

Child Abuse and Neglect

DEFINITION

Child abuse and neglect is the total unduplicated number of victims of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children. Child abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Child neglect includes emotional, educational, physical and medical neglect, as well as a failure to provide for basic needs.

SIGNIFICANCE

Preventing child abuse and neglect is critical to helping children grow into strong, healthy, productive adults and good parents. Children are at increased risk for maltreatment if their parents or caregivers are overwhelmed by multiple problems such as inadequate income, family stressors, isolation from extended family or friends, drug and/or alcohol abuse, or depression.¹ The immediate effects of child abuse and neglect include isolation, fear, inability to trust, injury, and even death. Child maltreatment can also lead to low academic achievement, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, mental health problems, and teen pregnancy. As adults, child victims are more likely to experience domestic violence and to abuse and neglect their own children, thus perpetuating the cycle of abuse.^{2,3}

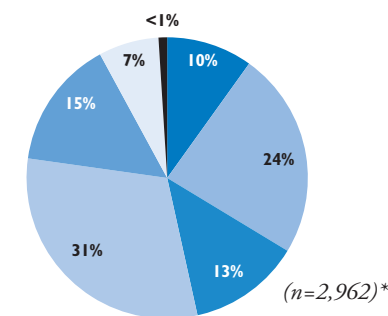
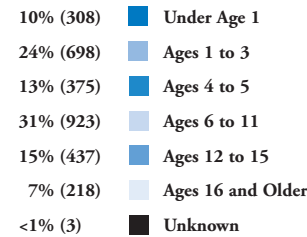
Responding to reports of child abuse and neglect and ensuring child safety are important functions of child protection systems. Maintaining the

capacity to focus on prevention is equally critical and more cost-effective. In Rhode Island, if an investigation does not reveal maltreatment but family stressors and risk factors are identified, Child Protective Services (CPS) refers families to community-based support services to reduce the risk of future involvement with the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). When maltreatment has occurred, a determination may be made that it is safe for the children to remain at home when families are willing to work with community providers. In both of these cases, DCYF makes referrals to regional Family Community Care Partnership (FCCP) agencies. They work with the family to identify appropriate services and resources, including natural supports.⁴

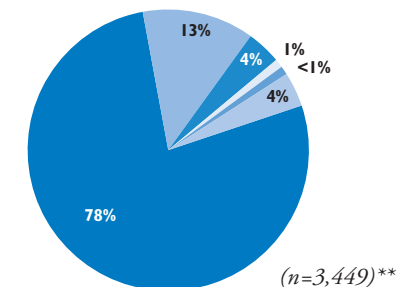
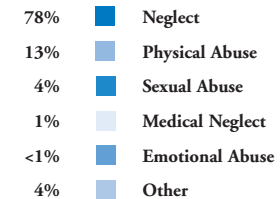
In 2009 in Rhode Island, there were 2,075 indicated investigations of child abuse and neglect involving 2,962 children. The child abuse and neglect rate per 1,000 children under age 18 was more than twice as high in the core cities (17.4 victims per 1,000 children) as in the remainder of the state (8.3 victims per 1,000 children). Almost half (47%) of the victims of child abuse and neglect in 2009 were young children under age six and more than one-third (34%) were age three and younger.⁵

Child Abuse and Neglect, Rhode Island, 2009

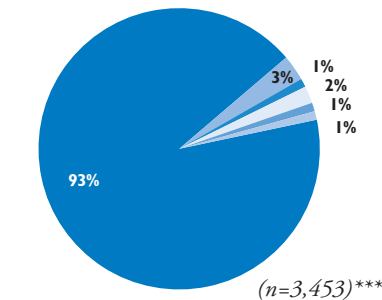
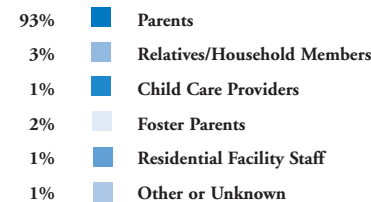
By Age of Victim*



By Type of Neglect/Abuse**



By Relationship of Perpetrator to Victims***



Notes on Pie Charts

* These data reflect an unduplicated count of child victims. The number of victims is higher than the number of indicated investigations. One indicated investigation can involve more than one child victim.

**This number is greater than the unduplicated count of child victims because children often experience more than one maltreatment event and/or more than one type of abuse. Within each type of abuse, the number of child victims is unduplicated.

***Perpetrators can abuse more than one child and can abuse a child more than once. This number is a duplicated count of perpetrators based on their number of victims. Under Rhode Island law, Child Protective Services can only investigate alleged perpetrators who are legally defined as caretakers to the victim(s), except in situations of child sexual abuse by another child.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, RIC HIST, 2009. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

DCYF Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline Calls for Reports of Abuse and/or Neglect, Investigations,* and Indicated Investigations, Rhode Island, 2000-2009

YEAR	TOTAL # UNDUPLICATED CHILD MALTREATMENT REPORTS	% AND # OF REPORTS WITH COMPLETED INVESTIGATIONS	# OF INDICATED INVESTIGATIONS
2000	13,580	56% (7,635)	2,234
2001	13,804	54% (7,479)	2,261
2002	14,545	50% (7,254)	2,209
2003	13,651	50% (6,847)	2,126
2004	13,341	52% (6,890)	2,095
2005	13,144	55% (7,188)	2,260
2006	14,957	59% (8,841)	2,862
2007	13,542	54% (7,363)	2,396
2008	12,204	51% (6,214)	1,913
2009	12,189	52% (6,362)	2,075

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST, 2000-2009.

* One investigation can be generated by multiple hotline calls. Investigations can result in a finding of indicated, unfounded or unable to complete (as when essential party cannot be found).

◆ The percentage of unduplicated child maltreatment reports for which there were completed investigations declined from 59% in 2006 to 52% in 2009. The number of unduplicated child maltreatment reports to the CPS Hotline was also lower in 2009 than at any point in the past decade.⁶ In 2009, there were 2,075 indicated investigations based on child maltreatment investigations, 33% of all completed investigations. The percentage of completed investigations that were indicated has remained fairly stable over the past decade.⁷ An indicated investigation is one in which there is a preponderance of evidence that child abuse and/or neglect occurred.⁸

◆ Of the 12,189 maltreatment reports in 2009, 4,662 were classified as “information/referrals” (formerly “early warnings”).⁹ Information/referrals are reports made to the CPS Hotline that contain a concern about the well-being of a child but do not meet the criteria for an investigation. Criteria for investigation include that the victim is a minor, the alleged perpetrator is a legal caretaker or is living in the home, there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect circumstances exist, and there is a specific incident or pattern of incidents suggesting that harm can be identified. When essential criteria for investigation are not present, the report may lead to a referral to other services or to the information being passed on to a DCYF caseworker (depending on whether the family is active with DCYF).¹⁰

Rhode Island Child Deaths Due to Child Abuse and/or Neglect**

YEAR	NUMBER OF DEATHS	YEAR	NUMBER OF DEATHS
2000	3	2005	4
2001	5	2006	1
2002	1	2007	0
2003	4	2008	0
2004	3	2009	2
<i>Total 2000-2004</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>Total 2005-2009</i>	<i>7</i>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST, 2000-2009.

**Based on Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families determination of death due to child abuse or neglect by a parent or caretaker.

◆ Between 2000 and 2009, 23 children died as a result of injuries due to abuse by a parent or caretaker. In 2009, two children died as a result of child abuse and/or neglect, the first deaths since 2006.¹¹ During 2008, there were 31 children hospitalized with the diagnosis of child abuse or neglect, compared with 32 in 2007, 32 in 2006, 34 in 2005, and 22 in 2004.¹²

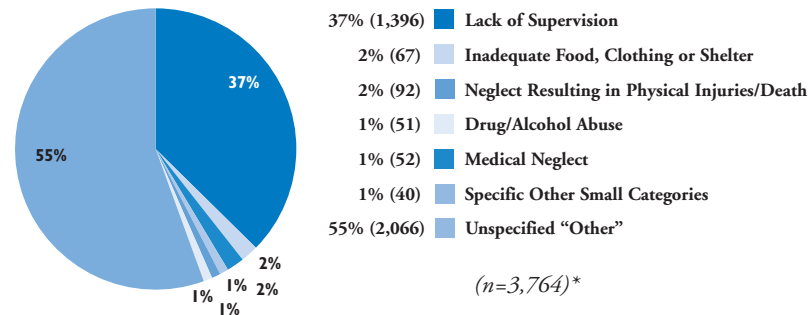
Child Abuse and Neglect in Rhode Island Communities

◆ Many parents at risk of child abuse and neglect lack essential parenting skills and are struggling with a combination of social and economic issues. These families benefit from access to community-based, comprehensive services that are able to respond flexibly to their needs.¹³ Helping families access income supports, medical care, high-quality child care, parent education and support, treatment for substance abuse and mental health problems and offering evidence-based home visiting programs, such as the Nurse-Family Partnership, to families at risk can prevent the occurrence and recurrence of child abuse and neglect.^{14,15,16,17}

◆ In 2009, the six core cities had the highest rates of child victims of abuse and neglect per 1,000 children out of all Rhode Island communities. Johnston (13.2) and Westerly (12.6) were the only other communities with child abuse and neglect rates higher than that of the state as a whole (11.7). Child abuse and neglect rates in the core cities ranged from a low of 14.1 per 1,000 children in Providence to a high of 26.6 per 1,000 children in Woonsocket.¹⁸

Child Abuse and Neglect

Indicated Allegations of Child Neglect, by Nature of Neglect, Rhode Island, 2009



◆ The importance of adequate capacity, affordability and quality of child care, preschool, other early childhood programs, and quality after-school opportunities is highlighted by the fact that of the 3,764 indicated allegations (confirmed claims) of neglect in Rhode Island in 2009, 37% involved lack of supervision.

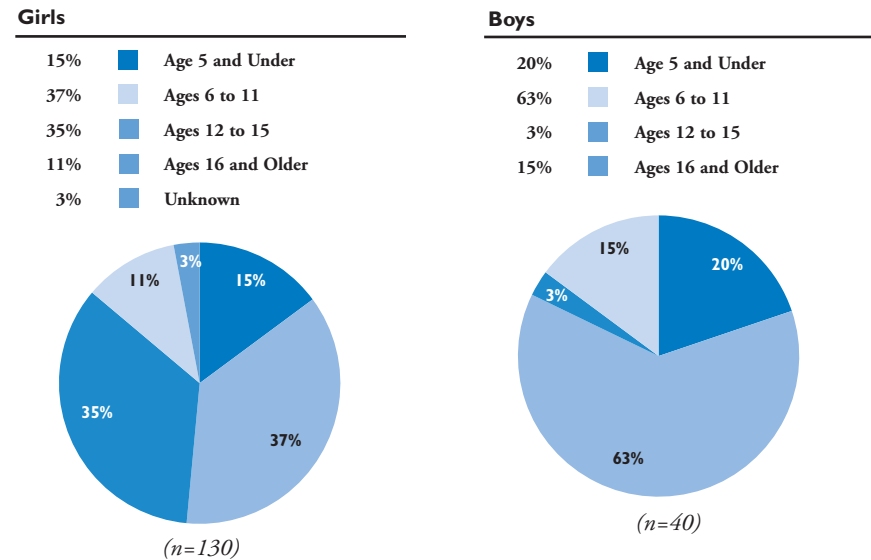
◆ The single largest category of neglect (55%) is “unspecified other.” These are instances of neglect that do not fit into the other specified categories.

◆ The “specific other small categories” include: tying or confinement (14), failure to thrive (8), excessive/inappropriate discipline (7), abandonment (5), educational neglect (3), and emotional neglect (3).

* The total refers to indicated allegations of neglect. Some children were victims of neglect more than once. Multiple allegations may be involved in each indicated investigation. Numbers do not include indicated allegations of institutional neglect.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST, 2009. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Child Sexual Abuse, by Gender and Age of Victim, Rhode Island, 2009



◆ In Rhode Island in 2009, there were 170 indicated allegations (confirmed claims) of sexual abuse. Some children were victims of sexual abuse more than once. In 76% (130) of the 170 indicated allegations of sexual abuse, the victim was a female. Just over half (52%) of the female victims were known to be under age 12 while 83% of the male victims were under age 12.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2009. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 30. Indicated Investigations and Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect, Rhode Island, 2009

CITY/TOWN	# OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18	# OF INDICATED INVESTIGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT	INDICATED INVESTIGATIONS PER 1,000 CHILDREN	# OF VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT	VICTIMS PER 1,000 CHILDREN
Barrington	4,745	6	1.3	7	1.5
Bristol	4,399	34	7.7	30	6.8
Burrillville	4,043	32	7.9	42	10.4
Central Falls	5,531	57	10.3	107	19.3
Charlestown	1,712	10	5.8	20	11.7
Coventry	8,389	71	8.5	88	10.5
Cranston	17,098	134	7.8	168	9.8
Cumberland	7,690	34	4.4	48	6.2
East Greenwich	3,564	9	2.5	18	5.1
East Providence	10,546	59	5.6	72	6.8
Exeter	1,589	7	4.4	8	5.0
Foster	1,105	10	9.0	7	6.3
Glocester	2,664	4	1.5	13	4.9
Hopkinton	2,011	13	6.5	17	8.5
Jamestown	1,238	0	0.0	1	0.8
Johnston	5,906	51	8.6	78	13.2
Lincoln	5,157	37	7.2	47	9.1
Little Compton	780	2	2.6	3	3.8
Middletown	4,328	32	7.4	44	10.2
Narragansett	2,833	19	6.7	20	7.1
New Shoreham	185	1	5.4	0	0.0
Newport	5,199	67	12.9	90	17.3
North Kingstown	6,848	38	5.5	50	7.3
North Providence	5,936	38	6.4	56	9.4
North Smithfield	2,379	24	10.1	24	10.1
Pawtucket	18,151	209	11.5	320	17.6
Portsmouth	4,329	25	5.8	31	7.2
Providence	45,277	469	10.4	640	14.1
Richmond	2,014	8	4.0	7	3.5
Scituate	2,635	18	6.8	23	8.7
Smithfield	4,019	18	4.5	26	6.5
South Kingstown	6,284	41	6.5	53	8.4
Tiverton	3,367	19	5.6	35	10.4
Warren	2,454	21	8.6	27	11.0
Warwick	18,780	114	6.1	162	8.6
West Greenwich	1,444	4	2.8	6	4.2
West Warwick	6,632	100	15.1	144	21.7
Westerly	5,406	48	8.9	68	12.6
Woonsocket	11,155	192	17.2	297	26.6
Unknown	NA	0	NA	1	NA
Core Cities	91,945	1,094	11.9	1,598	17.4
Remainder of State	155,877	981	6.3	1,299	8.3
Rhode Island	247,822	2,075	8.4	2,898	11.7

Note to Table

Data can not be compared to Factbooks prior to 2009. The denominator is the number of children under age 18 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and the numerator is an unduplicated count of child victims. Previous Factbooks used children under age 21 as the denominator and the indicated investigations as the numerator to calculate the rate of indicated investigations per 1,000 children. In 2008, Rhode Island lowered the eligibility age for entry into DCYF services to under age 18, although some children remain eligible for services after their 18th birthday.

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), calendar year 2009.

Victims of child abuse/neglect are unduplicated counts of victims with substantiated allegations of child abuse and/or neglect. More than one victim can be involved in an investigation.

An indicated investigation is an investigated report of child abuse and/or neglect for which a preponderance of evidence exists that child abuse and/or neglect occurred. An indicated investigation can involve more than one child and multiple allegations. City/town reports of indicated investigations omit certain investigations, particularly those where there are data entry errors affecting location. For this reason, the city/town table includes fewer indicated investigations than the chart with reports/investigations and indicated cases.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

References

^{1,2,17} Horton, C. (2003). *Protective factors literature review: Early care and education programs and the prevention of child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy.

³ *Long-term consequences of child abuse and neglect*. (2008). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Information Gateway.

^{4,8,10} Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Child Protective Services.

(continued on page 169)