



## Over-Representation of Aboriginal Children in Child Protection Services

Although the absence of a national child welfare data system makes it impossible to precisely quantify the over-representation of Aboriginal children receiving child protection services, available information suggests that overrepresentation increases at every stage of intervention in the child welfare system.

The 2003 Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS-2003) found that Aboriginal children were 2.5 times as likely to have a “substantiated” report of maltreatment in the child welfare system, an overall population rate of 49 per 1000 children in comparison to 19.8 per 1000 non-Aboriginal children (Trocmé et al., 2005).

The CIS-1998 found that although only five percent of children in Canada were Aboriginal, Aboriginal children comprised 17% of children reported to child welfare, 22% of substantiated reports of maltreatment, and 25% of the children admitted to care (Blackstock, Trocmé & Bennett, 2004). This staged increase was also found in CIS-2003.

Most alarming is that large numbers of Aboriginal children receive the most intensive child welfare intervention: removal from the home and placement in care. These apprehensions appear to be increasing, at least for First Nations children.

A study of 3 sample provinces found 10.23% of status First Nations children in out-of-home care, versus 3.31% of Métis children and 0.67% of other children (Blackstock et al., 2005).

Another study found that Aboriginal

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Twice as likely to survive on social benefits, and far less likely to have full time employment; these factors are intimately connected to the overall socio-economic situation of Aboriginal people, and are largely outside the parents' direct control.

2-3 times more likely to live in public housing or housing that is unsafe or overcrowded. Except on reserve, scratch the surface of these structural risks. Child protection agencies operating at the individual and family level can only do so much. Aboriginal families were much more likely to have moved more than once in the past year; and,

Several times more likely to have substance misuse issues in the family.

