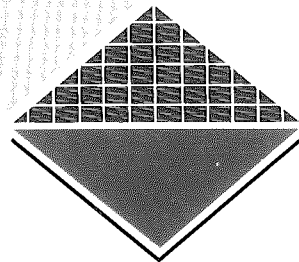


ChildWelfareSeries
Number 5

Child abuse and neglect Australia 1991-92

**Graham Angus
Katherine Wilkinson
Penelope Zabar**



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Figures in Table 6 on page 17

Number: Unknown age: SA: 156 should read 273

Number: Unknown age: Australia: 1,194 should read 1,311

Percentage: Unknown age: SA: 7 should read 12

Percentage: Unknown age: Australia: 2 should read 3

Percentage: Total: SA: 95 should read 100.

Figures in Table 18 on page 24

Number: Not stated source: SA: 87 should read 204

Percentage: Not stated source: SA: 4 should read 9

Percentage: Total: SA: 95 should read 100

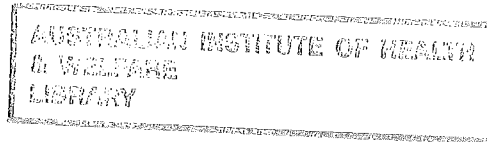
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AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND WELFARE
CHILD WELFARE SERIES
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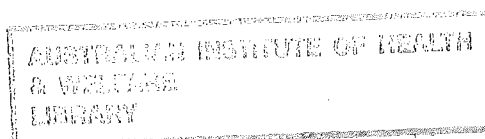
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Preface

This report—which was prepared by Graham Angus, Katherine Wilkinson and Penelope Zabar of the Welfare Division of AIHW—is the second on this topic compiled by the AIHW and the fifth in the Child Welfare Series.

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

Symbols used

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

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

Summary

- 53,296 cases of child abuse and neglect were reported to the State and Territory welfare departments during the period 1 July 1991 to 30 June 1992—an increase of 7% over 1990–91. Of these, the assessment of 49,142 cases were finalised. There were 45,974 children involved in reported cases in 1991–92—a rate of 10.7 per 1,000 children.
- 21,371 cases of child abuse and neglect were substantiated (43% of finalised cases). In a further 2,718 cases (6%), the occurrence of abuse or neglect was not substantiated, but the child was assessed as being at risk. There were 23,409 cases (48%) in which no abuse or neglect was found, and a further 1,644 cases (3%) where no action was possible. However, the proportion of cases substantiated is underestimated and the proportion of cases not substantiated is overestimated, as some substantiated cases in Victoria where the harm was minimal and where there was no continued risk to the child were not included in the 'Substantiated' category. See page 6 for further information.
- 17,723 children were involved in the substantiated cases and a further 2,242 children were assessed as being at risk. Combined, this represents a rate of 4.6 per 1,000 children aged 0–16 years.
- The highest rates of substantiated abuse and neglect occurred with children aged 13 and 14 years (5.1 and 5.2 children per 1,000 respectively), followed by children aged under one year (4.6) and those aged 3 years of age (4.5). Rates of substantiated sexual abuse increased with age to ages 14 and 15, whereas rates of substantiated emotional abuse and neglect decreased with age, with the highest rate for those aged under one year.
- Girls were the subjects in the majority (75%) of sexual abuse cases; both sexes were the subjects in a nearly equal number of cases of neglect, physical abuse and emotional abuse.
- The number of substantiated cases was similar for each of the three types of abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) and neglect, with physical abuse the largest (5,890 cases) and sexual abuse the smallest (4,876 cases).
- Reports of child abuse and neglect came mainly from friends or neighbours (17% of finalised cases) or parents (14%). Friends and neighbours, the greatest source of reporting, had one of the lowest rates of substantiation, whereas the subject child, one of the sources reporting least often, had one of the highest rates of substantiation.
- The major source of reports of child abuse and neglect varied between the States and Territories. The most common source of reports was a friend or neighbour in Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, school personnel in South Australia and Tasmania, parents/guardians in the Australian Capital Territory, and the police in Victoria.

1 Introduction

This publication presents statistics on child abuse and neglect provided by State and Territory welfare departments for the year 1 July 1991 to 30 June 1992 (1991-92).

The data provided by State and Territory welfare departments were sought according to detailed definitions and explanations agreed on by the States, Territories and the Commonwealth in *Child Maltreatment Standards, February 1987*. Definitions used in the data collection may be found in 'Explanation of terms' on page 27 of this publication.

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

2 Scope and coverage

This collection includes all cases of child abuse and neglect reported to and investigated by authorised departments and relevant statutory authorities during the year ended 30 June 1992.

3 Child abuse and neglect in Australia

General

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

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

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

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

Assessment outcomes

Following investigation, the department will determine an assessment outcome and finalise the case. In all States and Territories except Victoria, the outcome is designated as either 'Substantiated', 'Child at risk' (except in New South Wales and South Australia—see 'Child at risk and substantiation', page 6), 'No abuse or neglect found' or 'No action possible'. In Victoria the outcome is designated as 'Registered', 'Not registered' or 'No action possible'. It should be noted that in this publication, 'Registered' cases for Victoria are included in the 'Substantiated' category. Also, data for Victoria includes a small number of cases finalised during 1991–92 but reported prior to July 1991.

Substantiated cases are classified according to the type of abuse or neglect found. If more than one type has been substantiated, cases are classified according to that considered the most severe, or that considered to be the greatest risk to the child in the short term, or to that considered the most obvious.

Mandatory reporting

All States and Territories except Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have systems of compulsory reporting of child abuse.

New South Wales

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

Victoria

In June 1993 the Victorian Government legislated for mandatory reporting of child abuse by particular professional groups including doctors, 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 the process will be better understood by those involved and enable protective services to meet the additional workload. It is anticipated that doctors, nurses and police will be mandated from late 1993, school teachers from the commencement of the 1994 school year, and the other groups progressively until the end of 1994. These new arrangements will not affect data in this series before 1993-94.

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*. Family Court staff are also required to report all suspected cases under the Family Law Act. 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 relied on to follow these guidelines.

South Australia

Under the *Community Welfare Act Amendment Act 1987*, the following parties 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 parties to report suspected cases of child abuse to the Child Abuse Protection Board (CAPB): medical practitioners, registered nurses, probation officers, child welfare officers, school principals, kindergarten teachers, welfare officers appointed under the Alcohol and Drug Dependency Act, guidance officers and psychologists.

Australian Capital Territory

Mandatory reporting of child abuse has been considered by the ACT Community Law Reform Committee, and a report is expected to be provided to the ACT Government early in 1994.

Northern Territory

It is mandatory for anyone who has reason to believe that a child may be abused or neglected to make a report to either a delegated officer of the Department of Health and Community Services or the police.

Child at risk and substantiation

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

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

In Victoria, cases registered on the Children at Risk Register (CARR) are used as an estimate of the number of substantiated cases. However, as the category 'Registered' excludes cases where there is evidence of abuse or neglect but harm is considered to be minimal and there is no continuing risk to the child, the percentage of 'Registered' cases in Victoria (25%) is somewhat lower than the percentage of substantiated cases in other States (56% in New South Wales and 54% in the Northern Territory). Preliminary data from a new computer system introduced in Victoria during 1992-93 indicate that approximately 37% of reported cases were substantiated.

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

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

Reporting procedures

New South Wales

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

During 1991-92, responsibility for child protection in Victoria was shared between Community Services Victoria (CSV) (now the Department of Health and Community Services) and the police. Legislative changes have resulted in the department increasingly becoming the central investigation agency as the police reduce their involvement in the notification and investigation stage of protective services for children and young people. Since March 1992, a 'single track' system has operated in Victoria.

During 1991-92, notifications provided by either CSV or the police were placed on CSV's Child at Risk Register (CARR), and after investigation, designated as either 'Registered' (where 'there is continuing risk, and intervention is required to ensure the child is not going to be further harmed') or 'Not registered'.

Queensland

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

Western Australia

Child protection in Western Australia is coordinated by the Advisory and Co-ordination 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 *Child 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

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

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

Australian Capital Territory

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

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

Northern Territory

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

4 Child abuse and neglect 1991–92

There were 53,296 cases of child abuse and neglect reported during 1991–92, involving 45,974 children—a rate of 10.7 per 1,000 children.¹ For 4,154 of these cases, investigation by authorities had not been finalised by the date the statistics were collated (31 August 1992). The majority of cases not finalised were in South Australia (1,345 cases), with 1,027 in New South Wales and 1,185 in Victoria. Figures for these three States represented 86% of cases not finalised. (An unfinalised case is one which does not yet have an outcome decision or end date for the investigation recorded.) For South Australia the 1,345 reports not finalised represented 36% of reported cases, much higher than for other States and Territories. This should be considered when interpreting national statistics, as most are based on the number of cases finalised (Table 4).

Table 1: Number of cases and children: counting units by assessment outcome, 1991–92

Counting units	Cases finalised					Total	Not finalised	Total
	Abuse or neglect substantiated ^(a)	Child at risk	No abuse or neglect found	No action possible	Total			
Cases	21,371	2,718	23,409	1,644	49,142	4,154	53,296	
Children	17,723	2,242	21,057	1,454	42,476	3,498	45,974	

(a) Includes 'Registered' in Victoria

Assessment outcomes

Of the 49,142 cases of child abuse and neglect finalised during the year, 21,371 cases were substantiated (43% of finalised cases). In a further 2,718 cases (6%), the notifications were not substantiated, but the child was assessed as being at risk. There were 23,409 cases (48%) in which no abuse or neglect was found, and a further 1,644 cases (3%) where no action was possible (Table 4). However, the estimation of the proportion of cases substantiated and of cases where no abuse or neglect was found is complicated by Victorian data which classified cases into the 'Registered' and 'Not registered' categories. 'Registered' cases are substantiated cases where there is a continuing risk to the child. 'Not registered' cases include both those where there was no abuse or neglect and those where neglect and abuse was substantiated but the harm was considered minimal and there was no continuing risk to the child. Because of this, the proportions of cases substantiated are underestimated and the proportions of cases where no abuse or neglect was found are overestimated in Victoria, with consequential effects on the national totals (see explanatory notes on page 6 under 'Child at risk and substantiation').

The proportion of cases substantiated varied considerably between States and Territories. New South Wales and the Northern Territory had high levels of substantiated cases (56% and 54% of finalised cases respectively), while Western Australia had a low level of substantiation (33% of finalised cases).

1. This rate is based on the number of children involved in reported cases of abuse and neglect per 1,000 population aged 0–16 years. This rate is not a measure of the incidence of abuse and neglect, because not all cases of abuse and neglect are reported and because not all reported cases are substantiated.

Table 2: Percentage of finalised cases: assessment outcome of case by State and Territory, 1991-92

Assessment outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Substantiated or registered ^(a)	56	25	35	33	45	39	37	54
Child at risk ^(b)	..	..	21	13	..	11	19	14
No abuse or neglect found	42	^(c) 71	40	49	50	50	42	31
No action possible	2	3	5	5	5	-	2	1

(a) Includes 'Registered' cases for Victoria; see 'General' on page 4.

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

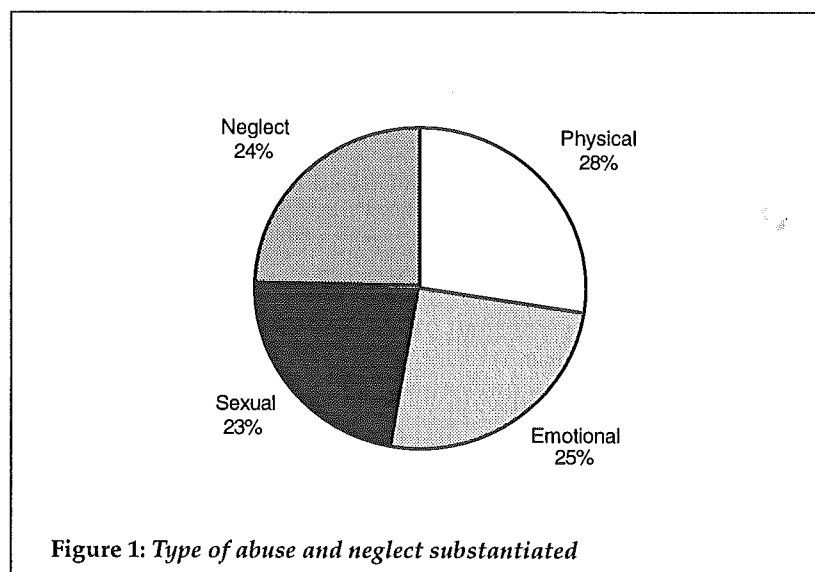
(c) The Victoria category is 'Not registered'. This category includes cases substantiated although the harm is considered minimal and there is not continuing risk to the child. See explanatory notes on page 6 under 'Child at risk and substantiation'

When figures for cases assessed as being at risk are added to cases substantiated for the States and Territories that include this category, the rates are more even across the States and Territories (except for Victoria) (Table 2).

Tasmania and South Australia had the largest proportion of cases where no abuse or neglect was found (50% of finalised cases), with the Northern Territory (31%) having the smallest proportion.

Types of abuse and neglect

The number of substantiated cases was similar for each of the four types of abuse and neglect, with physical abuse the greatest (5,890 cases) and sexual abuse the smallest (4,876 cases) (Figure 1; Table 7).



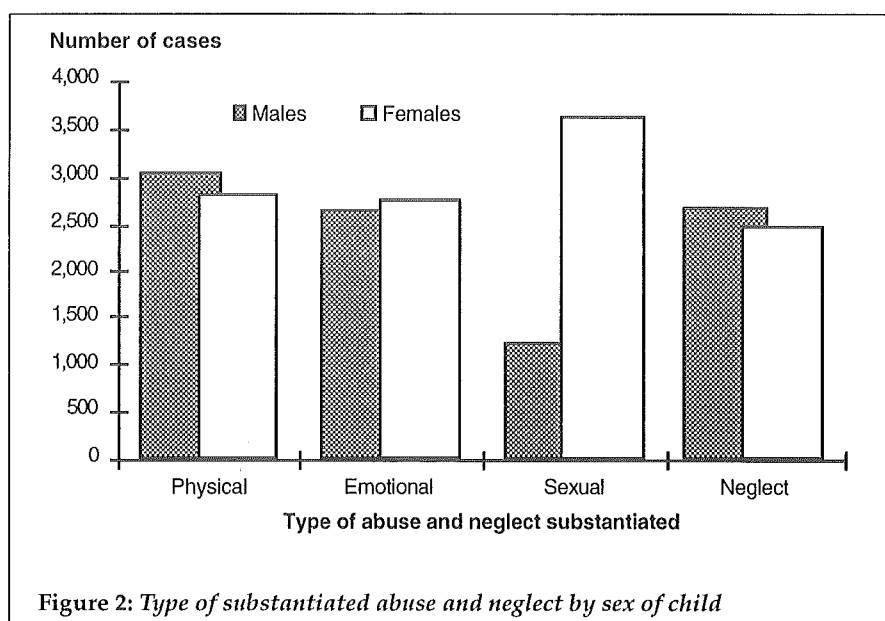
There are major variations between States and Territories in the proportion of each type of abuse or neglect. New South Wales and Victoria had higher incidences of emotional abuse (32% and 31% respectively) than other States and Territories. The proportion of physical abuse was particularly high in Tasmania (54% of substantiated cases), the Northern Territory (48%) and South Australia (47%). Sexual abuse represented a larger proportion of cases in South Australia and Western Australia (31% of substantiated cases), with the Australian

Capital Territory (10%) and Victoria (12%) having the lowest percentages. Neglect represented a much larger proportion of cases in the Australian Capital Territory (35%) and Queensland (33%) than in other States or Territory, with Tasmania and South Australia (12%) having much lower proportions than other States and Territories (Table 7).

Patterns of abuse and neglect by sex, age and type

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 (75%) of sexual abuse cases (Figure 2; Table 8).

The largest number of substantiated cases concerned children aged 13 and 14 years, with 1,553 and 1,494 cases respectively, however, the number of substantiated cases of neglect declined by age (Table 5).



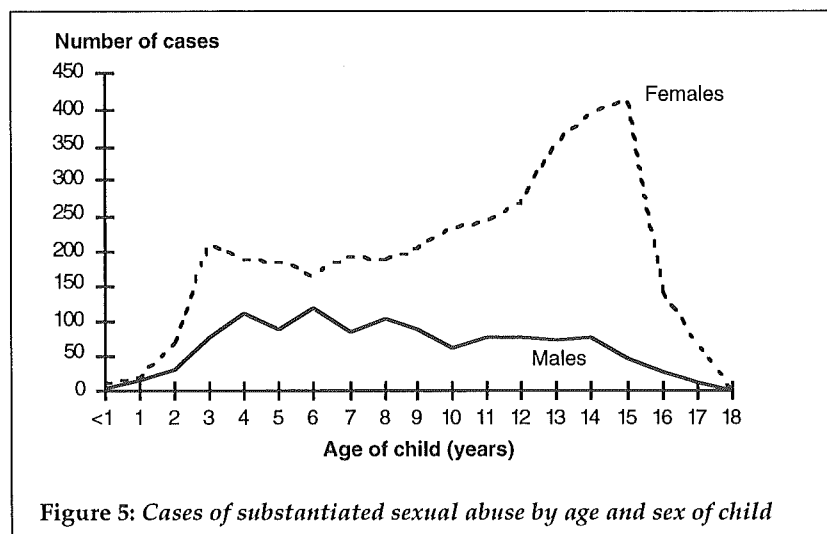
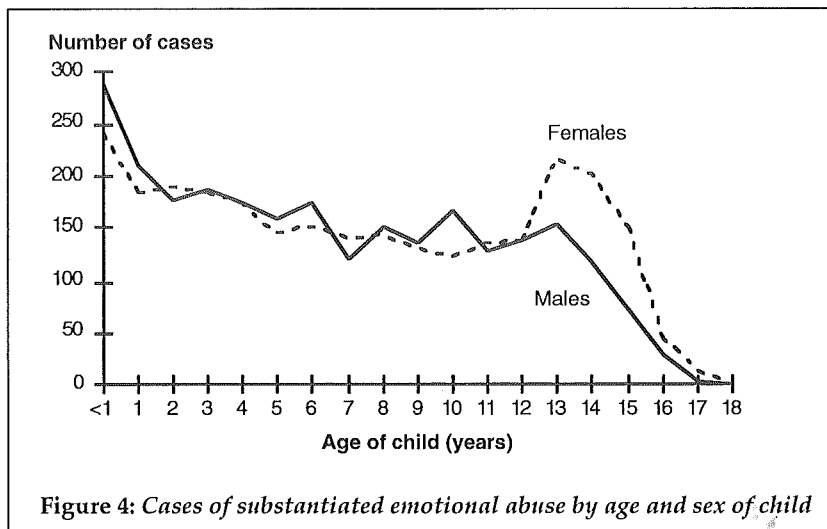
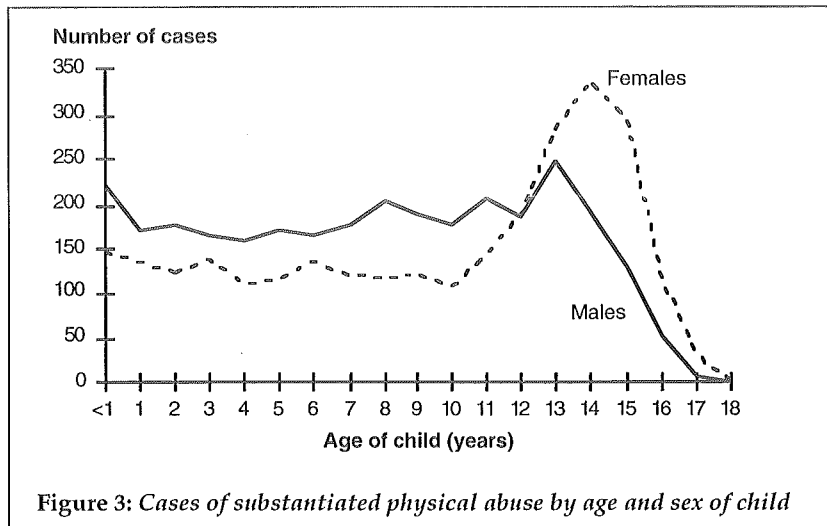
The pattern of abuse and neglect across age groups was not uniform, with more boys than girls being the subject of finalised reports in the lower age groups and girls being in the majority in the older age group (Table 5).

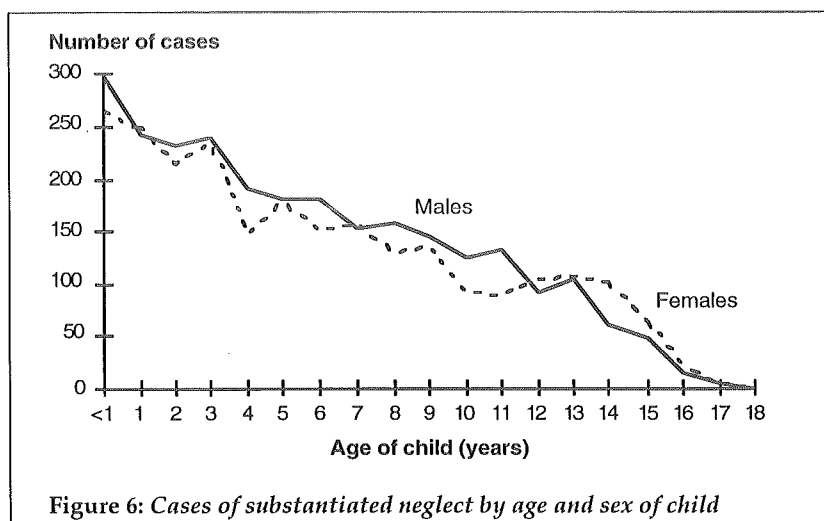
For substantiated cases of physical abuse, boys were the primary subjects at each age for pre-teenage children. However, more teenage girls than teenage boys were the subjects of substantiated cases of physical abuse, with the highest number of cases involving girls aged 14 and 15 years (Figure 3; Table 5).

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 4; Table 5).

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 5; Table 5).

Substantiated cases of neglect were highest in the youngest age group and showed a steady decline with age, except for a slight increase in the number of cases involving girls in the early teenage years (Figure 6; Table 5).





Rates by age group and State and Territory

Substantiated cases and cases assessed as 'Child at risk' represented a combined rate of 4.6 per 1,000 children aged 0–16 years, including children of unknown age and a small number of cases involving children over 16 (Table 19).

In 1991–92, 4.1 per 1,000 children¹ were involved in substantiated cases of abuse and neglect (Table 3).

Significant variation across the States and Territories underlies this Australian figure, with New South Wales having the highest rate (nearly 7 per 1,000 children), and Western Australia (2.8 per 1,000 children) and South Australia (2.9 per 1,000 children) having the lowest rates (Table 3).

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 3: Rates of children involved in substantiated cases per 1,000 children by State and Territory, 1991–92

Assessment outcome	0–4	5–9	10–14	15–16	(a) Total
New South Wales	6.9	6.5	7.5	4.7	6.9
Victoria	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.5	(b) 1.9
Queensland	3.2	3.1	3.4	2.5	3.2
Western Australia	3.1	2.8	2.7	1.6	2.8
South Australia	2.1	2.8	3.3	2.9	2.9
Tasmania	2.9	3.8	5.2	5.4	4.4
Australian Capital Territory	2.7	3.1	2.2	1.5	3.2
Northern Territory	4.0	3.9	6.1	2.1	4.4
Australia	4.1	3.9	4.4	3.0	4.1

(a) Includes children of unknown age and a small number of children over 16 years

(b) The rates for Victoria are based on 'Registered' cases (see explanatory notes on page 6 under 'Child at risk and substantiation'). Based on the estimate of 37% of cases substantiated (see page 6), the rate for Victoria is 2.9 and that for Australia 4.3.

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 1992, multiplied by 1,000.

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.

The highest rates of substantiated abuse and neglect occurred with children aged 13 and 14 years (5.1 and 5.2 children per 1,000 respectively), followed by children aged under one year (4.6) and those aged 3 years of age (4.5). Rates of substantiated sexual abuse increased with increasing age to a rate of 1.7 children per 1,000 at ages 14 and 15, whereas rates of substantiated emotional abuse and neglect decreased with increasing age with the highest rate 1.6 and 1.8 children per 1,000 respectively for those aged under one year. The rate of physical abuse was highest for children aged 13 and 14 years (1.8 children per 1,000) (Table 23).

Abuse and neglect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Eight 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%) (Table 10).

A higher proportion of finalised cases involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were substantiated or classified as 'At risk' (60%) than for the total population (49%). 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 (24%), and sexual abuse cases being much lower—15% of total substantiations compared with 23% overall.

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 only 7% for all children, reflecting the fact that neglect generally occurs at a younger age than other forms of abuse (Table 5; Table 9).

Relationship of maltreater to child

Parents were identified as responsible for abuse and neglect in the majority of substantiated cases. Parents (including a few but unknown number of adoptive parents) were identified in 47% of substantiated cases, and step-parents, de facto parents, foster parents and guardians were identified in a further 8% of cases. Siblings and other relatives were identified as being responsible in 5% and friends or neighbours 6% of substantiated cases. In the remaining 33% of substantiated cases the person was either not specified or someone other than a parent or guardian, sibling, other relative or friend or neighbour (Table 13).¹ This pattern applies to each of the different types of abuse except for sexual abuse, where friends and neighbours were identified as the maltreater in 21% of cases.

Eighty-eight 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 the maltreater.

Source of abuse and neglect reports

Friends or neighbours (17%), parents (14%), the police (12%) and school personnel (12%) were the main sources of reports for finalised cases (Table 15).

Reports of abuse and neglect from the subject child (62%) had the highest rate of substantiation, followed by medical staff other than a medical practitioner (60%),

1. It should be noted that in the vast majority of these cases the relationship of the maltreater to the child was not specified, rather than someone other than a parent or guardian, sibling, other relative or friend or neighbour.

the police (56%) and social workers (56%). Reports from anonymous persons (18%), friends/ neighbours (30%), siblings (33%) and other relatives (33%) showed the lowest rate of substantiation. Friends and neighbours, the greatest source of reporting, had one of the lowest rates of substantiation, whereas the subject child, one of the sources reporting least often, had one of the highest rates of substantiation. Professionals, including medical staff, social workers and school personnel, had a very consistent substantiation rate of between 49% and 60% (Table 16).

The type of abuse and neglect identified in substantiated cases varied according to the source of the report. Of substantiated cases reported by a sibling, 53% involved physical abuse, as did 49% of cases reported by the subject child. Neglect was identified in 51% of substantiated cases reported anonymously and 42% of substantiated cases reported by friends and neighbours. For reports by medical staff other than medical practitioners, 38% of substantiated cases involved emotional abuse, and for reports by parents/guardians, 32% involved sexual abuse (Table 17).

The major source of report varied between the States and Territories. In Queensland, 25% of finalised cases were reported by friends or neighbours, this being also the highest category for New South Wales and the Northern Territory and the equal highest (with parents/guardians) in Western Australia. In South Australia and Tasmania, school personnel reported most finalised cases (26% and 19% respectively). The police reported the largest proportion of cases (19%) in Victoria, and parents/guardians were the highest reporters (14%) in the Australian Capital Territory (Table 18).

5 Detailed tables

Table 4: Cases: assessment outcome of case by State and Territory, 1991-92

Outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Number									
Finalised									
Substantiated	12,645	2,146	3,027	1,380	1,048	598	295	232	21,371
Child at risk ^(a)	..	..	1,796	541	..	177	146	58	2,718
No abuse or neglect found	9,536	5,979	3,462	2,014	1,182	771	332	133	23,409
No action possible	560	294	461	194	117	-	14	4	1,644
Total finalised	22,741	8,419	8,746	4,129	2,347	1,546	787	427	49,142
Not finalised	1,027	1,185	550	31	1,345	16	-	-	4,154
<i>Total cases</i>	<i>23,768</i>	<i>9,604</i>	<i>9,296</i>	<i>4,160</i>	<i>3,692</i>	<i>1,562</i>	<i>787</i>	<i>427</i>	<i>53,296</i>
Percentage									
Finalised									
Substantiated	53.2	22.3	32.6	33.2	28.4	38.3	37.5	54.3	40.1
Child at risk ^(a)	..	..	19.3	13.0	..	11.3	18.6	13.6	5.1
No abuse or neglect found	40.1	62.3	37.2	48.4	32.0	49.4	42.2	31.1	43.9
No action possible	2.4	3.1	5.0	4.7	3.2	-	1.8	0.9	3.1
Total finalised	95.7	87.7	94.1	99.3	63.6	99.0	100.0	100.0	92.2
Not finalised	4.3	12.3	5.9	0.7	36.4	1.0	-	-	7.8
<i>Total cases</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

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

Note: Table excludes one case in South Australia where the assessment outcome is unknown.

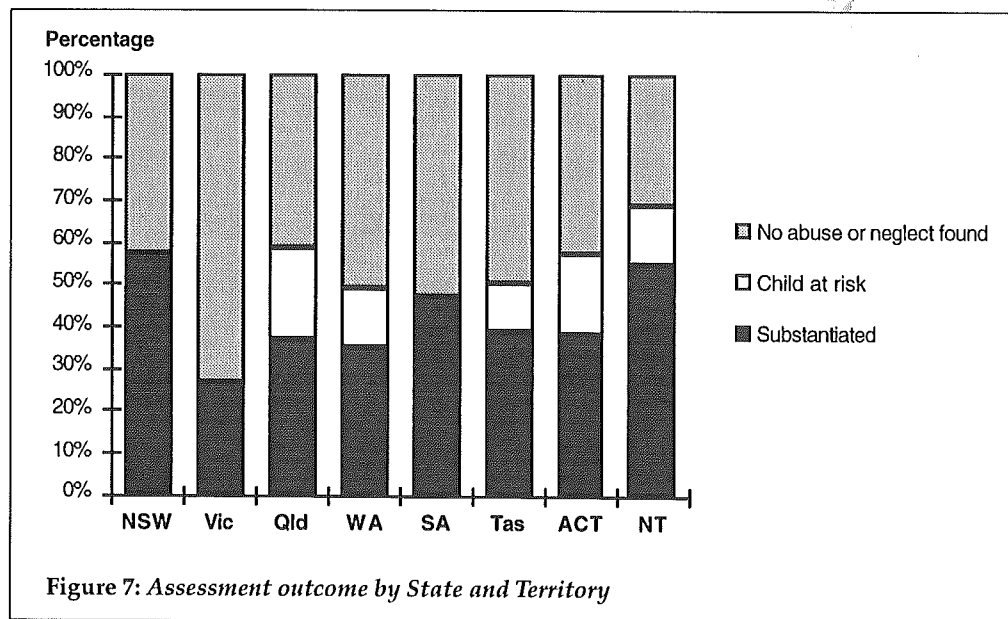


Figure 7: Assessment outcome by State and Territory

Table 6: Finalised cases: age of child by State and Territory, 1991-92

Age of child (years)	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
	Number								
Under 5	7,948	3,032	3,436	1,686	610	370	257	165	17,504
5-9	6,643	2,465	2,664	1,311	690	457	176	120	14,526
10-14	5,991	2,182	2,097	900	574	464	129	131	12,468
15-17 ^(a)	1,377	740	547	232	200	190	36	11	3,333
Unknown	782	-	2	-	156	65	189	-	1,194
Total	22,741	8,419	8,746	4,129	2,347	1,546	787	427	49,142
	Percentage								
Under 5	35	36	39	41	26	24	33	39	36
5-9	29	29	30	32	29	30	22	28	30
10-14	26	26	24	22	24	30	16	31	25
15-17 ^(a)	6	9	6	6	9	12	5	3	7
Unknown	3	-	0	-	7	4	24	-	2
Total	100	100	100	100	95	100	100	100	100

(a) Includes 33 cases involving persons aged over 17 years

Table 7: Substantiated cases: type of abuse and neglect by State and Territory, 1991-92

Type of abuse or neglect	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
	Number								
Physical	2,754	543	1,082	473	495	325	106	112	5,890
Emotional	4,013	671	479	61	104	28	56	3	5,415
Sexual	3,126	259	482	432	320	174	29	54	4,876
Neglect	2,744	666	984	414	129	71	104	63	5,175
Total	12,645	2,146	3,027	1,380	1,048	598	295	232	21,371
	Percentage								
Physical	22	25	36	34	47	54	36	48	28
Emotional	32	31	16	4	10	5	19	1	25
Sexual	25	12	16	31	31	29	10	23	23
Neglect	22	31	33	30	12	12	35	27	24
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Table includes 15 cases where the type of abuse or neglect is not known (eight in NSW and seven in Victoria)

Table 8: Substantiated cases: age of child by type of abuse and neglect and sex, 1991-92

Age of child (years)	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total		
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Persons
Under 5	894	658	1,043	981	245	505	1,207	1,115	3,394	3,262	6,661
5-9	906	617	743	717	489	937	819	756	2,957	3,029	5,991
10-14	1,013	1,063	714	822	373	1,495	517	492	2,617	3,875	6,495
15-17 ^(a)	191	446	103	208	84	628	68	96	447	1,378	1,825
Unknown	50	47	55	29	35	81	65	35	206	192	399
Total	3,054	2,831	2,658	2,757	1,226	3,646	2,676	2,494	9,621	11,736	21,371

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

Note: Table includes 15 substantiated cases where the type of abuse or neglect is not known (seven males and eight females; eight aged under 5 years, two aged 5-9 years, three aged 10-14 years, one aged 15-17 years and one age unknown).

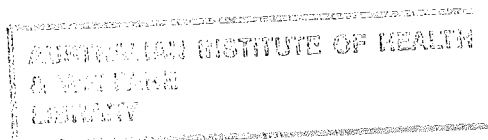


Table 10: Finalised cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: assessment outcome by State and Territory, 1991-92

Outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Cases finalised									
Substantiated	815	42	413	227	52	18	10	121	1,698
Child at risk ^(a)	..	..	226	79	..	2	9	24	340
No abuse or neglect found	546	44	272	275	53	21	12	47	1,270
No action possible	25	7	51	25	^(b) -	-	-	2	110
Total cases	1,386	93	962	606	^(b)105	41	31	194	3,418

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

(b) Excludes a small number of cases classified as 'No action possible'

Table 11: Substantiated cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: age of child by type of abuse and neglect and sex, 1991-92

Age of child (years)	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total		
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Persons
Under 5	80	56	60	75	19	28	191	161	350	320	670
5-9	49	51	54	52	22	55	115	103	240	261	501
10-14	63	97	30	37	15	75	49	44	157	253	410
15-17 ^(a)	15	14	5	12	4	27	2	7	26	60	86
Unknown	-	3	8	1	1	4	9	5	18	13	31
Total	207	221	157	177	61	189	366	320	791	907	1,698

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

Table 12: Substantiated cases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: type of abuse and neglect by State and Territory, 1991-92

Type of abuse or neglect	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
	Number								
Physical	155	6	121	62	21	14	2	47	428
Emotional	253	21	41	3	11	1	4	-	334
Sexual	115	1	47	46	14	1	-	26	250
Neglect	292	14	204	116	6	2	4	48	686
Total	815	42	413	227	52	18	10	121	1,698
	Percentage								
Physical	19	14	29	27	40	78	20	39	25
Emotional	31	50	10	1	21	6	40	-	20
Sexual	14	2	11	20	27	6	-	21	15
Neglect	36	33	49	51	12	11	40	40	40
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 13: Substantiated cases:^(a) relationship of maltreater (person believed responsible) to child by assessment outcome and sex, 1991-92

Relationship of maltreater ^(b) to child	Physical			Emotional			Sexual			Neglect			Total		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Natural/adoptive parent	1,369	1,404	2,774	1,308	1,319	2,627	151	508	659	1,510	1,414	2,928	4,338	4,647	8,990
Step-parent ^(c)	234	173	407	51	69	120	40	294	334	26	25	51	351	561	912
De facto parent	177	123	300	35	35	70	18	124	142	23	19	42	253	301	554
Foster parent	15	10	25	4	5	9	2	14	16	1	1	2	22	30	52
Guardian	12	7	19	1	-	1	-	2	2	6	1	7	19	10	29
Sibling	30	50	80	5	9	14	35	135	170	5	4	9	75	198	273
Other relative	60	37	97	20	17	37	107	422	530	28	27	55	215	504	720
Friend/neighbour	45	37	82	4	15	19	266	679	945	12	10	22	327	741	1,068
Not specified/Other	677	602	1,279	913	979	1,892	522	1,128	1,650	743	696	1,439	2,858	3,407	6,265
Total	2,619	2,443	5,063	2,341	2,448	4,789	1,141	3,306	4,448	2,354	2,197	4,555	8,458	10,399	19,154

(a) Excludes South Australia, for which data are not available

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

(c) Includes de facto parents for Victoria

Note: The table

excludes 1,169 substantiated cases in Victoria for which information on relationship of maltreater to child is not known, includes 318 cases involving more than one maltreater, eight substantiated cases where the type of abuse is not known (the persons believed responsible were two Natural/adoptive parents, one Other relative and five Not specified/Other), six cases where the sex of the child is not known (one physical abuse and four neglect where the maltreater was a Natural/adoptive parent, and one case of sexual abuse where the maltreater was an Other relative).

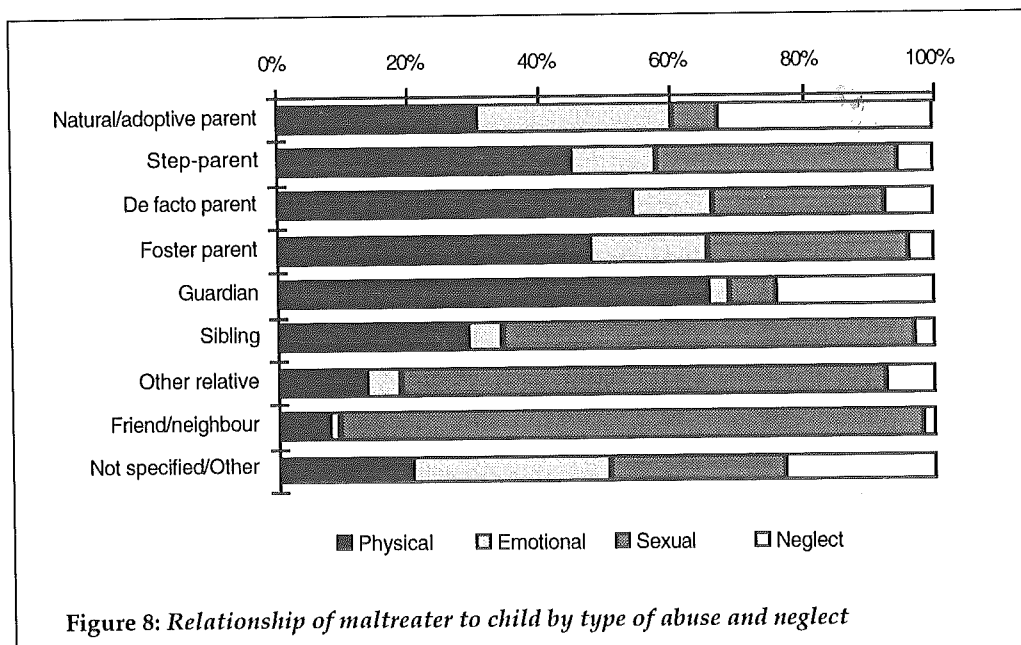


Table 14: Substantiated cases:^(a) relationship of maltreater to child by State and Territory, 1991–92

Relationship of maltreater ^(b) to child	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Natural/adoptive parent	4,862	552	2,132	894	n.a.	241	181	128
Step-parent	350	^(c) 92	303	73	n.a.	44	20	30
De facto parent	237	–	200	69	n.a.	24	11	13
Foster parent	24	–	13	11	n.a.	2	2	–
Guardian	14	1	3	9	n.a.	–	–	2
Sibling	163	12	61	23	n.a.	11	1	2
Other relative	414	20	134	102	n.a.	36	2	12
Friend/neighbour	770	6	69	135	n.a.	82	6	–
Not specified/Other	5,811	3	112	64	n.a.	158	72	45
Total	12,645	977	3,027	1,380	n.a.	598	295	232

(a) Excludes South Australia, for which data were not available

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

(c) Includes de facto parents

Note: The table excludes 1,169 substantiated cases in Victoria for which information on relationship of maltreater to child is not known. Includes 318 cases involving more than one maltreater (291 in Victoria and 27 in the Northern Territory).

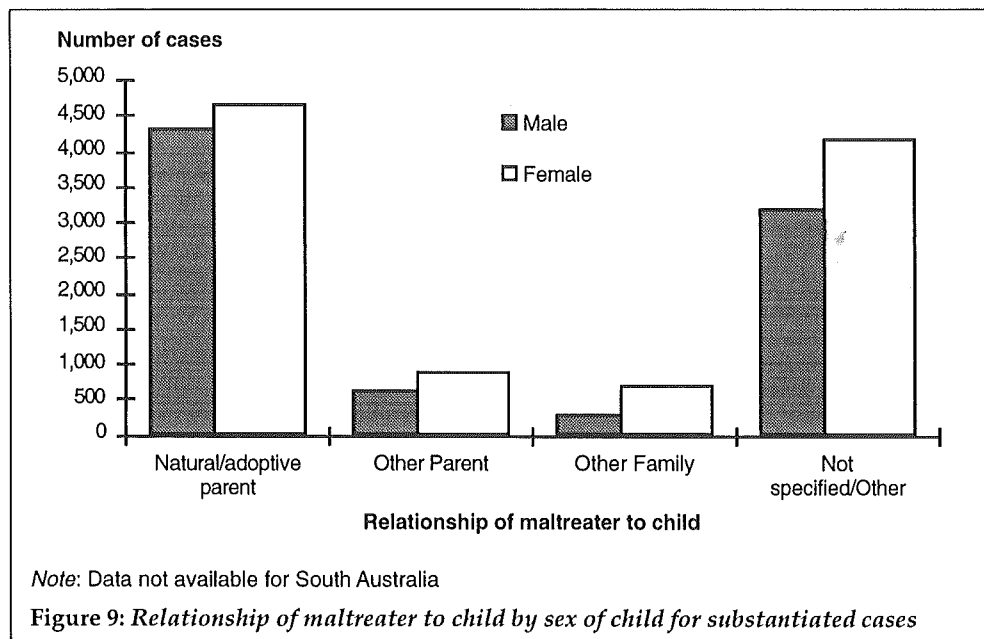


Table 16: Finalised cases: source of report by assessment outcome, percentage distribution, 1991-92

Source of report	Cases substantiated		Child at risk		No abuse or neglect found		No action possible		Total cases finalised	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Subject child	597	62	74	8	246	26	39	4	956	100
Parent/guardian	2,878	43	365	5	3,271	49	166	2	6,680	100
Sibling	70	34	34	17	97	47	5	2	206	100
Other relative	1,413	33	262	6	2,417	56	193	5	4,285	100
Friend/neighbour	2,519	30	531	6	5,121	60	328	4	8,499	100
Medical practitioner	767	49	147	9	617	39	43	3	1,574	100
Other medical	607	60	40	4	336	33	31	3	1,014	100
Hospital/health	1,283	54	102	4	953	40	46	2	2,384	100
Social worker	2,201	56	203	5	1,380	35	167	4	3,951	100
School personnel	3,118	54	266	5	2,373	41	65	1	5,822	100
Day care	203	40	29	6	267	53	5	1	504	100
Police	3,298	56	240	4	2,198	37	134	2	5,870	100
Department officer	389	40	82	8	481	49	28	3	980	100
Non-gov't org'n	637	49	48	4	563	44	39	3	1,287	100
Anonymous	450	18	111	5	1,774	72	125	5	2,460	100
Other	625	35	169	9	899	50	91	5	1,784	100
Not stated	316	41	15	2	416	54	22	3	769	100
Total	21,371	43	2,718	6	23,409	48	(a)1,644	3	49,142	100

(a) Includes 117 cases from South Australia where the source of report is unknown

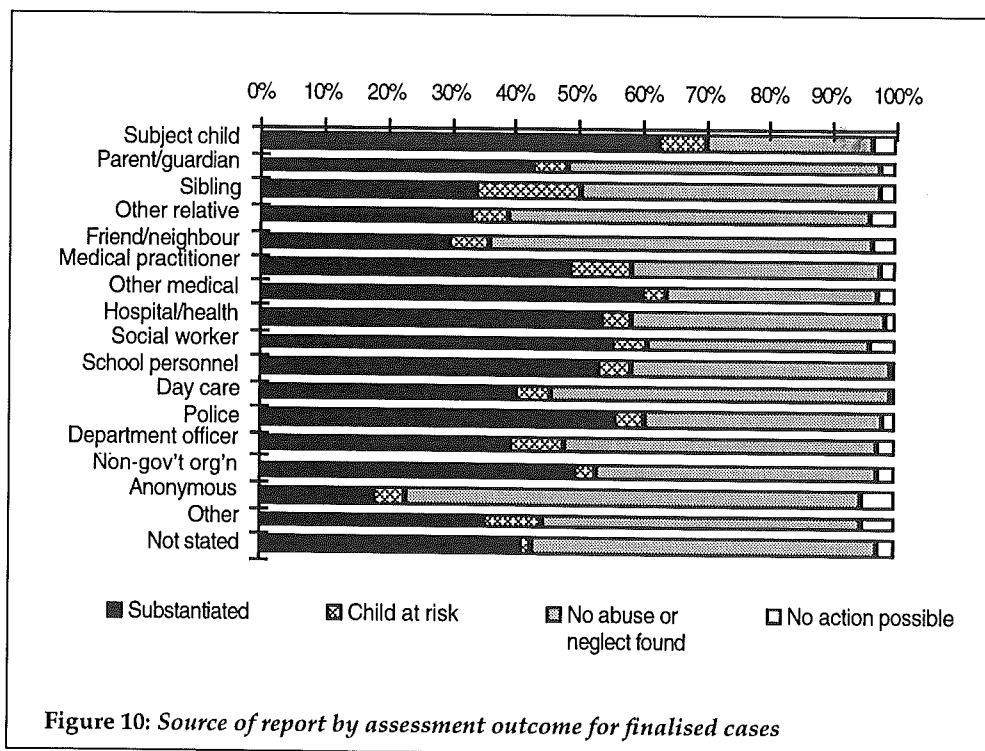


Table 17: Substantiated cases: source of report by type of abuse or neglect, 1991-92

Source of report	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Subject child	291	49	112	19	154	26	40	7	597	100
Parent/guardian	890	31	712	25	924	32	351	12	2,878	100
Sibling	37	53	7	10	18	26	8	11	70	100
Other relative	353	25	442	31	166	12	448	32	1,413	100
Friend/neighbour	544	22	648	26	270	11	1,057	42	2,519	100
Medical practitioner	291	38	169	22	181	24	126	16	767	100
Other medical	142	23	233	38	91	15	139	23	607	100
Hospital/health	324	25	371	29	279	22	305	24	1,283	100
Social worker	444	20	702	32	603	27	452	21	2,201	100
School personnel	1,207	39	466	15	960	31	484	16	3,118	100
Day care	76	37	44	22	25	12	58	29	203	100
Police	650	20	925	28	844	26	878	27	3,298	100
Dep't officer	147	38	65	17	91	23	86	22	389	100
Non-gov't org'n	152	24	222	35	106	17	157	25	637	100
Anonymous	92	20	101	22	26	6	231	51	450	100
Other	181	29	108	17	86	14	250	40	625	100
Not stated	69	22	88	28	52	16	105	33	316	100
Total	5,890	28	5,415	25	4,876	23	5,175	24	21,371	100

Table 18: Finalised cases: source of report by State and Territory, 1991-92

Source of report	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA		SA		Tas		ACT		NT	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Subject child	317	1	95	1	268	3	122	3	107	5	21	1	11	1	15	4
Parent/guardian	3,249	14	1,006	12	1,032	12	776	19	234	10	251	16	109	14	23	5
Sibling	-	-	46	1	85	1	44	1	22	1	5	0	3	0	1	0
Other relative	2,022	9	676	8	806	9	507	12	138	6	75	5	46	6	15	4
Friend/neighbour	3,643	16	1,193	14	2,221	25	794	19	311	13	159	10	106	13	72	17
Medical practitioner	683	3	212	3	384	4	81	2	71	3	116	8	19	2	8	2
Other medical	673	3	102	1	114	1	78	2	14	1	-	-	7	1	26	6
Hospital/health	1,270	6	467	6	160	2	272	7	83	4	70	5	9	1	53	12
Social worker	2,463	11	491	6	793	9	-	-	104	4	8	1	57	7	35	8
School personnel	2,990	13	733	9	640	7	396	10	608	26	296	19	96	12	63	15
Day care	196	1	140	2	73	1	45	1	15	1	14	1	12	2	9	2
Police	2,568	11	1,614	19	963	11	323	8	193	8	134	9	31	4	44	10
Dep't officer	149	1	276	3	-	-	200	5	56	2	228	15	71	9	-	-
Non-gov't org'n	571	3	468	6	67	1	83	2	-	-	18	1	71	9	9	2
Anonymous	1,147	5	500	6	531	6	142	3	74	3	-	-	58	7	8	2
Other	258	1	400	5	609	7	199	5	113	5	113	7	46	6	46	11
Not stated	542	2	-	-	-	-	67	2	87	4	38	2	35	4	-	-
Total	22,741	100	8,419	100	8,746	100	4,129	100	(a)2,347	95	1,546	100	787	100	427	100

(a) Includes 117 cases where the source of report is unknown

Table 19: Children in finalised cases: assessment outcome by State and Territory, 1991-92

Outcome	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Substantiated									
Physical	2,234	529	947	400	462	289	99	107	5,067
Emotional	2,895	648	382	50	100	22	51	3	4,151
Sexual	2,792	249	442	400	315	166	26	54	4,444
Neglect	2,069	618	700	346	121	61	73	61	4,049
<i>Total substantiated</i>	<i>9,995</i>	<i>2,051</i>	<i>2,471</i>	<i>1,196</i>	<i>998</i>	<i>538</i>	<i>249</i>	<i>225</i>	<i>17,723</i>
Child at risk ^(a)	..	..	1,456	457	..	170	104	55	2,242
No abuse or neglect found	8,073	5,979	3,014	1,744	1,131	707	287	122	21,057
No action possible	453	284	406	178	117	-	12	4	1,454
Total finalised	18,521	8,314	7,347	3,575	2,246	1,415	652	406	42,476

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

Note: Includes 12 substantiated cases where the type of abuse or neglect is not known (five in NSW and seven in Victoria).

Table 20: Children in finalised cases: State and Territory by age group, 1991-92

State/Territory	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-16	^(a) Total
NSW	6,240	5,450	4,904	1,094	18,521
Victoria	2,989	2,434	2,156	680	8,314
Queensland	2,820	2,212	1,811	453	7,347
WA	1,405	1,149	804	177	3,575
SA	570	651	556	167	2,246
Tasmania	343	413	424	146	1,415
ACT	199	137	109	31	652
NT	157	115	123	11	406
Australia	14,723	12,561	10,887	2,759	42,476

(a) Includes 292 children aged more than 16 and 1,254 children whose age is now known

Table 21: Reported cases: State and Territory, 1987-88 to 1991-92

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

Table 22: Substantiated and at risk cases: State and Territory, 1987-88 to 1991-92

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

(a) Victoria figures relate to cases 'Registered' and are underestimates of the number of cases substantiated and at risk. See page 6 for explanatory notes.

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, 1991-92

Age	Number of children ^(a)	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total	
		No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
0	254,104	318	1.3	394	1.6	14	0.1	447	1.8	1,175	4.6
1	259,698	251	1.0	283	1.1	32	0.1	365	1.4	931	3.6
2	258,504	259	1.0	267	1.0	85	0.3	363	1.4	976	3.8
3	254,109	252	1.0	281	1.1	267	1.1	349	1.4	1,150	4.5
4	252,849	224	0.9	263	1.0	273	1.1	257	1.0	1,018	4.0
5	252,242	233	0.9	230	0.9	249	1.0	279	1.1	991	3.9
6	255,476	257	1.0	247	1.0	262	1.0	256	1.0	1,024	4.0
7	257,346	249	1.0	204	0.8	246	1.0	249	1.0	948	3.7
8	255,810	292	1.1	236	0.9	268	1.0	228	0.9	1,024	4.0
9	257,206	278	1.1	211	0.8	263	1.0	231	0.9	983	3.8
10	253,492	247	1.0	230	0.9	269	1.1	171	0.7	917	3.6
11	254,090	302	1.2	206	0.8	294	1.2	177	0.7	980	3.9
12	246,185	327	1.3	218	0.9	326	1.3	151	0.6	1,022	4.2
13	248,193	447	1.8	282	1.1	384	1.5	163	0.7	1,276	5.1
14	248,511	455	1.8	260	1.0	432	1.7	132	0.5	1,280	5.2
15	250,530	380	1.5	183	0.7	419	1.7	92	0.4	1,075	4.3
16	255,278	163	0.6	68	0.3	162	0.6	35	0.1	428	1.7
Unknown ^(b)	..	93	..	73	..	117	..	93	..	377	..
Total	4,313,623	5,027	1.2	4,136	1.0	4,362	1.0	4,038	0.9	17,575	4.1

(a) Estimated resident population at 30 June 1992

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

Note: This table excludes a small number of children aged over 16 years.

6 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.

Assessment outcome

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

Details of State variations are given under 'Child at risk and substantiation' on page 6.

Substantiated abuse and 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 29.

Child at risk

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

No abuse or neglect found

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

No action possible

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

Case

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

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

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

Child

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

A small number of persons over these ages were investigated. Forty-four finalised cases involved persons aged over 17 years.

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

Child abuse and neglect

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

Finalised case

A finalised case is one reported in the reporting year and closed by the following 31 August. South Australia used 7 August 1992 as the closing date for 1991-92. Data for Victoria includes cases reported prior to July 1991.

Having the care of

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

Maltreater

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

Where there is more than one maltreater, the statistics are based on the maltreater who is believed to have inflicted the most severe abuse or neglect, or most likely to have harmed the child or put the child at risk. Where it is not possible to identify the maltreater in this way, the maltreater is identified as the person who inflicted the most obvious form of abuse or neglect.

Parents and other relatives

Natural or adoptive parent

A natural or adoptive parent is any male or female who is the biological or adoptive parent of the child.

Step-parent

A step-parent is 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

A de facto parent is 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

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

Other relative

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

Report

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

Source of report

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

Type of abuse or neglect

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

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is any non-accidental physical injury inflicted upon a child by a person having the care of a child.

Emotional abuse

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

Sexual abuse

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

Neglect

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

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, 1990–91*

Number 4: *Adoptions Australia, 1991–92*

Other publications

Australia's Welfare: Services and Assistance 1993



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