10–14	109	119	34	56	17	100	87	79	247	354	601
15–17 <sup>(a)</sup>	20	19	2	16	2	32	4	13	28	80	108
Unknown	4	3	6	5	2	2	11	9	23	19	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>1,292</b>	<b>2,322</b>

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

**Table 13: Substantiated cases involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: type of abuse and neglect by State and Territory, 1992-93**

Type of abuse or neglect	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
	<b>Number</b>								
Physical	204	21	144	115	48	6	10	50	598
Emotional	330	34	43	13	25	..	17	3	465
Sexual	184	9	18	61	20	..	1	36	329
Neglect	326	61	247	186	36	6	15	53	930
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,044</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>2,322</b>
	<b>Percentage</b>								
Physical	20	17	32	31	37	50	23	35	26
Emotional	32	27	10	3	19	..	40	2	20
Sexual	18	7	4	16	16	..	2	25	14
Neglect	31	49	55	50	28	50	35	37	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



Table 14: Finalised cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: age of child by assessment outcome and sex, 1992-93

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				
<b>Months</b>																															
Under 2	6	4	10	7	13	20	-	-	-	10	12	22	23	29	52	-	5	5	11	6	17	1	-	1	35	40	75				
2 and under 6	10	14	24	8	16	24	-	-	-	29	22	51	47	52	99	5	7	12	22	18	40	2	3	5	76	80	156				
6 and under 12	15	22	37	9	6	15	-	4	4	40	28	68	64	60	124	19	19	38	56	70	126	6	2	8	145	151	296				
<b>Years</b>																															
1	16	22	38	18	18	36	1	2	3	46	65	111	81	107	188	27	22	49	65	83	148	15	5	20	188	217	405				
2	22	18	40	19	27	46	2	6	8	42	40	82	85	91	176	22	16	38	75	86	162	12	13	25	194	206	401				
3	17	8	25	17	18	35	5	16	21	34	35	69	73	77	150	16	12	28	76	89	165	10	9	19	175	187	362				
4	13	9	22	12	16	28	11	16	27	36	30	66	72	71	143	16	14	30	72	60	132	7	5	12	167	150	317				
5	12	10	22	16	15	31	7	19	26	20	34	54	55	78	133	11	19	30	64	68	132	6	11	17	136	176	312				
6	7	10	17	17	14	31	5	17	22	24	24	48	53	65	118	7	11	18	55	70	125	4	6	10	119	152	271				
7	20	14	34	14	19	33	7	11	18	32	26	58	73	70	143	12	16	28	35	54	89	4	2	6	124	142	266				
8	16	15	31	12	13	25	2	17	19	23	27	50	53	72	125	7	13	20	50	50	100	1	5	6	111	140	251				
9	13	11	24	13	9	22	3	23	26	24	24	48	53	67	120	13	13	26	45	56	101	5	3	8	116	139	255				
10	26	22	48	8	11	19	1	16	17	27	20	47	62	69	131	5	6	11	46	59	106	10	1	11	123	135	259				
11	19	17	36	12	9	21	6	24	30	18	17	35	55	67	122	4	10	14	35	45	79	5	1	6	99	123	221				
12	22	24	46	6	9	15	5	14	19	17	13	30	50	60	110	8	9	17	29	55	83	5	1	6	92	125	216				
13	21	27	48	5	12	17	4	23	27	16	18	34	46	80	126	13	9	22	28	40	68	5	5	10	92	134	226				
14	21	29	50	3	15	18	1	23	24	9	11	20	34	78	112	3	7	10	22	38	60	1	3	4	60	126	186				
15	15	15	30	2	10	12	1	20	21	4	12	16	22	57	79	5	6	11	6	19	25	2	5	7	35	87	122				
16	4	4	8	-	3	3	-	8	8	-	-	-	4	15	19	-	-	-	4	6	10	-	-	-	8	21	29				
17	1	-	1	-	3	3	1	2	3	-	1	1	2	6	8	-	-	-	1	4	5	-	-	-	3	10	13				
Adult	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	3	-	-	-	2	5	7				
Unknown	4	3	7	6	5	11	2	2	4	11	9	20	23	19	42	-	4	4	26	26	53	4	5	9	53	54	108				
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>1,292</b>	<b>2,322</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>1,826</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>2,149</b>	<b>2,598</b>	<b>4,751</b>				

M=males F=females P=persons

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

Note: Table includes four cases assessed as 'No abuse or neglect found' where the sex of the child is not known.

# Relationship of maltreater to child

Table 15: Substantiated cases: relationship of maltreater to child by assessment outcome and sex, 1992-93

Relationship of maltreater <sup>(a)</sup> to child	Physical			Emotional			Sexual			Neglect			Total		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Natural parent	1,738	1,688	3,428	1,518	1,711	3,229	159	587	746	1,814	1,648	3,463	5,231	5,637	10,871
Step-parent	279	188	467	84	78	162	29	284	313	18	16	34	410	566	976
De facto parent	199	163	362	48	73	121	33	227	260	36	22	58	316	485	801
Foster parent	23	18	41	6	3	9	4	18	22	6	2	8	39	41	80
Guardian	7	10	17	1	8	9	-	3	3	8	4	12	16	25	41
Sibling	36	62	99	6	10	16	42	163	205	9	7	16	93	242	336
Other relative	41	48	89	22	35	57	112	448	560	15	33	48	190	564	754
Friend/neighbour	32	30	62	15	15	30	262	777	1,041	9	8	17	318	830	1,150
Other	50	42	92	30	28	58	141	345	486	15	16	31	236	431	667
Not specified	963	966	1,929	1,301	1,238	2,544	496	1,318	1,817	924	903	1,833	3,690	4,426	8,130
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,368</b>	<b>3,215</b>	<b>6,586</b>	<b>3,031</b>	<b>3,199</b>	<b>6,235</b>	<b>1,278</b>	<b>4,170</b>	<b>5,453</b>	<b>2,854</b>	<b>2,659</b>	<b>5,520</b>	<b>10,539</b>	<b>13,247</b>	<b>23,806</b>

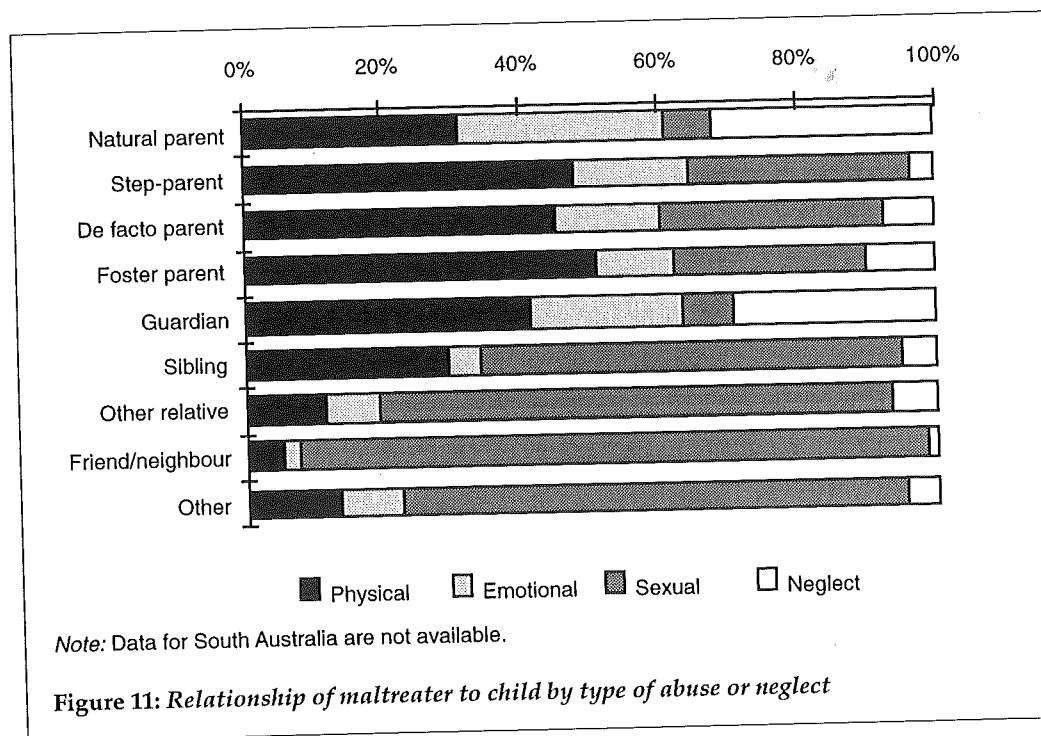
M=males F=females P=persons

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

Notes: 1. The table excludes South Australia, for which data are not available.

2. The 'Persons' column includes an additional 20 cases where the sex of the child is not known (three physical abuse, five emotional abuse, five sexual abuse and seven neglect).

3. The 'Total' columns include an additional 12 cases where the type of abuse or neglect is not known (eight males and four females).

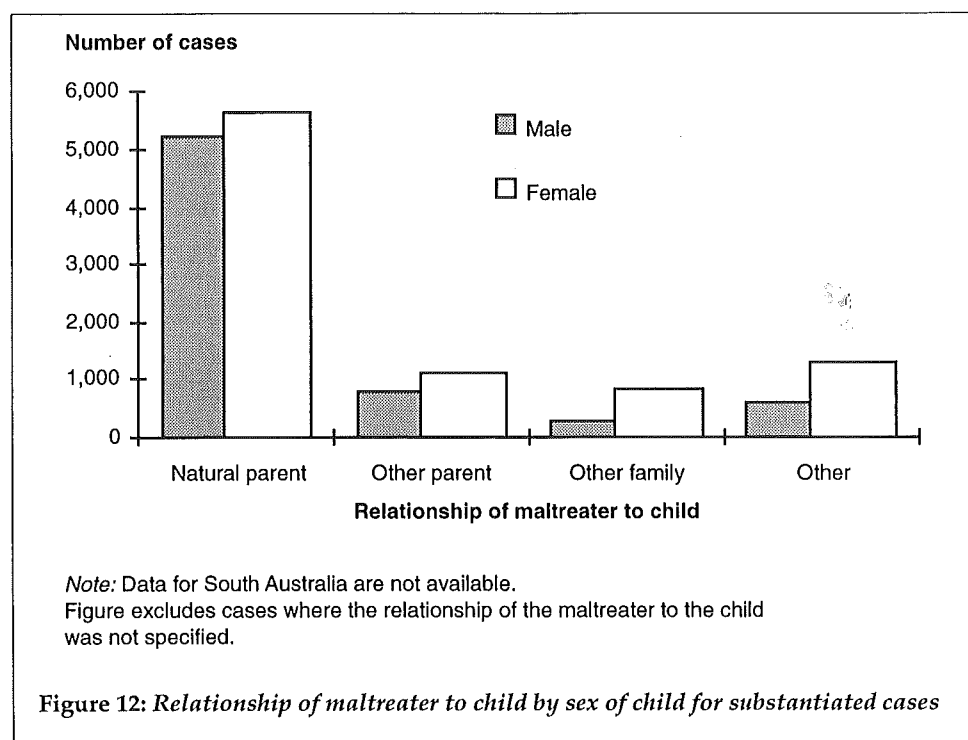


**Table 16: Substantiated cases: relationship of maltreater to child by State and Territory, 1992-93**

Relationship of maltreater <sup>(a)</sup> to child	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA		Tas		ACT		NT	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Natural parent	4,626	32	2,582	63	2,018	74	986	65	155	37	299	67	205	67
Step-parent	293	2	242	6	289	11	78	5	24	6	25	6	25	8
De facto parent	292	2	152	4	224	8	84	6	19	5	22	5	8	3
Foster parent	31	-	8	-	31	1	7	-	1	-	2	-	-	-
Guardian	14	-	2	-	7	-	14	1	3	1	-	-	1	-
Sibling	178	1	77	2	37	1	28	2	6	1	8	2	2	1
Other relative	401	3	123	3	64	2	101	7	16	4	18	4	31	10
Friend/neighbour	856	6	74	2	16	1	112	7	85	20	7	2	-	-
Other	473	3	17	-	57	2	78	5	-	-	10	2	32	11
Not specified	7,126	50	812	20	-	-	31	2	107	26	54	12	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,290</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,089</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,743</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,519</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>100</b>

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

Note: The table excludes South Australia, for which data are not available.



## Source of abuse and neglect reports

Table 17: Finalised cases: source of report by assessment outcome, 1992-93

Source of report	Cases substantiated		Child at risk <sup>(a)</sup>		No abuse or neglect found		No action possible		Total cases finalised	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Subject child	762	60	92	7	362	28	58	5	1,274	100
Parent/guardian	3,841	47	323	4	3,694	45	266	3	8,124	100
Sibling	95	36	20	8	135	51	12	5	262	100
Other relative	1,751	35	266	5	2,677	54	240	5	4,934	100
Friend/neighbour	2,788	30	546	6	5,476	59	437	5	9,247	100
Medical practitioner	895	54	70	4	650	39	43	3	1,658	100
Other medical	601	64	18	2	283	30	34	4	936	100
Hospital/health centre	1,430	52	115	4	1,112	41	77	3	2,734	100
Social worker	2,175	56	154	4	1,440	37	148	4	3,917	100
School personnel	3,955	54	212	3	3,007	41	159	2	7,333	100
Day care	157	30	38	7	317	60	13	2	525	100
Police	3,850	59	260	4	2,187	33	265	4	6,562	100
Department officer	943	58	78	5	509	31	108	7	1,638	100
Non-govt orgn	840	55	48	3	558	37	69	5	1,515	100
Anonymous	445	18	104	4	1,745	71	151	6	2,445	100
Other	717	37	184	9	965	49	94	5	1,960	100
Not stated	385	46	15	2	366	44	65	8	831	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,630</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2,543</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25,483</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2,239</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>55,895</b>	<b>100</b>

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

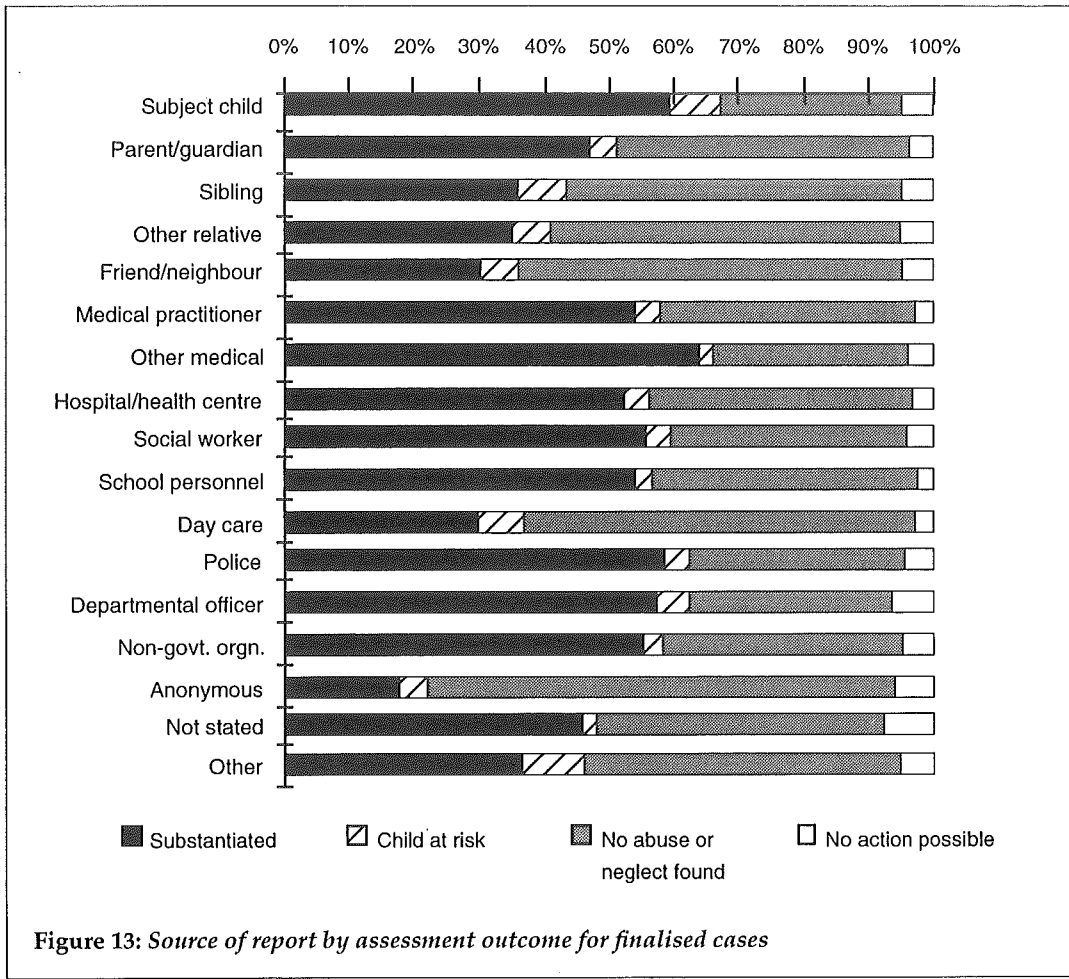


Table 18: Finalised cases: source of report by assessment outcome and sex 1992-93

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																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																						
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Subject child	160	223	383	52	95	148	23	174	197	12	22	34	247	514	762	32	60	92	137	225	362	17	41	58	433	840	1,274	717	544	1,262	513	455	968	383	813	1,196	214	201	415	1,827	2,013	3,841	159	164	323	1,784	1,909	3,694	131	134	266	3,901	4,220	8,124	17	12	29	15	10	25	2	21	23	7	11	18	41	54	95	10	10	20	59	76	135	5	7	12	115	147	262	212	164	376	270	300	570	67	175	242	290	273	563	839	912	1,751	106	160	266	1,237	1,438	2,677	115	124	240	2,297	2,634	4,934	343	345	688	359	373	732	78	266	347	507	512	1,020	1,288	1,496	2,788	271	274	546	2,687	2,784	5,476	219	215	437	4,465	4,769	9,247	207	118	325	95	121	216	39	159	198	80	76	156	421	474	895	26	44	70	287	362	650	18	25	43	752	905	1,658	60	79	139	146	110	256	16	62	78	61	67	128	283	318	601	11	7	18	138	145	283	23	11	34	455	481	936	215	191	406	181	196	377	76	273	349	141	156	297	614	816	1,430	48	67	115	516	594	1,112	32	45	77	1,210	1,522	2,734	256	248	504	336	323	659	165	435	600	239	171	410	998	1,177	2,175	72	82	154	649	790	1,440	64	83	148	1,783	2,132	3,917	656	796	1,454	300	353	654	190	1,063	1,253	276	315	591	1,422	2,530	3,955	85	127	212	1,321	1,684	3,007	69	88	159	2,897	4,429	7,333	33	23	56	13	16	29	16	15	31	18	23	41	80	77	157	13	25	38	155	162	317	3	10	13	251	274	525	424	404	829	438	519	957	212	754	967	605	491	1,097	1,679	2,168	3,850	107	153	260	1,009	1,178	2,187	114	148	265	2,909	3,647	6,562	163	128	291	98	126	224	46	108	154	139	135	274	446	497	943	31	47	78	240	262	509	56	52	108	773	858	1,638	106	94	200	144	139	283	32	108	140	115	102	217	397	443	840	24	24	48	262	296	558	33	35	69	716	798	1,515	51	49	100	61	67	128	2	23	25	110	79	189	226	219	445	54	49	104	885	858	1,745	70	80	151	1,235	1,206	2,445	115	103	219	77	79	156	23	79	102	123	115	240	338	376	717	88	96	184	451	514	965	43	50	94	920	1,036	1,960	44	37	81	45	52	103	20	55	77	52	65	122	163	209	385	7	8	15	172	191	366	22	34	65	364	442	831	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,779</b>	<b>3,558</b>	<b>7,342</b>	<b>3,143</b>	<b>3,334</b>	<b>6,485</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>4,583</b>	<b>5,979</b>	<b>2,989</b>	<b>2,814</b>	<b>5,812</b>	<b>11,309</b>	<b>14,293</b>	<b>25,630</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>1,397</b>	<b>2,543</b>	<b>11,989</b>	<b>13,468</b>	<b>25,483</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>2,239</b>	<b>25,476</b>	<b>30,340</b>	<b>55,895</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,779</b>	<b>3,558</b>	<b>7,342</b>	<b>3,143</b>	<b>3,334</b>	<b>6,485</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>4,583</b>	<b>5,979</b>	<b>2,989</b>	<b>2,814</b>	<b>5,812</b>	<b>11,309</b>	<b>14,293</b>	<b>25,630</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>1,397</b>	<b>2,543</b>	<b>11,989</b>	<b>13,468</b>	<b>25,483</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>2,239</b>	<b>25,476</b>	<b>30,340</b>	<b>55,895</b>																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												

M=males F=females P=persons

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

Note: Table includes 12 substantiated cases where the type of abuse is not known (one friend/neighbor, one hospital/health, two social worker, three school personnel, three anonymous and two not stated) and 79 cases where the sex of the child is not known (five physical abuse, eight emotional abuse, six sexual abuse, nine neglect, two child at risk, 26 no abuse or neglect and 23 no action possible).

Table 19: Finalised cases: source of report by State and Territory, 1992-93

Source of report	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA		SA		Tas		ACT		NT	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Subject child	378	1	147	2	279	4	211	4	217	5	29	2	8	1	5	1
Parent/guardian	3,946	15	1,190	12	955	13	910	18	683	14	230	17	154	15	56	9
Sibling	-	-	85	1	67	1	46	1	32	1	17	1	10	1	5	1
Other relative	2,274	9	733	8	667	9	653	13	408	8	70	5	91	9	38	6
Friend/neighbour	4,146	16	1,246	13	1,786	24	933	19	642	13	202	15	210	21	82	13
Medical practitioner	790	3	263	3	289	4	79	2	162	3	33	2	33	3	9	1
Other medical	632	2	131	1	73	1	-	-	33	1	38	3	5	0	24	4
Hospital/health centre	1,434	6	389	4	138	2	352	7	239	5	59	4	27	3	96	16
Social worker	2,683	10	280	3	583	8	-	-	227	5	20	1	35	3	89	15
School personnel	3,686	14	962	10	571	8	471	9	1,226	25	234	17	113	11	70	11
Day care	237	1	79	1	77	1	49	1	27	1	20	1	19	2	17	3
Police	2,806	11	1,836	19	966	13	316	6	446	9	75	6	72	7	45	7
Dept officer	145	1	817	8	-	-	384	8	80	2	160	12	52	5	-	-
Non-govt orgn	577	2	674	7	49	1	103	2	-	-	27	2	76	8	9	1
Anonymous	1,271	5	378	4	468	6	153	3	90	2	3	0	61	6	21	3
Other	301	1	395	4	610	8	244	5	225	5	113	8	28	3	44	7
Not stated	545	2	108	1	-	-	73	1	77	2	19	1	9	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,851</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9,713</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7,578</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,977</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,814</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,349</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,003</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 20: *Substantiated cases: source of report by type of abuse or neglect, 1992-93*

Source of report	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Subject child	383	50	148	19	197	26	34	4	762	100
Parent/guardian	1,262	33	968	25	1,196	31	415	11	3,841	100
Sibling	29	31	25	26	23	24	18	19	95	100
Other relative	376	21	570	33	242	14	563	32	1,751	100
Friend/neighbour	688	25	732	26	347	12	1,020	37	2,788	100
Medical practitioner	325	36	216	24	198	22	156	17	895	100
Other medical	139	23	256	43	78	13	128	21	601	100
Hospital/health centre	406	28	377	26	349	24	297	21	1,430	100
Social worker	504	23	659	30	600	28	410	19	2,175	100
School personnel	1,454	37	654	17	1,253	32	591	15	3,955	100
Day care	56	36	29	18	31	20	41	26	157	100
Police	829	22	957	25	967	25	1,097	28	3,850	100
Dept officer	291	31	224	24	154	16	274	29	943	100
Non-govt orgn	200	24	283	34	140	17	217	26	840	100
Anonymous	100	22	128	29	25	6	189	42	445	100
Other	219	31	156	22	102	14	240	33	717	100
Not stated	81	21	103	27	77	20	122	32	385	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,342</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>6,485</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5,979</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5,812</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25,630</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Table includes 12 cases where the type of abuse or neglect is not known (eight males and four females).



# Children

**Table 21: Children in finalised cases: assessment outcome by State and Territory, 1992-93**

Outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
<b>Substantiated</b>									
Physical	2,855	1,132	966	404	705	182	116	120	6,480
Emotional	3,502	1,192	348	59	226	16	105	13	5,461
Sexual	3,540	580	263	440	504	137	48	83	5,595
Neglect	2,215	1,127	655	374	253	53	89	72	4,838
<i>Total substantiated</i>	<i>12,117</i>	<i>4,031</i>	<i>2,232</i>	<i>1,277</i>	<i>1,688</i>	<i>388</i>	<i>358</i>	<i>288</i>	<i>22,379</i>
Child at risk <sup>(a)</sup>	..	..	1,233	578	..	102	74	54	2,041
No abuse or neglect found	8,279	5,088	2,593	2,089	2,504	756	340	209	21,858
No action possible	542	456	295	245	277	-	29	18	1,862
<b>Total finalised</b>	<b>20,938</b>	<b>9,575</b>	<b>6,353</b>	<b>4,189</b>	<b>4,469</b>	<b>1,246</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>48,140</b>

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

Note: Table includes five substantiated cases where the type of abuse or neglect is not known.

**Table 22: Children in finalised cases: State and Territory by age group, 1992-93**

State/Territory	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-16	Total <sup>(a)</sup>
New South Wales	6,782	6,108	5,884	1,209	20,938
Victoria	3,383	2,758	2,642	689	9,575
Queensland	2,413	1,858	1,716	346	6,353
Western Australia	1,509	1,348	1,002	216	4,189
South Australia	1,204	1,441	1,114	269	4,469
Tasmania	357	363	347	140	1,246
Australian Capital Territory	313	206	150	39	801
Northern Territory	229	159	168	10	569
<b>Australia</b>	<b>16,190</b>	<b>14,241</b>	<b>13,023</b>	<b>2,918</b>	<b>48,140</b>

(a) Includes 294 children aged 17 years or over and 1,474 children whose age is not known.

Table 23: Children 0–16 years and rates of children in substantiated cases per 1,000 children: age of child and estimated resident population by type of abuse or neglect, 1992–93

Age	Number of children <sup>(a)</sup>	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total	
		No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
0 <sup>(b)</sup>	263,774	388	1.5	479	1.8	33	0.1	528	2.0	1,429	5.4
1 <sup>(c)</sup>	254,052	311	1.2	358	1.4	32	0.1	474	1.9	1,175	4.6
2	260,158	329	1.3	406	1.6	115	0.4	461	1.8	1,311	5.0
3	259,029	336	1.3	364	1.4	306	1.2	378	1.5	1,384	5.3
4	254,746	308	1.2	326	1.3	345	1.4	353	1.4	1,332	5.2
5	253,506	278	1.1	327	1.3	352	1.4	333	1.3	1,290	5.1
6	252,810	304	1.2	318	1.3	325	1.3	298	1.2	1,245	4.9
7	256,154	329	1.3	304	1.2	327	1.3	305	1.2	1,265	4.9
8	257,980	325	1.3	263	1.0	307	1.2	242	0.9	1,137	4.4
9	256,460	362	1.4	292	1.1	378	1.5	238	0.9	1,270	5.0
10	257,861	380	1.5	275	1.1	369	1.4	241	0.9	1,265	4.9
11	254,072	389	1.5	282	1.1	431	1.7	196	0.8	1,299	5.1
12	254,804	468	1.8	308	1.2	387	1.5	199	0.8	1,363	5.3
13	246,923	556	2.3	355	1.4	541	2.2	176	0.7	1,628	6.6
14	248,811	630	2.5	368	1.5	546	2.2	189	0.8	1,734	7.0
15	249,338	491	2.0	232	0.9	433	1.7	100	0.4	1,256	5.0
16	251,565	139	0.6	56	0.2	171	0.7	16	0.1	382	1.5
Unknown <sup>(d)</sup>	..	117	..	133	..	132	..	98	..	480	..
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,332,043</b>	<b>6,440</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>5,446</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>5,530</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>4,825</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>22,245</b>	<b>5.1</b>

(a) Estimated resident population at 30 June 1993.

(b) Excludes children aged under one year from Victoria and Western Australia.

(c) Includes children aged under one year from Victoria and Western Australia.

(d) Children of unknown age are included in this table as almost all would be aged 0–16 years.

Note: This table excludes 134 children aged 17 years or over.



## Change over time

Table 25: Reported cases (warranting investigation): State and Territory, 1987-88 to 1992-93

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
1991-92	23,768	9,604	9,296	4,160	3,692	1,562	787	427	53,296
1992-93	26,728	9,898	8,496	4,979	5,736	1,598	1,077	610	59,122

Table 26: Cases substantiated and at risk: State and Territory, 1987-88 to 1992-93

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
1991-92	12,645	2,146	4,823	1,921	1,048	775	441	290	24,089
1992-93	14,290	4,089	4,281	2,246	1,824	524	552	367	28,173

(a) Figures for Victoria prior to 1992-93 relate to cases 'Registered' and are underestimates of the number of cases substantiated and at risk.

Table 27: Reported cases: assessment outcome, 1987-88 to 1992-93

Year	Finalised						Total
	Substantiated	Child at risk (a)	No abuse or neglect	No action possible	Total finalised	Not finalised	
1987-88 <sup>(b)</sup>	19,860	2,979	15,548	1,342	39,729	2,387	42,116
1988-89	18,816	2,631	14,305	1,545	37,297	5,171	42,468
1989-90 <sup>(c)</sup>	18,333	2,572	17,267	1,454	39,626	3,069	42,695
1990-91	20,868	3,043	21,288	1,570	46,769	2,952	49,721
1991-92	21,371	2,718	23,409	1,644	49,142	4,154	53,296
1992-93	25,630	2,543	25,483	2,239	55,895	3,227	59,122

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

(b) Data for Western Australia were not available.

(c) Data for Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory were not available.

Note: Figures for Victoria prior to 1992-93 relate to cases 'Registered' and are underestimates of the number of cases substantiated.

## Injury or harm sustained

Table 28: *Substantiated cases: primary actual abuse, New South Wales, 1992-93*

Primary actual abuse	Cases substantiated	
	number	per cent
<b>Physical abuse</b>		
Facial/head bruising	442	13
Other significant bruising	435	13
Lacerations/welts	111	3
Cuts/abrasions	59	2
Burns/scalds	50	1
Dislocations/sprains/twisting	12	0
Skull fractures	13	0
Other fractures	37	1
Intentional/abusive administration of drugs & alcohol	28	1
Death of child (non accidental)	5	0
Death of sibling (non accidental)	2	0
Threats to physically harm child	181	5
Request for assistance by parent/child/caregiver	701	20
Other (physical)	1,230	36
Unknown	137	4
<i>Total physical</i>	<i>3,443</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Emotional</b>		
Severe verbal abuse	274	6
Continual scapegoating	74	2
Continual rejection	102	2
Child's behaviour to self/others indicates abuse	578	13
Parent's emotional state threatens child	1,029	23
Parent's psychological disorder/developmental delay leads to emotional harm	318	7
Parent's alcohol/drug abuse leads to emotional harm	1,168	26
Other (emotional)	708	16
Unknown	175	4
<i>Total emotional</i>	<i>4,426</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Sexual abuse</b>		
Genital exposure / voyeurism	115	3
Sexual fondling	1,667	43
Oral sexual behaviour	245	6
Vaginal/anal penetration	844	22
Threat of sexual abuse	86	2
Child's inappropriate sexual behaviour indicates abuse	167	4
Other (sexual)	611	16
Unknown	151	4
<i>Total sexual</i>	<i>3,886</i>	<i>100</i>

(continued)

Table 28 (continued): *Substantiated cases: primary actual abuse, New South Wales, 1992-93*

Primary actual abuse	Cases substantiated	
	number	per cent
Neglect		
No abuse	341	12
Failure to provide food or shelter	153	5
Failure to protect child's health	89	3
Failure to provide medical care or medical/nursing aid	123	4
Left without adequate supervision	1,290	46
Other (neglect)	647	23
Unknown	152	5
<i>Total neglect</i>	2,795	100
Type of abuse unknown	13	
<b>Total cases substantiated</b>	<b>14,563</b>	

Table 29: Substantiated cases: most serious type of abuse or neglect, Queensland, 1992-93

Most serious type of abuse or neglect	Cases substantiated	
	number	per cent
Physical abuse		
Bruising	497	46
Cuts/abrasions	74	7
Burns	12	1
Skull fractures	7	1
Other fractures	21	2
Alcohol/drug administration	7	1
Other physical	451	42
At risk of physical abuse	16	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,085</i>	<i>100</i>
Emotional abuse		
Severe verbal abuse	105	24
Scapegoating/rejection	90	20
Chronic emotional deprivation	13	3
Other emotional	227	51
At risk of emotional abuse	6	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>441</i>	<i>100</i>
Sexual abuse		
Penetration with violence/coercion	47	16
Penetration without violence	22	8
Other sexual contact	185	65
Other sexual	31	11
At risk of sexual abuse	1	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>286</i>	<i>100</i>
Neglect		
Neglect of physical needs	235	25
Inadequate living conditions	73	8
Left unattended	319	34
Abandoned	73	8
Neglect of health care	58	6
Neglect of education	14	2
Other neglect	154	17
At risk of being neglected	5	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>931</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Total cases substantiated</b>	<b>2,743</b>	

Table 30: *Substantiated cases: type of injury or harm, Western Australia, 1992-93*

Type of injury or harm	Cases substantiated	
	No.	%
<b>Physical abuse</b>		
Cuts/bruises etc	299	59
Fractured skull/brain damage	11	2
No identifiable injury	130	26
Scald, burn, fracture	14	3
Emotional trauma	22	4
Death	2	0
Other physical	29	6
Unknown	1	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>508</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Emotional abuse</b>		
Emotional trauma	17	25
Impaired development	5	7
No identifiable injury	29	43
Other emotional	15	22
Unknown	1	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Sexual abuse</b>		
Anal/vagina trauma	44	9
Cuts/bruises etc	8	2
Emotional trauma	157	32
No identifiable injury	223	46
Other sexual	57	12
<i>Total</i>	<i>489</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Neglect</b>		
Avoidable illness	41	9
Cuts/bruises etc	4	1
Emotional trauma	18	4
Impaired development	20	4
No identifiable injury	229	50
Scald, burn, fracture	7	2
Other neglect	136	30
<i>Total</i>	<i>455</i>	<i>100</i>
<b>Total cases substantiated</b>	<b>1,519</b>	



## 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 or Torres Strait Islander when the child identifies as such, 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.

### **Allegations received**

Allegations received refer to all allegations of child abuse and neglect that come to the notice of a relevant authority. An allegation which warrants investigation becomes a report. (This term has been introduced, as the term notification has different meanings across the States and Territories).

### **Assessment outcome**

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

### **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 50.

### **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 category is used in Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory only.

### **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 of abuse or neglect where:

- there has been no previous report of abuse or neglect concerning the child; or
- 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 one family. A child may be the basis of more than one case in a reporting period 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.

Therefore 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.

### **Finalised case**

A finalised case is one reported in the reporting year and closed by the following 31 August.

### **Cases not finalised**

A case is classified as not finalised if it is reported in the reporting year and not closed by the following 31 August.

## Child

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

A small number of cases involving persons over these ages were investigated. In 1992–93, 70 finalised cases involved persons aged 18 years or more.

A child may be the subject of more than one case during the year. 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 (generally 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 other than by accidental means.

In Queensland only abuse and neglect inflicted by a person living within the child's home is investigated by the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs,

except in cases where the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child, or where it is not known if the person believed responsible lives in the child's home.

In the Northern Territory the Department of Health and Community Services only investigates cases of abuse and neglect within the family and the immediate family circle (including Aboriginal kinship). The Department also investigates cases involving a person outside of the immediate family circle where it appears that the child's caregivers are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

## **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. Generally the maltreater is a person who has care of the child, although this publication includes some cases of abuse (particularly sexual abuse) by other persons.

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 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 or 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.

## **Principal maltreater**

Where there is more than one maltreater, the principal maltreater is the person who is known to have, alleged to have or confessed to have inflicted or be inflicting the most severe maltreatment, or is the most likely to have harmed or put the child at risk. Where it is not possible to assess this, the principal maltreater is the person who has inflicted or is inflicting the most obvious form of maltreatment.

## **Relevant authority**

A relevant authority is an organisation to which reports of child abuse and neglect are made. This includes all State and Territory welfare departments and all other authorities (such as the Victorian Police and the Child Protection Assessment Board of Tasmania) recognised by the welfare departments as being responsible for collecting data for the purposes of this collection.

## **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 its 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**

Physical abuse is any non-accidental physical injury inflicted upon a child.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is any act which results in the child suffering any kind of significant emotional deprivation or trauma.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is defined as any serious act of omission or commission which, within the bounds of cultural tradition, constitutes a failure to provide conditions that are essential for the healthy physical and emotional development of a child.

## 8 Related legislation

The following legislation relates to child protection in Australia:

### **Commonwealth**

*Family Law Act 1975*

### **New South Wales**

*Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987*

### **Victoria**

*Children and Young Persons Act 1989*

### **Queensland**

*Children's Services Act 1965*

*Health Act Amendment Act 1980*

### **Western Australia**

*Child Welfare Act 1947*

*Community Services Act 1972*

### **South Australia**

*Community Welfare Act 1972*

*Children's Protection and Young Offenders Act 1979*

### **Tasmania**

*Child Welfare Act 1960*

*Child Protection Act 1974*

*Child Protection Amendments Act 1986, 1987 and 1991*

*Alcohol and Drug Dependency Act 1968*

### **Australian Capital Territory**

*Children's Services Act 1986*

### **Northern Territory**

*Community Welfare Act 1983*

## 9 Related AIHW publications

### **Child Welfare Series**

Number 1: Adoptions Australia, 1990-91

Number 2: Child abuse and neglect Australia, 1990-91

Number 3: Children under care and protection orders Australia, 1990-91

Number 4: Adoptions Australia, 1991-92

Number 5: Child abuse and neglect Australia, 1991-92

Number 6: Children under care and protection orders Australia, 1991-92

Number 7: Adoptions Australia, 1992-93

Number 8: Child abuse and neglect: reporting and investigation procedures in Australia, 1994

### **Other publications**

Australia's welfare: services and assistance 1993



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