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Child Maltreatment 2000

2000

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Washington, DC

The following document presents the cover, title page, table of contents, introduction, and table and figures for this resource.



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11 Years of Reporting

Child Maltreatment 2000



U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

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This document was prepared for the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families by Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc., in collaboration with the American Humane Association, under contract ACF-105-99-9801. Members of the technical team who contributed to this report include Ying-Ying T. Yuan, Ph.D., Project Director; Jeffrey Johnson, M.P.H., Associate Project Director; Madonna Aveni; Bill Henry, Ph.D.; Linda Ingram; and Lana Zikratova, M.S. Other members of the Technical Team-Myles Edwards, Ph.D.; John Fluke, Ph.D.; Kim Murphy Ph.D.; Mary Jo Ortiz, M.S.W.; and Larry Shannon, M.S.-also participated in the collection and analysis of data. The report was designed and formatted by Janin/Cliff Design, Inc., and edited by Old Goat Communications.

The information presented in this report was collected from the States through the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). In conjunction with these data collection efforts, the NCANDS Technical Team helps States to improve their child protective services information systems, to address technical and programmatic issues of submitting data to the NCANDS, and to enhance the analytical capability of their agencies. For further information on technical assistance, contact the NCANDS Federal Project Officer at the following address:

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Additional copies of this report and other information on child maltreatment can be obtained by contacting the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information by phone at 800-FYI-3366 or on the Internet at <http://www.calib.com/nccanch> (*This link opens a new browser window to an external Web site. To return to Children's Bureau Web site, close the new window.*). This publication is also available on the Internet at /programs/cb.

Researchers interested in using data from the NCANDS should contact the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect at the following address:

National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect
Family Life Development Center
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853-4401
607-255-7794
DataCAN@cornell.edu
<http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu> (*This link opens a new browser window to an external Web site. To return to Children's Bureau Web site, close the new window.*)

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, *Child Maltreatment 2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002).

Chapter 1

Introduction

Child Maltreatment 2000

This report presents national data about child abuse and neglect known to child protective services (CPS) agencies in the United States in 2000. The data were collected and analyzed through the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families in the Administration of Children and Youth, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This chapter discusses the background and continuing development of NCANDS and describes the annual data collection process. Highlights of the report-including key national estimates and an overview of the report's sections-are provided.

BACKGROUND OF NCANDS

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was amended in 1988 to direct the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish a national data collection and analysis program to make available State child abuse and neglect reporting information.¹ The Department responded by establishing NCANDS as a voluntary national reporting system. In 1992, the Department produced its first NCANDS report based on data from 1990. The *Child Maltreatment* report series evolved from this initial report.

In 1996, CAPTA was amended to require all States that receive funds from the Basic State Grant program to work with the Secretary of the Department to provide specific data, to the extent practicable, on children who had been maltreated.² The NCANDS data elements were revised to meet these requirements ([appendix A](#)).

During the initial design phase of NCANDS, the Department convened a State Advisory Group comprised of State CPS program administrators and information systems managers. This group suggested data items and definitions that would best represent a national profile of child maltreatment. As NCANDS evolves, the group continues to meet to discuss ways to improve the participation of States in providing data to NCANDS. The 2000 State Advisory Group members are listed below.

Lee Stelmack, California
Donna J. Pope, Ph.D., Colorado
Eileen Breslin, Connecticut
Susan K. Chase, Florida
Rebecca Jarvis, Georgia
Antonio Montoya, Iowa
Walter G. Fahr, Louisiana
Lee Hunsberger, Michigan
Gail Clifford, Montana
Otto D. Lynn, L.S.W., Nevada
Donna Keys, New York
Kevin Kelly, North Carolina
Bill D. Hindman, Oklahoma
Leslie Schockner, Oregon
Bruce Benedik, Pennsylvania
Deborah Washington, Texas
Robert Lewis, D.S.W., Utah
Phillip M. Zunder, Ph.D., Vermont

A technical assistance meeting for all States is held each year in conjunction with the National Child Welfare Data Conference. This meeting serves as a forum for providing guidance to the States for their annual data submissions and provides an opportunity to discuss data utilization.

Data collected by NCANDS have been a critical source of information for many publications and reports. Most recently, data from NCANDS were incorporated into the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR), which ensure conformity with State plan requirements in titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. Data on recurrence of maltreatment and on the occurrence of maltreatment in foster care are the basis for two of the standards in the CFSR.

An annual departmental report on child welfare outcomes also includes context and outcome data on safety, based on State submissions to NCANDS.³ Data on the characteristics of children who have been maltreated, as well as data on the two safety outcomes- recurrence of maltreatment and maltreatment in foster care-are reported as well.

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ANNUAL DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

States submit a child-specific record for each report alleging child abuse or neglect that received a disposition as a result of an investigation or an assessment during the calendar year.⁴ Each child is identified within each report. The data fields in the child-specific record include the demographics of children and their perpetrators, types of maltreatment, investigation or assessment dispositions, risk factors, and services provided as a result of the investigation or assessment. A record number of States (34) submitted child-level data for 2000. The populations of these States account for more than 75 percent (78.1%) of the child population in the United States and a similar percentage (77.1%) of child victims of maltreatment.⁵

The 34 States also reported aggregate-level data for some items that were not obtainable at the child level, such as the number of child protective services workers. The remaining 17 States reported only aggregate statistics.

Upon receipt of data from each State, a technical validation review was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the data and to identify probable causes for missing data. In many instances, the review concluded that corrections were necessary and the States were requested to resubmit their data. Once a State's case-level data were finalized, aggregate counts were computed and shared with the State. The final step in the data collection process was to develop a composite file of aggregate statistics for all States regardless of the original data source. All analyses for this report were conducted with this composite file unless otherwise noted. The types of data submitted by the State and the data elements in the compiled aggregate data file are presented in [appendix B](#).

Commentary for State data and contact information for State representatives are presented in [appendix C](#).

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HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS ⁶

The following is a list of key findings from the report. The findings are arranged by chapter.

Referrals and Reports

Each week CPS agencies receive more than 50,000 referrals (also called reports) alleging that children have been abused or neglected. Almost two-thirds of referrals were screened in by CPS agencies because they were deemed appropriate for investigation or assessment.

- Nationally, 61.7 percent of all referrals (approximately 1,726,000) were screened in and 38.3 percent (approximately 1,070,000) were screened out.
- * Professionals submitted more than half (56.1%) of the screened-in referrals. Nonprofessional report sources, which include family and community members, submitted the remaining 43.9 percent of screened-in referrals.
- * Most States have established time standards for initiating the investigation of reports. The average response time from submission of the report to investigation was 54 hours.
- * More than a quarter of investigations or assessments resulted in a "Substantiated" (28.0%), "Indicated" (3.4%), or "Alternative Response-Victim"(1.0%) disposition, meaning that at least one child involved in an investigation was determined to be a victim. More than half (58.4%) of investigations led to a finding that the alleged maltreatment was "Unsubstantiated."
- * The average number of investigations per investigation/assessment worker was 73 per year.

Child Maltreatment Victims

Victims of maltreatment are defined as children who experienced or who were at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect.

- * Nationally, an estimated 879,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in 2000. The 2000 victimization rate has shown a small, 1-year increase to 12.2 per 1,000 children, but it is still the second-lowest level in the past decade. This increase may be due to various factors including a more timely completion of investigations, a cleared backlog of investigations awaiting dispositions, or a reduced rate in 1999 of 11.8 per 1,000 children due to census population estimates. It is not possible to tell whether this year's slight increase indicates a trend until more data are collected.
- In 2000, 62.8 percent of victims suffered neglect (including medical neglect), 19.3 percent were physically abused, and 10.1 percent were sexually abused; 16.6 percent of victims were associated with additional types of maltreatment.
- Children in the age group of birth to 3 years had the highest victimization rate-15.7 victims per 1,000 children. Victimization rates declined as age increased.
- Rates were similar for male and female victims (11.2 and 12.8 respectively) except for victims of sexual abuse. The rate for sexual abuse was 1.7 victims per 1,000 female children compared to 0.4 victims per 1,000 male children.
- More than half of all victims were White (50.6%); a quarter (24.7%) were African American; and a sixth (14.2%) were Hispanic. American Indian/Alaska Natives accounted for 1.6 percent of victims, and Asian-Pacific Islanders accounted for 1.4 percent of victims.
- Children who had been victimized in a prior year were more than three times as likely to experience recurrence compared to children without a history of victimization.

Perpetrators

A perpetrator of child abuse or neglect is defined as the person who has maltreated a child while in a caretaker relationship to that child.

- Females composed 59.9 percent of all perpetrators, while males composed 40.1 percent. Female perpetrators were typically younger than male perpetrators—41.9 percent of females compared to 31.6 percent of males were younger than 30 years old.
- The most common pattern of maltreatment was a child victimized by a "Female Parent Acting Alone" (40.0%).⁷ At least one parent was the perpetrator for 83.3 percent of victims.
- A "Female Parent Acting Alone" was most commonly responsible for neglect (46.9%) and physical abuse (32.1%) of victims. A "Male Parent Acting Alone" was responsible for 21.5 percent of sexual abuse victims.

Fatalities

Child fatality estimates are based on data recorded by CPS agencies or other agencies such as the coroner's office or fatality review boards.

- * A nationally estimated 1,200 children died of abuse or neglect—a rate of 1.71 children per 100,000 children in the population.
- * Approximately 2.7 percent of child fatalities occurred in foster care.
- A comparison of the perpetrator relationship to all victims and all fatalities depicted a difference in the "Female Parent Acting Alone" percentages. A "Female Parent Acting Alone" accounted for 40.0 percent of victims, compared to 30.2 percent of fatalities.
- Children younger than a year old accounted for 43.7 percent of fatalities, and 85.1 percent of fatalities were younger than 6 years of age.
- Maltreatment deaths were more often associated with just neglect (34.9%) than with any other type of abuse.
- * About a sixth (14.9%) of the families of child fatality victims had received family preservation services in the 5 years prior to the deaths, while less than 3 percent (2.6%) of child fatality victims had been in foster care and returned to their families prior to their deaths.

Services

CPS agencies provide services to prevent future instances of child abuse and neglect and to remedy conditions that have come to the attention of the child welfare agency. Preventive services are provided to parents whose children are at risk of abuse or neglect. Remedial or postinvestigative services are offered to families on a voluntary basis by child welfare agencies or are ordered by the courts to ensure the safety of children. Data on postinvestigation services are reported if the services were provided within 90 days of the disposition of the report.

- * A nationally estimated three million children were recipients of preventive services.
- * The average time from the start of an investigation to provision of service was 35.8 days.
- * More than half of the child victims, 55.4 percent (an estimated 478,000), received postinvestigation services, while a fifth of nonvictims, 18.7 percent (an estimated 385,000 children), received postinvestigation services.

- * About a fifth of victims (20.8%) were removed from their homes as a result of investigations or assessments. In addition, 3.5 percent of nonvictims were placed in foster care. Nationally it is estimated that more than 250,000 children were placed in foster care as a result of child abuse investigations or assessments.
- * Court actions were initiated for 15.3 percent (an estimated 92,000) of victims. A tenth of victims (11.8%) were reported as having court-appointed representatives.

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STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report contains the additional chapters listed below. Throughout the report, supplementary tables that contain supporting data are located at the end of each chapter.

- [Chapter 2](#), Reports-referrals and reports of child maltreatment;
- [Chapter 3](#), Victims-characteristics of child maltreatment victims;
- [Chapter 4](#), Perpetrators-perpetrators of maltreatment;
- [Chapter 5](#), Fatalities-fatalities that occurred as a result of maltreatment;
- [Chapter 6](#), Services-services to prevent maltreatment and to assist the victims; and
- [Chapter 7](#), Additional Research Based on NCANDS and State Administrative Data-research activities that use NCANDS data.

A reader survey is included to solicit advice for future reports ([appendix D](#)). Please take a few minutes to complete and return the survey per the instructions at the end of the survey form.

Notes

¹ 42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.; 42 U.S.C. 5116 et seq., Public Law 100-294 passed April 25, 1988.

² In this report, "States" includes the District of Columbia.

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, *Child Welfare Outcomes 1999: Annual Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002).

⁴ CPS agencies assign a finding, known as a disposition, to a report alleging maltreatment after the circumstances are investigated or assessed.

⁵ Here and throughout the report, the term "child population" refers to all people in the U.S. population younger than 18 years. Supporting data are provided in supplementary [table 1-1](#), which is located at the end of this chapter. Child population and demographic data are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 200 Summary File 1.

<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet> - This link opens a new browser window to an external Web site. To return to Children's Bureau Web site, close the new window.)

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⁶ Highlights denoted with an asterisk (*) designate data elements required by CAPTA.

⁷ In this report, the term "Parent" includes biological parent, adoptive parent, and stepparent.

Child Maltreatment 2000
Table 1-1 NCANDS Data by Type, 2000

Data Type	# of States	Child Population		Investigated Reports		Children Subjects of an Investigation ¹		Child Victims ²	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Child-Specific	34	56,477,121	78.1	1,334,344	76.3	2,381,960	79.4	677,281	77.1
Aggregate	17	15,816,691	21.9	413,376	23.7	617,761	20.6	201,678	22.9
Total	51	72,293,812	100.0	1,747,720	100.0	2,999,721	100.0	878,959	100.0

¹ Total count of children subjects of an investigation includes estimated counts for Maryland and Nevada.

² Total count of victims includes an estimated count for Maryland.

Thirty-four States, accounting for 78 percent of the child population that totaled 72.3 million, submitted child-specific data. The remaining 17 States, accounting for 22 percent of the child population, submitted aggregate-level data. Data for more than 75 percent of investigated reports, children subjects of an investigation, and child victims were submitted at the child-specific level.