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Child abuse and neglect Australia 1995–96

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and
Rebecca Bentley**

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
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Preface

This report was prepared by Anne Broadbent and Rebecca Bentley of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). It is the AIHW's sixth report on child abuse and neglect and the seventeenth in the Child Welfare Series.

Tables in this publication showing statistics for Australia only are available for individual States and Territories on request.

Numbers, rates and percentages shown in the tables may not add due to rounding. The numbers of male and female children may not add to total children as the sex of some children was not stated or unknown. Children whose age was not stated or unknown are included with children aged 0–16 years and 0–17 years as appropriate for the calculation of rates per 1,000 children.

It should be noted that the territory of Jervis Bay is included with the Australian Capital Territory in all the tables.

Rates per 1,000 population for children were calculated using an estimated population for 31 December 1995, based on projected ABS population data for 30 June 1995 and 30 June 1996. Population data for all children were obtained from projections of Australia's population, 1995–2051, Series A (ABS, unpublished data). Population data for Jervis Bay for all children at 31 March 1996 were obtained from the ABS. This was added to the population for the Australian Capital Territory.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population data were obtained from experimental projections, Medium Series, of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (ABS, unpublished data). Population estimates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children exclude Jervis Bay, Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Symbols used in the tables

- nil or rounded to zero
- .. not applicable
- n.a. not available
- M males
- F females
- P persons

Summary

This report presents statistics on notifications of child abuse and neglect made to State and Territory community service departments in the 1995–96 financial year. It also provides data on finalised investigations and substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect and on children who were the subject of these finalised investigations and substantiations. It does not provide details about all child abuse and neglect in Australia as an unknown number of occurrences of abuse and neglect are not reported to community service departments. The main points to be noted from the statistics presented in this report are:

- In 1995–96 State and Territory community service departments recorded 91,734 notifications of child abuse and neglect, of which 74% were investigated and 14% were dealt with by means other than investigation (such as referral). The remaining 12% were not investigated or dealt with by any means; these include notifications where there was insufficient information to allow follow-up and notifications where action or investigation was not considered necessary.
- Of the 67,816 notifications that were investigated during the year, 61,383 (91%) were finalised by 31 August 1996. Of those finalised investigations 49% were substantiated, 47% were unsubstantiated and 4% had an outcome of 'child at risk'. The 29,833 substantiations consisted of 8,467 physical abuse substantiations (28%), 9,265 emotional abuse substantiations (31%), 4,802 sexual abuse substantiations (16%) and 7,299 neglect substantiations (25%).
- Overall, 53% of substantiations involved female children, although this varied across age groups and the types of abuse and neglect. Sexual abuse was far more likely to involve female children, particularly in the older age groups.
- Some children may be the subject of more than one notification, investigation or substantiation of child abuse or neglect in a year. In 1995–96, 71,766 children were the subject of a notification, 51,133 the subject of a finalised investigation and 25,558 the subject of a substantiation. This represents 16.3 children per 1,000 aged 0–16 years in the population who were the subject of a child abuse and neglect notification, 11.6 per 1,000 who were the subject of a finalised investigation and 5.8 per 1,000 who were the subject of a substantiation.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented in the child abuse and neglect statistics in 1995–96. The rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in notifications was 42.3 per 1,000 children aged 0–16 years, compared to 15.5 per 1,000 for other children. Similarly, 34.4 per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were involved in a finalised investigation and 18.0 per 1,000 were the subject of a substantiation. The respective rates for other children were 10.9 and 5.4 per 1,000. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are particularly over-represented in neglect substantiations.
- In 1995–96 the most common sources of notifications of abuse and neglect were friends/neighbours, parents/guardians, school personnel and the police. Notifications made by the police or the subject child were more likely to be substantiated than those from other sources. In particular a low proportion of notifications from anonymous sources were substantiated.
- Available data from the States and Territories indicate that in 71% of substantiations the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect was the natural parent. This is not surprising given that the statistics on child abuse and neglect include only those incidences involving protective issues for the child (that is, where the child's parents or guardians have been responsible for the abuse or neglect, or unable or unwilling to protect the child from abuse or neglect).

- Where States and Territories could provide data on the type of family in which the child was residing, the statistics show that, in 1995–96, 40% of emotional abuse substantiations, 32% of sexual abuse substantiations and 51% of neglect substantiations involved a child from a single female parent family. Thirty-four per cent of physical abuse substantiations involved a child from a ‘two parent—natural’ family. In interpreting these figures it should be noted that the factors associated with child abuse and neglect are complex and no single factor, such as the type of family structure in which a child lives, can fully explain why child abuse and neglect occurs.

Part A: Overview

1. Introduction

Child abuse and neglect is an emotive topic, with accounts of serious individual cases often reaching the press. It is an area of considerable interest to both the government and community and the subject of a large body of research. It is also an area where there is considerable scope for more work to determine the current incidence, the causes and effects (on both children and families) and the most appropriate and effective ways of dealing with child abuse and neglect.

This report, one in a series on child welfare, will inform debate in both the government and community sectors by presenting statistics on child abuse and neglect notified to State and Territory community service departments in the year 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996. These statistics should not be looked at in isolation, but should be considered in the context of the child welfare policies and processes in each of the States and Territories. The effect of broader factors such as social and family structures, the economy and community values also needs to be taken into account.

2. Background

The protection of children from abuse and neglect is legally the responsibility of the community service departments in each State and Territory. A list of the relevant authorities in each State and Territory is provided at the front of this report under 'Contributing departments'. Each has separate legislation to empower it to undertake its responsibilities in this area (see Appendix 1). State and Territory governments also provide funding for the provision of family services, to assist families at risk and in crisis.

Police also have some responsibility for child protection in each State and Territory. The extent of their responsibility varies, as detailed in Section 5.3, but generally they are involved in all abuse and neglect of a criminal nature (mainly significant sexual or physical abuse or abuse or neglect which results in the death of a child). In some States and Territories there have been protocols or informal arrangements established whereby the police are involved in joint investigations with the community service department.

The Commonwealth's role in child protection is mainly one of education and research. In addition it provides some funding for family support services mainly aimed at the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Section 6 contains more detail on the role of the Commonwealth Government.

The role of the AIHW is to collect and publish national data on child abuse and neglect, children on care and protection orders and adoptions. These collections are funded in large part by contributions from the State and Territory governments.

3. Scope and coverage

3.1 Scope and coverage of data in this report

A number of factors should be taken into consideration when interpreting the information presented on child abuse and neglect in Australia.

This report includes data on notifications of child abuse and neglect made to State and Territory community service departments in the 1995–96 financial year. It also provides data on notifications investigated in 1995–96 where the investigation was finalised by 31 August 1996, finalised investigations of child abuse and neglect which were and were not substantiated, and children who were the subject of finalised investigations and substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect.

Notifications made to other organisations, such as the police or non-government welfare agencies, are only included if these notifications were referred to the community service department. The level of referral varies from State to State, depending on the statutory requirements and policies in each jurisdiction. In general, notifications of child abuse and neglect are referred to the community service department by the police or other organisations if the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect is the child's guardian or from within the child's family, or where there is concern for the child's protection (for instance, where the parent(s) or guardian(s) are unable or unwilling to protect the child from abuse or neglect by a third party). This is discussed in more detail in Section 8.

In addition, it is widely acknowledged that a proportion of child abuse and neglect is not reported to any agency or department—although the extent of unreported child abuse and neglect is unknown.

The data in this report were sought from State and Territory community service departments according to definitions and counting rules agreed to by the departments and the AIHW. Definitions of terms used in the collection are provided in the glossary at the back of this publication. However, as noted above, each State and Territory has its own legislation regarding child abuse and neglect and these differ somewhat in wording and content. Reporting procedures, policies and practices also vary from State to State, as detailed in Section 8. These differences should be taken into consideration as they affect the comparability of some of the data across jurisdictions. To assist readers, footnotes describing instances where States and Territories could not adhere precisely to definitions and agreed standards have been provided with the tables.

3.2 Changes from previous years

There are considerable changes to the 1995–96 collection of national data on child abuse and neglect compared with previous collections, as outlined below. As a result, care should be taken in comparing data in this publication with data for previous years.

- For 1995–96 data on 'notifications' of abuse and neglect have been published. Previously, data was collected on the number of 'child abuse and neglect cases', which referred to notifications that warranted investigation (that is, a subset of all notifications).
- For this collection, notifications have been broken down into three main categories: notifications that were investigated, notifications that were dealt with by other means (such as through a referral to another agency), and notifications not investigated or dealt with by other means (which includes those where there was no action or investigation possible or necessary). These categories are discussed in more detail in Section 8.

- There have also been changes in the data collection as a result of recent changes in policies related to child abuse and neglect. Major changes include:
 - in Tasmania, notifications of neglect made under the *Child Welfare Act 1960* were not included in previous data collections. For 1995–96 data on all notifications of abuse and neglect to the Department of Community and Health Services (DCHS) are included. This is described in more detail in Section 8.1.
 - the number of notifications of child abuse and neglect that were substantiated is considerably lower in Tasmania in 1995–96 than in previous years. This is because of the absence of a common definition of ‘substantiated’ child abuse and neglect across the regions in that State. To rectify this problem Tasmania has recently adopted the national definition for child abuse and neglect.
 - the Western Australian ‘New Directions in Child Protection and Family Support’ policy was piloted in five regions of the State in 1995–96 and introduced State-wide on 1 May 1996. This policy substantially changes the way that Family and Children’s Services (FCS) classifies and deals with notifications of child abuse and neglect. Under ‘New Directions’, notifications of concerns about children are separated from notifications of maltreatment and the two types of notifications are dealt with in different ways. Previously both types of notifications were included as notifications of abuse and neglect (WA FCS 1996). Section 8.1.1 describes the changes in Western Australia in more detail.
- In the 1995–96 data collection, investigations of abuse and neglect notifications received during the year ended 30 June 1996 are counted as ‘finalised’ where the investigation was completed and an outcome recorded by 31 August 1996. In the 1994–95 collection the ‘cut-off date’ to determine finalisation of ‘cases’ investigated was 30 September 1995 (although for South Australia it was 16 August 1995). Prior to 1994–95 the collections included ‘cases’ reported in the financial year and where the investigation was finalised by the following 31 August (mid-August for South Australia).
- Only notifications relating to children under 18 years of age are included for 1995–96. Previously there were a small number of ‘cases’ of child abuse and neglect involving persons aged 18 years and over (referred to as ‘adults’ in the tables) included in the data collection.

4. Defining child abuse and neglect

Child abuse and neglect can be generally defined as occurring when a child has been, is being, or is likely to be, subjected to sexual, emotional or physical actions or inactions which have resulted in, or are likely to result in, significant harm or injury to the child. It refers to situations where there are protective issues for the child because the person believed to be responsible is a parent, family member or some other person with responsibility for care of the child; or where the person with the care of the child is unable or unwilling to protect the child from abuse or neglect.

Assaults of a child by a ‘stranger’ or someone with no responsibility for care of the child and where there are no protective concerns regarding the child are generally dealt with by the police rather than the community service department and are generally not included in the statistics.

Within this general definition or description, there are some variations across States and Territories, reflecting each jurisdiction’s own legislation, policies, and practices relating to child protection and child welfare. Terms such as ‘significant harm’ or ‘substantial risk’ are used in some States while others refer to ‘harm’ or ‘in danger of being harmed’. The boundary of what is included as child abuse and neglect also varies across jurisdictions. For example, Western Australia, under ‘New Directions’, places greater emphasis on the harm experienced by a child rather than on the nature of the act or incident in isolation (with the exception of sexual abuse where the exploitative or inappropriate nature of the act itself is considered to

constitute abuse) (WA FCS 1996). New South Wales includes in their 1995–96 statistics notifications of a broader nature, including general concerns for children as well as notifications where children are reported to have suffered actual harm. However, it is expected that New South Wales data will conform more closely to the national definition in future years.

5. Reporting of child abuse and neglect

5.1 Overview

The number of notifications of child abuse and neglect has risen considerably over the past decade, across all States and Territories (Angus & Hall 1996,¹ p. 40). It is not possible to determine whether this is indicative of a rise in the incidence of child abuse and neglect, or a reflection of changes in policies and practices relating to the reporting of child abuse and neglect (including the introduction of mandatory reporting). Other factors that may have contributed to the increase include the greater public awareness of child abuse and neglect, an increase in the willingness to listen to children and an increase in the numbers of those families most at risk of becoming the subject of a notification (for example, single parent families, families with mental illness or intellectual disability) (Clark 1995a). As a result of these contributing factors, changes over time in the figures for abuse and neglect need to be interpreted carefully.

Additionally, as stated earlier, this data collection includes only notifications of child abuse and neglect to State and Territory welfare agencies. The proportion of occurrences of child abuse and neglect which are not reported and, for instance, whether this is changing over time and greater in some areas within Australia than others, is unknown.

Recent research indicates that the likelihood of reporting may depend on the type of abuse and the child's situation. Adult respondents may be more likely to report severe sexual and physical abuse to the authorities than severe emotional abuse and neglect. Older children may be less likely to approach authorities, being more aware of the consequences for themselves and their families. In addition, it has been suggested that incidences of abuse involving children with disabilities may be less likely to be reported to child welfare or law enforcement authorities (Cashmore & Castell-McGregor 1996). There are also indications that child abuse is often not reported in country areas because of factors such as the closeness of the community, associated difficulties for workers in the areas and a widespread lack of resources (Select Committee of the Legislative Council 1991).

The extent of over- or under-reporting of abuse and neglect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is difficult to determine. A relatively high proportion of abuse and neglect may be reported to State and Territory community service departments because Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to be in the welfare system already and therefore more 'visible'. There is also the possibility that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-reported because of cultural differences in parenting practices. On the other hand, there may be under-reporting because of distrust of the community service department and the equating of 'welfare' with the removal of children.

A large proportion of child abuse and neglect notifications are made by relatives (including parents), friends and neighbours, while a relatively small proportion are made by the subject child. Other organisations, including the police and non-government welfare agencies, may also report if they have concerns for the child, or in some cases are mandated to do so. Section 9.7 provides data on the source of notifications in 1995–96.

¹ It should be noted that the data in Angus & Hall refer to 'child abuse and neglect cases', that is, notifications warranting investigation.

5.2 Mandatory reporting

All States and Territories except Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have legislation requiring compulsory reporting of child abuse and neglect. In most States and Territories the members of a few designated professions involved with children are required to report, although in the Northern Territory anyone who has reason to believe that a child may be abused or neglected must report to the appropriate authority. While Western Australia does not have mandatory reporting it does have protocols in place. The Australian Capital Territory is to introduce mandatory reporting on 1 June 1997. Details regarding the mandatory reporting requirements in each State and Territory are set out in Appendix 2.

In addition to requirements under State and Territory legislation, Family Court staff are also required under the *Family Law Act 1975* to report all suspected cases of child abuse.

5.2.1 The pros and cons of mandatory reporting

There is some controversy surrounding mandatory reporting, and whether or not it has a positive impact in reducing child abuse and neglect. Those in favour argue that it provides a clear statement by society on the existence of child abuse, its unacceptability and the need to protect children (Swain 1995).

Mandatory reporting sends a strong symbolic message that child abuse will not be tolerated. It also resolves the conflict some people, particularly medical professionals, may have about disclosing information given in confidence. (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission & Australian Law Reform Commission 1996, p. 67)

The effect of the introduction of mandatory reporting on notifications of child abuse and neglect can be seen from the Victorian experience. The staged introduction of mandatory reporting in Victoria over 1993 and 1994 resulted in a significant increase in notifications of child abuse and neglect in that State, not only from those that were specifically mandated. Notifications from doctors, nurses and police increased by 65% in 1993–94 from the previous year, and a further 6% in 1994–95. Notifications from teachers and principals increased by 41% and 64% respectively over these periods, while notifications from non-mandated groups (including family and non-mandated professional groups) increased by 30% and 18% respectively (Angus & Hall 1996).

Those against mandatory reporting argue that it increases the risk of unnecessary intrusion into families where reports may be of a trivial or frivolous nature and that this places increased pressure on the welfare system at the reporting end, taking resources away from those cases where assistance is obviously needed. There is also a concern that mandatory reporting may prevent people in crisis from seeking help from mandated professionals, for fear that this may result in a notification to the community service department.

Criticisms of mandatory reporting remain. Abusers may be less likely to seek help for themselves or the child. Mandatory reporting may deny children a voice in whether to report abuse and the action to be taken in relation to disclosure of abuse or neglect. This criticism is particularly relevant to older children. (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission & Australian Law Reform Commission 1996, p. 68)

In relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, concern has been expressed that mandatory reporting may be ineffective:

...the system of mandatory reporting is of dubious usefulness in the Aboriginal community given the existing suspicion and disapproval of most forms of state intervention in family and community life. In areas of Australia where there is mandatory reporting, Aboriginal Child Care Agencies (ACCA) and community members may not report if there is a suspicion of abuse or neglect for fear of activating the state system, preferring instead to deal with such instances on an informal basis first...This is not to say that the best interests of the children are ignored but rather that they would choose to use their own systems, especially where their children are concerned. (D'Souza 1993, p. 43)

5.3 Role of the police

Generally speaking, State and Territory community service departments are responsible for the investigation of child abuse and neglect where the person believed responsible is a parent, guardian or someone within the household, or where the person believed responsible is someone outside the household but the parents or guardians are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

In all States and Territories the police have the responsibility to investigate child abuse and neglect of a criminal nature (defined under the State or Territory criminal Acts). This usually occurs in incidences that involve sexual abuse or physical abuse of a significant nature, or the death of a child. The police are either notified directly or by the community service department. The police are also involved, in varying degrees (depending on the legislation and practices within each jurisdiction) in other incidences of child abuse and neglect. The police and the community service department may conduct joint investigations, with the department pursuing the child protection issues and the police the criminal investigation.

Some States have developed a formal team approach to the investigation of abuse and neglect, for example:

- New South Wales is trialing the co-location of Department of Community Services (DCS) workers and members of the police, whereby staff from each section operate as a cohesive unit in Joint Investigative Teams (JIT).
- In Victoria, a protocol exists between the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Victorian Police. Under this protocol, each agency must inform the other when grounds exist (based on a notification) for believing that a child has been sexually assaulted or has incurred significant physical harm. The protocol requires that joint interviews be arranged.
- Queensland has Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Teams which comprise representatives from the Department of Family Youth and Community Care (DFYCC), the police and an authorised medical officer. Where the abuse of a child within the family may involve criminal actions, investigations are undertaken jointly by officers of the department and the police.
- In South Australia, where warranted, joint investigations of abuse and neglect are conducted by workers from the Department for Family and Community Services (DFCS) and the police.
- In Western Australia, in order to ensure efficient referral of child abuse and neglect notifications to the community service department where this is required, reciprocal policies and procedures are negotiated with key agencies that deal with children and families (such as the police, children's hospitals, schools and prisons).
- In Tasmania, a formal protocol exists between Tasmania Police and DCHS to deal with child abuse and neglect matters. Joint investigations can be carried out, with Tasmania Police dealing with the criminal aspects and DCHS dealing with the abuse or neglect aspects. Within Tasmania Police there are dedicated child protection officers. Police also have membership on the Child Protection Board and Multi-disciplinary Assessment Committees.
- In the Australian Capital Territory the community service department involves the Australian Federal Police early in the investigation (often at initial contact) where it appears that the abuse or neglect is of a criminal nature.
- In the Northern Territory there is a protocol between Territory Health Services and the police whereby, if abuse of a child within the family involves criminal actions, joint investigations are undertaken.

The police in all States and Territories also have a role in providing assistance to protective workers where they may be under threat of physical violence (for instance, in a violent domestic situation).

6. The Commonwealth's role in child abuse and neglect

Australia is a signatory to the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. As stated above, the responsibility and legislative powers for child protection rest largely with the State and Territory welfare authorities. The Commonwealth's role is largely confined to education and research. It does, however, also directly fund some family support services (in the areas of counselling and mediation) and a small number of family resource centres (ACOSS 1996).

In the 1996 Budget the Commonwealth Government committed \$4.3 million over two years to deliver parenting education programs in the belief that:

Providing parents with the information necessary to deal with some of the pressures of day-to-day life should lead to a reduction in the incidence of child abuse. (Statement by the Honourable Judi Moylan 1996, p. 15)

The Commonwealth has stated that it will use the expertise of the community welfare sector in establishing and running these programs.

The National Child Protection Council (NCPC), comprising representatives from the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and 'community representatives' (such as a representative from the Aboriginal Child Care Agencies), was established in 1991. The Council's main role is education and research into child abuse and neglect. In 1993 the Council produced the National Child Abuse Prevention Strategy, the thrust of which is towards prevention of abuse and neglect (Calvert 1993; Rayner 1994).

The Commonwealth also funds the Australian Institute of Family Studies to host the National Child Protection Clearing House which serves as an interchange point for information, research and initiatives supporting work in the field of child abuse and neglect prevention.

7. Factors often associated with child abuse and neglect

There is a considerable body of written material regarding the social, psychological and environmental factors often associated with child abuse and neglect, and whether these factors are causal in nature. It is important to discuss some of the commonly identified factors to place the following data in context (particularly that related to family type and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

Identification of these associated factors is also important in targeting prevention strategies, currently being given considerable emphasis by both State and Territory and Commonwealth governments. It should be noted that the presence of these factors is neither sufficient nor necessary to explain why child abuse and neglect occurs. They are not associated with all cases of abuse or neglect—they are merely factors that have been identified as being common to many cases.

Goddard (1992) categorises the factors associated with child abuse as:

- psychological—for example, parents who were themselves abused as children and parents who have unrealistic expectations of their children's behaviour;
- social—such as social stresses, social isolation, poverty, unemployment and poor housing; and
- factors associated with the child—for example, prematurity or a disability that may make the child more demanding or difficult to manage.

He also suggests that there is an interaction of factors that contribute to child abuse and neglect. Domestic violence has been cited as another factor often associated with child abuse and neglect (Goddard & Hiller 1993; Tomison 1995).

A study of a sample of 151 substantiated notifications dealt with by the South Australian child protection agency in the year 1988–89 also attempted to identify some common factors. Of the 119 notifications where there was some information recorded about the family context prior to the report, 72% noted caregiver factors (for example, custody and access disputes, caregiver's psychiatric or physical illness, addiction to drugs and alcohol, financial stress, history of domestic violence or lack of parenting skills); over 30% noted child factors (such as disturbed behaviour, resentment towards or conflict with caregiver or siblings); and 16% noted the family as close and caring, with no apparent problems. These were not mutually exclusive categories (Winefield, Harvey & Bradley 1993). Similarly an analysis of notifications to the NSW DCS over the period 1991–92 to 1994–95 found that issues such as alcohol and/or drug abuse, emotional incapacity, and a violent domestic environment were frequently associated with the reported matter (Information and Planning Group, Child and Family Services Directorate 1996).

Clark (1995a) also points out that the socioeconomic profile of the Protective Services client population in Victoria is similar to that in the United Kingdom. The children reported are from poor families, with single parent families over-represented and an increasing number of children with parents with a mental illness or intellectual disability. She also cites substance abuse and domestic violence as factors contributing to child abuse and neglect.

8. Overview of the processes of notification, investigation and substantiation of abuse and neglect

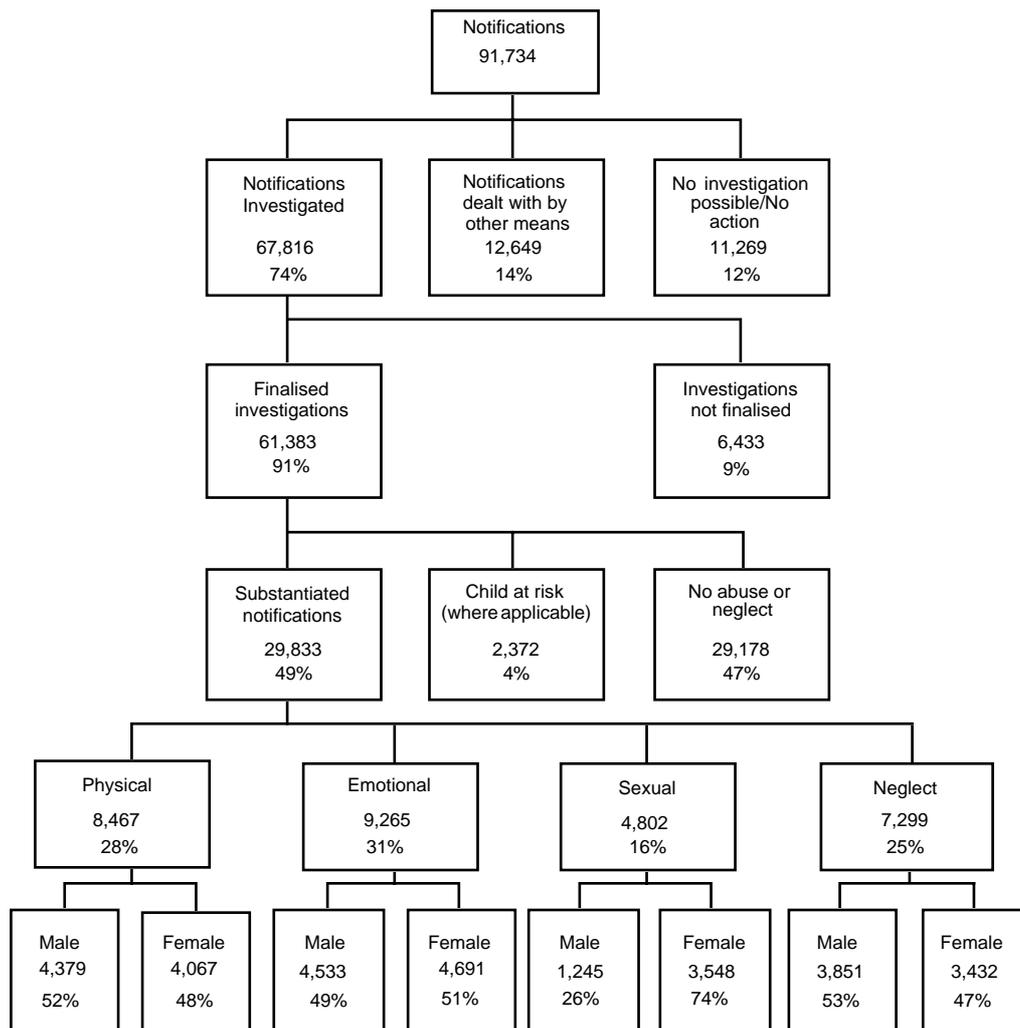
To help the reader place the data contained in this publication in some context, the following is a general description of the main processes following notification of child abuse or neglect to a State or Territory community service department. Figure 1 also outlines a very simplistic model of these processes and provides actual numbers for Australia for 1995–96.

It should be noted that the processes and stages through which a notification may pass vary across States and Territories, reflecting their different legislation, policies, protocols and local requirements. A brief description of these differences is also included below.

8.1 Notifications

In 1995–96 a total of 91,734 notifications of child abuse or neglect were received by the community service departments in the States and Territories (Figure 1). Notifications made to other organisations (such as the police) which were not referred to a community service department were not included in the data.

In this collection, only one child is the subject of a notification. Notifications concerning the child but which relate to the same event (that is, where the child has suffered the same type of abuse or neglect and where the same person is believed responsible) are counted as one notification. However, where a child is the subject of more than one notification during the year but these notifications relate to different events (for example, where there is a different type of abuse or neglect or a different person is believed responsible), these are counted as separate notifications, except in Victoria (see below).



Notes

1. Excludes 40 notifications of 'threat of abuse' for South Australia.
2. Figures by sex exclude substantiated notifications where the sex of the child is not stated.

Figure 1: Notifications of child abuse and neglect by outcome, type of abuse or neglect and sex of child, Australia, 1995-96

8.1.1 Definition and description of notifications in each jurisdiction

The States and Territories vary in how they define a notification and how they count notifications for the purposes of their data collection, as described below:

New South Wales

The definition of a notification in New South Wales is very broad and includes concerns regarding child behaviour or requests for assistance or information from parents. The data collection includes all notifications to NSW DCS except malicious allegations and allegations with insufficient information.

Victoria

A notification is caller defined; that is, where the person contacting the department believes that child abuse and neglect has occurred, this is classified as a notification. While a case is open, multiple notifications concerning a child are counted as one notification only, even if these notifications relate to a different type of abuse or neglect or a different person is believed responsible for the abuse or neglect.

Queensland

If the initial allegation of child abuse or neglect to DFYCC ('intake report') is assessed as involving a child protection issue and requiring a departmental response, then it is counted as a notification.

The data collection includes:

- notifications of abuse or neglect where the person believed responsible is a parent, a parent's partner or a person living in the home with the child;
- notifications where the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect is living outside the home but where the parent is likely to be unable or unwilling to protect the child;
- notifications where it is not known if the person believed responsible lives in the child's home; and
- notifications where the person believed responsible is a foster parent, approved person, State emergency 24 hour carer, or licensed residential worker.

A notification where the level of harm or risk of harm is not deemed to be significant is responded to by providing 'protective advice'. These notifications are included in the AIHW data collection as 'notifications dealt with by other means'.

Western Australia

In Western Australia notifications of child abuse and neglect are contacts with the FCS which the department classifies as Child Maltreatment Allegations (CMAs).

The 'New Directions' policy introduced a new approach by FCS to the management of notifications of abuse and neglect (see Section 3.2). The focus is now on collecting better information at the point of referral or contact with the department with referrals now classified into CMAs, Child Concern Reports (CCRs) and 'other reasons for contact' (such as schooling problems and physical problems with the child).

A contact is classified as a CMA where there is sufficient information to form a professional judgement that a child:

- has been physically or emotionally harmed or injured;
- is at risk of significant physical or emotional harm or injury;
- has been exposed or subjected to sexual behaviour or activities which are exploitative or inappropriate to his or her developmental level; or
- has been the subject of persistent actions or inactions which are likely to result in the child's development being significantly impaired (WA FCS 1996, p. 21).

CCRs include general concerns about a child's welfare such as concerns about situations where a child has harmed him or herself or is suffering emotional distress as a result of a divorce or a situation involving domestic violence. After assessment, a CCR may be reclassified as a CMA (WA FCS 1996).

Although only CMAs are defined as notifications of child abuse and neglect, it should be noted that 1995-96 was a phasing-in period for the new approach and that this publication contains data collected under both the old and the new approaches. As a result, the count of CMAs for 1995-96 includes some notifications that under 'New Directions' would be classified as CCRs. Therefore, while the number of notifications in 1995-96 is lower than in previous years, it is expected that the number will be lower again in 1996-97 when 'New

Directions' will have been in place across the whole of Western Australia for a full financial year.

South Australia

Notifications include reports to the community service department where there is a reasonable suspicion of abuse and neglect.

Data on notifications for 1995–96 include 1,729 notifications that were assessed as not meeting the requirement for investigation (for instance, notifications involving parent–child conflict or behavioural problems) (see Table 1).

Tasmania

Notifications include allegations of abuse or neglect of a child, or risk of abuse or neglect, made to Intake and Assessment Teams located in DCHS in the three regions in Tasmania. They do not include reports of concerns such as family problems and homelessness.

In previous years, only child abuse and neglect which was reported under the *Child Protection Act 1974* and recorded on the Child Protection database was included in the AIHW data collection. This represented all notifications of abuse, but only a minority of notifications of neglect. Notifications of neglect under the *Child Welfare Act 1960* were recorded on the Child Welfare Information System and were not included in the data provided to AIHW. The Child Protection database and the Child Welfare Information System have now been combined and since 1 July 1995 all notifications of child abuse and neglect have been reported to Intake and Assessment Teams that administer both Acts.

Australian Capital Territory

Reports to the department where the notifier considers there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is, or there is risk of, child abuse and neglect are counted as notifications. Child welfare concerns reported to the department (such as child–parent conflict, behavioural problems or homelessness) are not included as notifications in this collection.

Northern Territory

In the Northern Territory a report to Family, Youth and Children's Services (FYCS) that a child has suffered or is at substantial risk of suffering maltreatment is counted as a notification. The data collection includes notifications where the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect is within the immediate family circle (including Aboriginal kinship), and notifications where the person believed responsible is outside the immediate family circle but it appears that the child's caregivers are unable or unwilling to protect the child. Child welfare concerns reported to the department are also counted as notifications.

8.1.2 Actions taken in regard to notifications

Notifications are either:

- investigated (see Section 8.2);
- dealt with by means other than investigation (such as referral or the provision of advice); or
- are neither investigated nor dealt with by any means. This may be because there is insufficient information for the community service department to take any action (for example, the name or address of child was not provided), because it is obvious that the allegation is mischievous or malicious, or because it is obvious that the child is not in need of care and protection.

In 1995–96 in Australia, 67,816 notifications were investigated (74% of all notifications), 12,649 notifications (14%) were dealt with by means other than investigation, and the remaining 11,269 notifications (12%) were not dealt with by any means (Figure 1).

8.2 Investigations

An investigation of child abuse and neglect is the process by which the community service department obtains information about a child who is the subject of a notification. Most States and Territories conduct an initial assessment of a notification to determine whether the notification warrants investigation, but do not count these assessments as part of the investigation phase. In the other jurisdictions, however, these initial assessments are counted as 'investigations'.

Since notifications about the same child (where about different events) are counted as separate notifications in all States and Territories except Victoria, each of these notifications has a separate investigation. In Victoria, since more than one notification about a child cannot be counted while a case is open, there can only be one investigation (notification investigated) during this period (see Section 8.1.1).

In this collection investigations are categorised as either:

- a finalised investigation; that is, a notification received during 1995–96 which was investigated and where the investigation was completed and an investigation outcome recorded by 31 August 1996; or
- an investigation not finalised; that is, a notification received during 1995–96 which was investigated and where the investigation was not completed and there was no investigation outcome recorded by 31 August 1996.

In 1995–96, in Australia, 91% of the 67,816 investigations were 'finalised' and the remaining 9% were 'not finalised' (Figure 1).

8.2.1 Investigations across jurisdictions

The following briefly outlines the actions of the community service department that are deemed to constitute an investigation in each State and Territory:

New South Wales

During 1995–96 a very wide range of actions, from a phone call to face-to-face contact, were considered to constitute part of an 'investigation' in New South Wales. The data provided in this publication reflect this policy.

In July 1996, however, the DCS introduced new policies and practices, which significantly change the way that notifications and investigations are dealt with in that State. Whereas formerly all notifications were investigated, notifications are now initially assessed to determine whether they relate to child abuse and neglect or to some other concern about a child's welfare. After the assessment only notifications relating to child abuse or neglect are investigated. Investigations thus concentrate on the issues of child abuse and neglect rather than child concerns (NSW DCS 1995). As a result of these policy changes a substantial fall in the number of 'investigations' is expected in the 1996–97 data.

Victoria

In Victoria, all appropriate notifications are initially investigated to determine if they require a direct investigation. This 'initial investigation' would typically involve phone calls, file searches and/or case conferences. 'Initial investigations' are not counted as an 'investigation' for the purposes of this data collection. Only 'direct investigations', which involve face-to-face contact with the child, are included as an 'investigation' in the data in this report.

Queensland

In Queensland all notifications of abuse and neglect are responded to, either by a 'full investigation' (involving contact with the child or family) or a 'protective advice' (which means that the department responds to the caller through the provision of advice or referral). In this collection a 'full investigation' is counted as an 'investigation' and a 'protective advice' is counted as a 'notification dealt with by means other than investigation'.

Western Australia

Investigations include the face-to-face interviewing of the child and his or her caregivers, as well as the gathering of other information in order to make an assessment. An investigation can also involve consultation with other agencies actively involved in the case.

South Australia

Investigation involves any contact with the child, family, friends or other professionals with the purpose of gaining further information about a report which has been assessed as relating to child protection. Investigation usually involves a visit to the home of the child or a visit by the family of the child to the DFCS office.

Tasmania

An investigation may range from a search of records, interviews with the child or alleged maltreater, or liaison with the police in a criminal investigation.

Australian Capital Territory

The range of actions classified as an investigation is very broad, from a phone call to a face-to-face interview with the child and/or his or her caregiver.

Northern Territory

Investigation procedures require that a child must be visited at home and interviewed. All investigations, whether substantiated or not, are independently reviewed by Child Protection Teams which may recommend further action in relation to the management of the case.

8.2.2 Outcomes of finalised investigations

When an investigation is finalised it must have an outcome recorded. For the purposes of this collection States and Territories have classified outcomes of finalised investigations as either:

- 'substantiated abuse and neglect';
- 'unsubstantiated abuse and neglect'; or
- 'child at risk' (only some jurisdictions have this category of outcome).

8.3 Substantiations

In general terms a finalised investigation is classified as 'substantiated' or as a 'substantiated notification' where there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has been, or is being, abused or neglected. Substantiation does not require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution, with only a fairly small proportion of substantiated notifications resulting in prosecution of the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect. For example, a study of Western Australian child protection data for the period 1989 to 1994 indicated that 8% of physical abuse substantiations, 28% of sexual abuse substantiations, 2% of emotional abuse substantiations and 1% of neglect substantiations resulted in prosecution of the person(s) believed responsible (Cant & Downie 1994). It is also important to note the wide range of severity of harm and injury experienced by children who are the subject of abuse and neglect substantiations, as shown in Section 9.10.

The definition of substantiation does not differ greatly across the States and Territories. There are, however, a few differences that need to be taken into consideration when examining the data on substantiated child abuse and neglect.

- In New South Wales, prior to July 1996, substantiation of a notification did not necessarily mean that abuse or neglect had occurred, but rather that the information about the notification was confirmed (irrespective of whether or not it was a notification

of maltreatment or a notification of a concern about a child's welfare). Thus, in the data provided in this report, the definition of a substantiated notification in New South Wales is broader than in the other States and Territories. This has changed with the introduction of new policy directions at 1 July 1996, with a notification in New South Wales now being counted as substantiated only if child abuse and neglect is found (NSW DCS 1995). This will result in a significant fall in the number of substantiations in New South Wales in the 1996–97 data.

- The number of substantiations in Tasmania in 1995–96 is low relative to previous years. This reflects the absence of a common definition for substantiated child abuse and neglect across the regions within Tasmania. To rectify this problem, Tasmania has since adopted a definition for substantiated child abuse and neglect that is more consistent with the definition used by other States and Territories.

In 1995–96 there were 29,833 notifications of child abuse and neglect that were substantiated by State and Territory community service departments in Australia.

8.3.1 Categorisation by type of abuse and neglect

Substantiated abuse and neglect is broken down into the following four categories for the purposes of this collection:

- physical abuse—any non-accidental physical injury inflicted upon a child;
- emotional abuse—any act which results in the child suffering any kind of significant emotional deprivation or trauma;
- sexual abuse—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; and
- neglect—any serious omissions or commissions which, within the bounds of cultural tradition, constitute a failure to provide conditions that are essential for the healthy physical and emotional development of a child. This includes 'failure to thrive'.

Many children suffer more than one type of abuse or neglect. For example, a recent study of 295 notifications of suspected child abuse in Victoria found that, in one-third of notifications where neglect was the main concern, there was also physical abuse; in one-fifth of notifications relating to physical abuse, neglect was also an issue; and in one-quarter of notifications relating to sexual abuse there were also concerns about neglect (Tomison 1995).

The combination of different types of abuse is well documented in the literature:

Clinically it appears that physical, verbal or sexual abuse seldom occur without some component of other mistreatment. Various forms of abuse are frequently combined with either physical or emotional neglect. (Ney, Fung & Wickett 1994, p. 705–714)

Emotional abuse almost always occurs with physical or sexual abuse...Emotional abuse can also occur where there appears to be good physical care. (Goddard 1992, p. 287)

To avoid double counting where more than one type of abuse or neglect is recorded as an outcome of a finalised investigation, in this collection the type of abuse or neglect is classified as that considered to be the 'most serious'.

It should be noted that the categorisation of abuse and neglect into physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect is somewhat subjective, particularly given that most incidents of abuse and neglect do not appear to occur singly. It may be difficult to discern which type of abuse or neglect is the most serious and presents the greatest harm to the child.

In addition to the four categories of abuse and neglect mentioned above, South Australia has a fifth category, called 'threat of abuse'. In 1995–96 in South Australia there were 40 substantiations coded as 'threat of abuse' and these substantiations are excluded from the data in this collection. Other States and Territories include 'threat of abuse' under either

'physical', 'emotional' or 'sexual' abuse and these data are therefore included in the collection.

In 1995–96 in Australia, 28% of the 29,833 substantiated notifications of child abuse and neglect were categorised as physical abuse, 31% as emotional abuse, 16% as sexual abuse and the remaining 25% as neglect (Figure 1).

8.3.2 How do the community service departments deal with substantiated notifications?

The emphasis of State and Territory community service departments is on protecting the child, if possible, within the family structure. In addition, where possible, the family is involved in sorting out the problems and possible solutions when child abuse and neglect is substantiated. The term 'family preservation' is often used in the literature to describe this current emphasis.

Child protection workers are charged with onerous responsibilities as they struggle to steer a path trying to protect children on the one hand, and preserve family integrity on the other. (Cashmore & Castell-McGregor 1996, p. 16)

Each State and Territory has developed its own programs and practices to involve and assist families where a child has been subjected to abuse and neglect. For example, South Australia has a pre-court process called Family Care Meetings, which involve families in developing plans and strategies for the protection of children. Victoria has Family Group Conferences and a Families First program (which is an intensive in-home support program aimed at preventing out-of-home placement for abused and neglected children). Similar family preservation programs are being developed in other States and Territories (Cashmore & Castell-McGregor 1996; Voight & Tregeagle 1996).

Other intervention may include referral to other organisations to assist in the alleviation of financial or emotional stresses within the family, or continued supervision by the relevant department and restricting access to the child of the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect. In some situations such restrictions are not necessary as the person believed responsible may leave the family home voluntarily. Some children may be placed out of home on a voluntary basis for a short term, while the process of reconciliation with the family is being attempted.

Another option available to community service departments, usually only undertaken as a last resort, is to apply to have the child who is the subject of abuse and neglect placed on a care and protection order. This gives the community service department some legal responsibility for the child's welfare. Care and protection orders range from guardianship orders (where guardianship of a child is transferred to the State) to supervisory orders (where the community service department's role is to supervise the care provided to the child by its parents or guardian). Placing the child on an order does not necessarily involve removing the child from his or her home, although some children under orders are removed to foster care or some other out-of-home placement (Angus, Dunn & Moyle 1996).

Only a small proportion of substantiated notifications result in children being placed on an order. For example, in New South Wales in 1993–94, only about 5% of all notifications resulted in a determination by the Children's Court that a child be placed on a care and protection order, despite the fact that around half of all notifications were substantiated (NSW DCS 1995).

8.4 Child at risk

The 'child at risk' category refers to situations where the notification of abuse or neglect is not substantiated, but where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting the possibility of previous or future abuse or neglect and it is considered that continued departmental involvement is warranted. In 1995–96 only Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and

the Australian Capital Territory included the 'child at risk' category as an outcome from a finalised investigation.

In Western Australia, the category 'not substantiated—child at risk' was abolished with the implementation of the 'New Directions' policy state-wide in May 1996 (see Section 8.1.1) (WA FCS 1996). Since the new policy was phased in during 1995–96, the number of substantiated notifications classified as 'child at risk' is lower than in previous years.

Victoria ceased assigning finalised investigation outcomes to the 'child at risk' category in 1988–89. In South Australia, the use of the 'child at risk' category was discontinued during 1989. The Northern Territory has not had a 'child at risk' category since 1993–94 (although it had one finalised investigation with an outcome classified as 'child at risk' in 1995–96).

In this collection, for New South Wales and South Australia, where a notification is not substantiated but a child is assessed as being at risk, the investigation outcome is classified as 'no abuse or neglect'. In the Northern Territory, however, these notifications are allocated either to the category 'substantiated' or 'no abuse or neglect', depending on the individual situation.

There were 2,372 finalised investigations with an outcome classified as 'child at risk' in 1995–96, representing only 4% of all finalised investigations in Australia (Figure 1).

8.5 No abuse or neglect (unsubstantiated)

A notification is categorised as 'unsubstantiated' where it is concluded after investigation that there is no reasonable cause to suspect that the child has been, is being, or is likely to be, harmed.

There is some variation between the States and Territories as to what is included as an unsubstantiated notification since, as discussed above, some jurisdictions include as unsubstantiated those notifications which others classify as 'children at risk' (see Section 8.4). In addition, in New South Wales 'unsubstantiated' refers to a situation where the details of the notification were not confirmed (see Section 8.3).

For Australia, in 1995–96, the outcome of 29,178 finalised investigations (47% of all finalised investigations) were classified as 'unsubstantiated' or 'no abuse or neglect' (Figure 1).

Part B: Analysis

9. Child abuse and neglect 1995–96

9.1 Overview

The following section provides details of child abuse and neglect for the 1995–96 financial year. The explanations of child abuse and neglect terms, processes and practices, outlined in the previous sections of this report, should be taken into consideration when interpreting the information.

9.2 Notifications

During 1995–96 there were 91,734 notifications of child abuse and neglect recorded by the eight State and Territory community service departments. Of these notifications, 67,816 (74%) were investigated, 12,649 (14%) were dealt with by means other than investigation (such as provision of advice or referral) and the remaining 11,269 (12%) were not dealt with by any means (due to lack of information to allow follow-up or because they were assessed as requiring no action by the community service department). In total, 61,383 investigations (91% of all investigations) were reported as finalised by 31 August 1996, with the remaining 6,433 investigations still in progress or still open at that time (Table 1 and Figure 1).

The differences in policies, practices and definition of terms across jurisdictions should be considered when comparing the proportions of notifications that were investigated, dealt with by other means or not dealt with by other means (no action/no investigation). For example, New South Wales had a very high proportion of notifications investigated compared to most other States and Territories. This can largely be explained by the fact that in New South Wales in 1995–96 the definition of an investigation was very broad, covering any action taken by the DCS in regard to a notification. Those States and Territories with the lowest proportion of notifications investigated (Victoria and Tasmania) had a relatively high proportion of notifications dealt with by other means (that is, notifications assessed as not requiring investigation but where another service may be provided). The Victorian figure for the proportion of notifications investigated appears low as a result of the way in which investigations are counted for that State in this collection. For the purposes of this report, in Victoria, only those investigations involving face-to-face contact with a child are counted as 'investigations'.

Table 1: Notifications of child abuse and neglect by type of action, 1995–96

	NSW ^(a)	Vic ^(b)	Qld ^(c)	WA ^(d)	SA ^(e)	Tas ^(f)	ACT	NT	Total
Number									
Investigation finalised	24,663	13,911	11,230	2,656	6,190	1,196	1,043	494	61,383
Investigation not finalised	2,653	368	1,586	124	976	591	135	–	6,433
<i>Total investigations</i>	<i>27,316</i>	<i>14,279</i>	<i>12,816</i>	<i>2,780</i>	<i>7,166</i>	<i>1,787</i>	<i>1,178</i>	<i>494</i>	<i>67,816</i>
Dealt with by other means	..	10,318	1,619	..	..	712	..	..	12,649
No investigation possible/No action	1,614	5,317	927	968	1,729	434	259	21	11,269
Total notifications	28,930	29,914	15,362	3,748	8,895	2,933	1,437	515	91,734
Percentage									
Investigation finalised	85	47	73	71	70	41	73	96	67
Investigation not finalised	9	1	10	3	11	20	9	–	7
<i>Total investigations</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>74</i>
Dealt with by other means	..	34	11	..	..	24	..	..	14
No investigation possible/No action	6	18	6	26	19	15	18	4	12
Total notifications	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Includes child welfare concerns notified to the NSW DCS.

(b) Notifications investigated include only those involving face-to-face contact with the child or family. 'Notifications dealt with by other means' includes those dealt with through initial investigation (ie: through phone calls, file checks etc). 'No action/ investigation possible' includes notifications where there is considered to be no immediate issues of risk to the child.

(c) 'Notifications dealt with by other means' includes those classified as 'Protective Advice'.

(d) Under 'New Directions' which was phased in during 1995–96, only CMAs are included as notifications.

(e) The number of notifications has been derived by combining the number of child protection assessments made on individual children which met the criteria for investigation with the number which did not (1,729). Excludes 40 notifications classified as 'threat of abuse'.

(f) 'Dealt with by other means' in Tasmania refers to those notifications that were assessed but not found to warrant a full investigation or where a full investigation was not possible.

9.3 Finalised investigations

9.3.1 Finalised investigations by State and Territory

Of the 61,383 investigations of child abuse and neglect that were reported as finalised in Australia for 1995–96, 49% were substantiated, 4% had an outcome classified as 'child at risk' and the remaining 47% were found to be unsubstantiated (Table 2 and Figure 1).

New South Wales had the highest proportion of finalised investigations that were substantiated (57%), due to the broader definition of substantiation used by that State (see Section 8.3). Tasmania's very low level of substantiation can be explained by the lack of an agreed definition for substantiation across the State, with some regions using a much tighter definition than others. This also explains the high proportion of finalised investigations that were unsubstantiated in Tasmania in 1995–96 (64% compared to the national average of 48%). South Australia also had a relatively high rate of finalised investigations that were unsubstantiated (61%).

Table 2: Finalised investigations of child abuse and neglect by type of outcome, 1995–96

	NSW ^(a)	Vic ^(b)	Qld	WA ^(c)	SA ^(d)	Tas ^(e)	ACT	NT ^(f)	Total
Number									
Substantiated abuse or neglect	14,063	6,663	4,662	1,095	2,415	235	445	255	29,833
Child at risk	..	..	1,778	289	..	191	113	1	2,372
No abuse or neglect	10,600	7,248	4,790	1,272	3,775	770	485	238	29,178
Total finalised investigations	24,663	13,911	11,230	2,656	6,190	1,196	1,043	494	61,383
Percentage									
Substantiated abuse or neglect	57	48	42	41	39	20	43	52	49
Child at risk	..	..	16	11	..	16	11	–	4
No abuse or neglect	43	52	43	48	61	64	47	48	47
Total finalised investigations	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

- (a) In New South Wales in 1995–96, a notification was substantiated when the information about the notification was confirmed. As such the number of substantiated notifications includes substantiated general concerns about a child as well as child abuse and neglect.
- (b) Only direct investigations involving contact with a child and/or family are included. Data excludes 10,318 'initial investigations'.
- (c) 'New Directions' was phased in during 1995–96. As a result Western Australia's figures include a smaller number of notifications with outcomes classified as 'child at risk' than in previous years.
- (d) Figures exclude 40 substantiated notifications classified as 'threat of abuse'.
- (e) The relatively low number of substantiated notifications for Tasmania is partly due to the absence of a common definition of 'substantiated' across regions during the counting period.
- (f) One outcome from a finalised investigation was mis-coded as 'child at risk'.

9.3.2 Finalised investigations by age and sex of child

Just over half of the finalised investigations of abuse and neglect in 1995–96 involved a female child. This proportion did not differ greatly across the three outcome categories, with 53% of substantiations involving a female child compared to 51% of unsubstantiated notifications. Similarly 51% of finalised investigations with the outcome of 'child at risk' involved females (Table A1).

In 1995–96, 36% of finalised investigations involved children aged 4 years or under and only 5% of finalised investigations involved children aged over 15 years of age. The age distribution differed across investigation outcome categories with a higher proportion of substantiations than unsubstantiated notifications involving older children. In 1995–96, 62% of substantiated investigations involved a child aged under 10 years and 38% a child aged 10 years and over. In comparison, 72% of unsubstantiated investigations involved a child aged under 10 years and 28% a child aged 10 years and over (Table A2).

Finalised investigations involving older children involved a higher proportion of females than those where the subject was a younger child. This was the case across all investigation outcome categories. Almost 70% of finalised investigations involving 15–17 year olds involved female children, compared to only 49% of those involving children aged 0–4 (Tables A1, A2 and A3).

9.4 Substantiations

A notification of child abuse and neglect is substantiated on the basis of information gathered during an investigation. The notification 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 (see Section 8.3).

9.4.1 Type of abuse and neglect

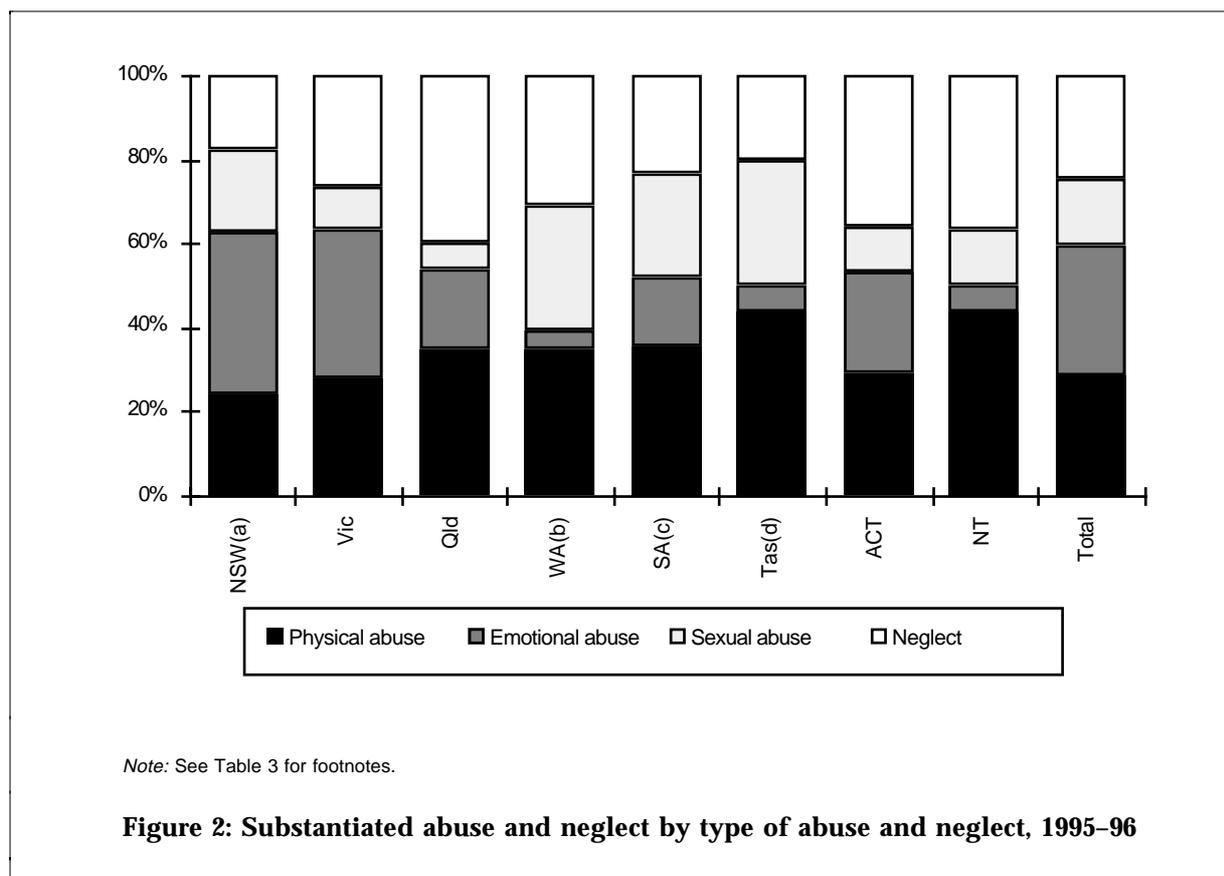


Table 3: Substantiated notifications of child abuse and neglect by type of abuse and neglect, 1995-96

Type of abuse and neglect	NSW(a)	Vic	Qld	WA(b)	SA(c)	Tas(d)	ACT	NT	Total
Number									
Physical abuse	3,422	1,847	1,620	383	852	103	129	111	8,467
Emotional abuse	5,388	2,393	896	46	404	14	107	17	9,265
Sexual abuse	2,776	644	301	328	600	70	49	34	4,802
Neglect	2,477	1,779	1,845	338	559	48	160	93	7,299
Total substantiations	14,063	6,663	4,662	1,095	2,415	235	445	255	29,833
Percentage									
Physical abuse	24	28	35	35	35	44	29	44	28
Emotional abuse	38	36	19	4	17	6	24	7	31
Sexual abuse	20	10	6	30	25	30	11	13	16
Neglect	18	27	40	31	23	20	36	36	24
Total substantiations	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

- (a) In New South Wales in 1995-96, a notification was substantiated when the information about the notification was confirmed. As such the number of substantiated notifications includes substantiated general concerns about a child as well as child abuse and neglect.
- (b) 'New Directions' was phased in during 1995-96.
- (c) Figures exclude 40 substantiated notifications classified as 'threat of abuse'.
- (d) The relatively low number of substantiated notifications for Tasmania is partly because of the lack of a common definition of 'substantiated' across regions during the counting period.

As discussed in Section 8.3.1 many children suffer more than one type of abuse or neglect. In this collection the type of abuse and neglect is recorded as the one most likely to be most severe in the short term, or most likely to place a child at risk in the short term, or the most obvious. Because of this, and because it is not always clear what type of abuse has occurred, the categorisation of substantiated abuse and neglect is in some cases subjective.

Of the 29,833 notifications of abuse and neglect that were reported as substantiated by the State and Territory community service departments in 1995–96, 28% were classified as physical abuse, 31% as emotional abuse, 16% as sexual abuse and 24% as neglect (Table 3 and Figure 2). This varied considerably across jurisdictions, depending on the legislation, policies and practices in each State and Territory. For example, Queensland had a relatively low proportion of sexual abuse substantiations because in this State sexual abuse by a person outside the family (where the parents act protectively) is dealt with as a police matter rather than a familial child protection matter and does not appear in these statistics.

9.4.2 Types of abuse and neglect by sex and age of child

The highest numbers of substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect were those involving children aged under 1 year (2,355). Substantiated notifications involving children under 1 year accounted for the highest number of emotional abuse substantiations (935) and neglect substantiations (850). The highest numbers of substantiated notifications of physical abuse and sexual abuse were those involving children aged 14 years (790 and 488 substantiations respectively) (Table A4).

Substantiations of physical abuse and neglect were slightly more likely to involve male children than female children while the reverse was true for emotional abuse. Sexual abuse was much more likely to involve female children, particularly in the older age groups (Tables A4 and A5).

The different patterns by age for male and female children involved in substantiated notifications of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect are shown in Figures 3 to 6. Substantiated physical abuse was more likely to involve male children than female children until the age of 13 years, as substantiations of physical abuse involving female children began to rise sharply after age 12 (Table A4 and Figure 3).

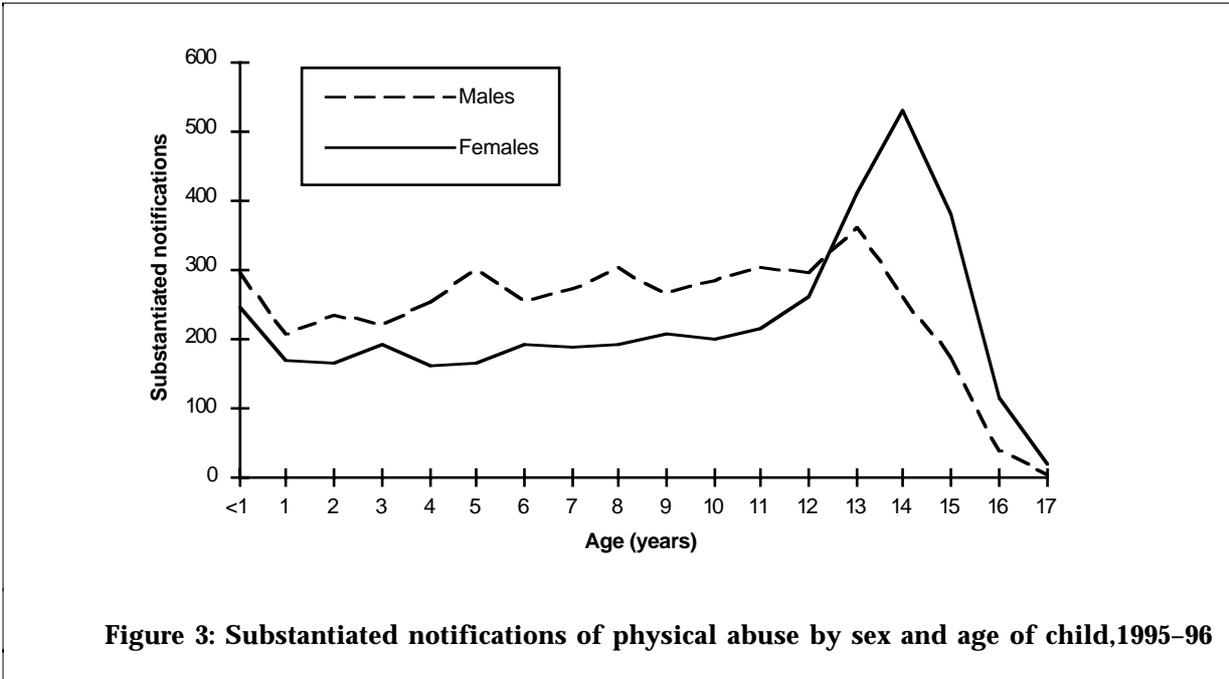


Figure 3: Substantiated notifications of physical abuse by sex and age of child, 1995-96

The patterns for substantiated notifications of emotional abuse involving male and female children are very similar until, once again, around 13 years of age, where the number of substantiations of emotional abuse involving females continued to rise sharply, while those involving males began to fall (Table A4 and Figure 4). The relatively high number of emotional abuse substantiations involving young children is apparent in this figure.

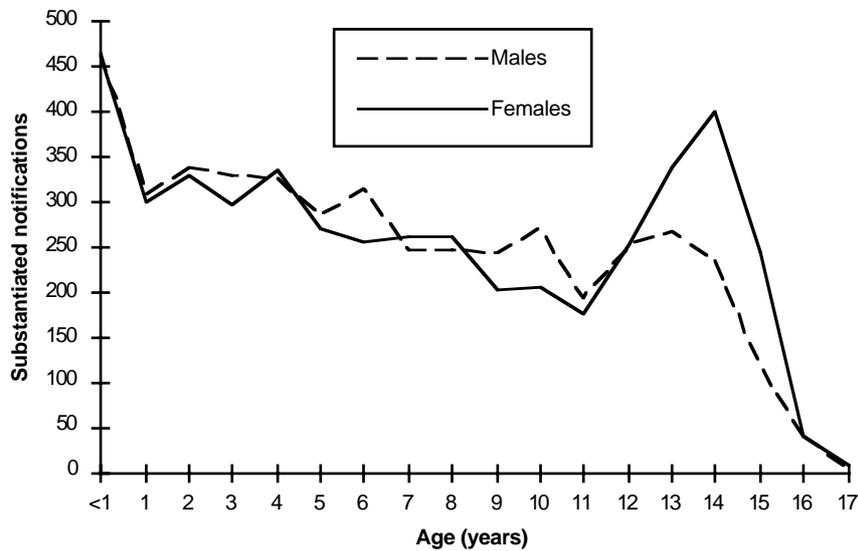


Figure 4: Substantiated notifications of emotional abuse by sex and age of child, 1995-96

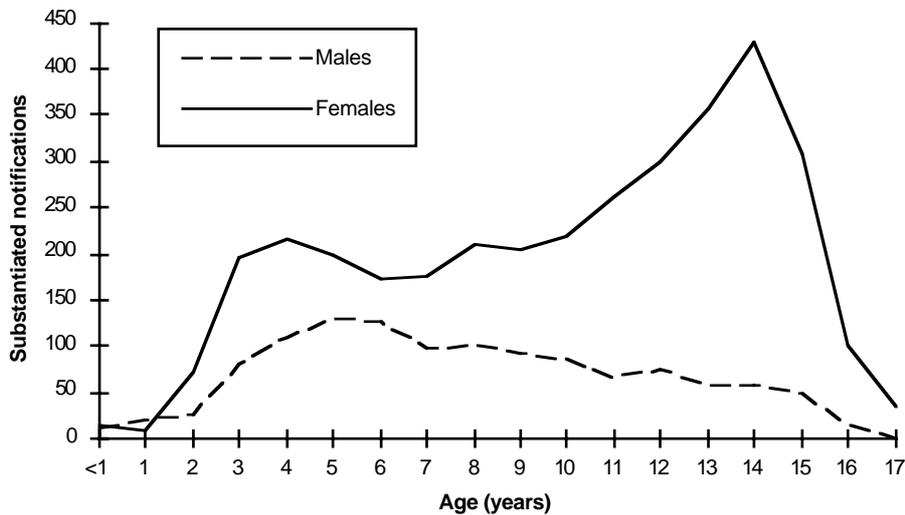
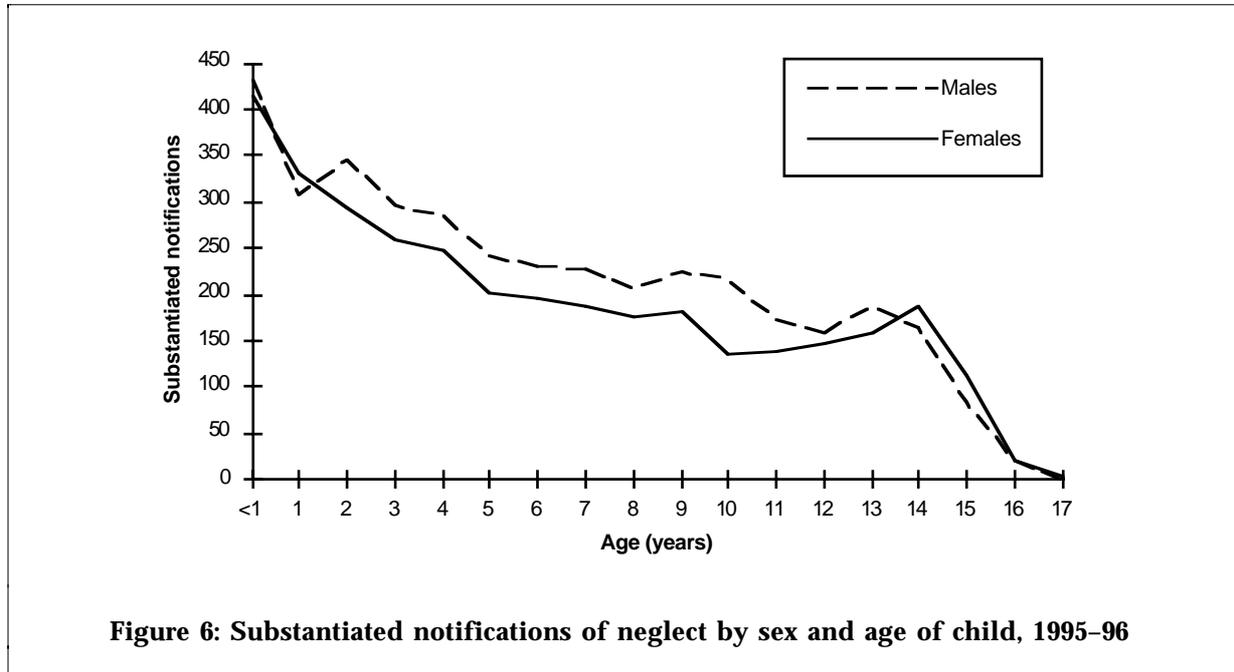


Figure 5: Substantiated notifications of sexual abuse by sex and age of child, 1995-96

As stated above, sexual abuse is far more likely to involve female children than male children. The pattern for sexual abuse substantiations involving male children peaked at around 5 and 6 years of age and then declined, while the pattern for those involving female

children had a small peak for girls aged 3 and 4 years and then a large peak for girls aged 14 years (Table A4 and Figure 5).

Substantiated neglect primarily involves young children, for both males and females. The patterns of involvement by children of different ages were very similar for both sexes (Table A4 and Figure 6).



9.4.3 Change over time

Several factors affect the trends in the number of substantiations reported in Australia by State and Territory community service departments, including changes in:

- State and Territory legislation, policies and practices;
- attitudes towards and beliefs about child abuse and neglect within Australia and also internationally (for example, what actions or inactions constitute child abuse and neglect);
- data collection methodologies and coding practices within each State and Territory and at the national level;
- the level of abuse and neglect;
- the extent to which abuse and neglect is reported, which will have been affected by the introduction of mandatory reporting in some jurisdictions; and
- the emphasis given to the protection of children in both the community and in government.

All these factors should be taken into consideration when examining the trends presented in Tables A6 and A7 and Figure 7.

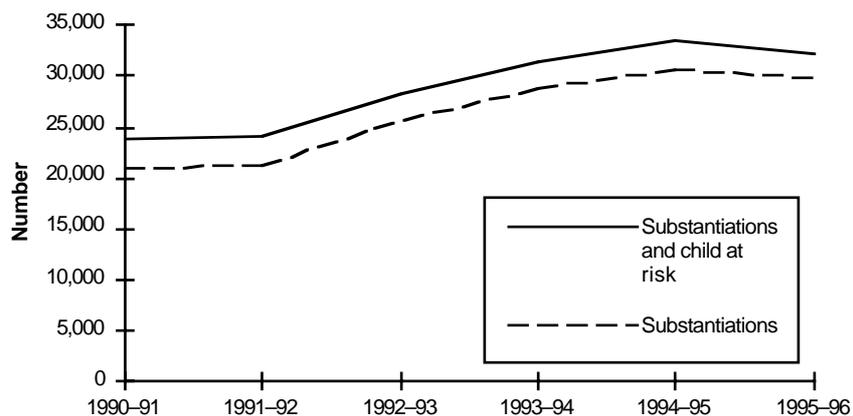


Figure 7: Substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect and finalised investigations with outcome of 'child at risk', 1990-91 to 1995-96

The number of substantiated notifications of child abuse and neglect increased from 18,816 in 1988-89 to 30,615 in 1994-95, but fell 3% to 29,833 in 1995-96. Most of the increase occurred between 1991-92 and 1992-93 (when there was a 20% increase in substantiations) and 1992-93 and 1993-94 (when there was a 12% increase). Much of the increase nationally during this time was due to large increases in the number of substantiations in Victoria² and South Australia during those years, although all other States and Territories except Queensland and Tasmania reported increased numbers of substantiations during these years. The fall in 1995-96 is due, at least in part, to changes in policies and practices in some States and Territories (such as Western Australia, with the introduction of 'New Directions', and Tasmania, which did not have a consistent definition for 'substantiated' across the regions in the State during the counting period).

There have been some changes in the five year period to 1995-96 in the type of substantiated abuse and neglect reported by State and Territory community service departments. The proportion of substantiated notifications classified as physical abuse increased to 30% in 1993-94 before falling to its current level of 28%; the proportion classified as emotional abuse increased from 25% in 1990-91 to 31% in 1995-96; the proportion classified as sexual abuse fell considerably over the same period from 24% to 16%, and the proportion classified as neglect changed little (Table 4). As with the overall trends, the factors influencing these changes are complex and should be considered when interpreting the data. These factors include changes in legislation and policies as well as changes in definitions and coding practices in each of the States and Territories.

² Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect was introduced in Victoria in this period (see Appendix 2). In addition, prior to 1993, the Victorian police were involved in receiving notifications of abuse and neglect along with the Victorian DHS, and these were not included in the statistics. Since 1992 all notifications in Victoria are made to DHS and are included in the data collection.

Table 4: Substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect, by type of abuse and neglect, 1990–91 to 1995–96

	Physical	Emotional	Sexual	Neglect	Total ^(a)
Number					
1990–91	5,479	5,123	5,072	5,194	20,868
1991–92	5,890	5,415	4,876	5,175	21,371
1992–93	7,342	6,485	5,979	5,812	25,630
1993–94	8,494	7,694	5,360	7,155	28,711
1994–95	9,000	8,597	4,924	8,084	30,615
1995–96	8,467	9,265	4,802	7,299	29,833
Percentage^(b)					
1990–91	26	25	24	25	100
1991–92	28	25	23	24	100
1992–93	29	25	23	23	100
1993–94	30	27	19	25	100
1994–95	29	28	16	26	100
1995–96	28	31	16	24	100

(a) Includes substantiations where type of abuse or neglect is unknown. As a result types of abuse and neglect may not add to the total.

(b) Percentage calculated as a proportion of substantiations where type of abuse or neglect is known.

9.5 Children who were the subject of notifications, finalised investigations and substantiations in 1995–96

Some children are the subject of more than one notification of abuse or neglect in a particular year. In 1995–96, the 91,734 notifications of abuse and neglect recorded by State and Territory community service departments involved 71,766 children, while the 61,383 finalised investigations involved 51,133 children (Table 5). For these children in finalised investigations, the outcome for 25,558 children (50%) was substantiated abuse or neglect, for 23,827 children (47%) the abuse or neglect was unsubstantiated and for the remaining 1,748 children (3%) the outcome was classified as ‘child at risk’ (Table A8).

In 1995–96, 47% of children in substantiated investigations, 49% of children in unsubstantiated investigations and 49% of ‘children at risk’ were male. Overall 48% of the children in finalised investigations were male (Table A8).

The distribution of children by State and Territory follows the pattern described earlier for notifications and finalised investigations (Section 9.3 and 9.4). The numbers of children by State and Territory are given in Table 5.

Of the 25,558 children in substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect, 7,489 (29%) were the subject of physical abuse, 7,762 (30%) emotional abuse, 4,478 (18%) sexual abuse and 5,829 (23%) neglect (Table 5 and A9). The patterns of abuse and neglect for children follow the same patterns by age and sex as described earlier for substantiations (see Section 9.4.2).

Table 5: Children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a notification, finalised investigation and substantiated notification of child abuse and neglect, 1995–96

Type of abuse and neglect	NSW ^(a)	Vic	Qld	WA ^(b)	SA ^(c)	Tas ^(d)	ACT	NT	Total
Physical abuse	2,917	1,796	1,330	368	752	103	118	105	7,489
Emotional abuse	4,361	2,306	644	27	316	13	80	15	7,762
Sexual abuse	2,590	622	257	316	549	65	47	32	4,478
Neglect	2,031	1,717	1,101	271	455	41	127	86	5,829
<i>Substantiated abuse or neglect</i>	<i>11,899</i>	<i>6,441</i>	<i>3,332</i>	<i>982</i>	<i>2,072</i>	<i>222</i>	<i>372</i>	<i>238</i>	<i>25,558</i>
Child at risk	..	..	1,315	238	..	120	74	1	1,748
No abuse or neglect	8,392	6,230	3,888	1,145	2,842	725	391	214	23,827
<i>Total finalised investigations</i>	<i>20,291</i>	<i>12,671</i>	<i>8,535</i>	<i>2,365</i>	<i>4,914</i>	<i>1,067</i>	<i>837</i>	<i>453</i>	<i>51,133</i>
Notifications	23,319	23,399	11,833	3,220	6,159	2,240	1,126	470	71,766

- (a) In New South Wales, in 1995–96, a notification was substantiated when the information about the notification was confirmed. As such the number of children in substantiated notifications includes those who were the subject of general concerns notified to DCS as well as those who suffered child abuse and neglect.
- (b) 'New Directions' was phased in during 1995–96.
- (c) Figures exclude children in substantiated notifications with outcomes classified as 'threat of abuse'.
- (d) The relatively low number of children who are the subject of substantiated notifications for Tasmania is partly due to the absence of a common definition of 'substantiated' across regions during the counting period.

Note: Children whose age was unknown or not stated are included as most of these would be aged 0–16 years of age.

9.5.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented in the statistics on child abuse and neglect. While making up only an estimated 3% of the Australian population aged 0–17 years at 31 December 1995, 8% of the children who were the subject of notifications of abuse and neglect, 9% of the children in finalised investigations and 10% of the children in child abuse and neglect substantiations in 1995–96 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children made up 16% of children classified as 'at risk' and 8% of children who were the subject of a finalised investigation classified as 'unsubstantiated' (Table A10).

The pattern of substantiated abuse and neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children differed markedly from the pattern for other children. In 1995–96, 38% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in substantiated notifications were the subject of neglect, compared to 21% of other children. Conversely, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in substantiated notifications who were the subject of sexual abuse was lower than for other children (11% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in substantiated notifications compared to 18% for other children) (Tables 6 and A11). However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have a higher rate per 1,000 children across all types of abuse and neglect than other children (see Section 9.6.2).

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and other children in notifications, finalised investigations and substantiations in each State and Territory is given in Table 6. Rates of abuse and neglect per 1,000 children in the population for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and all children are given in Section 9.6.

The reasons for the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are complex, involving social, psychological, economic and environmental factors. High rates of poverty and unemployment, poor living conditions for many families, the high incidence of single parent families, high incidences of alcoholism and other health problems among the population, greater association with the welfare system (both in the past and in the present), lack of access or ability to access appropriate parental support services and different child rearing practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people all contribute to the over-representation of these children in the child abuse and neglect statistics.

Table 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a notification, finalised investigation and substantiated notification of child abuse and neglect, 1995–96

Type of abuse and neglect	NSW ^(a)	Vic	Qld	WA ^(b)	SA ^(c)	Tas ^(d)	ACT	NT	Total
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children									
Physical abuse	200	64	175	58	53	6	9	46	611
Emotional abuse	446	76	67	3	33	0	6	3	634
Sexual abuse	130	8	28	56	28	1	2	11	264
Neglect	284	121	269	91	89	5	24	57	940
<i>Substantiated abuse or neglect</i>	<i>1,060</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>539</i>	<i>208</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>2,449</i>
Child at risk	..	..	227	38	..	9	9	1	284
No abuse or neglect	643	246	454	243	215	33	23	85	1,942
<i>Total finalised investigations</i>	<i>1,703</i>	<i>515</i>	<i>1,220</i>	<i>489</i>	<i>418</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>4,675</i>
Notifications	1,943	758	1,511	618	507	125	90	208	5,760
Other children									
Physical abuse	2,717	1,732	1,155	310	699	97	109	59	6,878
Emotional abuse	3,915	2,230	577	24	283	13	74	12	7,128
Sexual abuse	2,460	614	229	260	521	64	45	21	4,214
Neglect	1,747	1,596	832	180	366	36	103	29	4,889
<i>Substantiated abuse or neglect</i>	<i>10,839</i>	<i>6,172</i>	<i>2,793</i>	<i>774</i>	<i>1,869</i>	<i>210</i>	<i>331</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>23,109</i>
Child at risk	..	..	1,088	200	..	111	65	..	1,464
No abuse or neglect	7,749	5,984	3,434	902	2,627	692	368	129	21,885
<i>Total finalised investigations</i>	<i>18,588</i>	<i>12,156</i>	<i>7,315</i>	<i>1,876</i>	<i>4,496</i>	<i>1,013</i>	<i>764</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>46,458</i>
Notifications	21,376	22,641	10,322	2,602	5,652	2,115	1,036	262	66,006

(a) In New South Wales, in 1995–96, a notification was substantiated when the information about the notification was confirmed. As such the number of children in substantiated notifications includes those who were the subject of general concerns notified to DCS as well as those who suffered child abuse and neglect.

(b) 'New Directions' was phased in during 1995–96.

(c) Figures exclude children in substantiated notifications with outcomes classified as 'threat of abuse'.

(d) The relatively low number of children who are the subject of substantiated notifications for Tasmania is partly due to the absence of a common definition of 'substantiated' across regions during the counting period.

Note: Children whose age was unknown or not stated are included as most of these would be aged 0–16 years of age.

9.6 Rates of abuse and neglect in the population

The previous section examined the number of children who were the subject of abuse and neglect notifications, investigations and substantiations in 1995–96. However, to make meaningful comparisons across States and Territories, age groups and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other children, it is necessary to place these numbers in perspective through the calculation of rates of notifications, investigations and substantiations per head of population. In this section the number of children subject to abuse and neglect per 1,000 children in the relevant age population cohort is used as a simple way of standardising the numbers across different groups. The rate for children as a whole is calculated as the number of children aged 0–16 years who were the subject of a notification, finalised investigation or substantiation, divided by the population aged 0–16 years and multiplied by 1,000.

In 1995–96, 16.3 children per 1,000 aged 0–16 years were the subject of a notification of child abuse and neglect, 11.6 per 1,000 were the subject of a finalised investigations and 5.8 per 1,000 were the subject of a substantiation (Table 7). The rate for substantiations is slightly below the comparable 1994–95 rate of 6.1 children substantiated per 1,000 children aged 0–16 years. Prior to 1995–96, rates of substantiated abuse and neglect had been rising each year since 1990–91 (Table A12).

9.6.1 Rates across States and Territories

Table 7: Rates of children 0–16 years in notifications, finalised investigations and substantiated notifications of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children, 1995–96

Type of abuse and neglect	NSW ^(a)	Vic	Qld	WA ^(b)	SA ^(c)	Tas ^(d)	ACT	NT	Total
Physical abuse	2.0	1.7	1.6	0.8	2.2	0.9	1.6	1.9	1.7
Emotional abuse	3.0	2.2	0.8	0.1	0.9	0.1	1.1	0.3	1.8
Sexual abuse	1.7	0.6	0.3	0.7	1.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	1.0
Neglect	1.4	1.6	1.3	0.6	1.3	0.3	1.7	1.6	1.3
<i>Substantiated abuse or neglect</i>	<i>8.1</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>4.9</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>5.8</i>
Child at risk	..	..	1.6	0.5	..	1.0	1.0	–	0.4
No abuse or neglect	5.7	5.8	4.7	2.6	8.3	6.0	5.2	4.0	5.4
<i>Total finalised investigations</i>	<i>13.8</i>	<i>11.9</i>	<i>10.4</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>14.4</i>	<i>8.9</i>	<i>11.1</i>	<i>8.4</i>	<i>11.6</i>
Notifications	15.8	22.0	14.4	7.2	18.0	18.6	14.9	8.7	16.3

(a) Includes children notified to the DCS because of child concerns.

(b) 'New Directions' was phased in during 1995–96.

(c) Excludes children subject to substantiated notifications with outcomes classified as 'threat of abuse'.

(d) The relatively low rate for Tasmania is partly due to the absence of a common definition of 'substantiated' across regions during the counting period.

Notes

1. Rates are calculated by dividing the number of children aged 0–16 years who were the subject of a notification, finalised investigation or substantiation by the estimated resident population aged 0–16 years at 31 December 1995, multiplied by 1,000.
2. Children whose age was unknown or not stated are included as most of these would be aged 0–16 years of age.

The rates of child abuse and neglect in the population varied considerably across States and Territories, with the rate for notification being highest for children in Victoria (22.0 per 1,000 children) and lowest for children in Western Australia (7.2 per 1,000 children). It should be noted that there are some differences in the definition of a 'notification' across States and Territories (see Section 8.1.1). South Australia had the highest rate for children in finalised investigations (14.4 per 1,000 children) and Western Australia the lowest (5.3 per 1,000). The situation was different for rates of children substantiated, with New South Wales having the highest rate (8.1 per 1,000) and Tasmania the lowest (1.8 per 1,000) (Table 7).

This is due to the broad definition of 'substantiated' used by NSW DCS and the lack of a consistent definition of 'substantiated' across the regions in Tasmania (see Section 8.3).

The rates for the four types of abuse and neglect also varied considerably across jurisdictions. Differences in policies, practices and definitions should be taken into account when interpreting differences in rates of abuse and neglect across the States and Territories.

9.6.2 Rates by age and sex

Overall, the rate of substantiated abuse and neglect for male children in Australia in 1995–96 was 5.3 per 1,000 children, slightly less than the rate for female children (6.3 per 1,000 children).

The highest rate of substantiated abuse and neglect per 1,000 children for Australia in 1995–96 was for girls aged 10–14 years (7.3 per 1,000 children) and the lowest rate was for boys aged 15–16 years (2.0 per 1,000 children) (Table 8 and Figure 8). The highest rates of physical and sexual abuse were experienced by girls aged 10–14 years (2.2 and 2.3 per 1,000 respectively), while young children of both sexes had the highest rates of emotional abuse and neglect (Table 8 and Figure 9).

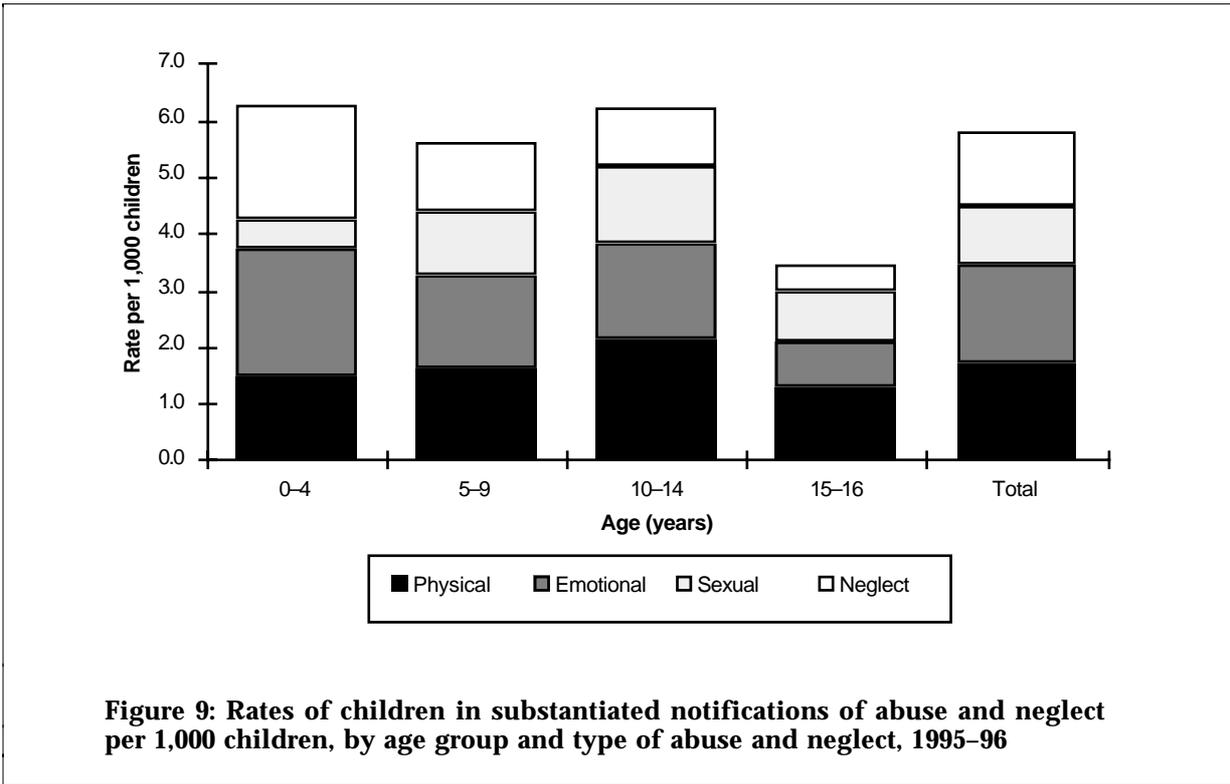
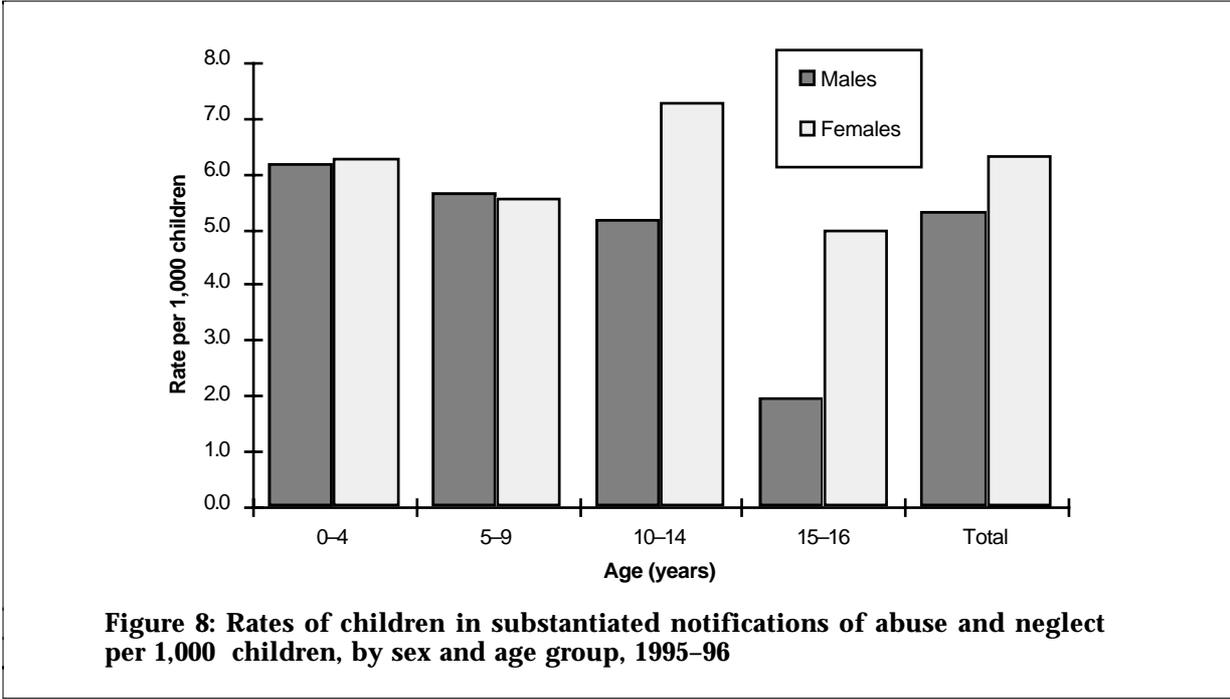
Table 8: Rates of children 0–16 years in substantiated notifications of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children, by sex and age of child and type of abuse and neglect, 1995–96

Age of child (years)	Physical			Emotional			Sexual			Neglect			Total		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
0–4	1.6	1.3	1.5	2.2	2.3	2.3	0.4	0.8	0.5	2.0	1.9	2.0	6.2	6.3	6.2
5–9	1.9	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	0.8	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.3	5.6	5.6	5.6
10–14	2.0	2.2	2.1	1.6	1.8	1.7	0.5	2.3	1.4	1.1	0.9	1.0	5.2	7.3	6.2
15–16	0.7	1.8	1.3	0.6	1.0	0.8	0.3	1.6	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.4	2.0	5.0	3.4
Total^(a)	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	0.5	1.5	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.3	5.3	6.3	5.8

(a) Children whose age was unknown or not stated are included as most of these would be aged 0–16 years of age.

Notes

1. Rates are calculated by dividing the number of children aged 0–16 years who were the subject of a substantiation by the estimated resident population aged 0–16 years at 31 December 1995, multiplied by 1,000.
2. The person columns (P) include children whose sex was unknown or not stated.



Detailed rates by individual year of age and type of abuse and neglect are provided in Table A13 and the rates by age group for each State and Territory are provided in Table A14.

9.6.3 Rates of abuse and neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

As stated previously, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented in child abuse and neglect statistics. Examination of the rates per head of population highlight this finding. Overall, the rate of notification of abuse and neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children was 42.3 per 1,000 children, compared to 15.5 per 1,000 for other children. In 1995–96, 34.4 per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were involved in finalised investigations of abuse and neglect, compared to 10.9 per 1,000 other children. The rate of substantiated abuse and neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in 1995–96 was 18.0 per 1,000 children, compared to 5.4 for other children (Tables 9, A15 and A16 and Figure 10) and 5.8 for all children (Table 8).

For other children, the rate of abuse and neglect for girls aged 10–14 years was higher than the rates for other age and sex groups, whereas for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, rates for girls aged 10–14 years and for boys aged 0–4 years were very similar.

Unlike other children, the rates of substantiated neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were much higher than the rates of other types of abuse and neglect, particularly amongst young children. In 1995–96 the rate of substantiated neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children was 6.9 per 1,000 children, compared to 4.5 for physical abuse, 4.7 for emotional abuse and 1.9 for sexual abuse. The comparative rates for other children were 1.1 for neglect, 1.6 for physical abuse, 1.7 for emotional abuse and 1.0 for sexual abuse (Table 9 and Figure 10).

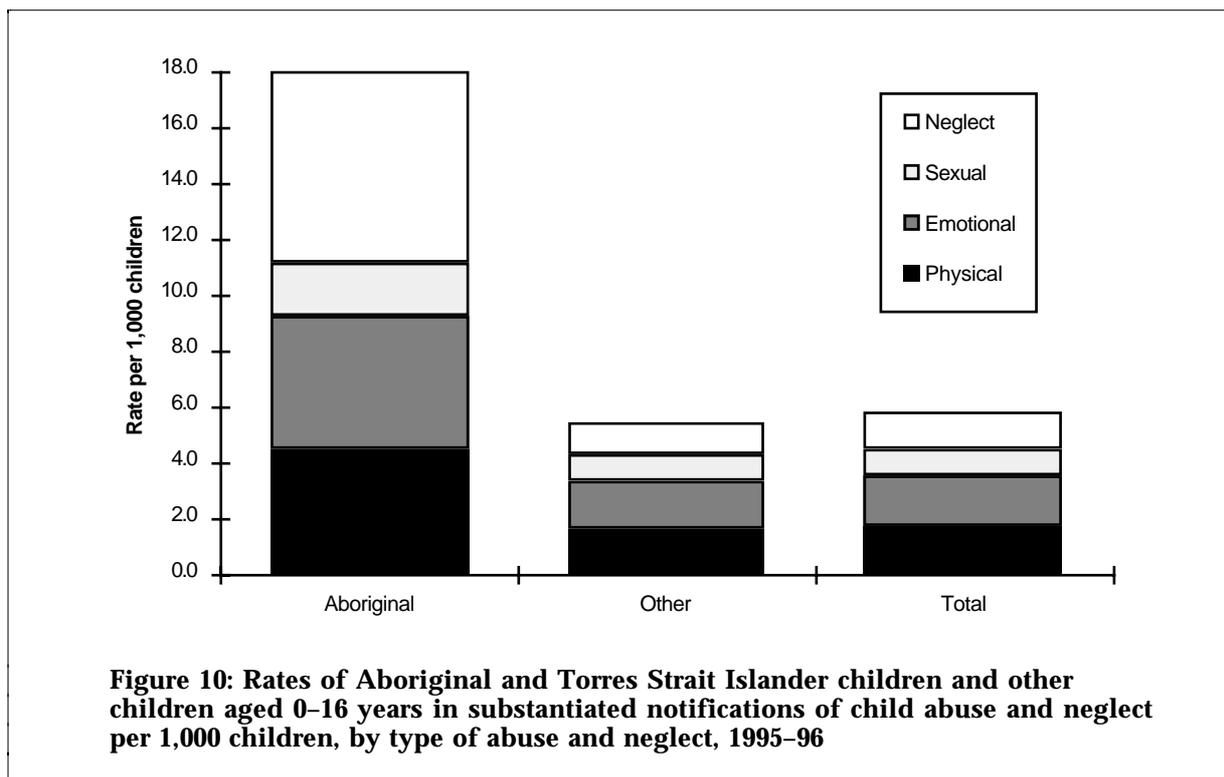
Table 9: Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and other children aged 0–16 years in substantiated notifications of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children, by sex and age of child and type of abuse and neglect, 1995–96

Age of child (years)	Physical			Emotional			Sexual			Neglect			Total		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children															
0–4	4.4	3.6	4.1	6.8	6.2	6.5	0.3	1.6	1.0	10.4	10.4	10.4	22.0	21.8	21.9
5–9	5.1	3.4	4.3	3.9	4.2	4.1	0.9	3.6	2.2	6.6	5.6	6.1	16.5	16.8	16.7
10–14	4.7	6.6	5.7	3.3	4.2	3.7	0.3	5.8	3.0	5.3	4.9	5.1	13.7	21.5	17.5
15–16	1.0	5.4	3.2	1.3	2.7	2.0	0.1	1.9	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.3	3.6	11.5	7.5
Total^(a)	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.8	4.7	0.5	3.4	1.9	7.1	6.8	6.9	16.6	19.5	18.0
Other children															
0–4	1.5	1.2	1.4	2.0	2.1	2.1	0.4	0.7	0.5	1.7	1.6	1.7	5.6	5.7	5.7
5–9	1.8	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	0.8	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.1	5.3	5.2	5.3
10–14	1.9	2.1	2.0	1.5	1.8	1.6	0.5	2.2	1.3	1.0	0.8	0.9	4.9	6.9	5.9
15–16	0.7	1.8	1.2	0.6	1.0	0.8	0.3	1.6	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.4	1.9	4.8	3.3
Total^(a)	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	0.5	1.5	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.1	4.9	5.9	5.4

(a) Children whose age was unknown or not stated are included as most of these would be aged 0–16 years of age.

Notes

1. Rates are calculated by dividing the number of children aged 0–16 years by the estimated resident population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–16 years at 31 December 1995, multiplied by 1,000.
2. The person columns (P) include children whose sex was unknown or not stated.



9.7 Source of notifications

9.7.1 For investigations that were finalised

Notifications of child abuse and neglect to community service departments come from a number of different sources, including those people or groups of people mandated to report, as discussed in Section 5.2. For finalised investigations in 1995–96, the most common sources of the notification were friends/neighbours (15% of finalised investigations), parent/guardian (14%), school personnel and the police (both 13%) (Table A17).

The outcome of finalised investigations varied according to the source of the notification, with some notifications from particular sources more likely to have an outcome of substantiated than others. While in total 49% of finalised investigations had an outcome of substantiated or child at risk, 63% of those notified by the police and 62% of those notified by the subject child resulted in a substantiation. Relatively high proportions of finalised investigations also had an outcome of substantiated or child at risk where notifications were from non-government organisations, hospital/health centres, medical practitioners and other health workers. In contrast, finalised investigations where the notifier was anonymous or a friend/neighbour had low proportions of notifications substantiated (23% and 33% of finalised investigations respectively) (Table 10).

Consequently, while the police were the source of notification in only 13% of finalised investigations, they were the source of 17% of substantiated notifications.

Friends/neighbours on the other hand were the source of notification in 15% of finalised investigations but in only 10% of substantiations (Tables A17 and A18).

It should be noted that an unknown number of incidences of child abuse and neglect are not reported to community service departments (Cashmore & Castell-McGregor 1996).

Table 10: Distribution of finalised investigations of abuse and neglect by broad type of outcome and source of notification, 1995–96

Source of notification	Substantiations	Child at risk ^(a)	Substantiations plus child at risk	No abuse or neglect	Finalised investigations
Percentage					
Subject child	62	8	70	30	100
Parent/guardian	48	4	52	48	100
Sibling	43	10	53	47	100
Other relative	38	5	43	57	100
Friend/neighbour	33	5	38	62	100
Medical practitioner	56	4	60	40	100
Other health worker	56	3	59	41	100
Hospital/health centre	59	4	63	37	100
Social worker	57	3	60	40	100
School personnel	53	2	55	45	100
Child care personnel	42	4	46	54	100
Police	63	2	65	35	100
Dept officer	53	4	57	43	100
Non-govt organisation	60	2	62	38	100
Anonymous	23	3	26	74	100
Maltreater ^(b)	76	9	85	15	100
Other	45	7	52	48	100
Not stated	45	1	46	54	100
Total	49	3	52	48	100

(a) Only Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory classified outcomes of finalised investigations to the 'child at risk' category in 1995–96.

(b) Only Queensland data are included in this category.

9.7.2 Source of notification by type of substantiated abuse and neglect

The type of substantiated abuse and neglect also varied according to the source of the notification. Physical abuse was found in 52% of substantiated notifications reported by siblings, 48% of substantiated notifications reported by the subject child, and 43% of substantiated notifications reported by school personnel. Emotional abuse was identified in 48% of substantiated notifications reported by 'other health' workers and 47% reported by non-government organisations. Of substantiated notifications reported by school personnel, 25% were classified as sexual abuse, as were 23% of substantiated notifications reported by parents and guardians. Of substantiated notifications reported anonymously, 44% were classified as neglect. Neglect was also identified in 40% of substantiated notifications made by friends and neighbours (Tables A18 and A19).

9.8 Person believed responsible—relationship to child

Data were collected from each State and Territory on the relationship to the child and the sex of the person believed responsible for substantiated abuse and neglect. However, some States and Territories had a large number of unknown values in their data on these items and most either could not report on the sex of the person believed responsible, or could not do so reliably. As a result the following analysis is restricted to those States and Territories that could provide relatively complete data on the relationship to the child of the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect (Queensland, Western Australia, the Australian

Capital Territory and the Northern Territory). No data are provided for the sex of the person believed responsible.

The data that are available indicate that the person believed responsible in 71% of substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect was the natural parent. This is not surprising given that child abuse and neglect is a child protection issue and that the natural parent is the person most likely to have care of a child. Step-parents were reported as the person responsible in 10% of substantiated notifications and a parent's de facto partner in 7%. Parents were believed to be responsible for 66% of physical abuse substantiations, 77% of emotional abuse substantiations, 87% of neglect substantiations, but only 24% of sexual abuse substantiations. In 17% of sexual abuse substantiations, a step-parent (and in a further 7% a parent's de facto partner) was believed responsible. Other relatives, 'other' people, friends and neighbours and siblings were the other main categories of people believed to be responsible for sexual abuse and for neglect (Table 11).

Table 11: Substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect in Queensland, Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, by type of abuse and neglect and relationship to child of person believed responsible, 1995–96

Person believed responsible	Physical	Emotional	Sexual	Neglect	Total
Number					
Natural parent	1,480	832	166	2,108	4,586
Step-parent	329	102	119	125	675
Parent's de facto partner	192	82	50	99	423
Foster parent	54	9	10	6	79
Guardian	19	7	3	22	51
Sibling	32	16	55	7	110
Other relative	68	15	89	39	211
Friend/neighbour	12	2	71	6	91
Other ^(a)	35	11	93	17	156
Not stated	22	3	43	7	75
Total	2,243	1,079	699	2,436	6,457
Percentage					
Natural parent	66	77	24	87	71
Step-parent	15	9	17	5	10
Parent's de facto partner	9	8	7	4	7
Foster parent	2	1	1	—	1
Guardian	1	1	—	1	1
Sibling	1	1	8	—	2
Other relative	3	1	13	2	3
Friend/neighbour	1	—	10	—	1
Other ^(a)	2	1	13	1	2
Not stated	1	—	6	—	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

(a) The Northern Territory includes in this category substantiations where the relationship of the person believed responsible was relative/kinship.

Note: Data for New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania are either not available or have large proportions of 'not stated' for 'person believed responsible'.

9.9 Type of family in which the child was residing

Not all States and Territories could provide data on the type of family in which the child was residing at the time of notification of the abuse or neglect. New South Wales and South Australia were unable to provide any data on this item; Victoria provided data on the type of family at the time of the investigation; Queensland could provide family of residence for substantiated notifications and 'child at risk' but not for all finalised investigations; and Tasmania and the Northern Territory provided data on the family type at the time the abuse or neglect was reported to have occurred. It should be noted that the person believed responsible may not reside with the child (for example, he or she could be a non-custodial parent) and that the type of family at the time of investigation may not be the same as that at the time of abuse or neglect. As a result the information presented in this section should be interpreted carefully.

In interpreting this data it should also be noted that, as discussed in Section 7, the factors associated with child abuse and neglect are complex and no single factor, such as the type of family structure in which a child lives, can fully explain why child abuse and neglect occurs.

In 1995–96, of finalised investigations in those States and Territories for which data were available (Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory), 40% involved children living in single female parent families and 31% living in 'two parent—natural' families. A further 15% of finalised investigations involved children from 'two parent—other' families (such as families where there is one natural parent and a de facto or a step-parent) (Tables A20 and A21). The distribution was the same for finalised investigations involving both male and female children.

For substantiated notifications the proportions were very similar to those for finalised investigations. However, for those finalised investigations with an outcome of 'child at risk', the distribution was slightly different with 41% involving children from single female parent families, 26% from 'two parent—natural' families and 18% from 'two parent—other' families.

Data for the family type of children in substantiated notifications are available for Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. Analysis of these data highlight the differences in the child's type of family across the different categories of substantiated abuse and neglect. In these States and Territories in 1995–96, 31% of physical abuse substantiations, 40% of emotional abuse substantiations, 32% of sexual abuse substantiations and 51% of neglect substantiations involved children from single female parent families (Table A22). While only 18% of emotional abuse substantiations and 15% of neglect substantiations involved children from 'two parent—other' families, 26% of physical abuse and 26% of sexual abuse involved children from this family type (Table A22).

The most common types of substantiated abuse and neglect involving children from two parent—natural families and single male parent families were physical abuse and neglect (Tables A22 and A23, and Figure 11). Forty per cent of substantiated notifications involving children from 'two parent—other' families were classified as physical abuse, while 41% of substantiated notifications involving children from single female parent families were classified as neglect (Table A23 and Figure 11).

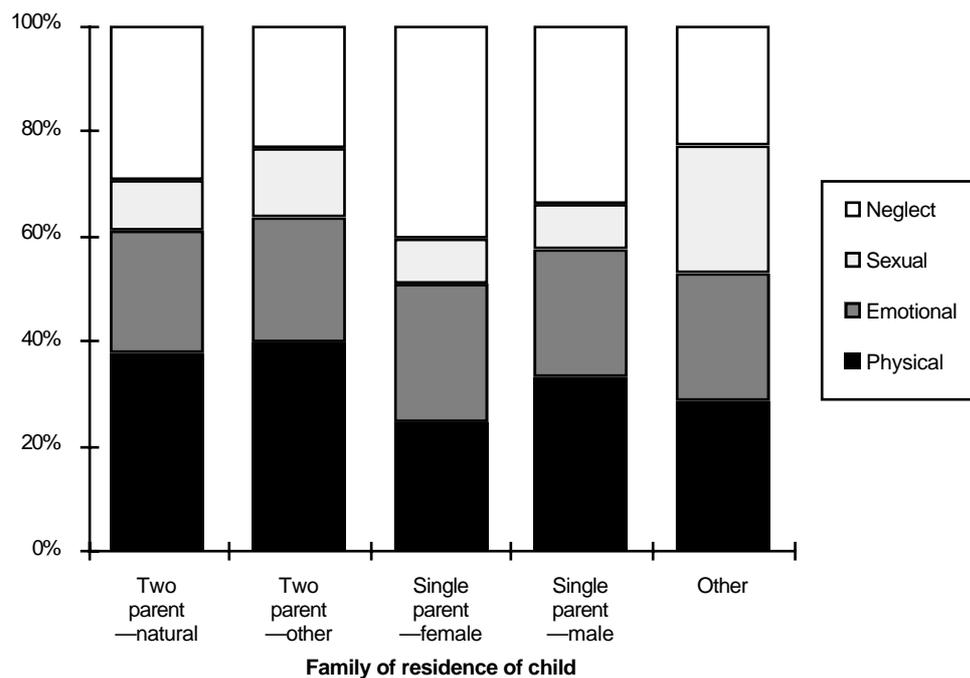


Figure 11: Substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect for Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, by type of abuse and neglect and the type of family in which the child was residing, 1995-96

9.10 Injury and harm

There are no national data available on the type of injury or harm sustained by children who were the subject of a child abuse and neglect substantiation in 1995-96. In addition, where States and Territories could provide data on this item, the categories of injury and harm vary. As a result, separate tables on the type of injury or harm sustained by children in substantiated notifications in 1995-96 are shown for New South Wales (Table A24), Victoria (Table A25), Queensland (Table A26) and Western Australia (Table A27), using each jurisdiction's own classifications. It should be noted that many of the differences reflect different policies and coding practices across the jurisdictions and these data should be interpreted carefully.

In New South Wales child abuse and neglect substantiations are classified according to the 'primary actual abuse'. The classification of injury and harm data is a mixture of items which describe actions responsible for injury and harm to children and resulting identifiable injury and harm sustained. Almost all of the physical abuse categories are types of injuries (burns, cuts, bruising etc.), although some are actions (threats, administration of alcohol). The categories used for emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect substantiations are actions. The most common 'primary actual abuse' in New South Wales in 1995-96 was 'other physical abuse' (1,437), 'emotional abuse due to exposure to domestic violence' (1,287 substantiated notifications), 'left without adequate supervision' (1,225), 'parent's alcohol/drug abuse leading to emotional harm' (1,169), 'sexual fondling' (1,121) and 'parent's emotional state threatens child' (1,097) (Table A24).

Victoria provided data on the most serious type of injury or harm sustained by children in substantiated notifications. This also includes some actions (such as kick/strike/punch). The most common type in 1995-96 were 'failure to ensure safety' (1,046 substantiated notifications), 'functioning affected by exposure to domestic violence/psychiatric illness'

(1,034), 'substantial emotional trauma' (967) and 'likelihood of significant physical harm' (857) (Table A25).

In Queensland the most serious types of injury or harm sustained were classified into the 'other' categories of physical and emotional abuse and neglect (743, 506 and 551 substantiated notifications respectively). Bruising accounted for 538 substantiated notifications (Table A26).

In Western Australia the most serious type of injury in substantiated notifications in 1995–96 was 'no identifiable injury', which relates to where there was no physical evidence of abuse or neglect but it has been stated to have occurred. Cuts, bruises, welts and bites accounted for a further 20% and identifiable emotional trauma for 18% of substantiated notifications in Western Australia (Table A27).

10. Detailed tables

These are referred to in the text as Table A1 to Table A27.

10.1 Finalised investigations and substantiations by age and sex of child

Table A1: Proportion of finalised investigations of child abuse and neglect that involved female children, by type of outcome and age of child, 1995–96

Age of child (years)	Physical	Emotional	Sexual	Neglect	Total substantiations	Child at risk ^(a)	No abuse or neglect	Finalised investigations
Percentage involving females ^(b)								
0–4	43	49	67	48	49	48	49	49
5–9	40	48	64	45	48	47	49	49
10–14	52	53	82	46	57	58	54	56
15–17	70	64	87	56	71	71	65	69
Total	48	51	74	47	53	51	51	52

(a) Only Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory had this category as an outcome of a finalised investigation in 1995–96.

(b) Percentage involving female children is calculated as a proportion of those finalised investigations where the sex of the child was known (excludes 259 where sex was unknown).

Table A2: Finalised investigations of child abuse and neglect by type of outcome and sex and age of child, 1995–96

Age of child (years)	Substantiations	Number			Finalised investigations
		Child at risk ^(a)	No abuse or neglect		
Males					
0–4	4,906	468	5,576		10,950
5–9	4,413	404	4,697		9,514
10–14	3,974	224	3,101		7,299
15–17	557	33	422		1,012
Unknown	158	24	457		639
<i>Total</i>	<i>14,008</i>	<i>1,153</i>	<i>14,253</i>		<i>29,414</i>
Females					
0–4	4,713	429	5,403		10,545
5–9	4,106	365	4,493		8,964
10–14	5,333	307	3,573		9,213
15–17	1,392	79	784		2,255
Unknown	194	37	502		733
<i>Total</i>	<i>15,738</i>	<i>1,217</i>	<i>14,755</i>		<i>31,710</i>
Total^(b)					
0–4	9,655	897	11,066		21,618
5–9	8,545	771	9,221		18,537
10–14	9,325	531	6,703		16,559
15–17	1,955	112	1,214		3,281
Unknown	353	61	974		1,388
Total	29,833	2,372	29,178		61,383
Percentage^(c)					
Males					
0–4	35	41	40		38
5–9	32	36	34		33
10–14	29	20	22		25
15–17	4	3	3		4
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>		<i>100</i>
Females					
0–4	30	36	38		34
5–9	26	31	32		29
10–14	34	26	25		30
15–17	9	7	6		7
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>		<i>100</i>
Total^(b)					
0–4	33	39	39		36
5–9	29	33	33		31
10–14	31	23	24		28
15–17	7	5	4		5
Total	100	100	100		100

(a) Only Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory had this category as an outcome of a finalised investigation in 1995–96.

(b) Includes finalised investigations where the sex of the child was unknown. As a result the number of finalised investigations involving males and females does not add to the total.

(c) Percentage distribution excludes those finalised investigations where the age of the child was unknown or not stated.

Table A3: Finalised investigations by type of outcome and sex and single year of age of child, 1995–96

Age of child	Substantiations			Child at risk ^(a)			No abuse or neglect			Finalised investigations		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Months												
Under 2	302	251	556	17	12	29	184	180	367	503	443	952
2 to under 6	376	358	737	28	35	63	347	315	668	751	708	1,468
6 to under 12	529	528	1,062	60	48	108	519	456	983	1,108	1,032	2,153
Years												
1	846	811	1,661	100	72	172	963	933	1,919	1,909	1,816	3,752
2	946	861	1,811	93	80	173	1,205	1,122	2,341	2,244	2,063	4,325
3	932	943	1,884	96	93	189	1,187	1,226	2,429	2,215	2,262	4,502
4	975	961	1,944	74	89	163	1,171	1,171	2,359	2,220	2,221	4,466
5	957	840	1,806	107	88	195	1,092	1,040	2,142	2,156	1,968	4,143
6	927	814	1,745	79	75	154	1,031	1,018	2,058	2,037	1,907	3,957
7	844	815	1,663	81	74	156	932	867	1,805	1,857	1,756	3,624
8	858	842	1,705	75	67	142	809	825	1,636	1,742	1,734	3,483
9	827	795	1,626	62	61	124	833	743	1,580	1,722	1,599	3,330
10	858	763	1,624	54	60	114	736	720	1,459	1,648	1,543	3,197
11	739	792	1,537	45	57	102	621	634	1,266	1,405	1,483	2,905
12	785	962	1,750	39	61	100	661	597	1,263	1,485	1,620	3,113
13	872	1,267	2,144	55	51	106	557	737	1,300	1,484	2,055	3,550
14	720	1,549	2,270	31	78	109	526	885	1,415	1,277	2,512	3,794
15	427	1,043	1,475	21	64	85	307	544	857	755	1,651	2,417
16	116	281	398	10	13	23	91	187	280	217	481	701
17	14	68	82	2	2	4	24	53	77	40	123	163
Not stated	158	194	353	24	37	61	457	502	974	639	733	1,388
Total	14,008	15,738	29,833	1,153	1,217	2,372	14,253	14,755	29,178	29,414	31,710	61,383

(a) Only Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory had this category as an outcome of a finalised investigation in 1995–96.

Note: Person columns (P) include finalised investigations involving children whose sex was unknown or not stated. As a result the number of finalised investigations involving males and females does not add to the total.

Table A4: Substantiated notifications by type of abuse or neglect and sex and single year of age of child, 1995–96

Age of child	Physical			Emotional			Sexual			Neglect			Total		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Months															
Under 2	79	58	137	128	112	243	2	1	3	93	80	173	302	251	556
2 to under 6	89	76	165	149	158	309	1	5	6	137	119	257	376	358	737
6 to under 12	129	111	241	188	192	383	9	9	18	203	216	420	529	528	1,062
Years															
1	209	168	378	309	301	612	20	10	30	308	332	641	846	811	1,661
2	234	167	401	338	329	669	27	72	99	347	293	642	946	861	1,811
3	222	191	414	330	296	631	82	197	279	298	259	560	932	943	1,884
4	254	162	418	327	335	665	110	217	328	284	247	533	975	961	1,944
5	299	167	470	285	270	558	130	200	331	243	203	447	957	840	1,806
6	254	191	447	315	256	573	128	172	300	230	195	425	927	814	1,745
7	273	189	463	246	261	509	98	177	275	227	188	416	844	815	1,663
8	302	191	494	247	263	513	102	211	313	207	177	385	858	842	1,705
9	266	207	474	244	202	447	93	205	299	224	181	406	827	795	1,626
10	285	202	488	271	206	478	86	219	306	216	136	352	858	763	1,624
11	305	215	524	193	176	370	67	263	330	174	138	313	739	792	1,537
12	297	261	558	254	254	510	75	300	376	159	147	306	785	962	1,750
13	360	412	772	267	339	610	57	356	414	188	160	348	872	1,267	2,144
14	260	530	790	237	401	639	58	430	488	165	188	353	720	1,549	2,270
15	173	379	554	119	244	364	51	307	359	84	113	198	427	1,043	1,475
16	39	117	156	42	42	84	15	101	117	20	21	41	116	281	398
17	6	19	25	5	10	15	1	36	37	2	3	5	14	68	82
Not stated	44	54	98	39	44	83	33	60	94	42	36	78	158	194	353
Total	4,379	4,067	8,467	4,533	4,691	9,265	1,245	3,548	4,802	3,851	3,432	7,299	14,008	15,738	29,833

Note: Person columns (P) include finalised investigations involving children whose sex was unknown or not stated. As a result the number of finalised investigations involving males and females does not add to the total.

Table A5: Substantiated notifications of child abuse and neglect by type of abuse and neglect and sex and age of child, 1995–96

Age of child (years)	Physical	Emotional	Sexual	Neglect	Total
Number					
Males					
0–4	1,216	1,769	251	1,670	4,906
5–9	1,394	1,337	551	1,131	4,413
10–14	1,507	1,222	343	902	3,974
15–17	218	166	67	106	557
Unknown	44	39	33	42	158
<i>Total</i>	<i>4,379</i>	<i>4,533</i>	<i>1,245</i>	<i>3,851</i>	<i>14,008</i>
Females					
0–4	933	1,723	511	1,546	4,713
5–9	945	1,252	965	944	4,106
10–14	1,620	1,376	1,568	769	5,333
15–17	515	296	444	137	1,392
Unknown	54	44	60	36	194
<i>Total</i>	<i>4,067</i>	<i>4,691</i>	<i>3,548</i>	<i>3,432</i>	<i>15,738</i>
Total^(a)					
0–4	2,154	3,512	763	3,226	9,655
5–9	2,348	2,600	1,518	2,079	8,545
10–14	3,132	2,607	1,914	1,672	9,325
15–17	735	463	513	244	1,955
Unknown	98	83	94	78	353
Total	8,467	9,265	4,802	7,299	29,833
Percentage^(b)					
Males					
0–4	28	39	21	44	35
5–9	32	30	45	30	32
10–14	35	27	28	24	29
15–17	5	4	6	3	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
Females					
0–4	23	37	15	46	30
5–9	24	27	28	28	26
10–14	40	30	45	23	34
15–17	13	6	13	4	9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
Total^(a)					
0–4	26	38	16	45	33
5–9	28	28	32	29	29
10–14	37	28	41	23	31
15–17	9	5	11	3	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Includes substantiated notifications where the sex of the child was unknown. As a result the number of substantiated notifications involving males and females does not add to the total.

(b) Percentage distribution excludes those substantiated notifications where the age of the child was unknown or not stated.

10.2 Change over time—substantiations and ‘child at risk’

Table A6: Substantiated notifications of child abuse and neglect, 1987–88 to 1995–96

	NSW	Vic ^(a)	Qld	WA ^(b)	SA	Tas ^(c)	ACT	NT	Total
1987–88	13,498	1,534	2,923	n.a.	1,008	290	275	332	n.a.
1988–89	10,112	2,445	3,377	739	1,326	336	297	184	18,816
1989–90	9,429	2,950	3,721	884	1,165	n.a.	n.a.	184	n.a.
1990–91	11,611	2,427	3,500	1,223	1,162	472	247	226	20,868
1991–92	12,645	2,146	3,027	1,380	1,048	598	295	232	21,371
1992–93	14,290	4,089	2,743	1,519	1,824	416	445	304	25,630
1993–94	15,128	5,253	3,127	1,830	2,077	424	495	377	28,711
1994–95	14,164	7,326	4,000	1,484	2,547	360	376	358	30,615
1995–96	14,063	6,663	4,662	1,095	2,415	235	445	255	29,833

- (a) Figures for Victoria prior to 1992–93 underestimate the number of substantiated notifications, as prior to that time the Victorian Police were involved in receiving notifications of child abuse and neglect and these were not included in the data.
- (b) ‘New Directions’ was phased in during 1995–96.
- (c) The relatively low number of substantiated notifications for Tasmania in 1995–96 is partly due to the absence of a common definition of ‘substantiated’ across regions during the counting period.

Table A7: Finalised investigations of child abuse and neglect with an outcome classified as either ‘substantiated’ or ‘child at risk’, 1987–88 to 1995–96

	NSW	Vic ^(a)	Qld	WA ^(b)	SA	Tas ^(c)	ACT	NT	Total
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	n.a.	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
1993–94	15,128	5,253	4,463	2,773	2,077	578	667	377	31,316
1994–95	14,164	7,326	5,875	2,167	2,547	516	458	358	33,411
1995–96	14,063	6,663	6,440	1,384	2,415	426	558	256	32,205

- (a) Figures for Victoria prior to 1992–93 underestimate the number of substantiated notifications, as prior to that time the Victorian Police were involved in receiving notifications of child abuse and neglect and these were not included in the data.
- (b) ‘New Directions’ was phased in during 1995–96.
- (c) The relatively low number of substantiated notifications for Tasmania in 1995–96 is partly due to the absence of a common definition of ‘substantiated’ across regions during the counting period.

Note: New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia do not assign outcomes of finalised investigations to the ‘child at risk’ category. The Northern Territory has not had a ‘child at risk’ category since 1993–94, although one outcome was coded to this in 1995–96.

10.3 Children who were the subject of notifications, finalised investigations and substantiations in 1995–96

Table A8: Children in finalised investigations by type of outcome and sex and single year of age of child, 1995–96

Age of child	Substantiations			Child at risk ^(a)			No abuse or neglect			Finalised investigations		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Months												
Under 2	272	229	503	13	8	21	157	150	311	442	387	835
2 to under 6	322	303	628	18	21	39	276	241	525	616	565	1,192
6 to under 12	427	421	853	35	37	73	413	372	795	875	830	1,720
Years												
1	724	672	1,400	72	48	120	777	750	1,546	1,572	1,470	3,066
2	767	721	1,492	64	60	123	969	894	1,875	1,800	1,674	3,491
3	771	798	1,578	75	53	127	932	973	1,921	1,777	1,824	3,627
4	806	816	1,630	55	59	114	927	931	1,875	1,788	1,806	3,619
5	800	715	1,525	79	63	141	903	840	1,754	1,782	1,618	3,420
6	796	696	1,495	63	60	123	841	830	1,680	1,700	1,585	3,297
7	709	685	1,396	62	59	120	762	699	1,466	1,533	1,443	2,982
8	748	720	1,473	51	52	104	660	663	1,326	1,458	1,435	2,902
9	687	696	1,387	46	48	94	663	628	1,295	1,396	1,372	2,777
10	738	676	1,418	45	42	88	587	594	1,184	1,371	1,311	2,690
11	637	676	1,317	39	46	85	530	510	1,051	1,205	1,231	2,452
12	677	821	1,501	28	42	70	547	504	1,055	1,253	1,367	2,626
13	759	1,080	1,843	44	41	85	451	585	1,040	1,253	1,705	2,968
14	623	1,342	1,965	29	57	86	435	693	1,131	1,086	2,091	3,182
15	398	951	1,354	17	52	69	273	461	739	687	1,464	2,161
16	112	266	379	8	17	25	82	172	256	202	455	660
17	14	66	80	2	2	4	22	50	72	38	118	155
Not stated	156	185	342	15	24	39	432	480	931	603	689	1,312
Total	11,941	13,533	25,558	858	888	1,748	11,639	12,018	23,827	24,438	26,439	51,133

(a) Only Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory had the category 'child at risk' as an outcome for children who were the subject of a finalised investigation in 1995–96.

Notes

1. Person columns (P) include children whose sex was unknown or not stated. As a result the number of males and females does not add to the total.
2. Tasmania was unable to provide a breakdown by age and sex of children in finalised investigations. As a result the distribution of children by age and sex for Tasmania is an estimate based on the distribution of the outcome categories by age and sex of child involved.

Table A9: Children in substantiated notifications by type of abuse or neglect and sex and single year of age of child, 1995–96

Age of child	Physical			Emotional			Sexual			Neglect			Total		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Months															
Under 2	77	56	133	114	105	221	2	1	3	79	67	146	272	229	503
2 to under 6	84	72	156	126	130	258	1	4	5	111	97	209	322	303	628
6 to under 12	116	96	213	159	158	320	9	7	16	143	160	304	427	421	853
Years															
1	184	152	337	260	250	512	19	10	29	261	260	522	724	672	1,400
2	196	149	345	278	265	545	26	68	94	267	239	508	767	721	1,492
3	188	169	358	264	244	513	73	181	254	246	205	453	771	798	1,578
4	214	141	357	264	280	547	103	202	306	225	193	420	806	816	1,630
5	256	148	409	238	219	460	125	190	316	181	158	340	800	715	1,525
6	228	167	396	255	217	474	117	161	278	196	151	347	796	696	1,495
7	236	166	403	202	215	417	92	165	257	179	139	319	709	685	1,396
8	279	166	446	216	211	430	95	200	295	158	143	302	748	720	1,473
9	235	184	420	197	174	372	81	193	275	174	146	321	687	696	1,387
10	252	187	441	230	174	405	84	202	287	172	113	285	738	676	1,418
11	271	181	455	162	142	305	65	245	310	139	108	248	637	676	1,317
12	267	230	497	210	217	429	67	268	336	133	106	239	677	821	1,501
13	315	349	664	235	283	522	54	329	384	155	119	274	759	1,080	1,843
14	236	458	694	201	332	534	49	399	447	137	153	290	623	1,342	1,965
15	154	344	500	113	215	329	51	290	342	80	102	183	398	951	1,354
16	37	108	145	38	39	77	17	98	116	20	21	41	112	266	379
17	6	17	23	5	9	14	1	37	38	2	3	5	14	66	80
Not stated	44	53	97	39	40	79	32	59	92	41	33	74	156	185	342
Total	3,875	3,593	7,489	3,806	3,918	7,762	1,163	3,306	4,478	3,098	2,715	5,829	11,941	13,533	25,558

Notes

1. Person columns (P) include children whose sex was unknown or not stated. As a result the number of males and females does not add to the total.
2. Tasmania was unable to provide a breakdown by age and sex of children in finalised investigations. As a result the distribution of children by age and sex for Tasmania is an estimate based on the distribution of the outcome categories by age and sex of child involved.

Table A10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in finalised investigations by type of outcome and sex and single year of age of child, 1995–96

Age of child	Substantiations			Child at risk ^(a)			No abuse or neglect			Finalised investigations		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Months												
Under 2	38	23	61	2	1	3	15	14	29	55	38	93
2 to under 6	40	32	72	2	6	8	22	19	41	64	57	121
6 to under 12	66	81	147	8	5	13	50	41	91	124	127	251
Years												
1	95	96	191	10	8	18	65	67	133	170	171	342
2	108	86	194	11	7	18	75	73	148	194	166	360
3	84	89	173	12	7	19	75	79	154	171	175	346
4	78	74	152	10	10	20	71	81	152	159	165	324
5	79	67	146	10	7	17	63	69	133	152	143	296
6	73	73	146	20	8	28	73	75	148	166	156	322
7	57	71	128	10	9	19	61	58	119	128	138	266
8	75	68	143	14	10	24	67	55	122	156	133	289
9	66	60	126	9	4	13	59	64	124	134	128	263
10	64	53	117	6	10	16	45	50	95	115	113	228
11	55	78	133	4	12	16	39	54	95	98	144	244
12	47	73	120	7	11	18	49	56	105	103	140	243
13	48	77	125	11	7	18	29	48	77	88	132	220
14	39	100	139	2	4	6	25	46	71	66	150	216
15	18	56	74	–	7	7	9	22	31	27	85	112
16	6	17	23	1	0	1	3	11	14	10	28	38
17	1	5	6	–	–	–	1	5	6	2	10	12
Not stated	16	17	33	1	1	2	19	34	52	36	52	87
Total	1,153	1,296	2,449	150	134	284	915	1,022	1,942	2,218	2,452	4,675
<i>Per cent of total children</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>9</i>

(a) Only Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory had the category 'child at risk' as an outcome for children who were the subject of a finalised investigation in 1995–96.

Notes

1. Person columns (P) include children whose sex was unknown or not stated. As a result the number of males and females does not add to the total.
2. Tasmania was unable to provide a breakdown by age and sex of children in finalised investigations. As a result the distribution of children by age and sex for Tasmania is an estimate based on the distribution of the outcome categories by age and sex of child involved.

Table A11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in substantiated notifications by type of abuse or neglect and sex and single year of age of child, 1995–96

Age of child	Physical			Emotional			Sexual			Neglect			Total		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Months															
Under 2	9	6	15	18	8	26	–	–	–	11	9	20	38	23	61
2 to under 6	5	5	10	12	15	27	–	–	–	23	12	35	40	32	72
6 to under 12	15	13	28	16	24	40	–	–	–	35	44	79	66	81	147
Years															
1	23	20	43	25	20	45	–	–	–	47	56	103	95	96	191
2	22	16	38	36	25	61	2	6	8	48	39	87	108	86	194
3	16	15	31	21	26	47	3	14	17	44	34	78	84	89	173
4	13	5	18	30	18	48	3	16	19	32	35	67	78	74	152
5	28	11	39	22	19	41	3	16	19	26	21	47	79	67	146
6	22	15	37	13	22	35	4	14	18	34	22	56	73	73	146
7	20	17	37	11	17	28	3	15	18	23	22	45	57	71	128
8	21	12	33	20	15	35	5	15	20	29	26	55	75	68	143
9	17	13	30	17	12	29	4	13	17	28	22	50	66	60	126
10	19	14	33	13	6	19	2	17	19	30	16	46	64	53	117
11	21	23	44	8	9	17	–	20	20	26	26	52	55	78	133
12	20	23	43	11	15	26	1	18	19	15	17	32	47	73	120
13	15	23	38	14	15	29	1	26	27	18	13	31	48	77	125
14	13	34	47	15	29	44	1	22	23	10	15	25	39	100	139
15	7	26	33	6	13	19	1	8	9	4	9	13	18	56	74
16	–	8	8	3	4	7	–	4	4	3	1	4	6	17	23
17	1	2	3	–	–	–	–	3	3	–	–	–	1	5	6
Not stated	1	2	3	7	4	11	1	3	4	7	8	15	16	17	33
Total	308	303	611	318	316	634	34	230	264	493	447	940	1,153	1,296	2,449
<i>Per cent of total children</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>

Notes

1. Person columns (P) include children whose sex was unknown or not stated. As a result the number of males and females does not add to the total.
2. Tasmania was unable to provide a breakdown by age and sex of children in finalised investigations. As a result the distribution of children by age and sex for Tasmania is an estimate based on the distribution of the outcome categories by age and sex of child involved.

10.4 Rates of abuse and neglect in the population

Table A12: Rates of children 0–16 years in substantiated notifications per 1,000 children, 1990–91 to 1995–96

	NSW	Vic ^(a)	Qld	WA ^(b)	SA	Tas ^(c)	ACT	NT	Total
1990–91	6.8	2.1	3.9	2.5	3.1	3.6	2.5	4.0	4.1
1991–92	6.9	1.9	3.2	2.7	2.9	4.3	3.2	4.4	4.1
1992–93	8.3	3.8	2.8	2.9	4.9	3.2	4.6	5.5	5.1
1993–94	8.7	4.8	3.1	3.7	5.4	3.0	5.6	6.5	5.7
1994–95	8.2	6.7	3.6	2.9	6.3	2.7	4.6	6.0	6.1
1995–96	8.1	6.0	4.0	2.2	6.0	1.8	4.9	4.4	5.8

- (a) Figures for Victoria prior to 1992–93 underestimate the rate of substantiated notifications per 1,000 children, as prior to that time the Victorian Police were involved in receiving notifications of child abuse and neglect and these were not included in the data.
- (b) 'New Directions' was phased in during 1995–96.
- (c) The relatively low rate for Tasmania in 1995–96 is partly due to the absence of a common definition of 'substantiated' across regions during the counting period.

Notes

1. Rates are calculated by dividing the number of children aged 0–16 years by the estimated resident population aged 0–16 years at 31 December of each year, multiplied by 1,000.
2. Children whose age was not stated are included with those aged 0–16 years as almost all would be aged 0–16 years.

Table A13: Children aged 0–16 years and rates of children in substantiated notifications per 1,000 children, by age of child, estimated resident population and type of abuse and neglect, 1995–96

Age of child (years)	Population ^(a)	Physical		Emotional		Sexual		Neglect		Total	
		No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
0	259,348	502	1.9	799	3.1	24	0.1	659	2.5	1,984	7.6
1	257,112	337	1.3	512	2.0	29	0.1	522	2.0	1,400	5.4
2	258,037	345	1.3	545	2.1	94	0.4	508	2.0	1,492	5.8
3	258,463	358	1.4	513	2.0	254	1.0	453	1.8	1,578	6.1
4	260,646	357	1.4	547	2.1	306	1.2	420	1.6	1,630	6.3
5	262,556	409	1.6	460	1.8	316	1.2	340	1.3	1,525	5.8
6	259,734	396	1.5	474	1.8	278	1.1	347	1.3	1,495	5.8
7	256,987	403	1.6	417	1.6	257	1.0	319	1.2	1,396	5.4
8	255,994	446	1.7	430	1.7	295	1.2	302	1.2	1,473	5.8
9	257,206	420	1.6	372	1.4	275	1.1	321	1.2	1,387	5.4
10	259,713	441	1.7	405	1.6	287	1.1	285	1.1	1,418	5.5
11	259,882	455	1.8	305	1.2	310	1.2	248	1.0	1,317	5.1
12	259,782	497	1.9	429	1.7	336	1.3	239	0.9	1,501	5.8
13	258,588	664	2.6	522	2.0	384	1.5	274	1.1	1,843	7.1
14	257,205	694	2.7	534	2.1	447	1.7	290	1.1	1,965	7.6
15	253,806	500	2.0	329	1.3	342	1.3	183	0.7	1,354	5.3
16	251,208	145	0.6	77	0.3	116	0.5	41	0.2	379	1.5
Not stated ^(b)		97		79		92		74		342	
Total^(b)	4,386,263	7,466	1.7	7,748	1.8	4,440	1.0	5,824	1.3	25,478	5.8

(a) Estimated population at 31 December 1995. Includes an estimate for Jervis Bay but excludes Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

(b) Children whose age was not stated are included with total as most would be aged 0–16 years.

Note: Rates are calculated by dividing the number of children in substantiated cases by the estimated resident population aged 0–16 years at 31 December 1995, multiplied by 1,000.

Table A14: Rates of children in finalised investigations and substantiated notifications per 1,000 children, by State and Territory and age of child, 1995–96

Age of child	NSW	Vic ^(b)	Qld	WA ^(c)	SA	Tas ^(d)	ACT	NT	Total
Years	Finalised investigations								
0–4	15.8	14.2	12.9	6.6	14.9	6.1	14.1	8.7	13.6
5–9	14.1	11.6	11.1	5.9	15.4	6.0	13.3	9.0	11.9
10–14	13.1	11.5	9.4	4.7	12.7	4.0	8.8	9.2	10.7
15–16	6.2	7.1	4.6	2.2	6.2	4.0	3.5	3.6	5.6
Total^(a)	13.8	11.9	10.4	5.3	14.4	8.9	11.1	8.4	11.6
	Substantiations								
0–4	8.5	6.9	4.2	2.4	5.7	1.2	5.8	4.7	6.2
5–9	7.9	5.4	4.0	2.2	6.3	1.6	6.0	4.2	5.6
10–14	8.7	6.4	4.6	2.4	6.3	1.2	4.3	5.1	6.2
15–16	4.4	4.2	2.4	1.4	3.4	1.4	1.8	2.3	3.4
Total^(a)	8.1	6.0	4.0	2.2	6.0	1.8	4.9	4.4	5.8

(a) Total includes children whose age was not stated as most of these would be aged 0–16 years.

(b) Children in direct investigations only (that is, where face-to-face interviews were conducted).

(c) 'New Directions' was phased in during 1995–96.

(d) Tasmania was unable to provide a breakdown by age and sex of children in finalised investigations. As a result the distribution of children by age and sex for Tasmania is an estimate based on the distribution of the outcome categories by age and sex of child involved. The relatively low rate for Tasmania is partly due to the lack of a common of definition of 'substantiated' across regions during the counting period.

Note: Rates are calculated by dividing the number of children aged 0–16 years of age by the estimated resident population aged 0–16 years at 31 December of each year, multiplied by 1,000.

Table A15: Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–16 years in notifications, finalised investigations and substantiated notifications of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, 1995–96

Type of abuse and neglect	NSW ^(a)	Vic	Qld	WA ^(b)	SA ^(c)	Tas ^(d)	ACT	NT	Total
Physical abuse	5.7	7.6	4.9	2.6	6.3	1.3	10.4	2.2	4.5
Emotional abuse	12.7	9.0	1.9	0.1	4.1	0.0	7.0	0.1	4.7
Sexual abuse	3.7	1.0	0.8	2.5	3.3	0.2	2.3	0.5	1.9
Neglect	8.1	14.4	7.5	4.1	11.0	1.1	27.9	2.7	6.9
<i>Substantiated abuse or neglect</i>	<i>30.1</i>	<i>32.0</i>	<i>15.1</i>	<i>9.3</i>	<i>24.7</i>	<i>2.6</i>	<i>47.6</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>18.0</i>
Child at risk	..	..	6.4	1.7	..	2.0	10.4	–	2.1
No abuse or neglect	18.3	29.1	12.7	10.8	26.4	7.0	26.7	4.1	14.3
<i>Total finalised investigations</i>	<i>48.3</i>	<i>61.1</i>	<i>34.2</i>	<i>21.9</i>	<i>51.0</i>	<i>11.6</i>	<i>84.7</i>	<i>9.8</i>	<i>34.4</i>
Notifications	55.1	89.9	42.4	27.5	61.8	27.1	104.5	10.0	42.3

(a) Includes children notified to the NSW DCS because of child concerns.

(b) 'New Directions' was phased in during 1995–96.

(c) Excludes children subject to substantiated notifications classified as 'threat of abuse'.

(d) Tasmania was unable to provide a breakdown by age and sex of children in finalised investigations. As a result the distribution of children by age and sex for Tasmania is an estimate based on the distribution of the outcome categories by age and sex of child involved. The relatively low rate for Tasmania is partly due to the lack of a common definition of 'substantiated' across regions during the counting period.

Notes

1. Rates are calculated by dividing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–16 years by the estimated resident population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–16 years at 31 December 1995, multiplied by 1,000.
2. Includes children whose age was unknown or not stated as almost all of these would be aged under 16 years of age.

Table A16: Rates of other children aged 0–16 years in notifications, finalised investigations and substantiated notifications of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 other children, 1995–96

Type of abuse and neglect	NSW ^(a)	Vic	Qld	WA ^(b)	SA ^(c)	Tas ^(d)	ACT	NT	Total
Physical abuse	1.9	1.6	1.5	0.7	2.1	0.8	1.5	1.8	1.6
Emotional abuse	2.7	2.1	0.7	0.1	0.8	0.1	1.0	0.4	1.7
Sexual abuse	1.7	0.6	0.3	0.6	1.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	1.0
Neglect	1.2	1.5	1.1	0.4	1.1	0.3	1.4	0.9	1.1
<i>Substantiated abuse or neglect</i>	<i>7.5</i>	<i>5.8</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>3.6</i>	<i>5.4</i>
Child at risk	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.5	0.0	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.3
No abuse or neglect	5.4	5.7	4.4	2.2	7.9	6.0	4.9	3.9	5.1
<i>Total finalised investigations</i>	<i>12.9</i>	<i>11.5</i>	<i>9.3</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>13.5</i>	<i>8.8</i>	<i>10.3</i>	<i>7.6</i>	<i>10.9</i>
Notifications	14.8	21.4	13.1	6.2	16.9	18.3	13.9	7.9	15.5

(a) Includes children notified to the NSW DCS because of child concerns.

(b) 'New Directions' was phased in during 1995–96.

(c) Excludes children subject to substantiated notifications classified as 'threat of abuse'.

(d) Tasmania was unable to provide a breakdown by age and sex of children in finalised investigations. As a result the distribution of children by age and sex for Tasmania is an estimate based on the distribution of the outcome categories by age and sex of child involved. The relatively low rate for Tasmania is partly due to the lack of a common definition of 'substantiated' across regions during the counting period.

Notes

1. Rates are calculated by dividing the number of other children aged 0–16 years of age by the estimated resident population of other children aged 0–16 years at 31 December 1995, multiplied by 1,000.
2. Includes children whose age was unknown or not stated as almost all of these would be aged under 16 years of age.

10.5 Source of notification

Table A17 : Finalised investigations of abuse and neglect by type of outcome and source of notification, 1995–96

Source of notification	Substantiations	No abuse or neglect		Finalised investigations
		Child at risk ^(a)		
Number				
Subject child	897	116	434	1,447
Parent/guardian	3,977	376	3,966	8,319
Sibling	127	31	139	297
Other relative	2,055	285	3,128	5,468
Friend/neighbour	3,039	457	5,647	9,143
Medical practitioner	1,101	77	790	1,968
Other health worker	729	30	532	1,291
Hospital/health centre	1,494	91	934	2,519
Social worker	3,013	184	2,125	5,322
School personnel	4,385	183	3,694	8,262
Child care personnel	296	27	378	701
Police	5,174	195	2,864	8,233
Dept officer	758	51	619	1,428
Non-govt organisation	844	31	539	1,414
Anonymous	645	84	2,031	2,760
Maltreater ^(b)	54	6	11	71
Other	959	145	1,007	2,111
Not stated	286	3	340	629
Total	29,833	2,372	29,178	61,383
Percentage				
Subject child	3	5	1	2
Parent/guardian	13	16	14	14
Sibling	–	1	–	–
Other relative	7	12	11	9
Friend/neighbour	10	19	19	15
Medical practitioner	4	3	3	3
Other health worker	2	1	2	2
Hospital/health centre	5	4	3	4
Social worker	10	8	7	9
School personnel	15	8	13	13
Child care personnel	1	1	1	1
Police	17	8	10	13
Dept. officer	3	2	2	2
Non-govt organisation	3	1	2	2
Anonymous	2	4	7	4
Maltreater ^(b)	–	–	–	–
Other	3	6	3	3
Not stated	1	–	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100

(a) Only Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory classified outcomes of finalised investigations to this category in 1995–96.

(b) Only Queensland data are included in this category.

Table A18: Substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect by type of abuse and neglect and source of notification, 1995–96

Source of notification	Physical	Emotional	Sexual	Neglect	Total
Number					
Subject child	432	223	130	112	897
Parent/guardian	1,252	1,268	908	549	3,977
Sibling	66	29	11	21	127
Other relative	462	747	178	668	2,055
Friend/neighbour	719	920	188	1,212	3,039
Medical practitioner	419	317	191	174	1,101
Other health worker	156	350	64	159	729
Hospital/health centre	368	577	276	273	1,494
Social worker	722	1,065	498	728	3,013
School personnel	1,904	781	1,082	618	4,385
Child care personnel	92	73	49	82	296
Police	1,028	1,734	865	1,547	5,174
Dept officer	188	231	109	230	758
Non-govt organisation	178	400	78	188	844
Anonymous	109	224	27	285	645
Maltreater ^(a)	27	18	–	9	54
Other	258	235	106	360	959
Not stated	87	73	42	84	286
Total	8,467	9,265	4,802	7,299	29,833
Percentage					
Subject child	5	2	3	2	3
Parent/guardian	15	14	19	8	13
Sibling	1	–	–	–	–
Other relative	5	8	4	9	7
Friend/neighbour	8	10	4	17	10
Medical practitioner	5	3	4	2	4
Other health worker	2	4	1	2	2
Hospital/health centre	4	6	6	4	5
Social worker	9	11	10	10	10
School personnel	22	8	23	8	15
Child care personnel	1	1	1	1	1
Police	12	19	18	21	17
Dept officer	2	2	2	3	3
Non-govt organisation	2	4	2	3	3
Anonymous	1	2	1	4	2
Maltreater ^(a)	–	–	–	–	–
Other	3	3	2	5	3
Not stated	1	1	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Only Queensland data are included in this category.

Table A19: Distribution of substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect by type of abuse and neglect and source of notification, 1995–96

Source of notification	Physical	Emotional	Sexual	Neglect	Total
	Percentage				
Subject child	48	25	14	12	100
Parent/guardian	31	32	23	14	100
Sibling	52	23	9	17	100
Other relative	22	36	9	33	100
Friend/neighbour	24	30	6	40	100
Medical practitioner	38	29	17	16	100
Other health worker	21	48	9	22	100
Hospital/health centre	25	39	18	18	100
Social worker	24	35	17	24	100
School personnel	43	18	25	14	100
Child care personnel	31	25	17	28	100
Police	20	34	17	30	100
Dept officer	25	30	14	30	100
Non-govt organisation	21	47	9	22	100
Anonymous	17	35	4	44	100
Maltreater ^(a)	50	33	–	17	100
Other	27	25	11	36	100
Not stated	30	26	15	29	100
Total	28	31	16	24	100

(a) Only Queensland data are included in this category.

10.6 Type of family in which the child was residing

Table A20: Finalised investigations of abuse and neglect, for Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, by type of outcome, sex of child and the type of family in which the child was residing, 1995–96

Family type ^(a)	Substantiations ^(b)			Child at risk ^(c)			No abuse or neglect			Finalised investigations		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Number												
Two parent—natural ^(d)	1,258	1,354	2,630	69	67	136	1,433	1,518	2,990	2,760	2,939	5,756
Two parent—other	643	742	1,394	51	46	97	665	691	1,378	1,359	1,479	2,869
Single parent—female	1,605	1,713	3,338	108	108	218	1,875	1,981	3,903	3,588	3,802	7,459
Single parent—male	232	255	491	25	14	39	310	331	650	567	600	1,180
Other	143	197	346	11	21	32	154	189	358	308	407	736
Not stated	184	225	429	6	5	11	178	172	367	368	402	807
Total	4,065	4,486	8,628	270	261	533	4,615	4,882	9,646	8,950	9,629	18,807
Percentage												
Two parent—natural ^(d)	31	30	30	26	26	26	31	31	31	31	31	31
Two parent—other	16	17	16	19	18	18	14	14	14	15	15	15
Single parent—female	39	38	39	40	41	41	41	41	40	40	39	40
Single parent—male	6	6	6	9	5	7	7	7	7	6	6	6
Other	4	4	4	4	8	6	3	4	4	3	4	4
Not stated	5	5	5	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

- (a) States and Territories vary as to when they record family of residence of the child. Victoria records family of residence at time of investigation; the Northern Territory and Tasmania at the time of abuse; others at time of notification.
- (b) The number of substantiations in this table does not match the number in Table A22 as Queensland is excluded from this table.
- (c) Only Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory classified outcomes from finalised investigations to this category in 1995–96.
- (d) Includes where both parents are natural or both parents are adoptive. For the Northern Territory this includes where a parent is a single adoptive parent.

Notes

1. New South Wales and South Australia were unable to provide data on family of residence. Queensland was unable to provide data on family of residence for finalised investigations resulting in no abuse or neglect. Data in the table exclude these three States.
2. Excludes 65 substantiations for Tasmania due to missing data.
3. Person columns (P) include substantiated notifications of children whose sex was unknown or not stated.

Table A21: Finalised investigations of abuse and neglect, for Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, by type of outcome and the type of family in which the child was residing, 1995–96

Family type ^(a)	Substantiations	Child at risk ^(b) No abuse or neglect		Finalised investigations
		Percentage		
Two parent—natural ^(c)	46	2	52	100
Two parent—other	49	3	48	100
Single parent—female	45	3	52	100
Single parent—male	42	3	55	100
Other	47	4	49	100
Not stated	53	1	45	100
Total	46	3	51	100

(a) States and Territories vary as to when they record family of residence of the child. Victoria records family of residence at the time of investigation; the Northern Territory and Tasmania at the time of abuse; others at the time of notification.

(b) Only Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory classified outcomes from finalised investigations to this category in 1995–96.

(c) Includes where both parents are natural or both parents are adoptive. For the Northern Territory this includes where a parent is a single adoptive parent.

Notes

1. New South Wales and South Australia were unable to provide data on family of residence. Queensland was unable to provide data on family of residence for finalised investigations resulting in no abuse or neglect. Data in the table exclude these three States.
2. Excludes 65 substantiations for Tasmania due to missing data.

Table A22: Substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect, for Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, by type of abuse and neglect, sex of child and the type of family in which the child was residing, 1995–96

Family type ^(a)	Physical			Emotional			Sexual			Neglect			Total ^(b)		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
	Number														
Two parent—natural ^(c)	706	700	1,411	424	440	873	100	260	361	566	524	1,093	1,796	1,924	3,738
Two parent—other	579	485	1,067	298	323	625	76	284	361	310	309	620	1,263	1,401	2,673
Single parent—female	654	638	1,296	699	694	1,403	120	331	453	1,113	1,031	2,148	2,586	2,694	5,300
Single parent—male	146	107	254	86	96	184	15	49	65	141	120	261	388	372	764
Other	55	54	110	39	54	95	17	76	94	59	26	87	170	210	386
Not stated	13	18	35	137	143	290	17	44	63	17	20	41	184	225	429
Total	2,153	2,002	4,173	1,683	1,750	3,470	345	1,044	1,397	2,206	2,030	4,250	6,387	6,826	13,290
	Percentage														
Two parent—natural ^(c)	33	35	34	25	25	25	29	25	26	26	26	26	28	28	28
Two parent—other	27	24	26	18	18	18	22	27	26	14	15	15	20	21	20
Single parent—female	30	32	31	42	40	40	35	32	32	50	51	51	40	39	40
Single parent—male	7	5	6	5	5	5	4	5	5	6	6	6	6	5	6
Other	3	3	3	2	3	3	5	7	7	3	1	2	3	3	3
Not stated	1	1	1	8	8	8	5	4	5	1	1	1	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) States and Territories vary as to when they records family of residence of the child. Victoria records family of residence at time of investigation; the Northern Territory and Tasmania at time of abuse; others at time of notification.

(b) The number of substantiations in this table does not match the number in Table A20 as data for Queensland are excluded from Table A20 but included in this table.

(c) Includes where both parents are natural or both parents are adoptive. For the Northern Territory this includes where a parent is a single adoptive parent.

Notes

1. New South Wales and South Australia were unable to provide data on family of residence.
2. Excludes 65 substantiations for Tasmania due to missing data.
3. Person columns (P) include substantiated notifications of children whose sex was unknown or not stated.

Table A23: Substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect, for Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, by type of abuse and neglect and the type of family in which the child was residing, 1995–96

Family type ^(a)	Physical	Emotional	Sexual	Neglect	Total
	Percentage				
Two parent—natural ^(b)	38	23	10	29	100
Two parent—other	40	23	14	23	100
Single parent—female	24	26	9	41	100
Single parent—male	33	24	9	34	100
Other	28	25	24	23	100
Not stated	8	68	15	10	100
Total	31	26	11	32	100

- (a) States and Territories vary as to when they record family of residence of the child. Victoria records family of residence at time of investigation; the Northern Territory and Tasmania at time of abuse; others at time of notification.
- (b) Includes where both parents are natural or both parents are adoptive. For the Northern Territory this includes where a parent is a single adoptive parent.

Notes

1. New South Wales and South Australia were unable to provide data on family of residence.
2. Excludes 65 substantiations for Tasmania due to missing data.

10.7 Injury and harm

Table A24: Primary actual abuse sustained by children in substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect, New South Wales, 1995–96

Injury or harm sustained	Substantiations	
	Number	Percentage
Physical abuse		
Request for assistance by parent/child/caregiver	717	21
Significant bruising other than facial/head	404	12
Facial/head bruising	396	12
Threats to physically harm child	146	4
Lacerations/welts	102	3
Cuts/abrasions	37	1
Burns/scalds	37	1
Intentional/abusive administration of drugs and alcohol	29	1
Other fractures	27	1
Attempted strangulation	21	1
Child born drug dependant	17	–
Internal injuries/shaking	13	–
Intentional poisoning	9	–
Skull fracture	8	–
Dislocation/sprains/twisting	6	–
Attempted drowning	6	–
Attempted suffocation	5	–
Death of child (non-accidental)	3	–
Child with foetal alcohol syndrome at birth	1	–
Death of sibling (non-accidental)	1	–
Other physical	1,437	42
Total	3,422	100
Emotional abuse		
Emotional abuse due to exposure to domestic violence	1,287	24
Parent's alcohol/drug abuse leads to emotional harm	1,169	22
Parent's emotional state threatens child	1,097	20
Child's behaviour to self/others indicated abuse	530	10
Severe verbal abuse	277	5
Parent's psychological disorder leads to emotional harm	271	5
Continual rejection	69	1
Continual scapegoating	47	1
Social/physical isolation as punishment	38	1
Parent's developmental delay leads to emotional harm	36	1
Failure to thrive (non-organic)	25	–
Other emotional	542	10
Total	5,388	100

(continued)

Table A24 (continued): Primary actual abuse sustained by children in substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect, New South Wales, 1995–96

Injury or harm sustained	Substantiations	
	Number	Percentage
Sexual abuse		
Sexual fondling	1,121	40
Vaginal/anal penetration	546	20
Oral sexual behaviour	208	7
Child's inappropriate sexual behaviour indicates abuse	123	4
Threat of sexual abuse	76	3
Genital exposure/voyeurism	68	2
Exposure to/used for pornography	43	2
Incidents of sexual behaviour by a stranger	42	2
Deliberate exposure to sexual behaviour of others	40	1
Other sexual	509	18
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,776</i>	<i>100</i>
Neglect		
Left without adequate supervision	1,225	49
No abuse	416	17
Failure to provide shelter	80	3
Failure to provide medical care	73	3
Failure to control access to poison, alcohol etc.	61	2
Failure to provide food	61	2
Failure to protect child's health	57	2
Failure to provide nursing/medical aid	8	–
Malnutrition	5	–
Failure to provide clothing	4	–
Other neglect	487	20
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,477</i>	<i>100</i>
Total substantiations	14,063	

Note: New South Wales data on substantiations include some child concerns.

Table A25: Most serious type of injury or harm sustained by children in substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect, Victoria, 1995–96

Injury or harm sustained	Substantiations	
	Number	Percentage
Physical abuse		
Likelihood of significant physical harm	857	46
Kick/strike/punch/pull	489	26
Cuts/bruises/welts	249	13
Hit with object	167	9
Burns/scalding	21	1
Sprain/dislocation/bone fractures	16	1
Throwing or shaking	10	1
Bites	9	–
Suffocating, strangulation, drowning or attempted drowning	8	–
Tying/close confinement	7	–
Brain damage/skull fracture	6	–
Infections/disease	4	–
Haematoma	2	–
Internal injuries	2	–
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,847</i>	<i>100</i>
Emotional abuse		
Functioning affected by exposure to domestic violence/psychiatric illness	1,034	43
Substantial emotional trauma	967	40
Severe scapegoating or rejection	92	4
Severe verbal abuse	71	3
Severe social, physical and emotional isolation	13	1
Other	216	9
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,393</i>	<i>100</i>
Sexual abuse		
Likelihood of significant harm due to sexual abuse	443	69
Sexual molestation	140	22
Sexual penetration	37	6
Sexual harassment	13	2
Sexual exploitation	11	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>644</i>	<i>100</i>

(continued)

Table A25 (continued): Most serious type of injury or harm sustained by children in substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect, Victoria, 1995–96

Injury or harm sustained	Substantiations	
	Number	Percentage
Neglect		
Failure to ensure safety	1,046	59
Environmental neglect	348	20
Parents dead or incapacitated	135	8
Abandonment/desertion	111	6
Medical neglect	45	3
Developmental delay	29	2
Failure to provide adequate food/fluid	27	2
Failure to thrive	17	1
Misuse of drugs, medical or surgical procedure	17	1
Failure to provide adequate clothing	2	–
Malnutrition	2	–
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,779</i>	<i>100</i>
Total substantiations	6,663	

Note: Categories of type of abuse or neglect are as provided by Victoria DHS.

Table A26: Most serious type of injury or harm sustained by children in substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect, Queensland, 1995–96

Injury or harm sustained	Substantiations	
	Number	Percentage
Physical abuse		
Bruising	538	33
Cuts/abrasions	71	4
Alcohol/drug administration	16	1
Skull fractures	10	1
Other fractures	24	1
Burns	9	1
Internal injuries	9	1
Other	743	46
At risk	200	12
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,620</i>	<i>100</i>
Emotional abuse		
Severe verbal abuse	165	18
Scapegoating/rejection	157	18
Chronic emotional deprivation	16	2
Other	506	56
At risk	52	6
<i>Total</i>	<i>896</i>	<i>100</i>
Sexual abuse		
Penetration with violence and/or coercion	37	12
Penetration without violence and/or coercion	28	9
Other sexual contact	179	59
Other	38	13
At risk	19	6
<i>Total</i>	<i>301</i>	<i>100</i>
Neglect		
Left unattended	398	22
Neglect of physical needs	304	16
Inadequate living conditions	195	11
Abandoned	176	10
Neglect of health care	82	4
Neglect of education	63	3
Other	551	30
At risk	76	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,845</i>	<i>100</i>
Total substantiations	4,662	

Note: Categories of type of abuse or neglect are as provided by Queensland DFYCC.

Table A27: Most serious type of injury or harm sustained by children in substantiated notifications of abuse and neglect, Western Australia, 1995–96

Injury or harm sustained	Substantiations	
	Number	Percentage
No identifiable injury ^(a)	500	46
Cuts, bruises, welts, bites	221	20
Identifiable emotional trauma	194	18
Anal or vaginal trauma/disease	43	4
Impaired development	23	2
Scalds, burns, fractures	15	1
Avoidable illness	15	1
Poisoning	2	–
Fractured skull, brain damage	1	–
Other	81	7
Total substantiations	1,095	100

(a) No identifiable injury relates to substantiations where there is no evidence of abuse or neglect, but it has been stated that it has occurred.

Note: Categories of type of abuse or neglect are as provided by WA FCS.

Appendix 1

Legislation relevant to child abuse and neglect 1995–96

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 1937

Western Australia

Child Welfare Act 1947

Community Services Act 1972

South Australia

Children's Protection and Young Offenders Act 1979

Children's Protection Act 1993

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

Appendix 2

Mandatory reporting requirements in each State and Territory

New South Wales

Since 1977 medical practitioners have been required by law to report physical and sexual abuse. 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. The Department of School Education policy also requires teachers 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 1993 the Victorian Government proposed legislative changes to the *Children and Young Persons Act 1989* which would mandate specific professional groups to notify suspected cases of child physical and sexual abuse. The professional groups targeted through legislation include medical practitioners, psychiatrists, nurses, police, primary and post-primary teachers, principals, registered psychologists, social workers, youth and welfare workers, and other workers in related community and welfare services fields. The government adopted a phased implementation of mandatory reporting legislation to enable adequate professional education of these groups on issues of mandatory reporting and child abuse.

Doctors, nurses and police were mandated on 4 November 1993 to report child physical and sexual abuse. Primary and secondary school teachers and principals were mandated on 18 July 1994.

Queensland

Under the *Health Act 1937*, medical practitioners are required by law to notify the Director-General, Queensland Health, of all cases of suspected maltreatment of a child. Queensland Department of Education 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

In Western Australia, referrals about possible harm to children are facilitated by a series of reciprocal protocols that have been negotiated with key government and non-government agencies, rather than by mandatory reporting. Community awareness programs and education of professional groups also contribute to identification of possible maltreatment, and action to prevent further harm from occurring.

South Australia

Under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*, the following persons are required to notify the Department for Family and Community Services when they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child is being abused or neglected: medical practitioners, nurses, dentists, psychologists, police, probation officers, social workers, teachers, family day care providers, and employees of, or volunteers in government departments, agencies or local government or non-government agencies that provide health, welfare, education, child care or residential services wholly or partly 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 (ACT). Although 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, this provision did not take effect when the Act came into operation. The Australian Capital Territory Community Law Reform Committee, which published its findings in November 1993, was asked by the Australian Capital Territory Government to consider enacting this provision. Consequently, in 1995 the Australian Capital Territory Government announced its intention to introduce mandatory reporting from 1 June 1997, in a graduated approach involving the training of professionals in one region, allowing the assessment of the impact on services to be made before full implementation. The groups to be mandated from 1 June 1997 are doctors, dentists, nurses, police officers, teachers, school counsellors, public servants working in the child welfare field and licensed child care providers.

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 and Community Services office of Territory Health Services or to the police, who will then notify a Family and Community Services office.

Appendix 3

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*

Number 9: *Child Abuse and Neglect Australia, 1992–93*

Number 10: *Children under Care and Protection Orders Australia, 1992–93*

Number 11: *Adoptions Australia, 1993–94*

Number 12: *Children under Care and Protection Orders Australia, 1993–94*

Number 13: *Child Abuse and Neglect Australia, 1993–94*

Number 14: *Adoptions Australia, 1994–95*

Number 15: *Children under Care and Protection Orders Australia, 1994–95*

Number 16: *Child Abuse and Neglect Australia, 1994–95*

Other publications

Australia's Welfare: Services and Assistance 1993

Australia's Welfare: Services and Assistance 1995

Appendix 4

Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACOSS	Australian Council of Social Services
ACCA	Aboriginal Child Care Agencies
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CCR	Child Concern Report
CMA	Child Maltreatment Allegation
CYFSB	Children's, Youth and Family Services Bureau (Australian Capital Territory)
DCHS	Department of Community and Health Services (Tasmania)
DCS	Department of Community Services (New South Wales)
DFCS	Department for Family and Community Services (South Australia)
DFYCC	Department of Families, Youth and Community Care (Queensland)
DHS	Department of Human Services (Victoria)
FCS	Family and Children's Services (Western Australia)
FYCS	Family, Youth and Children's Services (Northern Territory)
JIT	Joint Investigative Teams
NCPC	National Child Protection Council
SCAN	Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Glossary

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

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 notification 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 of child

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 1 year.

Authorised department

An authorised department is an organisation to which reports of child abuse and neglect are made. This includes all State and Territory community service departments.

Child

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse and neglect

Child abuse and neglect occurs when a child has been, is being, or is likely to be, subjected to sexual, physical or emotional actions or inactions (generally by someone who has the care of the child) which have resulted in, or are likely to result in, significant harm or injury to the child.

Having the care of

A person is regarded as having the care of a child when he or she has 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.

Investigation outcome

The outcome of a finalised investigation is designated as either:

Substantiated notification/substantiation

A finalised investigation is classified as 'substantiated' or classified as a 'substantiation' 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 definition of *Type of abuse or neglect*.

Child at risk

A finalised investigation 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. During 1995–96, this category was used in Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

No abuse or neglect

A finalised investigation is classified in 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.

Maltreatment

‘Maltreatment’ has the same meaning as child abuse and neglect. Where data on notifications of ‘other concerns’ cannot be separated from notifications of ‘maltreatment’, this is footnoted.

Notifications

Notifications of child abuse and neglect consist of contacts made to an authorised department by persons or other bodies making allegations of child abuse or neglect.

Notifications can only involve one child; where it is claimed that two children have been abused or neglected, this is counted as two notifications, even if the children are from one family.

Where there is more than one notification about the same ‘event’, this is counted as only one notification. Where there is more than one notification about a child during the year ended 30 June, but relating to different events (for instance, a different type of abuse or neglect or a different person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect), these notifications are counted as separate notifications.

Notifications investigated (investigations)

A notification is investigated where the initial information provided by the notifier is sufficiently serious for the department to have made substantial contacts, by any means, with the child and/or family, and/or persons known to the child and/or family, to assess whether or not abuse or neglect has occurred.

Finalised investigation

A finalised investigation is a notification received during the year ended 30 June where the investigation was completed and an outcome recorded by 31 August.

Investigation not finalised

An investigation which is not finalised is a notification received during the year ended 30 June, which was investigated, but where the investigation was not completed and an investigation outcome was not recorded by 31 August.

Notifications dealt with by other means

Notifications of maltreatment during the year ended 30 June which were responded to by means other than investigation, such as advice or referral to services.

Notifications not investigated and not dealt with by other means

Notifications of maltreatment during the year ended 30 June which were not dealt with by any means. Include notifications where investigation was warranted, but where no investigation or other action was possible.

Person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect

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

Relationship to child of the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect

The relationship to the child of the person believed responsible for the abuse or neglect is categorised as follows:

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.

Parent's de facto partner

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.

Foster parent

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

Guardian

Any person other than the child's parents who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child.

Sibling

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

Other relative

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

Friend/neighbour

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

Other

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

Not stated

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

Sex of child

The sex of each child who is the subject of a notification to an authorised department is recorded as male or female. Where the sex of the child is not known, it should be recorded as 'Unknown' in relevant tables.

Source of notification

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

The source of notification is categorised as follows:

Parent/guardian

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

Sibling

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

Other relative

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

Friend/neighbour

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

Medical practitioner

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

Other health personnel

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

Hospital/health centre personnel

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

Social worker/welfare worker/psychologist/other trained welfare worker

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

School personnel

Any appropriately trained person involved in the instruction or imparting of knowledge to children or providing direct support for this education. This includes teachers, teachers'

aides, school principals and counsellors who work in preschool, kindergarten, primary, secondary, technical, sporting or art and crafts education.

Child care personnel

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

Police

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

Departmental officer

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

Non-government organisation

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

Anonymous

This category covers notifications received from a person who does not give his or her name.

Other

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

Not stated

This category includes all notifications which are received from an unknown source.

Type of abuse or neglect

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

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

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

Sexual abuse

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

Neglect

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

Type of family in which the child is residing

This item refers to the family type in which a child is residing **at the time of notification of child abuse or neglect**. If the type of family of the child is collected at the time of investigation, or at some time other than at notification, then this is footnoted.

The family type of a child is classified into six main categories: two parent—natural, two parent—other, single parent—female, single parent—male, other, and not stated.

Two parent—natural

This category includes all two parent families where both parents are natural or both parents are adoptive.

Two parent—other

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

Single parent—female

This category includes all families with a single female parent. The parent may be the natural, step or adoptive parent.

Single parent—male

This category includes all families with a single male parent. The parent may be the natural, step or adoptive parent.

Other

This category includes extended families and substitute care (not included above). It includes Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander kinship arrangements, foster care and non-family situations, such as hostels and institutional accommodation.

Not stated

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

Type of injury and harm

'Type of injury and harm' is classified differently in the various jurisdictions that can provide this data. A description of this is provided in the text.

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