

Child Abuse and Neglect

DEFINITION

Child abuse and neglect is the total number of indicated investigations of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children. "Indicated investigation" means that credible evidence exists that child abuse and/or neglect occurred following an investigation of an abuse report. An indicated investigation can involve more than one child and multiple allegations (claims) of different forms of abuse. Child abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Child neglect includes emotional, educational and medical neglect.

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, lack of a job or a decent place to live, emotional stress, isolation from extended family or friends, drug and/or alcohol abuse, mental illness, or domestic violence.^{1,2} Recent studies confirm that child abuse is linked to increases in low academic achievement, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, suicide, behavioral, emotional and mental health problems, teenage pregnancy, adult criminality and increased likelihood of

becoming an adult victim of physical or sexual abuse.^{3,4,5,6}

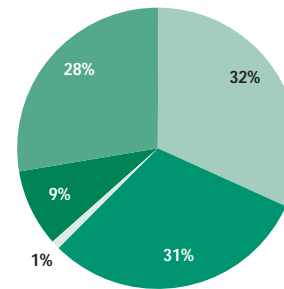
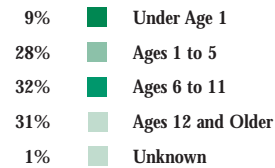
Many abusive parents lack essential parenting skills and are struggling with a combination of social and economic issues. Preventing child abuse and neglect requires family support systems such as access to high quality child care as well as parenting education and counseling for substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health problems. Families benefit from access to community-based, comprehensive services that are able to flexibly respond to their needs.^{7,8}

Responding to reports of child abuse and neglect and ensuring child safety in crisis situations are important functions of child protection systems. Maintaining the capacity to focus on prevention is equally critical and frequently more cost-effective. The absence of appropriate lower-cost placements and community-based family supports and early interventions contributes to a disproportionate share of the budget of the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) being spent on high-end costs such as psychiatric hospitalization, juvenile corrections, and residential treatment.^{9,10,11}

In 2004 in Rhode Island, there were 2,095 indicated investigations of child abuse and neglect involving 2,906 children.¹²

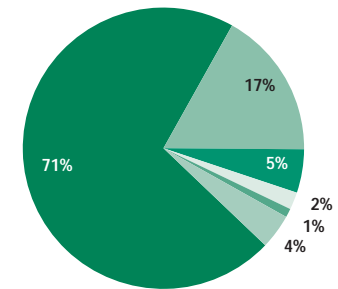
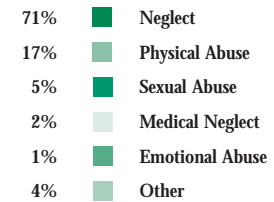
Child Abuse and Neglect, Rhode Island, 2004

By Age of Victim



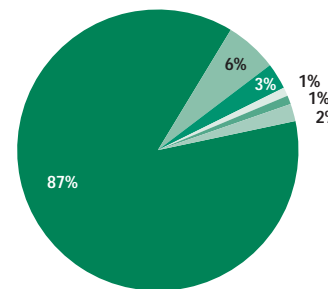
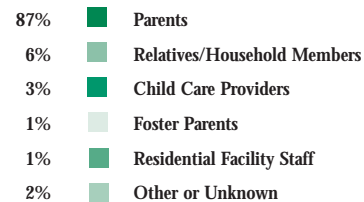
(n=2,906)*

By Type of Abuse



(n=3,452)**

By Relationship of Perpetrator to Victims



(n=3,437)***

Notes on Pie Charts

All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2004. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

* 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.

DCYF (CANTS)* Hotline Calls for Reports of Abuse and/or Neglect, Investigations, and Indicated Cases, Rhode Island, 1995-2004

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER UNDUPLICATED CHILD MALTREATMENT REPORTS	NUMBER OF COMPLETED INVESTIGATIONS	# OF INDICATED INVESTIGATIONS
1995	13,841	8,553	2,781
1996	13,098	8,398	2,541
1997	12,437	8,485	2,577
1998	12,674	8,463	2,459
1999	13,519	7,882	2,628
2000	13,580	7,635	2,234
2001	13,804	7,479	2,261
2002	14,545	7,254	2,209
2003	13,651	6,847	2,126
2004	13,341	6,890	2,095

◆ Between 1995 and 2004 the percentage of child maltreatment reports for which there were completed investigations declined from 62% to 52% while the percent of investigations that were indicated remained fairly stable.

◆ In 2004, 52% of reports resulted in completed investigations and 30% of completed investigations were indicated. An indicated investigation is one in which there is credible evidence that child abuse and/or neglect occurred.

◆ During 2004, among the 13,341 maltreatment reports, 5,336 were classified as “early warnings”, that is, instances where an essential criterion for investigation is not present. Criteria for investigation include that the victim is a minor, the alleged perpetrator is living in the home or responsible for the child’s welfare, there is harm or risk of harm alleged and there is a specific incident or pattern of incidents suggesting that harm can be identified.

** 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).*

Source: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, 1995-2004.

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

YEAR	NUMBER OF DEATHS	YEAR	NUMBER OF DEATHS
1995	5	2000	3
1996	4	2001	5
1997	2	2002	1
1998	3	2003	4
1999	3	2004	3
Total 1995-1999	17	Total 2000-2004	16

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

◆ Between 1995 and 2004, 33 children died as a result of injuries due to abuse by a parent or caretaker.

◆ During 2004, there were 29 children hospitalized with the diagnosis of child abuse or neglect, down from 38 in 2002. The average over five years (1999-2003) was 30 hospitalizations annually.¹³

Child Abuse and Neglect in Rhode Island Communities

◆ In 2004, the rate of indicated investigations of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 indicated investigations was higher in each core city than for the state as a whole. The core cities represented six out of the seven cities or towns in Rhode with the highest rates of child abuse and neglect.

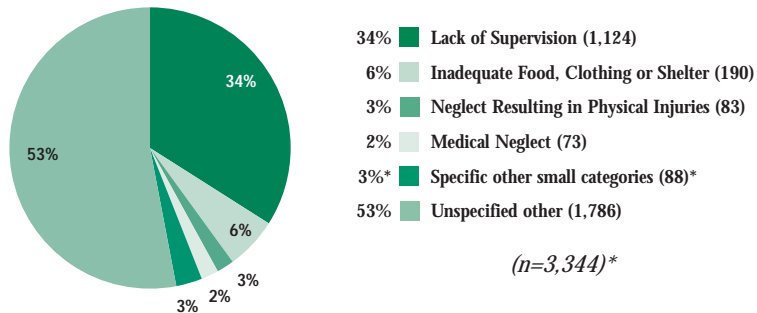
◆ In 2004, 56% of indicated investigations of child abuse and neglect occurred in core cities, which contain 39% of the state’s population under age 21.

◆ Woonsocket has consistently had the highest rate of indicated investigations of child abuse and neglect of all of the core cities.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, 2000-2004.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child Neglect, by Nature of Neglect, Rhode Island, 2004



◆ In Rhode Island in 2004, of the 3,344 indicated allegations (confirmed claims) of neglect, 34% involved lack of supervision, highlighting the potential importance of adequate capacity, affordability and quality of child care, preschool and other early childhood and school-age programs.

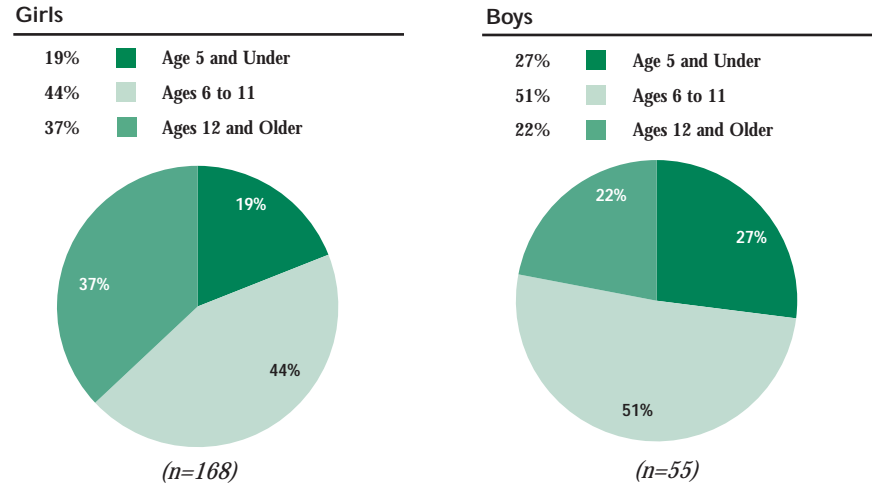
◆ The single largest category of neglect (53%) falls under other. These are instances of neglect that do not fit into any of the other specified categories.

◆ The specific small categories of less than 1% each include: drug/alcohol abuse (52), abandonment (12), tying and confinement (6), emotional neglect (6), excessive/inappropriate discipline (6), educational neglect (4), poisoning (2).

* 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, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2004.

Child Sexual Abuse, by Gender and Age of Victim, Rhode Island, 2004



◆ In Rhode Island in 2004, there were 223 indicated allegations of sexual abuse. Some children were victims of sexual abuse more than once.¹⁴

◆ In 75% (168) of the 223 indicated allegations of sexual abuse the victim was a female. Sixty-seven percent of the victims (63% of girls and 78% of boys) were under age 12.¹⁵

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

◆ Families overwhelmed by personal, social or economic problems may lack resources to meet their children's needs and require a variety of readily accessible services and interventions.¹⁶

◆ Connecting families with economic supports, decreasing isolation and providing access to substance abuse and mental health treatment are especially critical.¹⁷

Table 24. Indicated Investigations of Child Abuse and Neglect, Rhode Island, 2004

CITY/TOWN	TOTAL POPULATION OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 21	# OF INDICATED INVESTIGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT	RATE OF CASES OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT PER 1,000 CHILDREN
Barrington	5,211	13	2.5
Bristol	6,294	26	4.1
Burrillville	4,646	21	4.5
Central Falls	6,443	74	11.5
Charlestown	1,952	13	6.7
Coventry	9,438	61	6.5
Cranston	19,854	117	5.9
Cumberland	8,595	36	4.2
East Greenwich	3,861	5	1.3
East Providence	12,060	60	5.0
Exeter	1,790	5	2.8
Foster	1,234	2	1.6
Glocester	2,998	12	4.0
Hopkinton	2,255	10	4.4
Jamestown	1,354	3	2.2
Johnston	6,729	29	4.3
Lincoln	5,720	27	4.7
Little Compton	874	1	1.1
Middletown	4,757	18	3.8
Narragansett	3,897	10	2.6
New Shoreham	203	3	14.8
Newport	7,046	70	9.9
North Kingstown	7,561	32	4.2
North Providence	6,854	56	8.2
North Smithfield	2,674	7	2.6
Pawtucket	20,870	227	10.9
Portsmouth	4,726	17	3.6
Providence	62,125	544	8.8
Richmond	2,221	3	1.4
Scituate	2,944	14	4.8
Smithfield	6,112	5	0.8
South Kingstown	10,393	33	3.2
Tiverton	3,806	22	5.8
Warren	2,809	23	8.2
Warwick	21,330	145	6.8
West Greenwich	1,606	3	1.9
West Warwick	7,746	98	12.7
Westerly	6,094	35	5.7
Woonsocket	12,792	168	13.1
<i>Out of State/Unknown</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>117,022</i>	<i>1,181</i>	<i>10.1</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>182,852</i>	<i>867</i>	<i>4.7</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>299,874</i>	<i>2,095</i>	<i>7.0</i>

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), number of reports (indicated investigations) for the period January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004.

An indicated investigation is an investigated report of child abuse and neglect for which credible 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 of indicated investigations reports fewer indicated investigations than does the chart with reports/investigations and indicated cases.

The denominator is the number of children under the age of 21 according to the U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 1.

References for Indicator

- ^{1.7} *America's children at risk: A national agenda for legal action.* (1993). Chicago, IL: American Bar Association, Working Group on the Unmet Legal Needs of Children and Their Families.
- ^{2.4.8} 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 Chalk, R., Gibbons, A., & Scarupa, H. J. (2002). *The multiple dimensions of child abuse and neglect: new insights into an old problem* (Research Brief). Washington, DC: Child Trends.
- ⁵ Office of Justice Programs. (2004). *Violence against women: Identifying risk factors.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- ⁶ Alexander, R., Baca, L., Fox, J. A., Frantz, M., Glanz, S., & Huffman, L. D. (2003). *New hope for preventing child abuse and neglect: Proven solutions to save lives and prevent future crime.* Washington, DC: Fight Crime: Invest in Kids.
- ⁹ D'Ambra, L. (2001). *DCYF system of care task force report of the current reality subcommittee.* Providence, RI: Office of the Child Advocate.
- ¹⁰ *A review of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families.* (2001). Providence, RI: Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council.
- ¹¹ *Towards an organized system of care for Rhode Island's children, youth and families.* (2003). The Report of the Rhode Island System of Care Task Force.
- ^{12,14,15} Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2004.
- ¹³ Rhode Island Department of Health, Hospital Discharge Database, 1999-2003.
- ^{16,17} Protecting children from child abuse and neglect. *The Future of Children*, 8(1).